

# Partnering With Parents: Institutional Strategies for Student Success

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“Careful parental management will be one of the most nerve-wracking challenges of the millennial college era.”

-Howe and Strauss, 2003, *Millennials Go to College*

What types of challenges do you experience with parents?

# Higher Ed and Parents: Challenges

- Contacting children too often
- Only listening to their children's side of the story
- Taking on their children's roles
- Fighting their children's battles
- Posing as their children online
- Robbing their kids of their ability to make their own decisions

From Hofer and Moore, 2010, *The iConnected parent: Staying close to your kids in college (and beyond) while letting them grow up.*

# Background: Conflicting Messages

- Experts offering advice contribute to the confusion
- Institutions and parents struggle with the extent to which parents should be involved
- Institutions contribute to parental confusion
- Research on helicoptering suggests parents should back off
- Other evidence concludes that students are more successful with parental support
- Recent studies show that lack of family support creates barriers to college completion

# Where do we go from here?

Institutions that have been the most successful in helping families navigate the confusion and conflicting messages recognize that the college transition impacts both parents and students.

How do we determine clear boundaries without the detrimental effects of helicopter parenting?

# Today's College Student

- Scheduled, structured, and shadowed since birth.
- Rewarded for participation, not achievement.
- Raised with car seats, safety helmets, playgroups, soccer leagues and cell phones.
- Technologically savvy – used to easy access and instant gratification.
- Have more emotional baggage – divorced parents, blended families, lack of coping mechanisms.
- Enjoy strong connection to parents and desire parental involvement.

# Today's College Parent

- Delayed having children until older and financially secure.
- Practice attachment style and permissive parenting.
- Their children are central to their sense of purpose.
- They are the “Helicopter” and “Black-Hawk” parents.
- Involved in every aspect of their child's existence.



# Today's Parents on College

“These students are the product of 18 years of dedication and sacrifice. To expect sudden relinquishment of their responsibility to an educational entity is naïve at best.”

-Kanna Hudson, [millennialgeneration.org](http://millennialgeneration.org) blog

# Today's Parents' Approach to College

- Consumer mentality, want a return on their investment.
- Expect that college administrators act on their behalf to manage and protect their children.
- Demand immediate administrative response.
- Propensity to threaten legal action.

# Where do you (want to) go with how you communicate with parents?

- First, determine your contact points with parents
- Where do the parent contacts begin at your institution?
- What does your institution currently do to engage with parents?
- In what ways does your department communicate with parents?
- What approaches do you utilize to educate parents?

# Enlisting Stakeholders

Parents

Students

Institutional  
Stakeholders

# Strategy: Educate Parents

- What to expect as their student shifts from adolescence to young adulthood
- What it means to be successful in college
- What resources are available to help their students so that parents don't have to intervene themselves
- How to set reasonable expectations for communicating with their student

# Strategy: Educate Students

- What it means to be successful in college
- How to self advocate and seek help when they need it
- What resources are available so that they don't always rely on their parents
- How to communicate with parents about academic progress

# Strategy: Enlist Institutional Stakeholders

- Communicating the importance of careful institution planning and coordination
- Developing a campus-wide philosophy regarding parental involvement that reflects the messages transmitted to parents at all levels
- Understanding FERPA and its impact on parent communication policies
- Proactively provide information based on student engagement opportunities
- Discuss parent communication issues as a department or unit on a regular basis

# Practical Strategies



Ensure protocols are  
in place to ward off  
the “bureaucratic  
bounce”



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# Create Common Messaging

## PARENTS – ORIENTATION SESSION

- Outline services available
- Discuss ways that students can access support
- Discuss common first-year academic challenges
- Outline case studies: barriers to seeking help

## STUDENTS – ACE 101

- Outline services available
- Discuss ways that students can access support
- Discuss common first-year academic challenges
- Outline case studies: ways to be successful in specific first-year classes

Examine messaging to parents throughout website; make changes as needed.



