Dear Parents and Family Members,

I am delighted to welcome you and your student to our University. This is the beginning of a life-changing experience as your student enters a time of enormous growth and opportunity among our community of scholars.

Stony Brook is one of the world’s premier research institutions. We are among the 40 best public national universities according to U.S. News & World Report, and Kiplinger lists Stony Brook as one of the 35 best values in public colleges and universities. Our dedicated faculty, academic advisors, and support staff are committed to ensuring that all of our students have a successful undergraduate experience. As a member of one of six small undergraduate communities, your student will enjoy close connections with faculty. There will be many opportunities for undergraduate research, including the possibility for select students to work in labs alongside Brookhaven National Laboratory researchers engaged in the most important scientific study being done today. The connections your student makes here will last a lifetime, as will the valuable degree he or she earns. Our distinguished alumni include university presidents, publishers, scientists, teachers, inventors, CEOs and artists.

I urge you to encourage your student to take advantage of all that Stony Brook has to offer. There is no limit to what he or she can accomplish here. Welcome to Stony Brook, and my best wishes for a successful year.

Sincerely,

Samuel L. Stanley Jr., MD
President, Stony Brook University

Welcome to Stony Brook University! We are all thrilled that your student will be beginning their studies with us this semester. We have a broad range of majors and minors available for our students, which provide a great opportunity for them to broaden their horizons. Our Undergraduate Colleges will help to ease the transition to college as we foster a sense of belonging to an academic community. This is important for all first-year students – both residents and commuters. It is through their experiences in the Colleges that students will have the opportunity to interact with both faculty and staff from across the University.

There are so many academic and co-curricular ways students can become engaged. All studies in higher education indicate that students who are engaged are more successful, both in their college work as well as in their pursuits after completion. Encourage your student to get involved and pursue new opportunities. I highly recommend study abroad opportunities, as they are often life-changing experiences.

We are prepared to support your student throughout their academic career at Stony Brook. Through the Undergraduate Colleges, the Academic Success and Tutoring Center and many other groups on campus, faculty and staff are ready to help your student be successful. Please encourage them to take full advantage of the resources and supports available.

Again, congratulations on reaching this wonderful milestone. We know this is another step in your student’s pursuit of excellence.

Sincerely,

Charles L. Robbins
Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education
Dean, Undergraduate Colleges
### Success Tip for Siblings

**Prepare Younger Siblings Before the Student Leaves Home.**

Tell younger siblings when things are going to happen. Provide them with a calendar indicating departure dates as well as when their sibling may be returning home. Plan for younger siblings to spend time with the student.

### What Can Families Do?

- **Don't forget about the younger siblings in the family.** Often we get so wrapped up in packing up our student for college that we forget about the transition and feelings that our younger children may be experiencing.
- **Talk to younger siblings early about what it means to be going to college.** Share information about college with the younger siblings and offer opportunities for all of your children to spend time together.
- **Have a calendar at home for the younger sibling with the dates on which their older sibling is coming home for a visit;** this will help the younger sibling look forward to their visits.

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#### See back pages of calendar for Family Handbook and Stony Brook A-Z!

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**Red Hot Tradition:** Our color? Think red, as in red hot. All year long our students wear red, carry red book bags, cover their walls with red Seawolves pennants, and **show their pride on “Red Fridays.”** Check out the complete line of red hot Stony Brook accessories at our ShopSB website, stonybrook.edu/shopsb. When finals are finished, your student will appreciate a gift card acknowledging their hard work all semester.
**Success Tip for Families**

**Don’t ask if they are homesick.**

The power of suggestion can be a dangerous thing. A friend once told me, “The idea of being homesick didn’t even occur to me, with all the new things that were going on, until my mom called one of the first weekends and asked, ‘Are you homesick?’ Then it hit me.” The first few days/weeks of school are packed with activities and friends, and the challenge of meeting new people and adjusting to new situations takes the majority of a new student’s time and concentration. So, unless they’re reminded of it (by a well-meaning parent), they’ll probably be able to escape the loneliness and frustration of homesickness. Even if they don’t tell you during those first few weeks, they do miss you.

**What Can Families Do?**

- **Call your students often at first to listen and provide encouragement and reassurance.**
- **Encourage your students to participate in Opening Activities—a full month of social and recreational events.**
- **Write to your students (small care packages and handwritten letters in the mail are often a nice touch).**
- **If your students are living in the residence halls, encourage them to interact with their Resident Assistant and to get involved in their Residence Hall Association, which plans fun events throughout the year.**
- **If your students are commuting, encourage them to visit the Office of Commuter Student Services and Off-Campus Living and get involved in planning and partaking in the many events offered especially for commuters.**

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**Red Hot Tradition:** Between 1:00 pm and 2:20 pm every Wednesday during the academic year, few classes are scheduled, giving students a chance to come together for some of Stony Brook’s most exciting events. We call it Campus Life Time, a weekly tradition dating back to 1991. Campus Life Time features carnivals, concerts, student expo fairs, live entertainment, celebrity speakers, free food, and giveaways — plus a chance for informal face-to-face encounters in the midst of hectic academic schedules.
Success Tip for Families

Write (even if they don’t write back).

