Dear Gaucho Parents and Family Members,

On behalf of UCSB’s Division of Student Affairs and our Parent Services, I want to welcome you. This newsletter highlights resources and opportunities that support your student’s academic success, development, and well-being. I hope it will be helpful as you discover what it means to be a Gaucho Parent. It is challenging to figure out how involved you should be in your daughter’s or son’s college life. Assistant Dean for Student Academic Support Services Lupe N. Garcia recalls her experiences facing this challenge when her son went to college. I hope her story will help you reflect on your own experiences.

By Lupe N. Garcia, Assistant Dean, Student Academic Support Services

It was finally my turn. After 21 years of working in Student Affairs, my own son was leaving for college. It was going to be a breeze. My partner and I both work with university students. Our own college experience at UCSB was fantastic. We were looking forward to our son’s having the opportunity to study and find himself separate from us. No one was more surprised than I when the emotions took me for a rollercoaster ride. I belatedly realized that I had not put myself into the equation. I was soon joining the ranks of transitioning parents and I was not prepared.

The new life stage was going to be as significant for us as parents as it was going to be for my son as a young adult. We were going through parallel life stages, fraught with emotions ranging from joy, relief, and exhilaration to fear and—insert your own adjective here (they all apply). We were all going to need to grow, be challenged, take risks, redefine our relationships, and let go. My advice to you as you navigate this summer is to prepare yourself as much as you prepare your student.

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Alcohol Education for Students

The start of fall quarter presents a perfect opportunity to initiate a conversation with your son or daughter about alcohol and drug use in college. Research consistently indicates that parental involvement is an important protective factor when it comes to alcohol use among college students. But how do you start that conversation?

UCSB’s Alcohol & Drug Program offers several suggestions online, such as using news stories that deal with college substance use on television and in the newspapers to ask their opinions and to give yours. They also provide a list of questions that you can ask your son or daughter, such as “What are some reasons and excuses you can give your friends if you don’t want to drink?” You can even say, “I read this parent newsletter and they told me to ask you these questions.” Share with them your expectations regarding drug and alcohol use. Research shows that, even though you may not get a response, young adults pay attention when you talk about alcohol and drugs. We often hear “My parents think...” or “My parents say...” when students are talking with each other or with university staff about these issues.

UCSB is deeply committed to reducing the risks and harmful consequences of excessive drinking and the use of controlled substances by our students. UCSB requires all newly enrolled first-year and transfer students to complete an online alcohol education course at Mystudentbody.com within the first five weeks of their first quarter. Please remind your student to complete this requirement. This course helps students examine personal beliefs, risk behaviors, and consequences, while delivering prevention education through interactive tools, peer stories, and relevant information. This information includes how alcohol is processed by the body, how to cope with peer pressure, how to moderate drinking, and signs and symptoms of alcohol poisoning. Students also receive information about alcohol and other drugs regularly throughout the academic year. The goal of UCSB’s alcohol education requirement is to ensure that all students have the basic information they need to make safer choices about alcohol use.

For more information on UCSB’s alcohol and drug prevention efforts, visit UCSB Alcohol & Drug Program, call (805) 893-5013, or contact the Alcohol and Drug Program acting director, Jackie Kurta at (805) 893-2263 or jackie.kurta@sa.ucsb.edu. [Some of the above information has been adapted from College Parents of America, MADD, and Syracuse University]

Links to Web Pages

Links are blue and underlined in this newsletter. Click on them to get more information.

- UCSB Points of Pride—a list of the achievements, awards, and recognitions that UCSB has received. These are a few of the reasons why you should be proud of your student’s earning his/her way into UCSB.
- UCSB's Bicycle Program—how students can register their bikes and avoid bike impounding.
- Discovery Days Calendar: September 19-21. Hundreds of special programs and campus events are hosted by departments and campus organizations. Students become familiar with the campus, meet students, visit academic departments, learn how to get involved, and take care of campus business.
- CLAS Tutorial Group Sign ups: Students sign up for Campus Learning Assistance Services (CLAS) tutorial groups on the first day of classes—Thursday, September 22. Students sign up online or by visiting the CLAS office on the third floor of the Student Resource Building. Students should sign up on the first day because these tutorial groups are popular and will fill up.

