A Parent’s Guide to Making the Transition
TIPS FOR PARENTS DURING MOOVOIN

Actions parents take on Move-In day will either support or undermine the development of positive roommate relationships between your daughter and her roommate. Listed below are some things that you can do to help your student begin this process on the right foot.

Prior to Move-In
- Encourage your student to keep an open mind regarding the types of people that they can room with successfully.
- Prepare your student to live with someone who may have a very different background and values.
- Students often take cues from parents about how to handle diversity.

During Move-In
- Be sure to make your student's roommate feel welcome, especially if you arrive in the room first.
- Encourage your student to wait for her roommate to arrive before making big decisions such as furniture placement and overall decor.
- Step back during move-in and allow your student and their roommate to arrange and decorate their own room.
- Making these first decisions together will allow roommates to begin the process of sharing ideas and making agreements.

ROOMMATE AGREEMENTS

Living away from home, sharing a room (often for the first time), and immersing oneself in a diverse student community can be a rewarding as well as a challenging experience for anyone. In order to minimize the severity of potential conflicts that can arise, Residence Life provides the following:

- In most cases, students receive the name and basic contact information for their roommate in mid-July. This gives them several weeks to get in touch with their roommates and begin having early conversations about rooming together.
- Students are required to work with their roommates to fill out detailed roommate agreement forms during the first few days after move-in.
- These forms will ask roommates to have conversations in order to reach agreements on a variety of topics in order to meet each person’s needs.
- Students are also provided with a booklet “Roommate Success” that provides them with solid advice and specific suggestions to help them develop healthy attitudes and effective communication skills.
- Each student also has a Resident Assistant living on the floor available to assist with conversations necessary to successfully complete the Roommate Agreement.

As part of their mission, Residence Life is committed to providing a positive living environment in which all students are welcome, productive, and feel safe. However, roommate conflicts do occur and resolving them is a shared responsibility between students, parents, and housing staff. There is a process for room transfers in place.
RESOLVING ROOMMATE CONFLICTS: PARENTS ROLE

Helping Your Student EVALUATE the Situation
• Encourage your student to review the online Roommate Success brochure.
• Ask your student which suggestions in the brochure are most appropriate for improving the relationship.
• Remind your student that any conflict has two sides. Encourage your student to consider why his roommate might see the situation from a different point of view.
• Encourage your student to remember that roommate conflicts take time and effort to work through. Living with someone requires ongoing communication. Realistically speaking, a one-time meeting can not solve all past and future problems.
• Assure your student that having a roommate conflict is not a rare occurrence.
• Many students go through hard times with their roommates, and most are able to resolve their differences in a way that meets everyone's needs.

Helping Your Student ADDRESS the Problem
• Encourage your student to talk directly, but respectfully, to their roommate about their concerns and possibly seek out the assistance of their RA or a Hall Coordinator.
• Be supportive of your student. Your encouragement is especially appreciated during stressful times.
• Allow your student to resolve their own roommate problems. Doing so will leave them better prepared to resolve problems on their own in the future.
• Encourage your student to whole-heartedly pursue other means of conflict resolution before considering requesting a new room. Often, students can successfully work through roommate problems. Additionally, the process of working through a roommate conflict provides them the opportunity to build valuable life long skills. An immediate room change would result in your student losing out on the benefits the opportunity offers.
• If the conflict cannot be resolved, suggest that your student consider the option of transferring to another room. It is far better to live in a more positive environment than to refuse to leave a negative environment in order to prove a moot point.

Contacting Residence Life Yourself
• Consider Residence Life staff to be allies. We also want students to have the best possible experience.
• Talk to your student first before you call Residence Life yourself. Your student may not appreciate you calling Residence Life without their knowledge.
• Before calling Residence Life, familiarize yourself with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Simply put, in context of a roommate conflict, FERPA does not allow Residence Life Staff to discuss specific details of a student's conflict with their parent. However, the Residence Life staff will be happy to review with you the overall process in which we help residents work through conflicts.
• Your student is your information source if you want conflict specifics, so talk to them. Just keep in mind, they only have one side of the story.
• By all means, contact your student's Hall Coordinator yourself if you feel a situation exists that has overwhelmed your student's ability to work through it. We are happy to talk with you about your concerns and will arrange for your student to access necessary resources and support.
**SOME GREAT QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR STUDENT**

1. What Women in Engineering Programs have you attended so far?
2. Have you met with an Academic Advisor yet?
3. Have you spoken with your RA about any concerns?
4. Have you been to the free tutoring and study space in the Kinsolving or Jester?
5. Are you scheduling your ‘goof-off’ time?
6. Are you getting 6-8 hours of sleep at night?
7. Are you studying 2-3 hours for each hour in class?
8. Are you starting your assignments/test preparation early?
9. Be honest, are you skipping any classes?
10. Are you reviewing the material in your classes daily/weekly?
11. Have you been to office hours yet?
12. How do you feel about your midterm grades?
13. Have you discussed your midterm grades with your faculty?
14. Have you formed a study group for any of your courses?
15. What student organizations are you interested in joining?
16. What clubs or organization have you already joined?
17. Are you remembering to eat healthy foods daily?
18. Have you been getting regular exercise?

**CONVERSATIONS FOR THE FIRST YEAR IN COLLEGE**

**Your Expectations**
Make your expectations known to your student, as they want to please you and show you that they can be a successful adult.

**Alcohol and Drugs**
Unfortunately, underage students will have the opportunity to partake in parties where alcohol is served to them. Conversations around alcohol and drug use are respected coming from you.

**Finances**
Credit card debt is a major problem that starts in college for many young people. Talk about budgets or a spending plan for your student, so that they know their limits and potential pitfalls.

**Academics**
Explain what you expect for grades, and set some goals with your student.

**Interpersonal Relationships**
No parent wants to hear this, but it is important to talk about interpersonal relationships, safe sex and abstinence with your student.

**Communicating with You**
Set expectations for calling home, and for you calling your student. Know that they will tend to call you only during the bad times and when they need support and love. Many times, “no news is good news” is the motto to live by.

**WELD FACTS**
- Since 2003, the WELD Program has admitted over 115 students.
- The retention rate for the WELD students after one semester is 100%!
- The retention rate for WELD students after two semesters is 90%, compared to the Cockrell School’s average of 77.8%.
- After one semester, the average UT GPA for WELD students is 3.3254.
- After two semesters, the average UT GPA for WELD students is 3.3000.
- For the 2008 graduating class, the average UT GPA was 3.3503; the women had an average of 3.4291.