



## HOW TO BEGIN TO HAVE A MEANINGFUL CONVERSATION WITH YOUR STUDENT

Prior to beginning these important conversations, it may be helpful you to ask yourself some questions to regarding your beliefs, attitudes, and expectations of the Towson University experience.

For example: What are the expectations that you have for your student regarding the college experience? When was the last time you spoke with your student about these expectations? What have you discussed regarding the academic, financial, social (including alcohol and drug use), emotional, and overall wellness expectations for your student? If you have previous college-going experience, how does that experience inform your expectations for your student? How do you plan on allowing your student to create their own college experience while still providing the wisdom of experience?

## THE CONVERSATION

We recommend that you begin to have these conversations now and that you continue a frequent and meaningful dialogue as your student progresses through college. Honest conversation, non-judgmental expression, and willingness to listen are the foundation to healthy relationship building. An effective technique is to be explicit while you convey your views and expectations to your student. Despite what you may think, your student relies on your advice and support as guiding principles for the collegiate journey. Identify the behaviors that you deem both acceptable and unacceptable, and be mindful that your expectations should be reasonable and supportive—and that your student is an adult who will be making decisions for themselves. You and your student may wish to work together to create realistic goals and effective strategies for making healthy decisions about college life.

# CONVERSATIONS FOR THE CAR RIDE HOME

The beginning of college life can be both exciting and anxiety-provoking. Please consider this booklet as an invitation to partner with us in an effort to maintain the safety, health, and overall success of your student.

## ACADEMIC LIFE

Adjusting to a college-level curriculum can be quite challenging for first-year students, despite an excellent high school record. The best way to enhance educational success and reduce academic difficulties is to reach out early for support.

The primary academic, on-campus resources include:

### Faculty

- All professors make themselves accessible to students during office hours listed on the class syllabus
- All first-year students will be assigned an FYE advisor whom they will meet during Welcome to TU. Encourage your student to take advantage of the advising relationship

### Tutoring and Learning Center (TLC)

- TLC provides free peer tutoring in many introductory level courses
- TLC also offers free workshops in exam preparation, learning styles, test taking skills, time management, etc.
- Peer academic coaches are available to assist in organization, study skills, and time management

### The Writing Center

- The Writing Center offers free scheduled appointments to all students
- Writing Center coaches work with writers at any stage of their writing process
- Writing coaches are students who are also enrolled in Towson University and excel at writing

## REGARDING FERPA

Please partner with us in supporting student's rights and responsibilities to include others in their education. Family members are encouraged to communicate with their students regarding the student's academic progress, program of study, grades, or any other information about their educational record or experience. Family members wishing to obtain information about a student's record should obtain that information directly from the student. In the event that the student does not have ready access to the information, TU can supply that information to the student upon request who in turn can share it with whomever they wish.

### Ask Your Student:

- What strategies will you use to stay organized?
- If you don't do well on a test, what will you do?  
Where can you go?
- Where are your favorite spots to study?  
Where do you feel most productive?
- Which class is your favorite? What is challenging for you?
- When you have a big research paper to write,  
where can you go for help?
- What is your plan for establishing a study schedule?  
How much time do you think you should dedicate to studying?
- What are some examples of effective communication  
with your professors?
- What are some reasons having a tutor would be beneficial?



## CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT

Meaningful engagement outside the classroom, is associated with students' seamless transitions to college, satisfying collegiate experiences, and positive impacts on academic life. Student involvement is an expectation of students at TU. The Office of Student Activities creates and develops a more meaningful student experience through clubs and organizations as well as leadership development.

## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Leadership development is an essential outcome of higher education and it has become a norm to have leadership programming on college campuses. Currently, Student Activities offers a variety of short-term and long-term leadership opportunities for undergraduate students and a number of new programs will be created each academic year. Have your student explore the Tigers Lead program.



## TRANSITION & CONNECTION

The aim of our transitional programming is to assist students in finding their way at TU by helping them get involved, understanding the community, and assisting them through the difficult times at college. Particular work is done to help students with the challenging transitions during their first and second year.



**Ask Your Student:**

- What is the social scene like? What have you been doing for fun?
- What kinds of activities are happening on campus?
- What is life like in the residence halls?
- How are you getting along with your roommate(s)?
- Who are your friends? Has it been easy to find new friends?

**PHYSICAL HEALTH**

Incoming students are typically filled with excitement over the instant freedom they have recently acquired, in addition to the new friends they are beginning to make. In the midst of such an exhilarating time, students are usually not thinking about the possibility of an unexpected illness. We understand, and our job is to keep you well! The reality is that most college students are generally healthy. However, it is with increasing frequency that college students find themselves in precarious situations and sometimes engage in high-risk behaviors, unaware of the dangers and consequences that may ensue as a result of poor decision making.

**IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS**

It is very important to have honest conversations about behaviors and possible associated health risks with your student prior to arriving on campus. A good starting point for such conversations involves the Health Form and Immunization Record, which are required documents for the Ward and West Health Center. It is essential that you review your student's medical history and have your student consult with on-campus healthcare providers if they have been diagnosed with any chronic illness or health-related concern.

Coordinated and continuous care should be appropriately established with providers at the Health Center, and students are urged to have immediate access to the contact information of their private physicians at home. Finally, students' insurance cards should be carried at all times.

**Ask Your Student:**

- How are you keeping yourself healthy on campus?
- What's your plan if you get sick?  
Do you know where the Health Center is located?
- Do you know how you would get medicine (over-the-counter or prescription) if you needed it?
- Do you know your own medical history? Do you feel confident in giving your medical history to a health care provider?
- Do you know your family's medical history?



## STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESTORATIVE PRACTICE

The Office of Student Accountability and Restorative Practices strives to get to know students, listen to their stories, and provide opportunities for growth throughout the Student Accountability process, regardless of the student's responsibility for violating policies. Every part of our process is designed to be educational—students build valuable self-advocacy skills by participating in the process. If your student is involved in the Student Accountability process, it is understandable that you will want to support them. Students are entitled to bring a Support Person with them to any meeting or proceeding involved in their disciplinary process. While we welcome the involvement of family members, the ultimate decision is up to the student as to who they bring. In some circumstances, students can elect to participate in an Alternative Resolution Process (ARP), which provides students and student groups with a pathway to resolving interpersonal conflict and empowers all parties to participate fully in the accountability process.

### Ask Your Student:

- What do you know about the Student Code of Conduct?
- How do you use the Responsible Tiger Protocol?
- What are some ways you will act with integrity and civility in the TU community?

## ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE

We encourage you to take time to have meaningful discussions with your student about substance use. Research suggests that when parents have discussions about these topics prior to their student starting college, it leads to lower alcohol and other drug consumption during the first year and lowers the risk that they will experience serious substance use-related consequences. Sharing your expectations about substance use non-judgmentally can have a powerful impact on your student's choices.

<https://marylandcollaborative.org/resources-for-parents/>

## PREVENTION OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Before classes officially start at TU, incoming students are required to complete an online education designed to minimize risk associated with alcohol, drugs, and sexual violence. It is a research based, comprehensive training program that empowers students to make healthy choices. Please encourage your student to fully participate in this online module and complete it before classes start.



## TITLE IX

TU ensures that members of our community are not subjected to sexual misconduct, relationship violence, or any discriminatory harassment on the basis of sex and gender. TU has policies, procedures, and resources to prevent and address these issues, in accordance with Title IX of the Education amendments of 1972 (a federal civil rights law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex in federally funded education programs and activities).

## FAMILY BELIEFS AND VALUES

Discuss your personal beliefs about substance use with your student. Sharing your values non-judgmentally and non-defensively can create an environment of trust. It's important to recognize that your student may not fully agree with you, however, sharing your stance on the matter can still have a powerful impact on if, when, where, and how your student experiments with substance use.

## FAMILY HISTORY

If your family has a history of alcoholism, your student needs to be aware of such family history. Research indicates that children, or grandchildren, of alcoholics may be up to 6 times more likely to develop problematic drinking behaviors. It is important to communicate this potential risk factor with your student while explaining that some people with a family history of alcoholism may simply be unable to drink alcohol without drinking to excess.

Tigers in Recovery is the Collegiate Recovery Program (CRP) for TU. This program is designed to support TU students that are in or seeking recovery from substance abuse disorders. Tigers in recovery and its programs help students have an authentic college experience while maintaining their recovery.

### Ask Your Student:

- What are your perceptions of alcohol and drug use at TU?
- How will you decide whether or not to drink or use drugs at college?
- How will you decide how much or how often to drink?
- What do you think are some consequences of high-risk substance use? What are some strategies you can use to reduce your risk of experiencing those consequences?
- What reasons can you give your peers if you don't want to drink or use drugs?

- How will you handle it if your roommate wants to drink?

- Who can you talk to if you are having difficulty with your own or a friend's substance use?

