

MichiganTech

Parent & Family Orientation

Michigan Tech Parent and Guardian Philosophy

Michigan Technological University views students as young adults who are in the process of becoming responsible, accountable, and capable. We respect their growing independence and hold them accountable for decisions they make. We also respect their privacy, but don't always promise confidentiality and if needed, we will get others involved to ensure their well being.

As such, Michigan Tech views parents and guardians as our partners and will collaborate with them to the best of our ability to assist their student. However, it is our preference to work directly with students in order to foster their growth and development. Parents and guardians are encouraged to continue to strengthen and build the relationship with their student by adding the role of mentor and coach.

Suggested Readings

Letting Go: A Parents' Guide to Understanding the College Years by Karen Levin Coburn and Madge Lawrence Treeger, 5th edition, 2009

You're On Your Own (But I'm Here if You Need Me): Mentoring Your Child During the College Years by Marjorie Savage, 2003

Let the Journey Begin: A Parent's Monthly Guide to the College Experience by Jacqueline Kerman MacKay and Wanda Johnson Ingram, 2002

Don't Tell Me What to Do, Just Send Money by Helen Johnson and Christine Schelhas-Miller, 2000

Michigan Tech Resources Especially for Parents

COMPASS – Center for Orientation, Mentoring, Parents, and Academic Student Success

Parents, guardians, and family members are an important factor in the success of first-year students. That is why COMPASS works to support students and their parents and family members. By sponsoring events designed especially for families, developing communication tools and resources to keep parents informed, and answering your questions, we can help you support your Michigan Tech student. Visit www.mtu.edu/compass and click on the *Parents and Family* tab on the left side menu. COMPASS also provides a Parent and Family Handbook that has important reference information. To read the Parent and Family Handbook, visit www.mtu.edu/compass/parent/handbook.

ParentNet – An online community for parents, guardians, and family members that allows you the opportunity to post questions and topics, use other parents as a resource, and network with other Michigan Tech family members. ParentNet includes weekly articles by Michigan Tech students (*ParentNet Weekly* and *A Student Abroad*), and a monthly Parent and Family e-Newsletter from COMPASS. Visit www.parentnet.mtu.edu.

Family Weekend – Family Weekend is a Michigan Tech tradition that allows you to visit your student(s) while participating in a variety of activities your whole family will enjoy. Spend quality time together while exploring campus and the Keweenaw each fall in October. Visit www.familyweekend.mtu.edu.

Guest Access – Account access for parents, also known as Guest Access, allows Michigan Tech students to grant individuals access to their private educational records. The Registrar's Office at Michigan Tech recognizes that parents, guardians, and family members are important to students. We provide the opportunity for these individuals to have access so they may help guide and encourage their student, serving as an involved partner in their student's academic success. By using Guest Access, the student may grant access to any or all of the following information:

- Electronic bill notification, online bill pay
- Tuition bill and associated holds
- Student's emergency contact information
- Financial aid awards
- Unofficial academic transcripts
- Midterm grades (for first-year students only)
- Term-end grades
- Class schedules and course details

FERPA - The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) as amended, is a federal law ([20 U.S.C. 1232g](#)) that protects the privacy of a student's educational record. For more information visit <http://www.mtu.edu/registrar/parents-family/access>.

