



Northeastern University

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THE \$OURCE

The Newsletter of Student Financial Services
Winter 2006/2007 Edition

It's A Bird...It's A Plane...It's...A Helicopter Parent! ***A Guide to Understanding Those Who Are*** ***Overprotective***

By Shani Wilkerson

As defined by Wikipedia, a Helicopter Parent is “*a term for a person who pays extremely close attention to his or her child or children, particularly at educational institutions. They rush to prevent any harm from befalling them or letting them learn from their own mistakes, sometimes even contrary to the children’s wishes. They are so named because, like a helicopter, they hover closely overhead, rarely out of reach...*”

Sound familiar? If you are a college administrator, child born after 1982 (of the Millennial Generation), or a parent of said child, you most likely have come across a parent that fits this description to a T. In the name of cultivating the “well-rounded child,” these parents have made ages 0-18 a breeze for their children by being so involved in their lives that all a kid has to do is show up for their pre-arranged dance lessons, tutors, summer jobs, enrichment programs, sports practices, and play groups. To the Helicopter Parent’s credit, the students entering colleges nationwide as freshmen have some of the highest test scores, GPAs, and extra-curricular resumes that admissions recruiters have seen in years. However, Helicopter parents have managed to give their children the world...all without real world experience. Jeanna Mastrodicasa, Associate Dean of the University of Florida Honors College says, “Our students are graduating but they are not ready to go into the real world” [St. Petersburg Times, 6/19/06]. Numbers of colleges and universities across the country have noticed that these same super-achievers are under-performing in areas such as original thought and independent decision-making. Seton Hall University administrator Linda Walter stated that “many young adults entering college have the academic skills...but are somewhat lacking in life skills like self-reliance, sharing and conflict-resolution” [The Washington Post, 3/21/06].

In an attempt to make sure that college freshman can make a seamless and healthy transition from the comforts of home to the reality of living outside of the nest, many institutions are reaching out to parents as well as students. Summer orientation and move-in weekend are no longer times for students to simply schedule classes and for parents to purchase university paraphernalia. In the summer of 2005, the Boston Globe highlighted Northeastern University’s seminar for parents called “A Time of Holding On and a Time of Letting Go.” Here, moms and dads who are apprehensive of letting go of their child can learn ways to keep their family ties strong while encouraging and allowing their young adult to venture out in the world and make a way for themselves. St. Louis’s Washington

University invites parents to attend skits performed by upperclass students that describe ways for parents to help in their child’s transition process. As another proactive measure, Colgate University in Hamilton, N.Y. has its administrators provide parents with a copy of the university’s self-reliance philosophy during opening weekend. The delivery varies between schools, but the message stays the same. Schools as well as students appreciate and recognize the immense effort and sacrifice parents make in the hopes of taking the worry and stress out of going to school - like making cell-phone wake up calls for class and setting up conference calls with professors and counselors. Yet, there comes a time when parents should take a step back and let the student earn their own wings. Part of college life is what the student learns outside of the lecture halls and labs. Interacting with administrators, following through on responsibilities from beginning to end, practicing time management, and the experiencing the occasional set-back builds character and integrity. How do young people measure their level of true success when mom and dad are always there to steer them clear of potential failure?

As a Financial Aid Counselor who has been in higher education since 1997, I am constantly reminded by parents that their over-involvement is just a way of securing their investment of a college education for their child. With an average sticker price of \$40K/year for a private school degree, many parents go through any means necessary to ensure their child’s success. I too, think of how hard it might be for me to let go of my own child in the year 2021 and watch her acclimate herself to “the college experience.” Will I check in with her daily via phone or email? Will I expect her to come home for every holiday and to call me before she makes most of her decisions? The mommy in me would say yes. The in-her-best-interest side of me is preparing now, 15 years in advance, for the time when we will have to allow her to independently put into practice all of the lessons we will teach from now until then.