# Bryant University

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## Parents

- SERVICES & RESOURCES
- COMMENCEMENT
- GET INVOLVED
- EVENTS & ACADEMIC CALENDARS
- IMPORTANT CONTACTS
- EMAIL UPDATES
- EMERGENCY INFO

## Parents & Families

Parents and other family members play a crucial role in the lives of our students during their transformative college years. We hope you will be engaged with the life of the University.

### A TRANSITIONAL TIME

The beginning of a student's college

### WHY CHOOSE BRYANT UNIVERSITY?

Bryant's great strength in education is its attention to each individual student. Your son

# Create intentional communication materials addressing common parent questions and issues (brochures, mailings)

## Access Services

### Process of Academic Accommodation

- *Submit current documentation* of a learning disability (LD) or ADHD to the ACE Assistant Director of Access Services, according to Bryant's **Guidelines for Documentation** of Specific Learning Disabilities or Guidelines for Documentation of ADHD. Please keep a personal copy of all testing and documentation. *Verify receipt* of your submission.
- *Schedule an appointment* with the Assistant Director of Access Services at the *start of each semester* to request specific academic accommodations for each course. *It is the student's responsibility* to initiate all appointments and requests for accommodations each semester, since specific academic accommodations are approved on a case-by-case basis for the current semester. Please come to the ACE front desk or call 401-232-6746 to schedule.
- During the *initial appointment*:
  - Complete an intake form
  - Submit hard copy of a detailed course schedule for the current semester
  - Complete an Academic Accommodations Master Form for the current semester
  - Request forms for alternate format of print materials, as needed
  - Discuss responsibilities and recommendations for accommodations and services
- Based on the Academic Accommodations Master Form, the Assistant Director of Access Services sends a memo to each faculty member listing relevant academic accommodations. The memo does *not* implement any accommodations.
- *Students meet* with each faculty member to discuss the practical arrangements for each specific academic accommodation within *five (5) days* of signing the Academic Accommodations Master Form. Email and/or phone contact are not sufficient. Please note that faculty will *not* provide accommodations unless the student initiates this meeting and follows through on all arrangements and time frames.
- *Students schedule follow-up appointments* with the Assistant Director of Access Services throughout the semester as needed.

Bryant University's Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) provides academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the ADA of 2008.

Although Bryant University does *not* have a specialized program for students with disabilities, a wide range of academic support services are available to all Bryant students through ACE. Arranging these services and appointments with Access Services are the student's responsibility.



# Create or take advantage of professional development opportunities about communicating with parents

## Partners for Success in Higher Education: Understanding Today's Parents

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 12:00 -1:30, MRC 4

**Presenters:** Laurie Hazard, Assistant Dean for Student Success and Stephanie Carter, Director of the Academic Center for Excellence

### Key Takeaway

Parent involvement in higher education positively impacts student success and completion rates, and their involvement influences our day to day work in higher education. Attend this workshop to reflect on developing strategies to help Bryant's parents support their students, but from a healthy distance.

### Description

Parents receive mixed messages about the role they should play in their students' college experience. As a result, colleges find it increasingly important to develop strategies to help parents understand how to effectively support their students, from a healthy distance.

Institutions that have been most successful in helping families navigate conflicting messages recognize that the college transition impacts both parents and students. This perspective takes into consideration research that indicates parental involvement positively influences completion rates and ensures that parents remain partners in their students' success, while still acknowledging the potential pitfalls of helicopter parenting. How do we partner with parents to help them strike a balance between hovering and letting go, thus contributing to Bryant's institutional success?