MichiganTech

Parent & Family Orientation

Frequently Called Offices and Phone Numbers

Office or Department	Location on Campus	Telephone
Accounting/Student Billing	Student Service Center Administration Building, first floor	906-487-2243
Admissions	Administration Building, Room G29	906-487-2335
Campus Bookstore	Memorial Union Building, first floor	906-487-2410
Career Services	Administration Building, Room 220	906-487-2313
Cashier's Office	Student Service Center Administration Building, first floor	906-487-2247
Center for Diversity and Inclusion	Hamar House (Building 13)	906-487-2920
COMPASS – Center for Orientation, Mentoring, Parents, and Academic Student Success	Wadsworth Hall, Room G28W	906-487-3558
Counseling and Wellness Services	Administration Building, third floor	906-487-2538
Dean of Students	Administration Building, Room 170	906-487-2212
Disability Services	Administration Building, Room 170	906-487-2212
Financial Aid	Administration Building, Room 160	906-487-2622
Student Health Insurance	Lakeshore Center, Room 202L	906-487-1088
Houghton Community Health Center (Portage Health)	Student Development Complex	906-483-1860
Housing and Residential Life	Wadsworth Hall, Room 153W	906-487-2682
International Programs and Services	Administration Building, Room 200	906-487-2160
Public Safety and Police Services	Widmaier House, 206 MacInnes Dr.	906-487-2216
Registrar's Office	Student Service Center Administration Building, first floor	906-487-2319
Student Affairs, Vice President's Office	Administration Building, Room 505A	906-487-2465
Student Activities	Memorial Union Building, Room 112	906-487-1963

Important Dates for 2012-13

View the full academic calendar online at www.mtu.edu/registrar/students/calendars/academic.

Orientation	August 26-31, 2012
Fall bills due	August 29, 2012
Fall Semester, First day of classes	September 4, 2012
Homecoming	October 6-13, 2012
Family Weekend	October 12-14, 2012
Midterm grades available	October 15, 2012
Thanksgiving Break	November 17-25, 2012
Final Exam Period	December 17-21, 2012
Fall semester ends	December 21, 2012
Spring bills due	January 9, 2012
Spring semester, First day of classes	January 14, 2012
Winter Carnival	February 6-9, 2012
Midterm grades available	February 25, 2012
Spring Break	March 9-17, 2012
Final Exam period	April 29-May 3, 2012
Spring Semester ends	May 3, 2012

MichiganTech

Michigan Technological University Just Like Clockwork: The Rhythm of College Life

Many new students experience a similar pattern of emotions and experiences. Certain times in the academic year tend to be universally challenging for students. Family members who understand the ebb and flow of the first college year are better prepared to help their students negotiate the challenges of transitioning to college. Listed below by month are some typical adjustment issues your student may face during their first year at Michigan Tech.

Adapted from *Helping Your First Year College Student Succeed: A Guide for Parents*

August/September

- Feelings of excitement or anxiousness
- Testing newfound freedom/ independence
- Frequent calls and/or visits home
- Homesickness and loneliness
- Anxiety about roommates, professors, classes, new surroundings, policies, and procedures
- Challenges with managing own time, schedule, and habits
- Stress related to first exams
- Relationships from home remain strong (with friends, significant others, and family).
- Experience consequences of decisions made

October

- Free time disappears and student becomes very busy with academics and activities outside the classroom
- New friendships and connections are solidified
- Roommate problems may arise
- Student may question, “Do I fit in here?”
- First grades are returned
- Midterm exams take place
- Midterm grades are returned

November

- Roommate challenges become more apparent
- Many exams and papers/projects due before Thanksgiving Break
- Increased academic pressure due to procrastination
- Potential to cope with stress through nonproductive behaviors (lack of sleep, poor eating habits, alcohol consumption, or lack of exercise)
- Common onset period for illness (cold, flu, strep, etc.)
- Financial stress of running out of funds

December

- Anxiety over preparations for final exams
- Excitement and/or anxiety over returning home for the holidays
- Sadness over leaving new friendships and/or love relationships
- Roommate challenges continue

January

- “Fresh start” mentality sets in with new term
- Satisfaction and/or disappointment with fall-term grades
- Homesickness
- Loneliness for love relationship back home
- Relief being away from home and back at school
- Student begins to question whether their major is a good fit

February

- Feelings of claustrophobia and depression set in with winter
- Potential increase in alcohol and other substance abuse
- Challenges with love relationship back home
- Valentine’s Day brings out loneliness, isolation

March

- Anxiety over finding roommate(s) or housing for next year
- Excitement and/or disappointment over spring break plans
- Midterm exam stress
- Concern over summer employment/future plans
- Concern over winter weight gain or lack of exercise

April/May

- Excitement with arrival of spring
- Concern over major uncertainty
- End-of-semester pressure
- Final-exam anxiety
- Apprehension over returning home for summer
- Sadness over leaving new friendships and/or love relationships at school
- Realization of how college influences life decisions

