

FamilyFocus

NEWSLETTER

The
University
of Akron

2009 Common Reading Program



One of the first homework assignments your student will receive – even before classes start – is to read *Run* by Ann Patchett. *Run* tells the story of Tip and Teddy, who have been raised by their loving, possessive, and ambitious father. Set over a period of

24 hours, *Run* takes us from the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard to a home for retired Catholic priests in downtown Boston. It shows us how worlds of privilege and poverty can coexist only blocks apart from one another, and how family can include people you've never even met. As the first work of fiction selected for the common reading program, *Run* is a bit of a departure from our typical selection of autobiographical books. It will, however, be a perfect fit with The University of Akron's common campus theme of poverty for the 2009-2010 school year.

Goals of the Common Reading Program

- Encourage students to read beyond textbooks
- Create a foundation for students to explore values and ethics
- Raise awareness and tolerance of intergenerational and cultural likenesses and differences
- Promote academic discourse and critical thinking
- Provide an introduction to the expectations of higher education
- Create a sense of community among incoming students
- Integrate an academic and social experience into the campus community

Ann Patchett will make a special appearance to address the University community at 7:30 p.m., Oct. 21, 2009, at E.J. Thomas Performing Arts Hall. More details about this event and related campus programming will be available early in the fall semester.



It's my pleasure to extend a warm welcome to the family members of our new students! We appreciate the financial and moral support you give your sons and daughters as they begin a new chapter in their lives. This is an exciting time for students to begin their studies at The University of Akron.

UA's First Year Experience Program offers students many opportunities to "start strong." We hope they will become engaged in the learning process — in class, in cocurricular activities and within the greater Akron community. The University has many programs designed to help your student become successful at the college level:

- UA Learning Communities that offer a particular focus during the student's first term. Some are residential while others are organized for a particular discipline. A learning community offers students the opportunity to get to know other students pursuing the same major, or a particular interest, while faculty focus their assignments on a common theme.
- Students should consider our FY Mentor Program. Students can meet regularly with a campus administrator or faculty member who will serve as a sounding board, and help them navigate the University. Encourage your student to touch base with his/her mentor through the first semester.
- Each FY student is assigned an academic adviser to meet during New Student Orientation. Advisers are in touch with their students throughout the term to keep them informed of special programs available on campus. The academic advisers are knowledgeable about the requirements for different majors, University policies, programs and services. Please encourage your students to check their UA e-mail accounts **regularly** so they receive important information and updates from their adviser!
- The Student Success Seminar is a two-

Welcome!

credit course that helps students learn about study skills, time management, learning styles, and UA policies and programs that can enrich their University experience.

- Tutoring is available for General Education courses as well as first- and second-year classes, and students can be tutored in more than one course per term. Tutoring is provided at no extra cost (something a parent loves to hear!) to UA students. This service is provided in Bierce Library from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. and in the Polsky Building from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Friday to students who want to improve their grades.

- Learning assistants are specially trained peer tutors who help students in the learning process. They work with professors in teams to advance students' confidence in their ability to think critically and to solve problems independently. Since they have already mastered key study strategies, the assistants can model these learning techniques for students who seek their assistance in the classroom or at a study session.

- Writing and Math Labs, available in Bierce Library and the Polsky Building, are staffed by faculty and graduate assistants who provide FY students with the extra help they need to improve their skills.

- In order to help you to be a supportive parent, monthly e-mail letters and calendars are sent to first-year parents to alert you of important deadlines (registering for the next term, deadlines for payment for courses) and opportunities for your sons and daughters. By keeping you apprised of what is available on campus, you can assist your student to access these programs.

As the academic year gets under way, ask if your student has checked out these services. Please let us know how we can assist you as you encourage your student to reach his/her educational goals!

KARLA T. MUGLER, Ph.D.
ASSOCIATE PROVOST AND DEAN OF
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Learning Assistants' Advice to Parents

Learning assistants are specially trained peer tutors who can assist your student with the learning process. They collaborate with faculty mentors to work as teams to advance your student's critical thinking skills and problem-solving abilities. Because learning assistants have already mastered key study strategies themselves, they can be an excellent source of advice for your student, both inside and outside of the classroom.

- **ENCOURAGE** your student to always attend class, because it is the single greatest indicator of student success. Moreover, encourage them to **UTILIZE** all resources that are designed to support their academic and emotional well being — including the tutoring center, math labs, writing labs, study skills center, Center for Career Management, and the Counseling, Testing and Career Center. Finally, encourage your student to form study groups as a way of promoting academics and also getting connected to his or her peers.

