



Building Bridges with Campus Campus Partners to Encourage Encourage Positive Family Involvement

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Background

- **Large, Public, Research 1** institution
- **Land, Space, and Sea Grant**
- **52,000+** students
- Located in the **Southeast**

Getting in the Door

- Academic Professional Development Series
 - Attended by staff from Admissions and Student Health
- Academic Advising Conference
- Friends within the Division of Student Affairs
 - Student Activities and Involvement

Next Focus



- All-Academic Advisors
- New Faculty Orientation
- All of Admissions



The Presentation

By the Numbers

- **10,000** family members come through Preview each year
- **42,183** family members on Campus Safety Email List
- **6,589** family members have Activated their free Gator Parent and Family Association membership
- **1,550** family members are a part of the UF Parents of 2019 Facebook Group
- **2,399** family members are a part of the UF Families of 2020 Facebook Group

Who are our families?

Location

- **7%** of family members come from out of state
- Top 10 Florida Counties:
 1. Broward
 2. Miami-Dade
 3. Palm Beach
 4. Alachua
 5. Hillsborough
 6. Orange
 7. Pinellas
 8. Duval
 9. Brevard
 10. Seminole

Who are our families?

Income

- **\$100,000-\$104,000** Median range of parental income of UF students
- **\$102,404** Average parental income

Generations: **Baby Boomers: 1946 – 1964**

- Concerned with finances
 - Many are also responsible for aging parents
- Many have 2nd marriages and/or had children after career took off
- Boomers often went to great expense to have their Millennial child, i.e., in-vitro, surrogacy, and/or adoption.
 - Boomers were determined to do parenting right this time, which included becoming BFFs with their children.

Working with Baby Boomers

- Respect is key for them. They have a high respect for authority, and appreciate it in return
- High value on education: help them understand the educational value of an experience
- Value titles and status.

Generations: Generation X (1965-1979)

- Latch-key generation: “went through its all-important formative years as one of the least parented, least nurtured generations”
- Half of Gen Xers’ parents are divorced
- Lack of trust in authority figures
- First of the technology generations

Working with Generation X

- **Listen**
- **Include them: These are the PTA, volunteer-for-everything families**
- **Put them to work, but....**
- **Give limits: Let them know what can and cannot be changed**
- **Share with them the Intentionality behind policies and decisions**

The Role of Family Members

- **Provide support:** When we asked our students who they call when they are upset or having a rough day, most say they call home.
- **Provide information:** When students are looking for information, often they will call their family members to ask questions.
- **Serve as a Resource:** When making career decisions, major decisions, internship decisions, students will often use their family members as a sounding board.

What do families want from us?

- **Re-Assurance**
- **Help**
- **Communication path**
- **Clear specific directions**
- **Ongoing support**

What They Say vs. What They Mean

I CARE ABOUT MY STUDENT

My child won't do well in online classes. The professor in that class is terrible. My son couldn't understand what he was saying. The teacher's Assistant doesn't care anyway. Why can't you email me his grades? I'm paying the bills, I should get full access to everything, including grades and weekly progress reports. The website is so confusing, I can't find anything on there. How do I know my student isn't going to fail out? Is there a curfew in the dorms? You tell my student can just come and go whenever he wants to and no one is going to check on him to make sure he is in bed when he is supposed to be? So many people said that chemistry test was hard and there were things on the test that weren't covered in class? Maybe they were in the book, but shouldn't the professor teach what is going to be on the test? I just don't understand.

Successful Conversations

- Ask about their student – make it personal (it is!)
- Acknowledge you don't understand but empathize
- Relate with them: Show genuine joy, sadness etc.
- Validate their concerns
 - I can see that this is important to you
 - This is a natural feeling/emotion/concern
- Congratulate and praise positive parenting and involvement
- Set realistic expectations of your role
 - Explain hands off
 - Follow up

What we say, matters

- Why we use “Family Member”
- Dealing with family members vs. Working with family members
- Family members are not helicopters, lawn mowers, bulldozers, or any other machinery

Let's talk FERPA

- What does it mean for you?
- What does it mean for them?
- Other ways of talking about FERPA
 - Unfortunately, I'm mandated by federal law that I'm not able to share that information. However, what I can tell you is...
 - Talking in generalities: If a student were to fail this class, this is what would happen or these are their options
 - Always encourage open communication with their student.

How New Student and Family Programs Can Help

- Programming
 - Family Preview
 - New Student Convocation
 - Family Weekend
 - Family Chats
- Communication
 - Family Connection: Monthly Newsletter
 - Crisis Communication
- Assistance
 - Dedicated Person IHaveAGator@ufl.edu

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Other Campus Partner Outreach

Online Family Chats

- Bi-weekly online chats
- 2 hour window
- Specific chat windows for each office/campus partner

The Family Connection Newsletter

- Monthly Online Newsletter
- Call for contribution
- Sent to 48,000 Family Members

- Monthly Calendar request
 - 2nd Tuesday of the month

Fall Family Weekend



- Master Classes
- Open Houses
- Tabling Sessions
- Donations for Swag Bags

Maintaining Relationships

- Appreciation Lunch – End of Year
- Family Chats – Everyone joins together – provide lunch or dinner depending on chat time
- Thank you notes/emails from Dean of Students
 - CC Supervisor

Sharing the Impact

- Sharing numbers of participants and quotes from family members to campus partners
- Sharing the difference they are making



Thank You!

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