

Family Chat

Wednesday, February 18, 2015

familychatadministrator(NSFP_Arie): Good Morning and welcome to today's Family Chat! My name is Arie Gee and I am the Assistant Director for Family Programs and Engagement! Today's topic is about Spring Break Safety, but as always, we are happy to answer any questions you might have at this point in the semester!

frschof: Morning - during spring break are there any UF sponsored trip i.e. Beach or UF Lake area. Asking because our son dosnt have any personal transportation on campus. //Frank

familychatadministrator(NSFP_Arie): @frschof, the Center for Leadership and Service sponsors Florida Alternative Break trips for students: http://www.leadershipandservice.ufl.edu/programs/florida_alternative_breaks/

familychatmoderator(NSFP_Rachel): Good morning, my name is Rachel Lowe, and I am a student assistant in the office. I'm excited to hear from you all today.

frschof: Thankyou Arie I will pass this on.

familychatadministrator(NSFP_Arie): Other than these trips, there is not direct transportation sponsored by the University to different places. He may be able to find a friend who is going somewhere for break and join. We also have carpool boards on our Facebook page where he might be able to find transportation to a beach somewhere!

jmilford: This is not related to spring break. Can you tell me which dorms are typically for sophmores?

familychatmoderator(Academic Advisor_Daniel): Good morning all! I am Daniel Moore, an Academic Advisor in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

familychatadministrator(NSFP_Arie): Hi @jmilford, Rachel is working on a response for you!

arobinson: Seems like a great opportunity for someone or a Division at UF to have a UF-sponsored trip for those that don't have transportation or don't belong to a fraternity or sorority. Is it because of a liability issue with UF?

Sharlene Williams: Morning, can someone give me clarity about the residence halls...are they still open during spring break? My son was going to go away, but won't be gone for the entire break, will he still be able to get back in his dorm during the week?

familychatmoderator(NSFP_Rachel): @Jmilford great question! While there aren't specific dorms tailored to sophomore students, many students chose to live in areas like the Murphree Area, Springs, Lakeside and Keys. The following site will take you to view the various areas: <http://www.housing.ufl.edu/undergrad/choices/>

familychatadministrator(NSFP_Arie): @arobinson, the Center for Leadership and Service is the one who sponsors Spring Break Trips. We think it is important for any UF sponsored trip to connect back to the mission of the University, so service trips are a great way to spend Spring Break!

jmilford: Thank you, Rachel. I hope she will have a better experience in her dorm next year.

familychatmoderator(NSFP_Rachel): @SharleneWilliams, during the Spring Break the residence halls are open for students. Your student will be able to get back into his room during the week. If he does have an issue of some kind, the Resident Assistant On-Call will be available for any issues.

familychatmoderator(UF_NSFP Mickey): Hello folks my name is Mickey Howard and I am an Associate Director in New Student and Family Programs. Excited to be here!

arobinson: Does UF hold any pre_Spring Break seminars for freshman classes that would help them avoid some of the pitfalls of Spring Break. Seems as though a mandatory class would be helpful.

familychatadministrator(NSFP_Arie): We don't have a mandatory class for students, but we do have a great office on campus called GatorWell who has some awesome programming for students in the weeks leading up to Spring Break. They take their Health Hut to different places on campus and talk to students about safety. While student's don't have to participate, the hut is pretty hard to miss and they always have interactive games for students to win prizes so we have found that many of our students do participate and learn something in the process!

familychatadministrator(NSFP_Arie): Many RAs will also have a Spring Break Safety program or a bulletin board in the halls about safety.

Sharlene Williams: @NSFP_Rachel thank you for explaining it to me. Are the freshmen required to notify their RA where they are going for spring break since this may be their first experience going away in college.

familychatmoderator(NSFP_Rachel): @Sharlene, while freshman are not required to notify their RA, they're more than welcome to mention it to the RA. I know the RAs will be excited to hear about their plans and when they're coming back.

arobinson: I guess what I'm leading to is that since UF is sponsoring this chat session, it feels like it has somewhat of a responsibility for its students. While you can't control their behavior, especially freshmen who are away for the first time, just think UF should be more proactive in getting the word out to students which is why I keep addressing the issue about freshmen classes.

pattydykstra1@gmail.com: Hi,

familychatmoderator(UF_NSFP Mickey): Pattydykstra1 - Did you have more that you typed? if not hello to you.

familychatadministrator(NSFP_Arie): It is a student's responsibility to ensure that they are safe during spring break. We provide many resources because we know that students get information in many different ways. The reason we host this chat is to provide talking points so that family members can join the conversation about Spring Break safety and help share these messages with your students!