MichiganTech

Academic Differences between High School and College

High School	College	Tips
Each day students proceed from one class directly to another, spending 6 hours each day and 30 hours a week in class.	Students often have hours between classes; class times vary throughout the day and evening and you spend only 12 to 16 hours each week in class.	Encourage your student to use any free time during the day to study and prepare assignments. Discourage leaving all academic work until evenings, when many social activities occur.
Most of your student's classes are arranged for them.	Your student arranges their own schedule in consultation with their academic advisor. Schedules tend to look lighter than they really are.	Recommend your student visit their advisor prior to registration to ensure proper course selection. Recommend no more than 15 credits in the first semester.
The school year is 36 weeks long and most classes extend over the entire year.	The academic year is divided into two separate 14-week semesters, plus a week after each semester for final exams.	Remind your student to develop a regular study routine and to stay on top of course material as the pace and workload is quicker than high school.
Students may study outside class as little as 0-2 hours a week, mostly on last-minute test preparation.	Students need to study at least 2-3 hours outside of class for every hour in class, including reviewing class notes regularly and completing assignments.	Suggest learning effective study skills and finding a suitable quiet study environment (library, lab, or lounge) where your student can focus and be productive.
Students are expected to read short assignments that are then discussed and re-taught in class.	Students are assigned substantial amounts of reading and writing which may not be directly addressed in class.	Advise your student to keep up on readings, complete all assigned reading before class, and then review readings while taking notes.
Teachers check and often grade homework.	Professors may not even collect assigned homework, but they will assume students can perform the same tasks on tests.	Urge your student to complete all assignments, encouraging them to focus on understanding the concepts presented. Recommend additional practice problems.
Teachers remind students when assignments are due.	Professors may not remind students when work is to be completed. Students are responsible for keeping track of assignments.	Recommend your student review all course syllabi and use the Michigan Tech student planner to keep track of all assignments, tests, quizzes, and even outside activities.
Teachers often write information on the board to be copied directly in your student's notes.	Professors may lecture continuously, expecting students to identify the important points in their notes. Professors write on the board to emphasize parts of the lecture, not to summarize it.	Advise your student to develop good note-taking skills. Urge them not to write down everything the professor says, but instead to develop a clear and concise system that helps them consolidate the material.
Teachers approach your student if they believe they need assistance and are often available to talk before, during, or after class.	Professors are usually open and helpful, but expect students to initiate contact if they need assistance. Professors expect students to attend scheduled office hours.	Suggest your student make a point to meet each of their professors during office hours at least once each semester, and remind them to come prepared with a list of questions to ask.
Teachers have been trained in teaching methods to assist in imparting knowledge to students.	Professors have been trained as experts in their particular areas of research.	Encourage your student to visit the learning centers or visit their professor in office hours if they need assistance in understanding material.
Testing is frequent and covers small amounts of material. Review of material on test is usually completed in class prior to tests.	Testing is usually infrequent (sometimes only 2-3 tests per semester) and often covers large amounts of material. Students are responsible for organizing the material to review and prepare for the test.	Propose that your student look at the material from the entire term and organize it in a way that makes sense to them. Recommend using outlines or diagrams to help them remember the material.
Mastery of a subject is usually seen as the ability to reproduce what was taught in the same manner presented.	Mastery of a subject is usually seen as the ability to apply what was learned to new situations or to solve new kinds of problems.	Urge your student to thoroughly learn and understand the course material instead of simply memorizing it. Suggest practice problems, study groups, and reviewing notes to learn concepts.
Students are usually told what their responsibilities are, and they are corrected when they are out of line.	Students are expected to take responsibility for their actions, as well as for the consequences of their decisions.	Have discussions with your student about their decisions, using open ended questions to spur conversation. Process tough choices together.
Your student guidance counselors/ teachers who keep them on track to graduate.	Graduation requirements are complex, and differ from year to year. Students are expected to know their own requirements.	Remind your student to check their DARS report regularly and consult with their academic advisor about graduation requirements and courses.
You may graduate as long as you have passed all required courses with a grade of D or higher.	You may graduate only if your grade point average is a 2.0 (C average) or better.	Motivate your student to excel in their courses. Encourage them to get help when needed and to develop the study skills necessary to succeed.

