



TCNJ THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

Parent Newsletter

December, 2014

Hello, Parents and Guardians!

Through these Parent Newsletters, we will be sharing news and information with you regarding the many aspects of your student's experience at The College of New Jersey. The Division of Student Affairs has also just created a new Parent and Family Resources Facebook page where we will be posting events, news and important information. Please "like" our **Parent and Family Resources Facebook** page to receive updates. Thank you, and we hope you enjoy the Parent Newsletter!

2014 TCNJ Parent and Family Weekend Recap

Susie Orecchio

Assistant to the Vice President for Student Affairs
Coordinator of Parent and Family Programs

Thank you to all of the parents and families who were able to attend the 2014 TCNJ Parent and Family Weekend on October 17-18! For those who attended, please share with us any feedback you have regarding the events of the weekend by **filling out our survey**. To see photos from the 2014 TCNJ Parent and Family Weekend, you can view the **gallery** on our TCNJ Parent and Family Resources website.



Home for the Holidays

Mark J. Forest, Ph.D.- Director, Counseling and Psychological Services

Heading home for Thanksgiving or winter break can be both exciting and confusing for students and their parents. For students, the excitement comes from anticipating a needed break from the hectic pace of college life, some good home cooking, being able to re-connect with friends and familiar faces, and even being able to sleep in their old beds. For parents, having their children back at home, even with all their potentially quirky habits and endearing qualities, can feel like things are finally back to normal. Parents sometimes imagine that the student who left for college just a few months ago will be the exact same person who returns for the holidays. Often this isn't the case, and it is common for the most noticeable personal growth to take place during the first year or so of college. As a parent, it is important to be patient and understanding of this time of growth. It is also important to still be the parent in the relationship and in the household.

The confusing part often stems from adjusting to the different standards regarding issues of accountability and structure that college life and home life require. For students who have been exposed to a newly found sense of personal freedom and blossoming independence that often occurs at college, coming back home to an environment that provides more structure, curfews and family responsibilities can be challenging. For parents, these changes can feel disruptive, and perhaps even disrespectful. A conversation about the students' experiences

while away at college, along with reminders from parents about expectations while at home, can often prevent these challenges from escalating into unwanted conflict.

Here are some general tips for keeping the peace over the holiday/winter break:

1. **Be Flexible**- Students have just completed a long semester and the pressure of the final exams, often with little sleep. They will likely be viewing their time off as a time for rest, relaxation and a reprieve from obligations.
2. **Communicate your expectations**- Talk to each other about what you expect from each other and from the visit home. While it is not unreasonable to expect your child to participate in family activities, understand that they have become used to a more independent lifestyle while away from home. Communication is key.
3. **Be open-minded**- College students are often exposed to new knowledge and ideas by professors and friends. When your child expresses some new ideas, perhaps contrary to your own, don't react. Instead use it as an opportunity for family discussion and re-acquainting yourself with your child.

College can be a stressful place at times. This is especially true for transitions into and out of college which require students to draw upon new internal resources. For more information on what signs and symptoms to look for in your child that could be indicative of depression visit our [Parent and Family Resources homepage](#) for the extended article.

Dining Services: Mindful Nutrition on Campus

Joanna Lynn Brunell, Area Marketing Coordinator

As more and more young adults are looking to adopt healthier lifestyles, TCNJ Dining has responded by increasing and highlighting our healthy options, as well as our programming focused on healthy living.

Healthy eating at TCNJ is not about depriving oneself. Healthy eating at TCNJ is about being mindful of one's choices, choosing foods that are full of nutrients and flavor. In the fall of 2013, TCNJ Dining launched a new wellness menu at The Atrium at Eickhoff called Mindful. Mindful helps students make healthier choices every day. By using carefully chosen ingredients, Mindful menu items are big on flavor and portions, while being lower in calories, saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium. With Mindful, students don't need to sacrifice their favorite foods to eat healthy. At TCNJ, we serve pizza, burgers, and pasta, but with whole grains, lots of vegetables, and lean meats. And it's easy to be Mindful; all menu items are easily identified by the Mindful icon located on the item identifier. Because of the positive response to Mindful in resident dining, we launched the program in retail dining location, Fresh Pride Cafe. Located in the Brower Student Center, the cafe features a variety of Mindful soups, sandwiches and pastries that are easy for our busy students to grab on the go. Each semester, we host Mindful Madness which reintroduces the program to our new and returning students, encouraging them to try these nutritious and delicious options.



