

# ***MichiganTech***

## **Month-by-Month Guide for Parents, Guardians, and Family Members of Michigan Tech Students**

### **August/September**

- Encourage your student to participate in Orientation and Welcome Week activities.
- Phone your first-year student frequently at first to listen, support, and provide reassurance.
- Reassure your student that the adjustments he or she is experiencing are common.
- Encourage your student to participate in the ExSEL Program.
- If your student lives in the residence halls, encourage him or her to talk with a Resident Assistant (RA).
- If your student commutes, suggest exploration of opportunities for involvement in a student organization or another on-campus activity.
- Recommend regular exercise and use of the Student Development Complex.
- Encourage your student to participate actively in class and talk with professors about class expectations.
- Remind your student that regular class attendance is important, whether it is required or not.
- Reassure your student that feeling overwhelmed is normal for new students learning to manage academic demands and new personal responsibilities.
- Remind your student that attending class regularly and keeping up with assignments are keys to academic success.
- Encourage your student to build a time-management schedule and stick to it.
- Talk honestly with your student about family problems, but avoid creating guilt because he or she is not at home or available to help.
- If your student is experiencing severe homesickness or other adjustment issues, encourage him or her to get involved with a campus organization, seek a part-time on-campus job, or talk to someone in Counseling and Wellness Services.
- Encourage your student to go to the Learning Centers for academic assistance.

### **October**

- Spend a weekend at Tech visiting your student by attending Family Weekend activities.
- Be open to listening to the frustrations of trying to find one's place within the University.
- Be sympathetic but careful not to provide too many suggestions on how to remedy your student's problems. Convey your confidence in his or her own problem-solving abilities.
- October is a good month to explore campus involvement opportunities. Encourage your student to go to the Student Activities Office to find out more about student organizations, community service, Outdoor Adventure, Greek Life, leadership opportunities, and more.
- Encourage your student to use academic resources, including the Learning Centers, his or her academic advisor, and COMPASS so that s/he can feel in charge of his/her studies.
- Remind your student of previous success in making friends and establishing relationships. Reflecting on these memories will remind he or she of his or her success before college.

### **November**

- Give your student encouragement and support, especially during academically stressful times.
- Remind your student about free tutoring services offered by the Learning Centers.
- Encourage your student to visit professors during office hours to get help or discuss academic performance.

- If your student seems to be depressed or anxious, encourage him or her to talk to a counselor at Counseling and Wellness Services.
- If your student lives in a residence hall and is feeling isolated, encourage him or her to talk with a Resident Assistant (RA) or Housing and Residential Life staff person.
- If your student is commuting from home and is having trouble with time management, encourage him or her to spend time between or after classes on campus studying.
- Even though this may be a time of increased academic pressure, encourage your student to achieve a balance, which includes a healthy diet, adequate sleep and exercise, and some relaxation.
- If your student experiences symptoms of illness, remind him or her to visit the Houghton Community Health Center at the Student Development Complex (SDC) to take care of any health needs.
- Should you become aware that your student is using alcohol irresponsibly as a way of dealing with stress, suggest that he or she gather information and talk to a counselor in the Counseling and Wellness Services.

### **December**

- Reassure your student these next few weeks will be stressful and challenging, but you will be there to help if asked.
- Remind your student about the Learning Centers and other academic/tutoring support services on campus or encourage him or her to form a study group with friends or classmates if he or she expresses concerns about taking finals and reviewing course materials.
- Encourage your student to eat a balanced diet, get a reasonable amount of sleep, and avoid alcohol, drugs, and too much caffeine.
- Suggest that your student take advantage of the Relaxation Room, located at Counseling and Wellness Services. This stress-free zone provides a calming environment and relaxing activities to help students reduce stress.
- If your student seems quite anxious or depressed, or expresses feelings of hopelessness, recommend that he or she talk with someone in Counseling and Wellness Services.
- Offer support by phoning, sending emails, or visiting your student if requested. You will want to avoid putting another demand on his or her time unless it is absolutely necessary.
- Consider sending a care package with his or her favorite snacks or goodies. It doesn't have to be elaborate or expensive, but a "Coping with Finals" gesture can be a real morale booster.

