UNL Parents Association Introduction

Welcome, Parents!

Many people are surprised to learn that a university the size of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln has a Parents Association. However, we know that parents don’t stop caring about their students’ education just because they graduate from high school. Going to college is an important step for parents and students. Similar to parents associations in the high schools, the UNL Parents Association works to create a positive learning environment aimed at helping all students succeed in their academic careers. Parents are THE major component of our organization. Whether contribute your time or financially or both, your commitments will directly impact your students.

The UNL Parents Association has No Dues—every parent of a currently enrolled UNL student is automatically a member. In order to stay connected with you, we do ask that you complete our contact form (available online at the UNL Parents Association website at http://parentsassoc.unl.edu). This will allow us to contact you with upcoming event information and other important updates that are relevant to parents.

The UNL Parents Association meets quarterly. The Fall meeting is usually in October or early November, the Winter meeting is usually in January, the Spring meeting is usually in April and the Summer meeting is usually in June or July. The UNL Parents Association is fortunate to have a dedicated group of parents serving on its Executive Board (also listed on the UNL Parents Association website). We hope that you will consider serving on this board, as everyone who has served has had a positive experience. Even if you think you cannot serve, current members will tell you that they receive a lot of support from other members and from the University. If you have questions about serving on the Board, please feel free to ask a Board member at the next meeting or contact Tonda Humphress (thumphress1@unl.edu or 402-472-3755) or any of the Board members listed on the UNL Parents Association website. Our current Co-Presidents, Susan and Timothy Draftz, have done a great job and would be willing to discuss any concerns with you (Susan Draftz can also be contacted through the UNL Parents Association Facebook site).

We look forward to seeing you at future meetings. Meanwhile if there is anything that we may be able to help with, please let us know.

Lastly, we are excited about our transition to the Big 10 in the coming year. We hope that you would consider joining us in this journey.
OASIS and the Jackie Gaughan Multicultural Center

The Office of Academic Success and Intercultural Services (OASIS), welcomes new and returning UNL Parents! OASIS provides a unique blend of academic services, cultural celebration and social activities. OASIS works with all UNL students, with an emphasis on meeting the needs of students of color, first-generation and/or low-income students.

OASIS is located in the Jackie Gaughan Multicultural Center and is supported by the Office of Undergraduate Studies and the Nebraska Unions.

At 30,000 square feet the Gaughan Center is the nation’s largest multicultural center attached to a student union. The Gaughan Center features several lounges, areas for study, a library, a kitchen, meeting rooms and computer lab. We encourage you and your students to visit the Gaughan Center and OASIS.

Meet the Parents . . .

Opportunities for our UNL Parents Association members to meet other UNL Parents exist via attendance at UNL Parents Association meetings and events. However, it can be a particular challenge to our parents who live out-of-state and who have schedule conflicts for the meetings and events. We have recently created a Facebook group for the UNL Parents Association which may help parents connect. (Feel free to join the Facebook group and to send us your suggestions to maximize the usefulness of this tool.) The organization name in Facebook is UNL Parents Association; it is a “global” organization. The website is: http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=22626258497.

The Campus Report, the UNL Parents Association newsletter, is another way we would like to try introducing you to our wonderful parents. We have asked parents to please send us a photo of them and/or their student with a brief introduction that we can share in our newsletter. Mike Sadler, a proud Husker Dad who lives out-of-state was the first to meet the challenge. Now, we want to introduce you to . . .

Welcome Parents!

Randy and Mary Jo Lush
Parents of UNL Student, Machelle

Our daughter, Machelle, will be a junior advertising major this fall at UNL. We live just outside of the Twin Cities in Plymouth, MN. I grew up in Nebraska, and introduced Husker football to Machelle when she was just a baby. She loves going to school at Nebraska and being able to cheer on the Huskers in Memorial Stadium. Husker football was a big draw when Machelle chose to attend the University. The main reason our daughter chose UNL was the College of Journalism and Mass Communications. They have a great advertising program, and the professors are passionate about what they teach. We are proud to have Machelle attending such a great University. We look forward to seeing all that she can accomplish. Go Big Red!
BIG RED IN THE BIG TEN

On June 11, 2010, the University of Nebraska–Lincoln announced that it was joining the Big Ten Conference. The much anticipated move has brought an enormous amount of energy and excitement to the campus. While much of the attention has been focused on athletics (and yes I am very excited at the prospect of playing Michigan, Ohio State, Penn State, Wisconsin, and others on a regular basis), there is much more to be gained by joining the Big Ten. The conference has a great reputation as one of the elite academic conferences. Home to some of the “public Ivy” institutions such as the University of Michigan, it will be to the advantage of UNL students and faculty to work closely with these institutions.

The Big Ten Conference has a long history of promoting collaboration between institutions. The Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) is a consortium of the Big Ten universities and the University of Chicago and is used as the vehicle to promote collaboration. CIC agreements have lead to benefits for students and faculty through such things as greater access to conference libraries, and leveraging purchasing of technology equipment and licenses through economies of scale. Course-sharing across the campuses has also been quite successful.