- **DEVELOP** a respectful relationship with your student as a maturing adult. Try to wean yourself away from thinking of your student as a child and **LEARN** to treat him or her as a peer.

- **PARTICIPATE** actively in conversations with your student about how important a quality education is to leading a successful life.

- **THINK** about how difficult life can be at your student's age; and **REMEMBER** how different the world is today, compared to when you were your student's age. Ask probing questions about what your student is learning.

- **LISTEN** to any concerns your student may have about his or her uncertainty about what his or her major should be.

- **PRAISE** your student's accomplishments, no matter how small.

- **UNDERSTAND** your student's frustrations in adjusting to the differences between

high school and college, including the degree to which your student is solely responsible for his or her academic success.

- **FOCUS** your student's attention on the fact that his or her college education is just one more step in a lifetime of learning.

- **BALANCE** financial expectations so that your student can concentrate on his or her academic success.

- **COMMUNICATE** your expectations regarding your student's success clearly – and often. Most importantly, communicate to them that you want them to find a major, and ultimately, a job that they will be passionate about, and above all, enjoy!

DO

- Ask questions
- Offer your student a quiet place to study
- Attack concerns together
- Help your student become independent
- Give emotional support by helping them to step aside from a problem that creates academic stress
- Send your student “treats” (even if it is only a bag of cookies)
- Make them independent
- Assist them in setting realistic goals by helping them analyze their strengths and weaknesses
- Encourage them to choose a career in which they are essentially “being paid to have fun”

DON'T

- Nag or hover
- Be negative
- Be distant
- Call your student's professors to check up on him or her
- Be afraid to ask questions

Keep Your Student on Track



Help your students stay on track to career development by recommending they follow these tips each year.

FIRST YEAR

Make connections to classmates and the University

- Explore academic interests with an academic adviser
- Consider taking a career-planning course (1100:117)
- Seek a part-time or summer job
- Join at least one student organization
- Participate in the mentoring program
- Study hard and establish a solid GPA

SECOND YEAR

Start developing career goals

- Explore career options through the Center for Career Management
- Determine major area of study
- Develop an academic plan with your academic adviser
- Continue developing a résumé
- Seek employment related to academic interests

THIRD YEAR

Commit to your academic plan

- Consider adding a minor area of study
- Participate in a co-op or internship experience
- Interview professionals in fields related to interests
- Network with faculty, staff and current employers
- Meet with your academic adviser to check graduation requirements

FOURTH YEAR

Preparing for the future

- Confirm graduation status with your academic adviser
- Fill out necessary graduation documentation
- Have résumé critiqued by the Center for Career Management
- Request letters of recommendation from faculty members
- Attend career expos and plan job search strategy, or
- Complete and submit applications to graduate or professional schools
- Participate in mock interviews to gain that competitive edge





Do you know a Helicopter Parent?

A parent who rushes in to prevent any harm or threat to their child's happiness, or letting them learn from their own mistakes, sometimes even when the child would prefer to do it themselves? They hover.

Hovering: To remain suspended over a place, object or "child."

Ways for parents to help without hovering.

- Avoid the temptation to call on behalf of the student. Let the student make the call. Let them compile the information and seek the answer. The student is the client of the college, and he/she is the responsible party.
- Teach your student to be a self-advocate. Maturing and taking responsibility for their college work and business transactions will help them survive as an adult.
- Navigating college finances can be overwhelming. Take this time to teach them how to handle their financial matters. Work together to plan and budget.
- Parents have a need to know, and students have privacy rights. It is not easy to

reconcile these two issues when dealing with financial matters.

- The University of Akron communicates billing and due date information to students, but parents are most often paying the bill. It is very important that students communicate financial information to their parents to avoid penalties and consequences of nonpayment.
- Students can give parents access to their student account online through ZipLine at <http://zipline.uakron.edu>. This way the parent can independently monitor the student account balance and pay online.
- It has been documented that students on average change their class schedules and possibly their tuition balances at least seven times a semester.
- Love and let grow.

It is difficult to let go of the instilled mechanism to protect your child, but you must let them grow. Allow them to learn life skills that will help them succeed in college and beyond.

OFFICE OF STUDENT ACCOUNTS/BURSAR

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of every student's educational records. The 1974 law applies to all schools that receive funds under the applicable program of the United States Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. All rights and protections provided for by FERPA transfer to students when they reach the age of 18, or attend an institution of higher education. Therefore, The University of Akron cannot disclose a student's education records to a parent, or legal guardian, without the written consent of the student. Students wishing to request a waiver so that parents may have access to their academic information can contact their respective dean's office, or the Office of the University Registrar.