*Remember that TU has an Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Prevention Center in the Counseling Center where you can learn more about substance use or meet with a counselor.*

## RESPONSIBLE TIGER PROTOCOL

Responsible Tiger Protocol is TU's amnesty policy. If a student is in a situation involving the use of alcohol or marijuana, and any student, including that individual, is in need of medical attention, we want the student to act responsibly by taking action. RTP encourages students to seek assistance for a peer, even if they are engaging in behavior that violates our policies, by applying the 3 steps: 1) Call for help, 2) Remain with the person, and 3) Cooperate with officials.



## MENTAL HEALTH

The Counseling Center staff members have extensive experience working with students. They are interested in the personal experience of our students and seek to work collaboratively on personal, social, and academic goals. They embrace and appreciate the richness brought by the intersections of gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, age, physical and mental abilities, spirituality, socioeconomic status, physical attributes, as well as other personal and social characteristics that comprise individual identity. The Counseling Center provides a wide variety of services to support all students in their mental health journeys.



## SUPPORTIVE STRATEGIES

Many of life's unexpected and challenging experiences can feel outside of a student's control. These experiences may cause stress, feelings of helplessness, depression, loss of previous ability to concentrate, or impulsive decision making. In addition, alcohol and other drug use, as well as unhealthy eating patterns, are common responses to situational stress in the college population. These behaviors can have a negative impact on a student's personal and academic functioning. The Counseling Center works with students to combat and alleviate such forms of distress through individual and group counseling, skill building workshops, and campus-wide programming. The Counseling Center offers same-day appointments that can be scheduled by calling 410-704-2512 or by using our online scheduling system



## FAMILY SUPPORT

A supportive network is vital to a student's success. If your student is entering TU with a prior connection to counseling services, please help your student find a local provider who can continue appropriate care for your student. Even if your student has never engaged with a mental health provider before, please consider having a discussion with your student about the resources available at the Counseling Center, and offer encouragement for your student to seek services if they are needed. We also encourage families to contact the Counseling Center with any questions or concerns they have about their student. While counselors are bound by ethical and legal requirements of confidentiality, we are able to provide general consultation and recommendations to families, faculty, and other TU administrators.

### Ask Your Student:

- What resources are available at the Counseling Center on campus?
- How do you know when you are stressed? What are your triggers?
- How will you cope with stressful situations when you are away at school?
- If friends and family are your support system, how will you utilize them?
- How will you manage any pre-existing mental health concerns?
- Where will you receive ongoing treatment?  
How will you manage medications?

## ASKING FOR HELP

TU is rich with resources available for students. It can sometimes feel a little overwhelming to know where to go for help. Student Outreach and Support (SOS) is a great first step. They have staff members who are well-versed with TU and off-campus resources, are available to listen to what is happening, and help walk students through thinking about what steps to take. SOS is who you reach out to if you are starting to struggle in your classes, with college in general, something in your life outside of school, or know someone who is struggling. SOS helps communicate extended absences with faculty, whether for a medical reason or bereavements. They can provide support and resources for students experiencing food insecurity. SOS also manages the Student Emergency Fund. The goal of the emergency fund is to respond to an unexpected financial emergency that may detrimentally affect a student's progress toward their degree.





## KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING

The first six weeks of college are especially difficult. During this time and beyond, continue talking with your student, remain supportive, call, and email your student to check in and ask questions. Each family will differ in how they express support and what is beneficial for their student. While one student may want and ask for a family member to check in on them weekly or even daily, others may find this overwhelming. Talk about what will feel best for your student and your family as a whole.

## ON CAMPUS RESOURCES

Once again, we are glad to have you as a partner in your student's journey to success here at Towson University. As your student completes their first year and beyond, here are some resources on campus that may benefit your student at different times in their time at TU.

Academic Advising, Retention & Completion  
Office 410-704-2472

Accessibility and Disability Services 410-704-2302

Albert Cook Library 410-704-2462

Alcohol, Tobacco,  
and Other Drug Prevention Center 410-704-2512

Athletics 410-704-2759

Bursar's Office 410-704-2100

Campus Life 410-704-2332

Campus Recreation- 410-704-2367

Career Center 410-704-2233

Center for Student Diversity 410-704-2051

Counseling Center 410-704-2512

Dining Services 410-704-2302

Division of Student Affairs 410-704-2055

Financial Aid Office 410-704-4236

Health Center 410-704-2466

Housing and Residence Life 410-704-2516

New Student and  
Family Programs 410-704-2309

Off-Campus Student Services 410-704-2806

OneCard 410-704-2284

Parking and Transportation 410-704-PARK  
(7275)

Scholarships 410-704-2647

Student Activities 410-704-3307

Study Abroad 410-704-2451

Student Outreach and Support 410-704-2055

Tutoring and Learning Center 410-704-2291

University Police 410-704-4444

