What to Do When Your Student Says…

Every student is an individual, with unique strengths, skills, issues and challenges. For your student, some issues and challenges may come later in the semester or academic year, but we want you to hold on to this information to be prepared if your son or daughter needs some help. Here's some advice on what to do and say if you hear these words.

"The work is too hard."
More challenging academic work is one of the biggest differences from high school, even for the best students. Suggest that your student try using the academic resources available on campus. Also, encourage your student to talk to his or her professors and academic advisor throughout the semester.

"...and there's too much of it!"
Many students coast through high school by just showing up for class and reading "the book," but in college more learning takes place outside the classroom than in it. Your student should plan on 1-3 hours of study for every hour of class time. Suggest some time-management strategies, and again, encourage your student to use the Academic Resource Center. Additionally, LMU has the Katz Family Academic Skills Program to assist students who may present with identified learning disorders and need assistance with focus areas such as study strategies and time management. Please email the Katz Program Learning Specialist for more information about the program. If the problem persists, your student may want to consult with their professor or advisor to consider dropping or withdrawing from a course and focusing on a smaller set of responsibilities. We recommend students always talk to their professor and advisor before making the decision to drop or withdraw from a class.

"I can't stand my roommate."
While we make every effort to be a good matchmaker, sometimes friction between roommates is inevitable, especially this time of year when everyone is feeling the pressure of exams and papers and is overly tired. Encourage your student to try to work things out with his or her roommate directly. The first step is always for roommates to talk to each other! If that doesn't work, they should talk together with their Resident Assistant (RA), who is trained to handle these kinds of situations. If the RA is unable to help, the students can work with the Resident Director (RD) who is a professional staff member with Master's degree in student affairs administration. Sometimes a change is the only solution, but if the problem is a minor one, urge your student to ask for help and work on it for at least a few weeks.
"I think I flunked my midterms."
A lot of first-year students feel like they were torpedoed by their first midterms, but many do better than they think. Most learn to prepare more diligently for the next exam. Parents and families should support students by letting them know that you don't expect all A's, but you do expect them to do their best and to use all available resources. Mid-semester is a very common time for students to reevaluate their time management and study techniques and their grades improve through the rest of the semester. There are academic success workshops offered by the Academic Resource Center that can help students enormously and most professors are happy to offer suggestions on effective study methods in their course of study.

"I DID flunk a midterm!"
If midterm performance is truly poor, your student should talk to his or her professor directly to learn what went wrong and to see what can be done to correct it. Also, students should seek their advisor's counsel about whether to consider withdrawing from a course and to help identify the academic resources available on campus to make improvements and rebound.

"My instructor doesn't like me. He/she marked me down unfairly."
If your student has a serious issue with an instructor or a class, he or she is entitled to an objective review of the facts, and to a just, timely resolution. Your student should find out about their specific college's academic grievance protocol. Please note that parents can help their student figure out the protocol but should avoid direct intercession. The students who learn to deal with tough issues on their own make the most successful transition to college, and to adulthood.

"I don't know what to major in."
As many as 35% of students nationwide enter college undecided about a major, and many more that start out in one major will make a change (or maybe even two). Students should speak to their advisor for help in declaring a major and selecting courses as they progress toward a degree. Career and Professional Development is also a great place to learn about careers that many students may have never considered. They also have some great assessments that will help identify a student's strengths and help them match it to a major. There are many people that can help and students should always seek advice and counseling before making a change.

"I'm having a hard time making friends; I don't feel like I fit in."
Lots of first-year students feel the same way, although most will not admit it. Staying home too often or dropping out is not usually the solution. Encourage your student to get involved in student activities on campus where he or she will have fun and meet new friends. Whether it's a club or a sport or simply joining a study group, involvement will make your student feel part of the University community, leading to a faster and easier transition and a better overall experience. It takes a lot of courage to go to an activity or event unsure or uncertain, but in most cases the benefits far outweigh the risks.

Student Success can help! First year students have the support of Student Success devoted entirely to them. Student Success can help a student assess their concerns and provide a network of support to ensure their success. Student Success is located in the Malone Student Center Building, Suite 301 and students can stop by anytime or call at (310) 338-5252.
Be on the lookout for our next article *The Student Faculty Connection* that provides tips on how your student can best connect with and utilize their professors.

Until next time!

Lisha Maddox
Associate Director of Student Success

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