FERPA also provides the right to exercise limited control of other people's access to students' records and the right to seek to correct a student's education record believed to be in error.

Higher education institutions may disclose, without consent, "directory" information. The University of Akron considers directory information to include: student's name, mailing address, telephone numbers, major field of study, honors and awards, extracurricular participation, photographs, the height and weight of members of athletic teams, years of attendance and terms enrolled. However, the institution must inform students about directory information and allow a reasonable amount of time for students to request that the school not disclose directory information about them.

Students have the right to restrict the release of directory information. The request to restrict the release of directory information must be completed and submitted to the Office of the Registrar at least 10 days prior to the first day of instruction of the semester for which the request is to be effective. The Directory Information Restriction Request Form is available online at <http://www.uakron.edu/registrar/docs/DirInfoReq.pdf>. Changes to FERPA also can be made online via ZipLine.

If the release of directory information is restricted, it must be noted that the information will be withheld from ALL sources. Such sources include prospective employers, honor societies, news media (Dean's List, etc.), relatives, friends and the commencement program. It is important to carefully consider the potential consequences of restricting the release of directory information.

Additional questions about restricting the release of directory information should be directed to the Office of the University Registrar by telephone at 330-972-8300 or in person at Simmons Hall.

Where can I get more information about FERPA?

Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, D.C., 20202-5920. Phone: 202-260-3887, TDD: 1-800-877-8339, or online at www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html.

DEBRA HAYES
UNIVERSITY REGISTRAR

ZipLine: Keying in on Your Academic Career

ZipLine, The University of Akron's portal, is the safe and secure online gateway to a variety of services students need for a full and rich academic experience.



Before the heyday of computer technology, students might stand in long, serpentine lines to register for classes, pay a bill or talk with an adviser. Now, thanks to the portal and other technology widely employed at The University of Akron, students have cut that wait down to a matter of mere minutes.

Here are just some of the self-service tasks that can be performed online from home or from any one of the hundreds of easily accessible computers and kiosks on campus:

- Registration;
- Changing personal information;
- Checking grades;
- Viewing financial information;
- Making a payment;
- Requesting a parking permit;

- Communicating with instructors;
- Using online educational resources; and
- Accessing research resources, such as Gartner Reports.

A direct link for ZipLine is located at the top of The University of Akron home page at www.uakron.edu. ZipLine can be accessed directly at <http://zipline.uakron.edu>. Students login using their student ID and a personal password they have chosen.

Students can easily customize their ZipLine page to add or remove features and adjust the layout to match their preferences. A link to online tutorials for ZipLine and other self-service functions is available at <https://zipline.uakron.edu/>.

MICHAEL GIANNONE, COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

The Value of Student Involvement on Campus

As a parent, you play a crucial role in assuring the success of your son or daughter's college education. One way in which you can support your child is by encouraging him or her to get involved on campus. By getting involved on campus, your student will be able to experience activities that compliment what is being taught in the classroom while having fun and networking with peers at the same time. Some of the many benefits of student involvement on campus include:

- Learning transferable skills that can be taken into the workforce;
- Gaining practical experience that can be used to develop a resume;
- Developing self-initiative, discipline, independence and responsibility;
- Gaining a sense of belonging to something greater;
- Developing leadership skills;
- Expanding the social network;
- Using energy and recreational time constructively;
- Learning the importance of cooperation, teamwork, work ethic and being an active member of a group;
- Developing interpersonal and time management skills;

- Experiencing cultural sharing and exchange.

The knowledge and skills that students develop through co-curricular involvement can have a profound impact on their college experience. Student involvement helps undergraduates become active and engaged members of their college community while providing an educational foundation of learning through doing.

You can assist your undergraduate's involvement by referring your student to the SOuRCe (Student Organization Resource Center). The University of Akron has more than 200 registered student organizations, ranging from those related to individual majors, leadership and development to groups that involve community service and social involvement and Greek Life. The SOuRCe provides student liaisons to help your student explore their interests and find their niche on campus. For more information or to connect your student with the SOuRCe, please call 330-972-2483 or visit www.uakron.edu/studentlife/source/.

LORRI MARCH
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, CAMPUS PROGRAMS

Learn more about UA's First Year Programs at

www.uakron.edu/nso/FYE.php

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