### **January**

- Reassure your student that the feelings described above are normal for a second-semester freshman who is continuing to adjust to the college environment.
- Be aware that any family problems will impact his or her ability to focus on academic work. Make your student aware that you understand this reality.
- Encourage your student to take a renewed, invigorated look at his or her new classes and classmates as opportunities for new connections and improved academic performance.
- Review the events of the first semester with your student and identify both problem areas and areas of success. Encourage your student to capitalize on these strengths.
- Together with your student, evaluate changes that may be necessary for effective management of time, stress, and money.

### **February**

- Communicate with your student about the importance of balancing academic work and social activities.

- Remind your student to attend instructor office hours if he or she has concerns about schoolwork.
- Relationships are a focus during this month, and your student may need you to listen to his or her experiences with friends and significant others.
- You may wish to evaluate your student's financial needs to see if he or she needs extra spending money or can curb spending habits.
- Michigan Tech provides many opportunities to learn outside the classroom. Encourage your student to attend lectures, performances, cultural events, and other programs happening on campus that will enhance his or her knowledge.

### **March**

- Take the time to discuss living options with your student. Listen to his or her ideas about housing, and inquire about what he or she thinks is feasible financially and otherwise.
- Encourage your student to speak to professors about difficult classes or exams on which he or she didn't perform well.
- Discuss your student's spring break plans in detail. If he or she decides to travel, remind him or her about safety and responsible behavior.
- Continue to remind your student about the importance of finding balance between academics and fun.
- Be supportive of your student if he or she is experiencing emotional difficulties. Help guide him or her to campus resources such as Counseling and Wellness Services, Disability Services, and COMPASS for further support if necessary.
- Ask your student to speak to his or her academic advisor in preparation for registration.
- Do not expect perfection from your student. Encourage your student to reach his or her academic potential and to learn from mistakes. Keep your expectations, as well as your support, high.

### **April/May**

- Contact your student often, keeping the lines of communication open and supportive. Effective stress management begins with talking to someone close.
- Consider visiting your student at Michigan Tech if possible, planning a fun activity for your student and his or her roommate(s) or friend(s). This can provide a break from stress, show your support, and create opportunities for dialogue.
- Send a care package if you can, complete with snacks, multi-vitamins, and an encouraging note.
- Encourage your student to do the best he or she can on finals and to not worry tediously about what has occurred so far in the semester. Advising your student to talk to his or her professors to assess course performance is always a good idea.
- Encourage your student to find time for exercise, healthy meals, and sleep; basic but essential advice.
- Understand that your student's passage into independent, successful adulthood will be gradual and can be best aided by your respectful, simultaneous challenge and support.
- Telephone or email your student more frequently, especially as final exams approach.
- If your student is feeling physically ill, encourage a visit to the Houghton Community Health Center.
- Encourage your student to visit Counseling and Wellness Services if he or she is coping with depression, anxiety, or unusual stress.
- A visit to Career Services may also be advisable if your student is still concerned about finding a summer job.

## **Summer (June/July/August)**

- Talk with your returning student beforehand about your expectations while he or she is living at home.
- If your student is enrolled in summer courses, talk about the importance of effective time management. Summer track courses at Michigan Tech are intensive, generally covering the same amount of material as semester-long courses in roughly half the time.
- If your student is taking summer courses at Michigan Tech or away from home, make time to visit and spend a weekend with him or her.
- Review the events and experiences of your student's first year with him or her.
- Identify problem areas and encourage your student to consider possible solutions.
- Review your student's financial needs for the coming academic year, evaluate changes that may be needed related to money management, and establish a tentative budget for the coming year.
- Evaluate the need for and/or benefits of a part-time summer job.
- Examine the need for career counseling to establish career or academic goals.
- Evaluate the need for changes in time management.
- Encourage your student to establish a tentative academic plan for the coming year.