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Hello!

The end of the academic year is fast approaching. As do the many families sending their students away to college, I know that this has been a year marked with considerable change for your student and the family.

From our end, this year has been an exciting view. Every day is different and just when you think you’ve heard or seen pretty much the full range of ups and downs associated with student life on a college campus, an unexpected circumstance emerges. The University environment is never dull and always challenging.

Our students have learned much in their time at the University. The learning has happened not just in their classrooms, study groups, and laboratories, but with and among their student colleagues living in the same residence hall but also with their affiliations with a club, committee, or campus governance role. No doubt your student has experienced a life change living in our communities.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity this year to serve you and your student.

Enjoy summer. It’s almost here!

Warm Regards,

Connie Hayek

Associate Director for Residential Life
University Housing

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

MARCH & APRIL

3/10/17 Communities close at 6 p.m. for Spring Break
3/13–3/17/17 Spring Break—Campus closed
3/19/17 Communities open at 2 p.m.
3/31/17 Cesar Chavez Day—Campus closed

MAY & JUNE

5/15–5/19/17 Final Exams—Spring 2017 semester ends
5/19/17 All Communities close at 6 p.m.

University Class Updates

FEBRUARY

2/6–2/17/17 Restricted course add/drop period
2/17/17 University census
Sutter Dining is committed to serving a variety of cultural foods as well as the comfort foods many grew up with. Our team at Sutter Dining—23 professional staff and 180 student employees—is dedicated to providing healthy and nutritious meals. In the month of October, we served over 68,000 meals at Sutter. Our morning baker and his student staff made 38,750 cookies from scratch, and our student pizza makers rolled out over 3,700 pizzas.

All of our milk, yogurt, and coffee is sourced from local vendors and our campus chef works closely with our Local Food Hub to purchase fruits and vegetables from local farmers. There are also a few exciting changes this semester at Sutter Dining. We have switched all of our cooking oils—from soy oil to canola oil, and now all of the eggs purchased for Sutter Dining are cage free.

Is your student sick? Their Resident Advisor (RA) can pick up a sick tray from dining. Not enough time to eat before class? We offer a sack lunch program as well as a hot breakfast box. Does your student have a suggestion? Our staff meets with the RAs each month to get feedback, or students can drop a suggestion in the suggestion box at the front desk.

“All of our milk, yogurt, and coffee is sourced from local vendors and our campus chef works closely with our Local Food Hub to purchase fruits and vegetables from local farmers.”
Camp HealthyCat Helps Connect First-Year Students Interested in Health and Wellness

Is your student considering a major in the health sciences, nursing, or exercise physiology? Or perhaps your student is undeclared but has a strong natural interest in health, fitness, nutrition, or wellness-related topics? If you answered “yes” to either question, please encourage your student to consider participating in a brand-new program called Camp HealthyCat—a pilot affinity exploration group that launches this spring 2017.

The goal of the free program is to help connect students both academically and socially to the campus and community. Students will meet other students and faculty with similar healthy interests, as well as explore possible majors, minors, and careers in health-related fields.

The Camp HealthyCat program kicked off with a one-day retreat or “camp” the Saturday after spring classes began. Two Camp HealthyCat peer leaders and a faculty member lead the Camp HealthyCat cohort of approximately 30 students through a variety of fun and interactive health- and fitness-related activities.

As a follow-up throughout the semester, Camp HealthyCat participants will participate in eight camp reunions or meet-ups related to their interest in health and wellness. Like the initial retreat, meet-ups will be highly interactive and experiential in nature and will range from field trips, speakers, and tours to community projects, programs and social activities.

The Camp HealthyCat program is modeled after Texas A&M’s Fish Camp where first-year students go on a variety of team-building retreats based on their interests or affinity in order to help them adjust to college life both academically and socially. Our long-term goal is to roll out an affinity group or Camp WildCat program related to most General Education Pathways by 2018. For example, students interested in environmental issues might participate in “Green Cat,” which would be aligned with the sustainability pathway.