Collaborative research opportunities for faculty are also expected to increase. The conference is one of the leaders in research dollars generated. Of course, we currently have collaboration across universities in the Big XII, but it has not been a systematic, planned approach like it is in the Big Ten.

The number of out-of-state students enrolling at UNL is expected to increase. Playing in large population areas like Chicago is sure to generate interest in UNL among those who otherwise may not have considered Nebraska as a place to go to school. It is also anticipated that more Husker games will be televised nationally, thus providing more exposure to the University. We have already started focusing our out-of-state recruitment efforts on some of the Big Ten population areas like Chicago and the twin cities in Minnesota.

We look forward to a long and productive association with the Big Ten.

By Juan N. Franco, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
As you may know by now, we are installing a new student information system (SIS) at the University of Nebraska. This is a large and complex implementation that involves all four NU campuses (UNL, UNO, UNK, and UNMC) and three colleges in the State College system. This is a two year, $30 million project. The State agreed to fund the project but only if the two systems (University and State College) worked collaboratively to purchase one system and have it installed in both systems at the same time (thus saving money for the State). The change to the new SIS was made not by choice but because the vendor which maintains the current system (of which the portal WAM is a part) informed us that they would no longer maintain the system. Thus we needed to go out and purchase a new system. We purchased PeopleSoft. MyRED is the new portal developed for use with PeopleSoft.

Two years is a relatively short time to install a new student information system. Doing so across two systems and seven campuses makes it that much more of a challenge. Thus, we have concentrated on the essentials needed to admit, enroll, provide financial assistance, bill the students and develop the transcript for them. Some functions which are desirable but not immediately essential, and that were available in the old system, are not currently available. Unfortunately, parent access to their son’s or daughter’s account is one of those functions not yet available. These functions will be available in the new system in the months to come.

A letter that the Student Accounts Office sent to all our students, I believe is quite informative. It directs students to access their Student Account information through MyRED. The student will need to click on “Student Center” and then go to the “Finances” section. From there the student can access their current balance (Account Inquiry), their consolidated bill (My Bills; the first billing statement will be available August 25th), and enrollment for direct deposit (My Bank Info). By August 20, students should be able to pay their bills on-line. Billing statements will be available on the 25th of each month and payments will be due by the 12th of the following month. Individuals with student account questions should contact the Student Accounts Office at 402-472-2887 or studentaccounts@unl.edu.

By Juan N. Franco,
Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Students coming to the University this fall will have a new student information system to use for everything from enrolling for classes to paying their tuition — MyRED is being introduced this year.
Care Packages

With Love,

From Mom and Dad

As a student myself, it brings me great joy to check my mail. Why you ask? Well, it is because of the sheer elation in seeing that slip in my box that says I have a package awaiting me at the front desk. And that package is none other than a package from home.

You as a parent may be wondering what is so great about a box from home? Well, what isn’t better than a package from home?! Especially, when it is a care package. These are by far the greatest things a student can receive in the mail. Apart from the fact that there are goodies in them, it is a sure reminder that our parents are constantly thinking about us even when we are away at school.

The great thing about these boxes of fun is that they are completely personalized. They can be tailored to suit anyone’s needs, and there are plenty of reasons to send a package: Passing a difficult test (in which days of studying has occurred), getting the lead in the upcoming play, or even “just because”. Whatever the reason, these care packages are a great way to let your child know how much you really do care about them!

Here are some ideas for things to put in them:

- Snacks (for when we are up late… studying)
- Real food (Ramen and Easy Mac can only go so far, enough said)
- Supplies (notebooks, pens, No. 2 Pencils, perhaps some nice toilette paper)
- Gift Certificates. (Now these are a big one. Gift cards to restaurants, movies, the bookstore are all great options that can give your student a much needed break… you know, for when we are studying)

Now that you have decided what to put in your care packages, it is time to decide when to send them. Well this is totally up to you mom or dad. Whenever you feel like we need some TLC, you feel free to send it our way! Here are some great ideas though:

- My birthday. A nice box of goodies that are all my favorites could possibly be the best present I ever get!
- Around the holidays. Decorations for my room (say around Halloween), themed candy, and some fun knick-knacks like a candy dish are great ways to make a dorm room feel more like home.
- Finals week. This could be the most important one. A care package at the end of the semester keeps us sane. When hours in the library turn to days, it is nice to come home and have mom or dad’s famous homemade cookies awaiting our return.

So how are you supposed to get “home in a box” to us? There are a myriad of ways to do this. You can have it mailed to us at our dorm residence or off-campus housing. If you live close enough, you can drive to campus, take me to dinner and give me a nice relaxing night with the fam. You could also order one from a local Lincoln company that provides the packaging and delivery. Here are some companies that can help you.