pattydykstra1@gmail.com: i am just checking in. I haven't been able to join one of these before. My daughter is in a sorority that is going to Destin. I am not thrilled about that idea. She is a responsible girl, but I've seen that place at spring break first hand. UGH. I'll be talking to her again...

arobinson: Totally agree that it is a collaborative effort between parents and school officials. We both do what we can to educate our students as the faculty at UF does as well.

pattydykstra1@gmail.com: Are there any UF sponsored trips? I'd prefer she work on a habitat for humanity project, lol.

familychatmoderator(UF_NSFP Mickey): @arobinson - Absolutely there are some things that go in one ear and out the other. You can lead a student to information but it is ultimately up to the student if they HEAR it.

frschof: What is the Dorm policy on Friends visiting from other Universities ..

arobinson: Patty, if you think Destin is horrible, my son is going to Panama City Beach with his fraternity. I am in fear the same as most parents.

familychatmoderator(UF_NSFP Mickey): @pattydystra - there are some sponsored trips through our Center for Leadership and Service Office:

http://www.leadershipandservice.ufl.edu/programs/florida_alternative_breaks/participants/

familychatmoderator(UF_NSFP Mickey): More information and signing up for those trips is in 301 Peabody Hall.

familychatmoderator(NSFP_Rachel): @frschof the policy for having guests over in the residence halls is that residents are allowed to have 2 guests at a time in their room. The guests can stay in the hall for 72 hours.

frschof: Thank you Rachel...

Beatrice: Please talk with your kids who are going to PCB...We see a lot of underage kids there drinking.... Not sure how they are able to book hotel rooms too..

familychatmoderator(NSFP_Rachel): @frschof any time! If your student has specific questions about their guests coming they should speak with their Resident Assistant

arobinson: Beatrice: They book houses using one person that is at least 21. However, in some cases, such as a fraternity group, each person must sign the contract and provide a valid ID. (Underage or not) in PCB. That's how they do it.

familychatmoderator(UF_NSFP Mickey): @Beatrice it is good advice to have a conversation with your student about what the expectations are and offer pieces of wisdom when it comes to thinking about alcohol. More information about helpful alcohol info is located here: <http://gatorwell.ufsa.ufl.edu/Alcohol-and-Other-Drugs.aspx>

GATORMOM24: any suggestions on curfews, for those that are coming home for spring break?

arobinson: Leaving session now but great that I can catch up when I return. Thanks everyone and good luck to all of us parents.

pattydykstra1@gmail.com: ugh, maybe it is Panama City ... thanks for the alternative trip info!

Sharlene Williams: My son is a freshmen and traveled to Europe as a student ambassador with the People to People program when he was 15, I still worried about his safety, it's just how it is being a parent. Even with him going away for spring break I'm still going to be concerned, you hope your student uses wisdom and makes good decisions. I'm glad UF has this community where we as parents can have a support system for situations like this.

janees76: Is there a better way to access I-75 other than Archer? My son is an Innovation Academy Freshman and new to Gainesville.

pattydykstra1@gmail.com: Are members of the opposite sex allowed to stay overnight in dorm rooms? my daughter told me that she saw some she knows (not a UF student) in her dorm that stayed with a boyfriend for the weekend...yikes

familychatadministrator(NSFP_Arie): @GATORMOM24, I think those are great discussions to have with your student, keeping in mind that students don't have a curfew in college and that they are used to some freedom. This is a great time for them to demonstrate to you that they can be responsible without a curfew.

familychatadministrator(NSFP_Arie): However, it is ultimately up to you and your student to have a discussion about what is best for your family.

GATORMOM24: Thanks @ NSFP_Arie! also, any bus service to the airport for a 6am flight?

familychatadministrator(NSFP_Arie): @Sharlene, we are happy to be here and provide this forum. You never stop worrying about your student, regardless of how old they get! It is natural to have these worries.

Beatrice: Thank you for the info! I don't think it is just PCB that has underage drinking. You'll see it on high school kids' twitter, fb, etc.. Ultimately it is up to the student and parents. We are fortunate to have great services such as this to help.

Sharlene Williams: I have to ask this...is there any protocol in place if a student doesn't come back, if something happens does the University notify the parents? I hope I'm not the only parent on here that was reluctant to ask this ugh.

familychatadministrator(NSFP_Arie): @janees76, if your student is living in Beaty Towers, it depends on which way they are going and what time of day it is! If they are heading south, especially during rush hour, it can be much easier to take 13th street south to Williston Road. There is access to 75 from Williston Road. If he is traveling north, there isn't a much more convenient access point than Archer.

familychatadministrator(NSFP_Arie): @paydykstra1, members of the opposite sex are allowed to stay overnight in the residence halls. It is a good idea for your student to discuss this with their roommate to make sure they are comfortable with it!

familychatadministrator(NSFP_Arie): @GATORMOM24, is your student flying out of Gainesville?

