Successfully Transitioning to the Sophomore Year: Making the Most Out of Summer

Here’s to transitioning once again! The transition to sophomore year can sometimes feel like what we equate to being a middle child, a little overlooked or forgotten. The newness of the first year is over, and students sometimes feel like they should have it all together, feel completely comfortable on campus, be completely through all the first year transitions, and know their major and the career they want to pursue. Sometimes this couldn’t be further from the truth, and students need to know that this is all pretty normal.

Sophomore year can still be filled with some first year transitions, the new sophomore transitions and to top it all off, there is the added pressure to declare a major. Some students experience “sophomore slump,” confusion, bewilderment and lack of motivation from feeling overwhelmed. The honeymoon of the first year is over and it is time to settle in for the middle years. Sophomore and junior years require students to develop a greater sense of competence in their academics and more autonomy from their parents, all while developing a true sense of self and purpose. As with first year adjustments, not all of these sophomore adjustments happen on a set schedule and students need to know that they have support from the university as well as family and friends.

Key Strategies

The keys to successfully transitioning lies in these strategies:

- Developing a strong relationship with an academic advisor. This can be with the primary major advisor or another faculty member or college advisor.
- Building positive personal relationships with faculty and staff that can help serve as mentors. Each person sees the student from a slightly different perspective and can help round out the student’s view of themselves as they grow and change. The Office of Career and Professional Development can help your student with career assessment and planning.
- Continuing to build strong social interactions in activities on campus. A strong sense of connectedness and student involvement is shown to improve not only academic performance but also helps to build the interpersonal skills that are vital to a successful person.
Progress toward development of purpose. Seek out opportunities that will stretch your student beyond their view of themselves. Challenge, question and learn.

Summer Employment

Summer employment is available to all returning LMU undergraduate students. Students must apply for summer work study if they plan to utilize work study funds during the summer by visiting the Financial Aid Office in Von der Ahe 270 or by completing the online Financial Aid application. However, there are also many departments on campus that employ students who do not have work study awards including the Student Housing Office and Campus Recreation. The best way for students to find on-campus and off-campus summer employment is to search on LionJobs. If students need assistance finding summer employment, they are invited to contact Student Employment Services by phone at 310.338.7606 or by email at ses@lmu.edu to set up an appointment with a SES team member.

Another constructive and profitable way to spend the summer is working at a paid internship. Your student will earn valuable experiences while making money. Even an unpaid internship will allow your student to develop professional skills, start building a network of contacts, gain first-hand experience in a career field, develop mentoring relationships and so much more. Summer jobs that are not related to a future career also have value. Any job or internship, whether paid or unpaid, will help your student learn discipline, responsibility, and other skills necessary for the after-graduation job market.

The good news for students is that none of this is done alone. There is great support from faculty, staff, the Academic Resource Center (ARC), Student Leadership and Development, Campus Ministry, Career and Professional Development and yes, even FYE (First Year Experience). LMU is filled with amazing resources, but they can only be amazing if they are used. Urge your student to forge ahead through this sophomore transition. Ask questions, get involved, achieve academically, explore and create a plan.

Feel free to contact our Student Success office during business hours at 310.338.5252 if you have any questions or need any assistance- we will always be there!

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If you have any questions or concerns, please email us at lmuparentprograms@lmu.edu.
Visit our Parent Pride website for additional articles and resources!