- The Cookie Company (402-475-0625)
- Hy-Vee Grocery Store (www.hy-vee.com) or you can call them (402-483-7707—Talk to Anne in the Floral Department)—this one is the best!
- Valentino’s Pizza will deliver to campus if you want to send a pizza
- Adorable Gift Baskets (www.adorablegiftbaskets.com) has a great selection of baskets and items to choose from

All of these places are close to the University and will provide the best service possible. But beware! There are many companies that claim to be University affiliated even if they are not. We have no way of telling which ones claim until it is too late. All too often we get phone calls from parents saying they bought one from an affiliate and it turns out no one has even heard of them. Be cautious when choosing one. Choose one you have worked with before or have been recommended.

All that being said, care packages are great. I, myself, look forward to my Halloween and Valentine’s Day boxes. The décor, the candy, and of course the love are all packed in there. As a reminder… don’t forget the note! If you are short on time or funds, skip the “gifts” but still send a note or a card. A warm and loving note from you to me will make me want to come home all the sooner and will truly make home a place to be.
As the parent of a Husker, you’ve probably talked with the new roommate and decided who’s bringing what for the dorm room, apartment, or Greek house. You know what tuition and fees, room and board, and books will cost and how they’ll be paid for. But what about paying for other expenses, such as entertainment, eating out, school supplies, clothing, personal care items, transportation, insurance, and that always necessary category, “miscellaneous?”

Encourage your Husker to develop a written plan for both income and spending for the coming year. List anticipated income and expenses, both the amount and when each is expected. Then balance the plan.

Once you agree on how much income you’ll provide for your student’s living expenses, be clear about when and how you’ll provide the money. Will you write a check or transfer funds directly into your student’s checking or savings account? Will you do this once at the beginning of each semester or monthly? If you give a semester’s worth of support at one time, encourage your student to put the total amount in a savings account and then transfer only what is needed monthly into a checking account.

Encourage your student to use student loan money only for direct school expenses such as tuition, books, lab fees, and basic room and meals, never for lifestyle expenses such as entertainment, clothing and miscellaneous. Any left-over scholarship or grant can be used to fund an emergency fund or to help provide necessary lifestyle expenses.

Think of expenses in terms of wants vs. needs but remember you may consider something a want when your student considers it a need. Encourage thinking of trade-offs. What will be given up if money is spent for a want?

Encourage your student to live like a stereotypical college student – on the proverbial shoestring -- not like they hope to live once they’ve graduated and landed a professional job. In college, it’s much more acceptable to tell friends you can’t afford something.

All college students need basic health insurance. The student may continue to be covered by a parent’s plan. If not, check into a basic health plan to cover potential large medical expenses.

Look into renter’s insurance coverage for personal items the student brings to the dorm. Or add this coverage as part of the family’s existing homeowner’s or renter’s policy.

If the student brings a vehicle to campus, be sure the insurance company knows, especially where the vehicle will be parked.

Limit credit card use to what can be paid off in full when bills arrive. Always pay before the due date and always review monthly bills. If you as the parent are providing a card for the student and you continue to pay the bills directly, be sure your student agrees to review charges with you each month.

How a credit card account is handled in college impacts the student’s future credit score, and in turn, their ability to rent an apartment, buy a house, get a job, and pay the lowest insurance and loan interest rates.

Buy a small cross-cut shredder (or share one with a roommate) to completely destroy any papers with identifying information including name, address, account numbers, and Social Security number. Keep identification documents, credit and debit cards, checkbooks and blank checks, and financial records in a safe, locked place. Don’t share PINs and passwords.

Choosing Financial Accounts

For convenience, a student will probably want checking and savings accounts from a Lincoln credit union or bank. Choose an account with no penalty for low balance, no minimum, and no or low charges for ATM or debit card use. Compare all fees. Get only the minimum number of checks printed since most bills probably will be paid online. Check for convenience of ATM locations, online or telephone access.

Be sure the student knows how to balance a checkbook even if they’re using the convenience of online account services. Remember that the balance shown online may not be completely accurate because of outstanding debit card, ATM withdrawals, or checks.
Final Advice For Parents

Keep any financial advice you have for your Husker to a few well-chosen words. Rely on the 18 years you’ve had with your student and the example you’ve set with your own finances. But remember, like the rest of us, students often fail to admit they’re in trouble. Be sure they know they can come to you when they have a problem. And remember the Student Money Management Center on campus as a source for help in working out financial problems.

About the UNL Student Money Management Center

A joint venture of the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska, the Child, Youth & Family Studies Department, and the Office of Student Affairs, SMMC is committed to encouraging students to take responsibility for their financial futures by creating and upholding a culture of financial empowerment among the student body. The SMMC offers UNL students opportunities to increase their financial knowledge and skills through: peer-to-peer mentoring and financial education including a website, workshops, and events. For more information, visit www.unl.edu/smmc.

Calendar

Important Dates

- **Parents Weekend 2010 — October 1-3**
  For more information and to register visit:
  http://parentsassoc.unl.edu/weekend

- **Fall Meeting and Elections — October 30**