GATORMOM24: Yes, Gainesville airport.

GATORMOM24: And dorm is North Hall

familychatadministrator(NSFP_Arie): @GATORMOM24, I'm checking on those bus hours now for you!
familychatadministrator(NSFP_Arie): Which day is he flying?
GATORMOM24: Friday, 2/27
familychatmoderator(UF_NSFP Mickey): @Sharlene Williams - There is a protocol in place. Our Care Area in the Dean of Students Office sends out emails to faculty to inquire about attendance of students, to ask if there attendance patterns have changed after spring break. They then also work with Housing and Residence Education to see if the RA has seen the student. If there is any concern and the family member is listed as the emergency contact then the institution will notify them.
familychatadministrator(NSFP_Arie): @GATORMOM24, the bus that leaves from campus to go to the airport doesn't begin service until 7:15 a.m. Your student may be able to find someone else getting the same flight out and carpool to the airport, or share a cab with someone. The airport is small enough, there is a good chance other UF students will be on the same flight!
Sharlene Williams: @UF_NSFP Mickey thank you for the information
familychatmoderator(UF_NSFP Mickey): anytime!
GATORMOM24: Thanks @ NSFP_Arie!
familychatmoderator(UF_NSFP Mickey): what other questions are out there?
GATORMOM24: are profs lenient about travel days around spring break, if the student gives them some warning they will be missing class?
samstrckln: are the pools open at uf? I like the beach, but sometimes it just as nice hanging around the dorm, if there were things to do....
Sharlene Williams: How many RA's remain in the dorm for spring break if the student needs help with anything?
familychatmoderator(NSFP_Rachel): @sharlenewilliams - it may depend on the hall, but there is a RA On-Call throughout the entire duration of spring break. They're available 24/7 during the break to assist students if they have any concerns. Your student has access to the RA On-
familychatmoderator(NSFP_Rachel): Call via telephone. The number can be found at the area's front desk.
Sharlene Williams: @NSFP_Rachel that's good to know, he lives in Thomas
myrnajune@yahoo.com: I know a little off topic but are there any driving schools in the area? My 18 year old never wanted to drive and now 2 months at college she really wants to get her license.
familychatmoderator(UF_NSFP Mickey): myrnajune - there might be... it would probably be worth a Google search for one. There is not that we are affiliated with. That is great that she is going beyond her own expectations!
familychatmoderator(NSFP_Rachel): @myrnajune - this website may be useful http://gainesvilledrivingschool.com/
samstrckln: I just looked online, apparently all the pools close for spring break
jmilford: Why is spring break so early?
samstrckln: with the rec facilities closed, there is almost no incentive to stay on campus
familychatmoderator(NSFP_Rachel): @samstrckln while the pools may be closed, your student could attend some of the sporting events that happen around campus during this time. Here's some great events listed on the following site: http://www.gatorzone.com/schedule/201503
familychatadministrator(NSFP_Arie): @jmilford, I'm not sure why Spring Break happens when it does, but most colleges and universities have Spring Break around this time (at least in the south region). It does seem very early compared to a high school spring break!
samstrckln: thanks!
samstrckln: for a minute there, I thought the campus turned into a ghost town during breaks! lol
jmilford: FSU is March 10

Sharlene Williams: I graduated from the University of Pittsburgh and spring break was always the first week in March. Some of the schools up here in the north are on the same spring break schedule as UF...it's relatively close. It's actually not a bad thing if the students want to use some of their time on break to get a jump start on finding internships and summer employment.

myrnajune@yahoo.com: I will check out the website, thanks a million

familychatadministrator(NSFP_Arie): There are many factors that go into planning the Academic Calendar! I'm not privy to those conversations, but I would imagine that we try to not have all of the Universities in Florida on Spring Break at the same time! The beaches couldn't handle it! FSU is the following week.

familychatadministrator(NSFP_Arie): @Sharlene, this is a great point! We also end school so early, that if we had Spring Break in April, students would have to spend their entire spring break studying for exams (the last week of April!).

anacrespo: My child will be moving out of the dorms for fall of 2015, I understand that there are storage rentals were students can store there belongings during Summer break. Can you pls. elaborate a bit to this regard I couldnt imagine moving everthing back home for Summer and then back for Fall. Is this service available to students that are moving out of the dorms or only to students that will continue living on Campus?Also is the storage expensive?

Beatrice: Any idea of percentage of students who stay at UF during spring break? Our child was in the dorms until the last day of classes of Fall session and they were the only one on their floor.