Interested students are encouraged to apply early as spots are limited in this inaugural program.
The Office of Diversity and Inclusion is committed to cultivating a culturally inclusive environment where diversity of thought and expression is valued, respected, appreciated, and celebrated. We serve as a resource to our campus community by providing information, referrals, advocacy, coordination, and support for diversity-related events, activities, initiatives, and discussions. Our amazing staff continues to look at systemic opportunities to foster equity and inclusion for all members of our campus. A recent effort to highlight this includes working with first-generation faculty and staff to provide support for our first-generation campus community. You are a first-generation college student if neither of your parents has completed a four-year university degree. Efforts have included academic and personal advising; welcome reception at the beginning of the semester to network with new and current first-generation students; Warm Clothes For Wildcats Giveaway, which provided winter clothing offered at no cost to those who were interested; and an end-of-the-semester pizza social. We will continue to look at opportunities to support this amazing community.

If you are a first-generation student and would like to participate in our first-generation Student Organization, please contact Tray Robinson at trobinson@csuchico.edu
“This,” Brooke McCall joked, “is the unofficial tagline of the new Zen Den II in the Bell Memorial Union (BMU).” The space opened in September for use by students, faculty, and staff, after months of work by Wildcat Recreation Center (WREC) staff and support from the Associated Students. The restful relaxation area, operated by the WREC, boasts four massage chairs, three hammocks, and a strong focus on mental health and wellness.

“Stepping into BMU 301 feels like sighing in relief,” said McCall, program supervisor for the WREC. Dimly lit by twinkle lights, the room is filled with calming waterfall sounds from a fountain along one wall. The main area has a living room vibe with a sofa, chairs, coffee table, and a half-dozen bean bag chairs that can be positioned wherever desired. The side and back walls of the room have curtained-off areas for the hammocks and massage chairs so guests can relax in private.

That ambience is intentional. The new space is an extension modeled after the Zen Den relaxation room in the Student Services Center, which opened a year ago to help counselors triage patients in distress but not necessarily in crisis.

“We hoped that students who were experiencing symptoms of anxiety and panic could access this low-stimulation environment without an appointment and self-soothe,” said Juni Banerjee-Stevens, associate director of the Counseling and Wellness.

“Nap here, learn in the classroom.”
“It is hugely helpful to have something to offer students when we don’t have a counselor available. Students also access the Zen Den on their own ... [so] they are capitalizing on their own resilience and learning to manage anxiety without professional help. This, truly, is what we want to promote.”

According Banerjee-Stevens, sleep deprivation is a huge issue on college campuses, and sleep and relaxation are often the best tools for dealing with anxiety and depression, the first and second presenting concerns of students who access counseling centers, respectively.

“When I see the students go in there, it occurs to me how few spaces they must have on campus where they can really escape,” she said. “If you are introverted or highly sensitive to stimulation, living in the residence halls can get overwhelming. We really wanted to offer an antidote to those environments.”

WREC staff also recognized the serious consequences of students who are too tired, stressed, or anxious to succeed in the classroom, and knowing that not everyone finds calm through exercise, they set about creating the additional relaxation space of Zen Den II.

“Wellness is becoming a much bigger piece of university recreation nationwide,” said Curtis Sicheneder, WREC director. He wants students to know it’s okay to disengage sometimes and that Zen Den II is designed for them. “You don’t have to be perfect 24/7. This place exists for you. It’s okay to shut it down and put it in neutral. We care about your well-being. We care about your success while you’re here.”

“I think that’s something, in a general sense, Chico State is really good at—all of campus,” he said. “This is just an extension of that. It’s part of our culture.”

Finding a space to build off of the success of the original Zen Den proved to be a bit tricky.

“We knew what we wanted to do was quiet in nature, and we knew we didn’t have a place for that in the WREC,” Sicheneder said.

The WREC worked closely with Andrew Roberts, vice president of facilities and services for the Associated Students, and the BMU space committee to lock in the location. Noting that the building has numerous meeting rooms and study spaces already, the committee felt it was an opportunity to try something new.

With the space secured, WREC staff including McCall, Nancy Mantle, and Teresa Clements worked quickly to design and outfit the room, from the paint on the walls to the furniture in place—including the “tough job” of testing out massage chairs and researching the best ways to nap.