Adjusting to My Son’s First Year

(Continued from p. 1)

My sweet baby boy was living the dream we had hoped for him since the minute we knew we were pregnant. He was leaving for his first-choice college; he had chosen a major; he was following his own dream; he was ready—and it was time. If we were so happy and proud of his accomplishments, why were we suddenly feeling so sad? Somewhere in those last few days of preparation, I went from excitement to shock. Where had the time gone? What final lessons still needed to be taught? Should I help with the last-minute details or let him do things himself? Did he want me around or did he need to be with his friends? Should I show my sadness or try to be upbeat? Should we shop for all contingencies now or buy things later as the needs emerged? The questions just kept coming.

At one point, we found ourselves bickering over my needing help on the computer. Our argument was so out of proportion to the situation that we both had to stop and take stock. It was not the computer; it was all of the things we were not saying out loud. Leaving is scary. We were both going to need to learn to do things on our own. We could no longer pretend that we were not having a reaction to his leaving. I needed to tell him how much I loved him and how being his mother was such a blessing in my life. He needed to say that leaving home was harder than he thought. He was trying to say good bye to his friends, his home, his childhood, and his family all at the same time.

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Campus Learning Assistance Services (CLAS)

Student Resource Building (SRB), Room 3210. Phone: (805) 893-3269. Email: clas@sa.ucsb.edu.
Monday-Thursday: 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.; Friday: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

THE OTHER CLAS – AT NO EXTRA COST
Campus Learning Assistance Services (CLAS) provides course-specific tutoring and academic skills development services to registered UCSB students at no extra cost. CLAS offers tutorial groups and drop-in labs, workshops, and individual appointments for both undergraduate and graduate students. Last year, nearly 8,700 students—more than 50% of the combined undergraduate and graduate student bodies at UCSB—attended CLAS workshops and/or drop-in tutoring. CLAS staff tallied a total of over 200,000 contact hours with students.

CLAS consists of over 30 program coordinators, learning skills counselors, and instructors and over 160 graduate and undergraduate tutors and peers. CLAS staff members have earned Master’s degrees, MFA’s, and Ph.D.’s in their respective fields, such as creative writing, biology and chemistry, economics, linguistics, math, physics, and psychology. CLAS staff also tutor students studying foreign languages (espagnol, Deutsch, русский, français, , italiano, and ), as well as those learning English as a Second Language (ESL).

CLAS also provides study skills workshops. These teach students to develop memory techniques, take good lecture notes, and develop their best strategies for writing essay exams—all essential tools for success. Students develop skills that help them succeed at UCSB as well as throughout their adult lives.

UCSB Professor Richard E. Mayer’s extensive research in the fields of educational and cognitive psychology identifies the importance of metacognition in academic learning—that is, thinking about one’s thinking. Research demonstrates that successful students take responsibility for their own learning. They monitor their learning and adjust their studying accordingly. Strategies for improving metacognition include self-questioning ("What do I already know about this topic? How have I solved problems like this before?"); self-explanation (e.g., thinking aloud about what does not make sense while performing a task); self-testing (e.g., practicing remembering the material); and using generative techniques (e.g., summarizing the material in one’s own words or drawing concept maps, flow charts, or connections between one’s understanding and knowledge).

According to Jeff Harlig, a learning specialist at CLAS who earned his Ph.D. in linguistics, the following tips will help students improve their metacognition:

1. Until you know that you know, you don’t know. Are you really learning your material? You will know if you self-test. Try explaining the concepts you’ve studied to others—or to yourself in a mirror. It could be fun to Skype with a friend and discuss your newfound knowledge.
2. Read with a purpose. To begin, review your material and make predictions. Use this technique to look for parallels to things you already know, which will enhance your retention.
3. Know your environmental preferences for studying. Tune into your own needs. Do you like to study solo, read in a café, or review flashcards on an elliptical trainer?
4. Follow the lead of successful professionals: learn to manage and budget your time. Plan beyond just one day’s assignments. Look at the big picture, so you can break down the big tasks into smaller ones.