MichiganTech

Other Major Differences between High School and College

Area	High School	College
<i>Competition/Grades</i>	Academic competition is not as strong; students can often obtain good grades with minimal effort. Achievement is rewarded with honors/recognition/awards.	Academic competition is much stronger; minimum effort may produce poor grades (first C, D or F). Many students are from the top of their high school class. Recognition of efforts is less common.
<i>Status</i>	Students establish a personal status in academic and social activities based on family and community factors.	Students can build their status as they wish; high school status can be repeated or changed.
<i>Decision Making</i>	Students can rely on parents, teachers, and counselors to help make decisions and give advice. Students must abide by parents' boundaries and restrictions.	Students rely on themselves; they see the results of making their own decisions. It is their responsibility to seek advice as needed. Students set their own restrictions.
<i>Motivation</i>	Students get stimulation to achieve or participate from parents, teachers, and counselors.	Students apply their own motivation to their work and activities as they wish.
<i>Freedom</i>	Students' freedom is limited. Parents will often help students out of a crisis should one arise.	Students have much more freedom. Students must accept responsibility for their own actions.
<i>Distractions</i>	There are distractions from school, but these are partially controlled by school and home.	The opportunity for many distractions exists. Living on their own forces students to manage their own time spent on TV, video games, internet, extracurricular activities, and with friends.
<i>Value Judgments</i>	Students often make value judgments based on parental values and upbringing.	Students have the opportunity to see the world through their own eyes and develop their own opinions and values. They will face moral and ethical decisions they have never faced before.
<i>Extracurricular Involvement</i>	Students sometimes need permission to participate in extracurricular activities or their involvement is limited by their parents.	Students must decide whether or not to participate in co-curricular activities. They must find balance between involvement and academics.
<i>Responsibilities and Priorities</i>	Students count on parents and teachers to remind them of their responsibilities and to guide them in setting priorities.	Students must balance their own responsibilities; set their own priorities and goals.
<i>Learning Environment</i>	High school is a teaching environment in which students acquire facts and skills.	College is a learning environment in which students take responsibility for thinking through and applying what they have learned.

The information on the preceding pages has been adapted from Mullendore, R.H, & Hatch, C. (2000). *Helping Your First Year College Student Succeed: A Guide for Parents*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition. And from Southern Methodist University <http://smu.edu/alec/transition.asp>.

MichiganTech

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The College Zone Skit “Tips”

1. Avoid answering and speaking for your child when he or she is present.
2. Consider this: Is your child homesick? Or, are you as a parent, wanting them to be homesick?
3. If the first call you get is frantic... don't stress out; remember... don't worry too much about those upset phone calls.
4. Trust them!
5. Expect change, but not too much.
6. Visit... but not too often, and NOT unexpectedly!
7. Weekend visits home.
8. Stay in touch (email, phone, write) even when they don't respond back.
9. Ask questions, but not too many.

Parent and Family Orientation Presentations

All Parent and Family Orientation presentations will be available online beginning Monday, August 27. Please visit the website listed below to download or print any of the session materials you are interested in. The PowerPoint slides and handouts (if applicable) from the opening session and afternoon information sessions can be accessed online at: www.mtu.edu/compass/orientation/parent.

Parent and Family Orientation Evaluation

We appreciate your feedback about Michigan Tech's Parent and Family Orientation program. Your suggestions and input will help us improve future Parent and Family Orientation sessions. Thank you in advance for your cooperation. To complete our online program evaluation please visit: <http://www.mtu.edu/compass/orientation/parent/>.

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Parent and Family Questions

If you have any questions about Parent and Family Orientation, your student's first year, or about campus in general, please don't hesitate to call COMPASS – The Center for Orientation, Mentoring, Parents, and Academic Student Success at 906-487-3558. You may also email compass@mtu.edu or parents@mtu.edu.

Presenter Contact Information:

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**Thank you for joining us.
Welcome to the Michigan Tech family!**