“CSU, Northridge has these fancy napping pods, but they’re $8,000 a piece, so we decided that hammocks were better suited for our budget,” Mantle said.
I’ve talked to students who come to the Zen Den to do some relaxation exercises before an exam. Others come between classes to ‘detox.’

-Juni Banerjee-Stevens

The Zen Den II in BMU 301 is open Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Students, faculty, and staff are welcome to stop by and sign in for 20 minutes of hammock or massage chair time, or make use of the quiet seating area for rest or study.

The original Zen Den in SSC 430 is open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Working on the same premise that in order to be successful, students need to take a break sometimes, the WREC also hosted its semestral De-Stress Fest prior to final exams. The weeklong event December 5–9 featured therapy dogs, acupuncturists, massage therapists, relaxation activities, and more. Find the full schedule online.

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UMatter is a comprehensive initiative that focuses on promoting positive mental health behaviors. Since 2013, UMatter has been providing outreach for the CSU, Chico Counseling and Wellness Center. The goal of the program is to raise awareness about emotional and physical self-care, and teach the necessary skills for students to make self-affirming choices in college, as well as throughout their lifetime. We aim to increase awareness of mental health and mental illness, decrease stigma surrounding the topic of mental health, and increase bystander intervention with the goal of increasing the likelihood that students will access resources such as the Counseling and Wellness Center when they are struggling. We do this by hosting events each semester such as Suicide Prevention Week in the fall and UMatter Day in the spring. Working with other campus groups and programs, we facilitate workshops and presentations in classes covering mental health topics such as resilience, emotional wellness, self-care, and much more! We offer flexible non-credit and credit internships every semester that are open to all majors and class-standings.

Find us at www.csuchico.edu/umatter or follow UMatter Chico State on Facebook. To reach us, email umatter@csuchico.edu or call 530-898-3456.
1. Create an Account (FSA ID)

• **Student:** An FSA ID is a username and password you need to log in to and sign the FAFSA online. If you don’t have an FSA ID, get one here ASAP. It takes about 10 minutes to create an FSA ID. If this will be your first time filling out the FAFSA, you’ll be able to use your FSA ID right away to sign and submit your FAFSA online. If this is not your first time filling out the FAFSA, you’ll need to wait one to three days before you can use your new FSA ID (there’s an account verification process).

• **Parent:** If your child is required to report parent information on the FAFSA, you need to create your own FSA ID in order to sign your child’s FAFSA online. Create an FSA ID here. Parents are able to use their FSA IDs right away.

**IMPORTANT:** Some of the most common FAFSA errors occur when the student and parent mix up their FSA IDs. If you don’t want your financial aid to be delayed, it’s extremely important that each parent and each student create his or her own FSA ID and that they do not share it with ANYONE, even each other.

2. Start the FAFSA: [fafsa.gov](http://fafsagov)

The 2017–18 FAFSA is now available! It launched three months earlier than usual, on October 1, 2016. Even if your state and school deadlines aren’t for a while, you should complete the FAFSA as soon as possible because some types of financial aid may run out if you wait until the last minute to apply.

To get started, go to [fafsa.gov](http://fafsagov) and click “Start a New FAFSA”.

**TIP:** We recommend that students start the FAFSA using the instructions below. It makes the application process much easier.

• If you are the student: Click “Enter your FSA ID”, enter your FSA ID username and password, and click “Next”.

**IMPORTANT:** Some of the most common FAFSA errors occur when the student and parent mix up their FSA IDs. If you don’t want your financial aid to be delayed, it’s extremely important that each parent and each student create his or her own FSA ID and that they do not share it with ANYONE, even each other.
• If you are the parent: Click “Enter the student’s information”, then provide the student’s name, Social Security number, and date of birth, and click “Next.”

Choose which FAFSA you’d like to complete:

• 2017–18 FAFSA if you will be attending college between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018.

• 2016–17 FAFSA if you will be attending college between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017.

• Both: If you will be attending college during both time periods and haven’t completed your 2016–17 FAFSA yet, complete that first, wait until it processes (1–3 days), then go back in and complete the 2017–18 FAFSA after.

TIP: If you are given the option to complete a “renewal” FAFSA, choose that option. When you choose to renew your FAFSA, your demographic information from the previous year will roll over into your new application, saving you lots of time.