Popular readings on the “helicopter” phenomenon include: ***“Letting Go: A Parents’ Guide to Understanding the College Years”*** by Karen Levin Coburn and ***“Don’t Tell Me What To Do, Just Send Money”*** by Helen E. Johnson.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helicopter_parent
<http://www.boston.com/news/education/higher/articles/2005/08/20>
http://usatoday.com/news/nation/2005-08-28-hovering-parents_x.htm
http://www.sptimes.com/2006/06/19/news_pf/State
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/03/20/AR2006032001167>

New Cash Release Request Process

By Jill DeTeso

Those of you who are in the habit of using financial aid funding to pay for off-campus housing (as mentioned in our latest blog post, which can be viewed at <http://www.financialaid.neu.edu/wordpress/>) may be familiar with our new cash release process. We have been successfully using myNEU to process all check requests this semester, and it is so much easier for everyone than it used to be! In the “old days,” students either had to see one of our Student Accounts Representatives or Financial Aid Counselors to put in a request for the credit on their student account. Then a paper form was filled out, and the check was cut and mailed to the requested address.

Now, we use a complete online system to process and approve cash refund requests. It's called Liquid Office, and as its name suggests, it's fairly fluid and streamlined. Students log in to myNEU, where on the homepage there is a direct link to “Student Refund Requests” under the Student Accounts viewpane on the right. Once the student fills out the form with name, address, and amount of credit, it goes to an online portal where those of us behind the scenes can check and approve the requests in real time. Also, students can automatically request that the checks be held for them in 120 Hayden instead of sent via snail mail. The average turnaround time for credit requests has been drastically reduced. Refunds now take about three days to get into the students' hands (and bank accounts)!!

Go take a look on myNEU and let us know what you think!

Welcome to SFS!

photo courtesy of Lee Marrama



We recently welcomed Alexandra McHale, our new Assistant to the Dean, into the office. Alex comes to us from the sporting goods store City Sports, where she worked as a buyer. She brings a wide variety of experience to us, having also worked as a legal assistant, marketing assistant, and office manager. Alex says that after working in several different industries with many types of people, her favorite part about working at Northeastern is working with such amazingly passionate, kind, and dedicated people. She comments, “It is rare to find a group of people so enthusiastic about their jobs who also create a welcoming, familial environment within to work.”

Alex likes to take pictures in her free time and watch documentaries and independent films. She also likes to read and

write short stories. She loves sports and says that being from New England makes it easy (and at times heartbreaking) to love the Red Sox and the Patriots.

Alex is looking forward to taking advantage of all NU has to offer and becoming a part of the university community. She is also thinking of starting a Master's degree in English.

Don't Miss Out! Reapplying for Financial Aid on Time and With Accuracy

By Aaron Clark

It is time to begin the process of reapplying for financial aid for 2007-2008. To receive the maximum amount of aid you are eligible to receive, file your documents by our priority **filing deadline of March 1, 2007** (for returning students).

What does that mean for you? Here are some steps and tips:

- **File your 2007-2008 FAFSA.**
 - This form will become available online at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/> in the first week of January, usually by **January 1**.
 - File your FAFSA online using your PIN for fastest results and easiest processing. If you have forgotten your PIN or don't have one, you can apply for one by going to the following website: <http://www.pin.ed.gov>.
 - File the FAFSA early to ensure that we receive it by the deadline.
 - The Northeastern School Code is **002199**.
 - The FAFSA can be completed using **estimated** income and asset information. Corrections must be made when the actual figures become available.
 - Make sure that you have all necessary signatures (or e-signatures) on the form. This may include your parent's signature.
 - Always use correct and legal names, social security numbers, and dates of birth to avoid processing delays.
- If your application is selected for verification by the federal government, you will also need to supply verification documents. These include, but are not limited to, the Verification Worksheet, Student and Parent 2006 Federal Tax Returns (once completed) with corresponding 2006 W-2s.
- If you report discrepant information, we may ask for clarification.
- If you have questions about the financial aid process, please contact your counselor.



Burning Questions... This newsletter is for you! Please feel free to let us know what **YOU** want to know... send an email to k.huse@neu.edu and we will be happy to have your questions answered in our next issue.