Our Registered Dietitian, Aliz Holzmann, keeps herself very busy throughout the semester to promote healthy eating and healthy lifestyles. Every Monday, she invites students, faculty and staff to join her on the Mindful Mile, which is a brisk walk around campus. While students sneak in some stress-relieving and energy boosting exercise, they can ask Aliz their diet and nutrition related questions. Students who shop in the C-Store can also find a healthy recipe of the month. Each recipe features ingredients that can be purchased at the C-Store and which can be easily prepared in their residence halls. Each month, Aliz plans an "Eat Right at Eick" event with samples of healthy, delicious foods typically focusing on a seasonal item. Along with enjoying the free sample, students

have the opportunity to have a quick chat with Aliz and possibly set up a one-on-one appointment. All students have the opportunity to meet with Aliz individually for a nutrition consultation at no additional cost to their meal plan. Aliz can be reached at sdhrd@tcnj.edu.

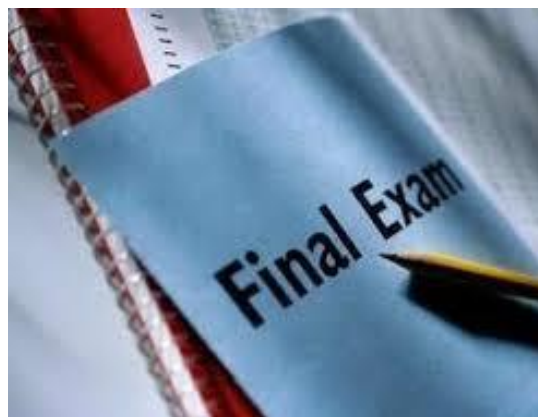
For more information about healthy dining on campus, please visit our [website](#).

Faculty Corner

Helping your Child Cope with the Stress of Final Exams

Amanda Norvell, Ph.D., Associate Professor in Biology

The end of the semester and final exam period can be stressful. It is difficult to watch our students worry about their courses and we all want to help navigate this time successfully. What can family do? Perhaps the most significant thing you can do is to help them maintain a sense of perspective. It is unlikely that poor performance on a single exam or in a single course will have lasting negative consequences for your student. However, this is not to say that students shouldn't strive to do well, but only to emphasize that building a solid foundation of knowledge in a particular area and developing strong writing and communication skills are much more important and long-lasting objectives. What can your child do in the future to avoid making the same mistakes again? It may seem like a cliché, but we can all learn great lessons from our mistakes. The key is to honestly reflect on these missteps and devise strategies to keep from repeating them.



In a more concrete way, you can help your students identify ways in which they can alleviate the stress in their lives. For some, exercise may be a useful way to channel anxiety. Establishing a fixed schedule, with time for focused study and time to relax with friends or other leisure pursuits, can also be beneficial in keeping the pressures of schoolwork at bay. All of us handle stress in different ways and learning how to effectively manage potentially difficult situations is a skill that will serve your sons and daughters well throughout their lives.

Similarly, encourage your children to eat well and get plenty of sleep. It may seem like common sense, but it is easy to get caught up in the hectic pace of the end of the semester and neglect to take care of these basics. Getting a good night's sleep not only ensures that time spent studying will be more effective, but it also helps to maintain a sense of normalcy and routine that will keep anxiety levels low.

Finally, an easy way to let your kids know that you are thinking about them is to send them a care package. A box of goodies is always appreciated and can be shared with roommates and friends as a way to remind them that finals will come to an end and they will be able to enjoy a well-deserved break with family and friends.