Remember, the FAFSA is not a one-time thing. You must complete a FAFSA for each school year.

Create a Save Key

• Unlike the FSA ID, the save key is meant to be shared. A save key is a temporary password that allows you and your parent(s) to “pass” the FAFSA back and forth. It also allows you to save the FAFSA and return to it later. This is especially helpful if you and your parent are not in the same place.

3. Student Demographic Information

This is information like your name, date of birth, etc. If you have completed the FAFSA in the past or if you log into the FAFSA with your FSA ID, a lot of your personal information will be pre-populated to save you time. Make sure you enter your personal information exactly as it appears on your Social Security card. (That’s right, no nicknames.)

4. School Selection

Two-thirds of precollege FAFSA applicants list only one college on their applications. For many, this is a mistake! You are allowed and encouraged to add every school you’re considering, even if you haven’t applied or been accepted yet. There is no harm in adding schools, so when in doubt, just add the school(s). You can add up to 10 at a time. If you’re applying to more than 10 schools, here’s what you should do.

5. Dependency Status

In this section, you’ll be asked a series of specific questions to determine whether you are required to provide your parent’s information on the FAFSA.

These dependency guidelines are set by Congress and are different from those used by the IRS. Even if you live on your own, support yourself, and file taxes on your own, you may still be considered a dependent student for federal student aid purposes. If you are determined to be a dependent student, you’ll be required to report
your parent’s information. If you’re determined to be an independent student, you won’t have to provide your parent’s information and you can skip the next step.

6. Parent Demographics

This is where your parent(s) will provide basic demographic information. Remember that it doesn’t matter if you don’t live with your parent(s); you still must report information about them if you were determined to be a dependent student in the step above.

Start by figuring out who counts as your parent on the FAFSA.

For specific guidance, go here. If you are not able to provide parent info due to special circumstances, read this.

7. Financial Information

Here is where you and your parent(s) (if applicable) will provide your financial information. This step is incredibly simple if you use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool, which is available within the FAFSA. This tool allows you to import your IRS tax information into the FAFSA with just a few clicks. Using this tool also may reduce the amount of paperwork you need to provide to your school. So if you’re eligible, use it!

More good news: Since the 2017–18 FAFSA requires earlier (2015) tax information, you’ll have already filed your taxes by the time you start the FAFSA. This means, you’ll be able to transfer your tax information right away and you won’t have to log back in later to update it!

To access the tool, indicate that you’ve “already completed” taxes on the student or parent finances page. If you’re eligible you’ll see an option to “Link To IRS”. Choose that option and follow the prompts.

8. Sign & Submit

You’re not finished with the FAFSA until you and your parent (if you’re a dependent student) sign it. The quickest and easiest way to sign your FAFSA is online with your FSA ID.

Note: If you (the student) logged in to the FAFSA with your FSA ID, you won’t need to provide it again on this page, but if you’re a dependent student, your parent will still need to sign before you can completely submit.

Sign and Submit Tips:

• If you or your parent forgot your FSA ID, you can retrieve it.

• Make sure you and your parent don’t mix up your FSA IDs. This is one of the most common errors we see, and why it’s extremely important for each person to create his or her own FSA ID and not share it with anyone.

• Make sure the parent who is using his or her FSA ID to sign the FAFSA chooses the right parent number from the drop-down menu. If your parent doesn’t remember whether he/she was listed as Parent 1 or Parent 2, he or she can go back to the parent demographics section to check.

• If you have siblings, your parent can use the same FSA ID to sign FAFSAs for all of his or her children. Your parent can also transfer his or her information into your sibling’s application by choosing the option provided on the FAFSA confirmation page.

• If you get an error saying that your FSA ID information doesn’t match the information provided on the FAFSA, here’s what you should do (the fourth bullet).

• We recommend signing the FAFSA with an FSA ID because it’s the fastest way to get your FAFSA processed. However, if you and or your parent are unable to sign the FAFSA electronically with an FSA ID, you can mail in a signature page. From the sign and submit page, select “Other options to sign and submit” and then choose “Print A Signature Page.” Just keep in mind that your FAFSA will take longer to process if you go this route.

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