Although first-year students are typically eager to experience all the away-from-home independence they may experience within those first few weeks, most are still longing for those family ties and the security they bring. Sensitive parents may misinterpret this surge of independence as rejection, but I’d bet that most new students (about 99 percent won’t ever admit it) would give anything for some news of home and family, however mundane it may seem to you. There’s nothing more depressing than a week of empty mailboxes.

What Can Families Do?

• Send handwritten letters to students.
• Keep pre-addressed postcards on hand.
• Create stationery with pre-addressed and stamped envelopes.
• Try to commit to sending a letter to your student once a month; it will brighten your student’s day.
• Keep in touch using e-mail, instant messaging, and texting.
• Pick a special time in the day when you and your student can share a conversation over the telephone.
• If your students are living at home, it is still helpful to send electronic messages as well as put little cards and notes in their rooms, bookbags, and cars to let them know you are thinking of them as a new college student.

Red Hot Tradition: October is best known for our Homecoming Weekend tradition. Homecoming Weekend includes the election of the homecoming king and queen and Idol-style student talent competitions during the Seawolf Showcase.

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stoneybrook.edu
**Success Tip for Families**

**Ask questions (but not too many).**

New college students are “cool” (or so they think) and have a tendency to resent interference with their newfound lifestyle, but most still desire the security of knowing that someone is interested in them. Parental curiosity can be obnoxious and alienating or relief-giving and supporting, depending on the attitudes of the persons involved. “I-have-a-right-to-know” tinged questions with ulterior motives should be avoided. However, honest inquiries and other “between friends” communication and discussion will go a long way to further the parent-student relationship.

**What Can Families Do?**

- Keep the lines of communication open between family members.
- Be sure to be engaged in your student’s life and aware of what they are involved in, but not too much. Remember that they are in a new place in their life now, engaged in the process of discovering who they are, as well as trying to find their place in this world.
- Be there for your student. The next couple of years will be easier if your student knows they can count on their family when times are tough.

### November 2016

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**Red Hot Tradition:** Stony Brook’s 20 varsity NCAA Division I teams bring a well-loved tradition to campus all months of the year—noise! Fans of football, baseball, lacrosse, and many other sports love making noise for their favorite **Seawolves** teams. As always, red is the predominant wardrobe color. Visit goseawolves.org for schedules, tickets, and more.

[stonybrook.edu](http://www.stonybrook.edu)
Success Tip for Families

Expect change (but not too much).

Your student will change (either drastically in the first few months, slowly over four years, or somewhere in between that pace). It’s natural, inevitable, and it can be inspiring and beautiful. Often, though, it’s a pain in the neck. College, and the experiences associated with it, can affect changes in social, vocational, and personal behavior and choices. An up-to-now wallflower may become a fraternity sweetheart; a pre-med student may discover biology is not their thing; or a high school radical may become a college egghead. You can’t stop change, you may not even understand it, but it is within your power to accept it. Remember that your student will be basically the same person you sent away to school, aside from a few new interest and personality revisions. Maturation is not an instantaneous or overnight process, and you might well discover your student returning home with some of the habits and hang-ups, however unsophisticated, that you thought they had grown out of. Be patient.

What Can Families Do?

• Be open-minded that your student may change and evolve into a new person.
• Be understanding with your student and yourself. You both may have difficulty with a few of these changes and adapting to the new lifestyle.
• Be patient with these changes and difficulties your student may have adjusting to their first year at college or transferring to a different university.

Red Hot Tradition: It’s a fact: Yelling makes finals more tolerable. Just ask all the students who pop open their residence hall windows and holler during the sacred University tradition known as Midnight Scream, held in December and May during finals week. Some say the tradition rejuvenates and motivates them for a few extra hours of late-night studying; others claim it’s essential just to preserve their sanity. For faculty and administrative staff, participation is optional.
**Red Hot Tradition:** Students meet, eat, dance, and cheer at dozens of **Opening Activities** (called Chillfest for winter enrollees) including barbecues, comedy shows, films, and seasonal activities like ice skating and ski trips. Our 85,000-square-foot Campus Recreation Center is devoted entirely to students’ well-being and includes a running track, fitness studios, basketball courts and state-of-the-art exercise equipment.

