

UNIVERSITY Parent

KEEPING YOU CONNECTED TO THE TWIN CITIES CAMPUS

Moving to an apartment off campus

Shortly after residence hall students return to the University for spring semester, they will receive information about reapplying to live on campus next year. Typically, about one third of residence hall students choose to return to campus housing for the next year, either in traditional residence halls or in apartment-style housing owned by the University. The rest decide to move home or rent an apartment or house near campus.

Apartment living—whether on campus or off—presents new challenges for students. In an apartment, they are responsible for making their own meals, paying bills on time, and negotiating roommate disputes with no assistance from residence hall

staff. Those who live farther from campus find that time management is more important than ever when they must catch a bus or find a parking spot and still arrive on time for class. Getting to the

library or being involved in a student organization might require an extra trip to campus at odd hours.

Apartment,
continued on page 3



Capital request: Taking care of what we have



In February, the University of Minnesota will present its 2004 capital request to the state legislature. This year's request focuses on taking care of what we have.

Of the \$189 million request, \$164 million, or 87 percent, would be spent on renovating and making necessary repairs to existing buildings as part of Higher Education Asset Preservation and Replacement (HEAPR).

Of the \$164 million, \$90 million would be used to provide safe and accessible campuses, building improvements, and upgrades to infrastructure. The remaining \$74 million would be dedicated to the renovation of four buildings on the Twin Cities and Duluth campuses.

In Minneapolis, renovations to Koltoff Hall would improve the environment for the chemistry program. The renewal of the Education Sciences Building—formerly the Mineral Resources Research Center, or MRRC—is proposed to create office and research space for the College of Education and Human Development. The Academic Health

Center would gain improved classrooms and learning environments for nearly 7,000 students.

Requested funds for planning a new classroom building for the Carlson School of Management would accommodate increasing enrollment and technology needs and also provide classroom space for the College of Liberal Arts.

Funds are also being requested for projects in Crookston, Duluth, Morris, and other locations throughout the state.

To learn more about the request or to find out how to advocate for the University, please visit the Government Relations Web site at www.umn.edu/govrel.

Winter 2004

Calendar

January 17

Residence halls open for spring semester, 8 a.m.

January 19

Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday
University offices closed

January 20

Spring semester begins

March 15–19

Spring break

May 7

Last day of spring semester classes

May 10–15

Final exams

Web site for Parents

www.parent.umn.edu

Parent Directory

Area code is 612

University Information
625-5000

Athletics Ticket Office
624-8080 or
800-UGOPHER

Boynton Health Service
625-8400

Disability Services
624-4037 (voice and TTY)

Housing & Residential Life
624-2994

One Stop Student Services (registration, financial aid, billing)
624-1111

Parking and Transportation Services
626-PARK (7275)

University Police
624-3550

Events Calendar

<events.tc.umn.edu>

Check out activities around the 'U'

If you have questions that do not fall into the above categories, contact Marjorie Savage at 612-626-9291 (phone), 612-626-8388 (fax), or parent@umn.edu.

In an extreme emergency during the day, records officials will look up a student's class schedule and try to make immediate contact. Call 612-624-1111.

Taking risks: Students say it's how they learn their limits

For some students, "taking a risk" means signing up for a semester abroad, being the only male in a women's studies course, or running for the homecoming court. For others, risk-taking means accepting a beer-guzzling challenge, trying not to get caught while smoking a joint in the residence hall, or having sex with someone they've just met.

The majority of college students take risks. In fact, student development professionals—and students themselves—say experimentation and risk-taking are not only a normal part of college life, but also a necessary part of growing up. By engaging in new behaviors, students learn their limits, practice decision-making, and discover their identity.

Jodi Dworkin of the University of Minnesota's Department of Family Social Sciences has talked to college students about why they take risks and asked them what part they think parents

should play in monitoring a student's behavior during the college years.

"Most students experiment when they're in college," Dworkin said, "but very few are off the charts in terms of dangerous behaviors. When you look at what else they're doing, they're still what we would consider to be good students. They're doing well academically, they're going to class, they have goals."

In fact, Dworkin said, students consider their behaviors carefully and set up their environment so that they feel justified in taking risks. "They'll say, 'Sure, I had way too much to drink, but I didn't drive drunk, and I didn't walk home alone. It isn't like I was being completely irresponsible.'" Students regard some of their behaviors as normal for college, Dworkin said. "Students might say that everyone drinks

when they're in college, or this is a time in their lives when they can be irresponsible. They say they will quit when they graduate."

Parents' role

Students want the freedom that comes from living away from home, and they insist on the right to make their own choices. At the same time, though, they trust that their parents will continue to monitor their behavior and let them know if they're headed for serious trouble. Parents should intervene, students told Dworkin, if a behavior would cause major physical or emotional harm or if it would interfere with their goals for the future.