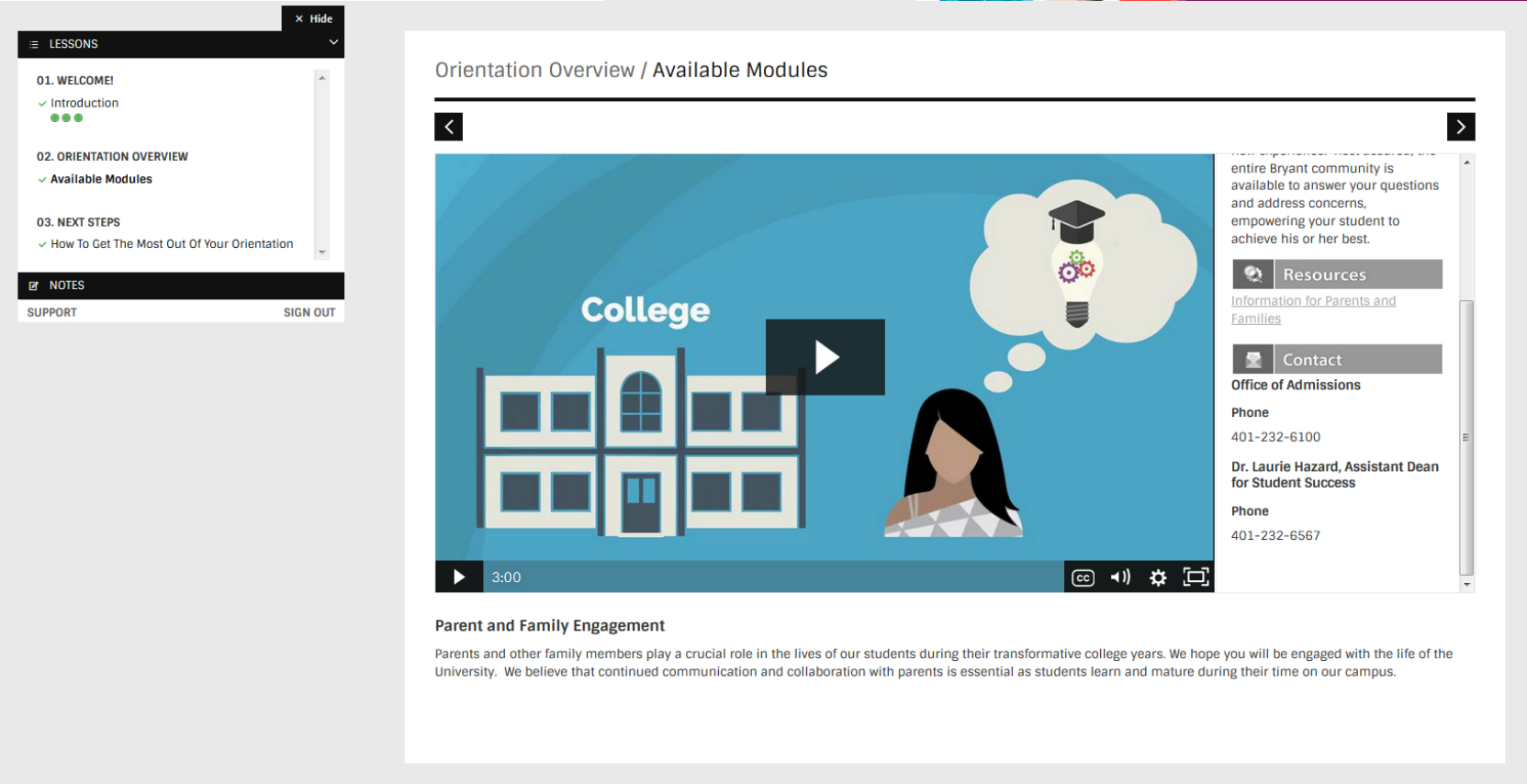
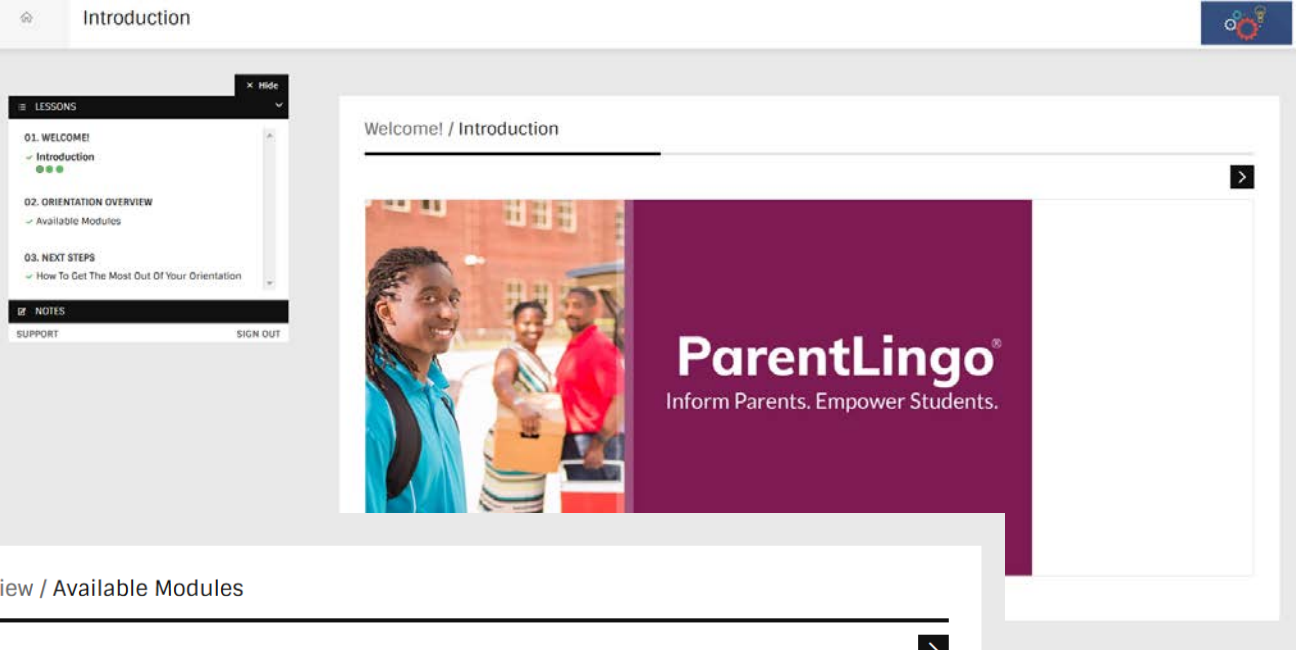
Participants will:

- Reflect on the trends influencing today's parents and college students
- Consider the ways that they currently interact and engage with parents at Bryant
- Understand the implications of effectively engaging with parents
- Discuss the benefits of creating a campus climate that offers clear messaging to parents
- Develop strategies that allow parental support, but from a healthy distance

For additional details or to register, click [HERE](#).



Create or utilize an  
online course for  
parents



# A Framework for Engaging with Parents Surrounding the First-Year Experience

6 Areas of Adjustment

# 6 Areas of Adjustment



Academic



Social



Emotional



Intellectual



Cultural



Financial





# Communicating On Areas of Adjustment



- Spring
- Parents and First-Years



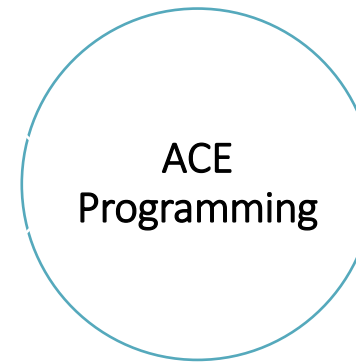
- June
- Parents and First-Years



- August
- First-Years



- First semester
- Parents



- First and second semester
- First-Years



- First and second semester
- First-Years

# Resources for Practitioners:

- Books
- Online Resources
  - Higheredparent.com
  - Innovative Educators: [innovativeeducators.org](http://innovativeeducators.org)
    - *StudentLingo: ie.org*
    - *ParentLingo*
    - Grown and Flown
- Blogs
- Consultants: professional development opportunities



# Parent Programs:

- What does your parent program entail?
- What is the central goal of your parent program?
- What programs and services are offered to parents at your institution?
- With unlimited funds, what changes would you make to your parent program?

# Questions?