**Success Tip for Families**

*Don’t worry (too much) about depressing phone calls and letters.*

Often when troubles become too much for a new student to handle (a flunked test, ended relationship, and a shrunken T-shirt all in one day), the only place to turn is home. Unfortunately, the urge to communicate is felt so strongly you never get to hear about the “A” paper, the new girlfriend/boyfriend, or the domestic triumph. Be patient with these nothing-is-going-right-I-hate-this-place phone calls. You’re providing a real service as an advice dispenser, sympathetic ear, or punching bag.

**What Can Families Do?**

- **Be there!** Students will often turn to the safety of family when times are tough.
- **Encourage** your student to share the good things that they are experiencing while they are at school. When you hear about the “A” paper send a “congrats” card. The small things will make your student feel good.
- **Realize** that although your student may not tell you that they appreciate you, they truly do. They often forget to share with you their thanks, but remember that they are grateful for all you do.
- **Encourage** your student to visit the Interfaith Center or the Counseling Center if they need someone to listen.

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**January 2017**

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- **Complete FAFSA** for next year online at fafsa.ed.gov
- **NY State Residents:** Complete TAP application for next year at www.tap.hesc.ny.gov/totw/
- **Winter session classes begin**

- **Martin Luther King Holiday - No classes in session**
- **Last Day Monday-Friday Winter Classes**
- **New resident Move-In**
- **Last Day of Saturday winter classes**
- **Orientation Part II: Experience Stony Brook**
- **Spring Semester: Saturday classes begin**
- **Returning Student Move-In**
- **Orientation Part II: Experience Stony Brook**
- **Spring Semester: Monday-Friday classes begin**
### Success Tip for Families

**Visit (but not too often).**

Visits by parents (especially when accompanied by shopping sprees and/or dinners out) are something that new students are reluctant to admit liking but appreciate greatly. A pretended disgust of those visits is just another part of the new student syndrome. These visits give the student a chance to introduce some of the important people in both of their worlds to each other. Additionally, it’s a way for parents to become familiar with (and hopefully more understanding of) their student’s new activities, commitments, and friends.

### What Can Families Do?

- Talk to your student to see what they are involved with on campus and attend events they may be participating in, such as musical events, dance performances, and plays.
- Plan a quick weekend visit and treat your student to dinner and a movie.
- If you live too far away for a quick visit, send a package of homemade treats. Include anything else that says “home” in the package—a local newspaper, for example, to help bridge the distance.

### Red Hot Tradition: Black History Month

*Black History Month* is celebrated throughout the United States in the month of February. At Stony Brook, we honor the diversity of our community by celebrating the achievements and acknowledging the struggles of all African Americans. Our annual observance of Black History Month includes panels, symposia, and lectures, as well as cultural and social events.
Success Tip for Families

Do not tell your student, “These are the best years of your life.”

The first year can be full of indecision, insecurities, disappointments, and most of all, mistakes. They’re also full of discovery, inspiration, good times, and new people. Except in retrospect, it’s not the good that stands out. It takes a while for students to accept that being unhappy, afraid, confused, and disliking people and making mistakes are all part of the show—all part of this new reality—all part of growing up. It takes a while for family members to accept it. Any family member who believes all college students get good grades, know what they want to major in, always have activity-packed weekends, thousands of close friends, and lead carefree lives is wrong.

What Can Families Do?

- Don’t be afraid to let your students make a mistake. Although this may be difficult, we all make mistakes and this is all a part of growing up.
- Give your students the time to find solutions to their problem their own way while they are at college. The first few semesters can be quite difficult at times, but students will find their way through at their own pace.
- Let them make their own decisions. Let your students choose their own major, decide which classes they want to take, and determine their class load. This will serve them well as they progress through the next few years, on their own, through college.
- Share your opinion, thoughts, and values with your student, encourage them to utilize on-campus resources, advisors, or support services. Your student’s success is our first priority.

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Red Hot Tradition: The Major/Minor Networking Event

March is home to the Major/Minor Networking Event, where students can speak to the faculty, administrators, and peers to find out about all of the majors and minors offered at Stony Brook. Every academic department is represented to help students define their interests and make the best choices regarding major and/or minor declarations.
April and May are all about Stony Brook’s Red Hot Traditions. Check out six favorites, below!

Diversity Day  brings individuals of different backgrounds together for an annual day of celebration and togetherness. Every spring we share the many dimensions of our different heritages and lifestyles through music and dance performances, creative arts, lectures, and cultural offerings. 

Strawberry Fest  brings everyone in the campus community to the Academic Mall each spring to enjoy a mouthwatering menu of strawberry treats and a fun-filled day of live music, dancing, and student performances. This event is traditionally held during Campus Life Time in conjunction with Diversity Day. 

The Roth Pond Regatta  is a genuinely unique Stony Brook tradition dating from 1987. Teams race across Roth Pond in makeshift craft constructed only of cardboard, duct tape, and paint. Students, faculty, and staff are all invited to compete and trophies are awarded to the winners. Nobody stays dry. 