Beatrice: Does the public bus service keep the same schedule during spring break?

Beatrice: Are all the dining halls and Reitz open during spring break?

familychatadministrator(NSFP_Arie): @anacrespo, Housing and Residence Education has contracted with a service in the past, but it looks like the contract is not currently active. Housing may be able to help answer any questions about storage, but the information about this can be found at the bottom of this page:

<http://www.housing.ufl.edu/undergrad/resources/move-out/>

myrnajune@yahoo.com: @Rachel, that website is for Gainesville in Virginia :) I was all set to sign her up too, lol! I will keep searching.

anacrespo: Thank you,

familychatadministrator(NSFP_Arie): @myrnajune, the DMV has a list of driving schools here:

<http://local.dmv.org/florida/alachua-county/gainesville/local-driving-schools.php>

familychatmoderator(NSFP_Rachel): Hi @Beatrice, the public buses do not keep the same schedule during spring break - however, they do have a reduced schedule. The following website lists the reduced schedule and options available for your student. <http://go-rts.com/holiday-reduced.php>

anacrespo: btw I learedned that there is a \$200.00 cleaning fee when moving out of the dorms can you confirm this?

familychatmoderator(NSFP_Rachel): @Beatrice, the schedule for the dining hours isn't available yet for Spring Break, however, from my experience there are options available in the Reitz Union (such as Subway).

mamagator3: Sorry, joining late. Does anyone know where the top locations for spring break are this year? Just curious where the students may be heading.

familychatmoderator(NSFP_Rachel): @anacrespo, that's a great question. To my knowledge, there is not a \$200 cleaning fee when moving out of the hall. However, if the room is left in an unsuitable condition residents may be fined. An unsuitable condition could be leaving trash in the room, leaving a refrigerator, etc. Basically when students move-out of their room, it has to be as clean as it was when they moved in. If you have additional questions about certain fines associated with housing, contacting Housing would be the best way to go. Their number is 352-392-2171

samstrckln: mamagator, I know costa rica was on the list

familychatmoderator(NSFP_Rachel): @Beatrice, I'm not exactly sure about the percentage of students who stay at UF during Spring Break. That might be a question better suited for Housing - as they might be the ones to have that number. Their number is 352-392-2171

samstrckln: http://www.leadershipandservice.ufl.edu/programs/florida_alternative_breaks/participants/

mamagator3: Thanks for the link. Cool site and possibly something my son might like to do. Unless he's already made beach plans. I'll pass it on to him.

anacrespo: Thanks, Rachel

samstrckln: don't thank me, the narrators of this chat gave this to us earlier...we're very thankful!

pdiken: Hello Sorry just logging in, I always forget that I have a three hour time difference.

familychatadministrator(NSFP_Arie): Thank you all for a great chat today! Rachel is going to wrap up the chat in about 5 minutes so get your final questions in! If you need anything before our next chat in 3 weeks, please don't hesitate to contact New Student and Family Programs!

pdiken: We on the west coast always hear about crazy Florida spring breaks what can I share with my student on how to be safe there?

Sharlene Williams: Are any of the spring break alternative trips allowing students to get college credit for their participation? I'm not sure if this was touched on, but I wanted to know to share with my son.

pdiken: Can you please share those safety sites that have been mentioned

familychatmoderator(NSFP_Rachel): @Pdiken welcome to the chat! We are excited to have you join us for the last few minutes. The best thing to share with your student about Spring Break is to make sure they find ways to have a safe, comfortable time! Our best recommendation is to have an open conversation with your student about staying safe and some of the expectations during the break. We recommend using GatorWell as a site with some helpful information: <http://gatorwell.ufsa.ufl.edu/Alcohol-and-Other-Drugs.aspx>

familychatmoderator(NSFP_Rachel): @sharlene, I do not believe that the spring break alternative trips allow students to get college credit. It's more of a volunteer opportunity - if you have specific questions about the trips, I would recommend contacting the Center for Leadership and Service at 352-392-1215

pdiken: Thanks I'll will check into that and hope that the school has a forum about it as well. Don't want to be on the nightly news :).

familychatmoderator(NSFP_Rachel): @pdiken, another thing that might be useful is to have a conversation with your student about what their plans are for the break. If they're planning on staying in Gainesville, this might be a great time to explore the area. They can even start to complete some of their F-book traditions (from the alumni center). These traditions include visiting the Harn Museum, visiting the Florida Museum of Natural History, etc.

familychatmoderator(NSFP_Rachel): Thank you everyone for joining our Family Chat today - it was so great to hear from you all! Like Arie said, if you need anything before our next chat in 3 weeks, please contact us at New Student and Family Programs via either phone or email. Have a great day!