When Dworkin asked students how they think parents should go about monitoring behaviors during the college years, they had some specific suggestions.

- Parents need to trust their child's judgment. They should allow—even encourage—their student to make decisions.
- Parents should regard past behaviors as indicators of future choices. Students who have made good decisions in the past will continue to make good decisions.
- Parents can advise and suggest, students said, "but don't be offended if I don't take your suggestions."
- They should consider the whole picture. If students are partying heavily on the weekend, but their grades are good, and if they're making progress toward their future goals, they are probably all right, the students said. One failed test is not serious; several failed classes indicate a problem.
- Students count on their parents to communicate regularly and watch for cues. Phone calls, e-mails, and in-person contact can reveal significant changes.



Assistant professor Jodi Dworkin

This newsletter is designed to keep open the lines of communication between parents and guardians and the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

We are interested in hearing what topics or specific questions you would like to see addressed in *University Parent*. Comments may be addressed to Marjorie Savage, Parent Program director, at 612-626-9291, parent@umn.edu, or 130E Morrill Hall, 100 Church Street S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455. Find us on the Web at www.parent.umn.edu.

University Parent is mailed to the "home address" that students list on their University registration information. If you move or if your student changes his or her home address to a campus or apartment address, you may not receive your newsletter. You may contact us and ask to be put on the newsletter mailing list; we maintain a separate database with those addresses.

The University of Minnesota is an equal opportunity educator and employer.

Apartment,

continued from page 1



Parents feel better about the decision to live off campus when they've had a chance to talk with their student about the benefits as well as the responsibilities.

Discussion points

Before students make final decisions about rental properties, they should consider the type of housing they're looking for and how they will live with their prospective roommates.

- Do they want to live in a house or in an apartment?
- How much can they afford?
- How many students want to live together?
- How will they work out cooking and cleaning schedules?
- How will they negotiate disagreements?
- What will they share, and what will they not share? This is particularly critical when one roommate has a car, but others do not.
- Whose name will go on utility bills? Who will be responsible for paying bills on time?

When students begin the apartment search, new points for discussion are likely to crop up.

- If one bedroom is larger than the others, how will they determine who gets it?
- Can they afford unanticipated expenses, such as high-speed computer hookups, cable TV, or utilities not included in the rent?
- Is there parking? Is there enough parking for all the vehicles?
- Based on the students' schedules, is the apartment location reasonable? If, for example, a student has night classes, is the building in a safe location? Is there bus access at the time of day students need it?

Parents may have some minimal standards they want to emphasize as their student is looking for an apartment. For example, you may want your student living in a security building, even though that might add to the expense of rent. You may have some financial limitations, which would dictate that your student will live farther from campus or will need to select a rental unit with fewer amenities. Some parents want their students within walking distance of campus, since they will not have a car.

Safeguards

Before students commit to an apartment, they should inspect the property with safety in mind. Are there smoke alarms and fire extinguishers? Is there an obvious emergency exit? Students should visit the building not only during the day, but also at night to see what the atmosphere is like at different times of the day. Will they feel safe coming home alone late at night? Are the door locks secure? Is there a peephole or a window that will allow them to see someone at their door? Are there concerns about illegal entry from ground floor windows or balconies? Are parking lots well-lit?

University Student Legal Service (USLS) will review a rental lease before the student signs it to be sure there are no irregularities. USLS staff can also check to see if there are any pending problems with the rental property. All students who pay the University's student services fee are entitled to assistance from USLS. They can make an appointment by calling 612-624-1001.

Frequently asked questions about off-campus housing

When should students begin looking for an off-campus apartment for next year?

Some of the large student apartment complexes near the University offer leases in the spring for September 1 openings. In many cases, however, current renters are not obligated to give notice until 60 days before they will vacate the apartment. That means that many vacancies will come up during the summer. Students can begin looking at apartments in March or April, but they shouldn't be concerned if they're not finding what they want. June and July are prime times for serious apartment hunting. Those who

wait until August are still able to find apartments, but the selection is much more limited. They may feel pressured to accept substandard housing. In most cases, even in August, if they spend two or three days seriously looking, they will find what they need.

I'm not convinced my student will eat well if he lives in an apartment. Are there dining options for commuting students?

University Dining Services offers meal plans for commuters, allowing them access to the all-you-can-eat plans in the six residence hall dining centers. Meal plans for off-campus

students include options such as 25 meals per semester, five meals per week, 150 meals per semester, or 14 meals per week. These and other meal plans are listed on the University Dining Services Web site, umn.mealplansonline.com.

Students also can sign up for FlexDine dollars, money loaded on the U Card, so they can purchase food at all campus restaurants or dining facilities. For more information on meal plans or FlexDine dollars, call 612-624-0558 or visit the UDS Commuter Web page at www.umn.edu/dining/commuter.html.