The Shirley Strum Kenny Student Arts Festival  showcases the talent and diversity of our students through their creative endeavors. A week-long roster of events includes dance and operatic performances, film and video, and the annual Student Talent showcase.

The URECA (Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities) Celebration  is a University-wide event that showcases the accomplishments of 150 to 200 Stony Brook students working with faculty mentors in virtually every discipline. Students display their work through research posters, art exhibits, talks, and performances. 

Earthstock  is celebrated on or around Earth Day (April 22). The campus-wide celebration features exhibits, displays, lectures, and concerts to promote and support environment-friendly living. Events include folks on stilts, dance and drumming performances, rubber duck races down the “stony brook,” live musical performances, and an ice cream social.

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Red Hot Tradition: Asian American Heritage Month

At Stony Brook, Asian American Heritage is celebrated during the month of April to recognize the culture and contributions of Asian Americans. Throughout the month of April, student groups and campus departments highlight the heritage of Asian Americans through programs, performances, and discussions.
**Success Tip for Families**

**Trust them.**

Finding oneself is a difficult enough process without feeling that the people whose opinions you respect the most are second-guessing you.

**What Can Families Do?**

- Have faith in your student’s ability to make their own decisions.
- Your student may be experiencing a great deal of independence for the first time. Some students may handle this newfound sense of independence well, and get involved in activities and make friends, whereas others may find it challenging to adjust to a new environment.
- Remember that although you want your students to call home every day and to hear about their triumphs and tribulations, there may be times when they just need to have some time to themselves.
- Ask questions and offer advice, but avoid telling them what to do.
- Tell them you trust them to make the best decision or to do the right thing.

*Sidebar text for the preceding months is excerpted with permission from McManus, M. (1994); Orientation Director’s Manual; National Orientation Directors Association, Minneapolis, MN.*

*Summer dates subject to change due to program development in progress.*

**Red Hot Tradition:** Commencement is definitely our favorite tradition — the act of proudly sending forth graduates with degrees that are valued around the world. New students can start on the right track by visiting our Career Center. Resources include help finding internships and jobs, résumé writing, job fairs, and visits from alumni who are professionals in various fields. Visit stonybrook.edu/career

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<td>Current residents remaining for summer housing move to summer placement</td>
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<td>Memorial Day - No classes in session</td>
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Books for Families

Almost Grown: Launching Your Child from High School to College
by Patricia Pasick

Oh the Places You Will Go
By Dr. Seuss

Letting Go: A Parent’s Guide to Understanding the College Years
By Karen Levin Coburn and Madge Lawrence Treeger.

Don’t Tell Me What to Do, Just Send Money
By Helen Johnson and Christine Schelhas-Miller

Once my Child, Now my Friend
By Elinor Lenz

You’re On Your Own (But I’m Here if You Need Me): Mentoring Your Child During the College Years
By Marjorie Savage

Emptying the Nest: Launching Your Young Adult toward Success and Self-reliance
By Brad Sachs

In Addition to Tuition: The Parent’s Survival Guide to Freshman Year of College
By Marian Edelman Borden, Mary Ann Burlinson, and Elsie R. Kearns

Navigating the First College Year A Guide for Parents by Richard H. Mullendore and Cathie Hatch

The UniversityParent Guide to Supporting Your Student’s Freshman Year
by UniversityParent
## July 2017

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### More Books for Families

- **When Your Kid Goes to College: A Parent's Survival Guide**  
  By Carol Barkin
- **133 Ways to Avoid Going Cuckoo When the Kids Fly the Nest**  
  By Lauren Schaffer and Sandy Feischl Wasserman
- **Empty Nest...Full Heart: The Journey from Home to College**  
  By Andrea VanSteenhouse, Ph.D.
- **Helping Your First Year College Student Succeed**  
  By Richard H. Mullendore and Cathie Hatch of the National Orientation Director's Association
- **Let the Journey Begin: A Parent's Monthly Guide to the College Experience**  
  By Jacqueline Kiernan MacKay
- **Studying Smart: Time Management for College Students**  
  By Diana Schart-Hunt and Pam Hait
- **When Kids Go to College: A Parent's Guide to Changing Relationships**  
  By Barbara M. Newman and Philip Newman

- **Independence Day - No classes in session**
- **Correction Day - Follows a Tuesday Schedule**
- **Summer Session I Ends**
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| • Move-In Day for new undergraduate students  
• Orientation Part II: Experience Stony Brook | | | | | | • Orientation Part II: Experience Stony Brook |
| 20     | 21     | 22      | 23        | 24       | 25     | 26       |
| • Move-In Day for returning students  
• Orientation Part II: Experience Stony Brook | • Monday-Friday classes begin | | | | | |
| 27     | 28     | 29      | 30        | 31       |        |          |

August 2017

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