Calendar of Possible Stressors and Issues

The first year of college involves many changes for your son or daughter. The following is a list of the possible stressors and issues that may occur during the upcoming year, whether your son or daughter commutes or lives on campus. We hope it will give you a month-by-month perspective of the life of a college student. Whether the student commutes or lives on campus the issues and stressors will still be a factor in the student’s first year.

August/September
- Time Management – Making time for multiple demands: social, academic, recreational, and possible employment.
- Adjusting to academic demands
- Social Pressure – Making new friends and “fitting in”
- Leaving the security of the known – Home, family, friends
- Dealing with the unknown – New environment, new people, new demands
- Adjusting to independence – Accepting responsibility for making one’s own decisions and dealing with the consequences of choice; exploring values.
- Indecision about direction of life – Pressure to select a major
- Learning to live in a community – Coping with new roles, policies and norms; tolerating differences.

October
- Midterm Exams – First major experience with college exams
- Conflicts with roommates, family and friends
- Class choice – Deciding on classes from the spring semester

November
- Increasing academic demands
- Less contact with family and friends at home
- Finalizing class schedule for spring
- For some, dealing with their first holiday away from home

December
- Preparing for exams and pressure to finish assignments
- Balancing social and academics demands
- Preparing for long break with parents, family and friends
- Anxiety about first semester grades
- Some students grapple with major decisions after the first semester. They may be in “crisis” over their grades and conflict because of a fear that they are not suited for or do not like their chosen major.
January
- Readjusting to school and returning to a routine
- Reestablishing relationships with campus friends
- Dealing with the reality of first semester grades – questioning competence and choice of courses
- Discussion with advisor about changing major - may be based on overall experience with courses taken first
- semester, grades, etc.

February
- Dealing with the routine – possible boredom
- Coping with bad weather
- Making plans for spring break

March
- Preparing for and taking midterm exams
- Expectations for spring break
- Running short on money

April/May
- Facing long weeks until the semester ends – spring fever
- Increased academic pressure – preparing for finals
- Year-end social activities
- Registration for fall semester classes
- Saying goodbye to friends
- Concerns about finding a summer job
- Deciding whether to take summer courses
- Readjusting to living at home for an extended period
- Receiving grades