Apartment questions

continued on page 4

Is your student ready for an apartment?

Here are some obvious clues to indicate whether or not your student is ready to live in an apartment.

● During the past year, has your child made good choices? Are you confident that she can manage her finances? Are you comfortable with the friends she has made? Can she balance social, personal, and academic demands? Apartment living adds a whole new list of duties to a student's schedule for cooking, cleaning, and commuting. Time management skills are important.

● Ask your child why he wants to live off campus. Are you satisfied by his answers? Most students say they can save money by living off campus. Rent costs may sound less expensive than room and board in the residence hall, but be sure he has considered groceries, transportation costs, utilities—including computer hookups—and parking. Are his estimates reasonable? In most college communities, on- and off-campus expenses tend to be comparable, but an apartment might mean a 12-month commitment. Students who say they will study better in an apartment, or they can't bear the noise or the food in the dorm for another year, might be surprised to find that life is no better in an apartment. But if your child says he is ready for an apartment, he wants the responsibility of his own place, and he recognizes that he will be taking care of himself, he is ready for the next step in the growing-up process.

Adapted from *You're on Your Own (But I'm Here If You Need Me): Mentoring Your Child During the College Years*. © 2003 by Marjorie Savage. Published by Fireside Books, a division of Simon & Schuster, Inc., with permission of the publisher.

Housing workshop for parents

The decision to rent an apartment represents a big step for students. Parents can provide support and guidance by asking the right questions, establishing priorities, and talking about the legal and community responsibilities that come with living off campus.

A housing workshop for parents will present these topics and more from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m., Saturday, January 17, at Riverbend Commons on the east bank. Staff from Housing and Residential Life, the University Parent Program, University Student Legal Service, and the University's Community Liaison program will talk about both on- and off-campus housing issues and provide suggestions for working with your student as he or she considers housing options for next year.

Topics include:

- the on-campus housing reapplication process
- types of on-campus housing
- how to search for off-campus housing
- how to evaluate a student's readiness to live off campus
- safety concerns to discuss with your student
- community involvement
- legal issues
- common pitfalls that students face as they move off campus

Register by January 12

Registration for the workshop is \$5 per person. Fill out the form, right, and submit it with payment by **January 12** to University Parent Program, 110 Morrill Hall, 100 Church Street S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455.

Marjorie Savage, director
Parent Program
Gayla Marty, editor
Communication Services
3 Morrill Hall
100 Church Street S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55455

This information is available in alternative formats upon request. Please call Barb Carlson, Communication Services, 612-626-1785 or parent@umn.edu.

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Apartment questions,

continued from page 3

My student wants to live in Uptown, which is several miles from the University. She says it's not a problem to get to campus—there are plenty of buses, or she can drive. Does that make sense?

A number of U of M students live in Uptown and in other neighborhoods throughout the Twin Cities. Buses are a good option, and the U-Pass—the ride-anywhere-anytime bus pass for University students—makes busing easy and affordable. Students should be sure that they're selecting an apartment with a bus stop nearby and check with Metro Transit

(www.metrotransit.org) to find out if there is a frequent bus route to and from campus. Parking on or near campus can be expensive, especially when compared with busing.

What if my student signs a lease for an apartment that turns out to be awful? Can he get out of it?

Students with concerns about the safety or legality of their house or apartment can contact University Student Legal Service (USLS) to determine if the landlord is in compliance with the law. USLS advises students on their rights and responsibilities relating to repairs, security deposits, evictions (unlawful detainer), and lease interpretation.

Taking risks,

continued from page 2

Follow up on things your child revealed during your last interaction, look for big changes in your child's mood or behavior, listen closely to the tone of their voice, monitor their grades, and ask about their friends and extracurricular activities, they said.

College students are learning how to make good decisions, and they are beginning to take control of their lives. They believe they need to take some risks, socially and academically. They told Dworkin that a strong relationship with their parents provides guidance and grounding as they weigh the difference between healthy experimentation and dangerous behaviors.

If parents can trust their children to make responsible decisions, one student told Dworkin, they will respond by living up to their parents' expectations. "I think that's a really satisfying feeling to know that your parents don't question what you're doing," he said. "I think it's a really empowering idea."

Jodi Dworkin is a researcher in the Department of Family Social Sciences in the College of Human Ecology. Her research paper is titled, "Parenting College Students: Students' Perspectives."

HOUSING WORKSHOP FOR PARENTS

Saturday, January 17, 2004 • 1:30–3:00 p.m.
Registration fee \$5

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Phone number _____

E-mail address _____

Number of participants _____

Students are welcome to attend, but information at this workshop will be geared primarily to parents.

Please make checks payable to the University of Minnesota. Mail to University Parent Program, 110 Morrill Hall, 100 Church Street S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455. Register by January 12.