A Gift to CLAS
CLAS relies on the generous support of parents, alumni, and friends. A gift to CLAS, no matter its amount, will help UCSB students in their quest for knowledge and their journeys of discovery. Gifts to CLAS will enhance its ability to strengthen and expand workshops, tutorials, and other support services; provide improved and “smart” technologies; and increase the size of its staff, so that CLAS has the capacity to provide services to the growing number of undergraduate and graduate students who utilize them.

To make a gift to CLAS, please give online or contact Catherine Boyer, acting director of Student Affairs Grants and Development at (805) 893-5037 or catherine.boyer@sa.ucsb.edu.
ACCESS CARD

What is the ACCESS card and how does it work?

The ACCESS card is a student’s ID/debit card. At UCSB, this card gives students the ability to check out research material at the library, access A.S. Notetaking and A.S. Ticket Office services, work out at the Recreation Center, and get free admission to Gauchos Athletic games and free rides on the local city buses (current registration sticker required). If a student has a meal plan, the ACCESS card is swiped for access to the dining commons. This swipe will deduct one meal (not a dollar value) from the number of meals the student receives each week.

The ACCESS card can also be used as debit card. Students pay a one-time $20 activation fee and the card can be pre-loaded with money. The ACCESS card is accepted at Student Health, the UCSB Bookstore, campus parking locations, all campus food outlets, and many shops and restaurants in Isla Vista.

To activate the ACCESS debit card, students fill out the application and submit payment (check or cash) to the ACCESS Photo Center on the main level of the University Center, Monday through Friday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. If they have any questions, students can call the ACCESS Hotline at (805) 893-7174.

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Adjusting to My Son’s First Year

There was not enough time left in the summer and someone important would feel left out. He was trying to fit everyone into the remaining time and the computer was not on his list. That was the point where I realized what my role was as the parent of an adult child. It was not my job to fix things. It was my job to listen and offer support as he navigated being on his own. Nor was it his job to fix things for me. I was going to need to take over the computer maintenance and, most importantly, I was going to need to find a way to channel all of that emotion and extra time in my schedule. 9

When it was time to leave my son at his new residence, all those life lessons flashed through my mind. What could I tell him now that I had not already said before? We got him settled, did a tour of the surrounding area and amenities, and shopped for the special things he wanted once he saw his new living quarters. When it was time to say good bye, we let go.

Was it that simple? It took several cities and multiple counties during the drive home before my partner, my daughter, and I stopped sniffing. My daughter, who until this point had never publicly acknowledged her big brother’s role in her life, found herself overwhelmed by the thought of being the only child in the house.

When we got back home, nothing looked different, but everything had changed. My son’s dog came in and looked behind us, asking the silent question, “Where is my boy?” The floodgates were released again. It was official: the Garcias and the dogs were all crying.

That was the letting go part. It was hard. Yet the staying connected part this past year has been fun. Even though I decided to not initiate first contact, if he called or sent a text message, it was on. I could reply and ask all of my questions—have you made friends; how were your classes; do you like your roommates; have you gone to check out any student activities; have you met with your advisor; what did you eat, etc.? My 101 questions were overwhelming so I received monosyllabic answers. I soon realized that the fewer questions I asked at a time, the more information he shared about his day. I learned to do subtle shout outs to him that let him know I was thinking about him.

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Shifting from our family to his friends was the natural course of my son’s growth. Finding people that are going through similar experiences provides a base of support, in addition to friendship. Department receptions, student organization activities, athletic events, the arts—all of these allow your student to make connections and find a sense of community. Rather than asking if my son was coming home to visit, I asked about his participation at school. Rather than give him money for transportation home, we gave him money to buy season tickets to athletic events.

Now that his first year has passed, I can tell you that my son made friends; he enjoyed his classes and the diversity of his housemates; he participated in activities on and off campus—and he did eat. He also made some good choices, learned from his mistakes, connected with faculty, found a job, refined his time management skills, took road trips, found mentors, and had a memorable first-year experience.

The beauty of it is that we get to do this all over again with his sister.