

# SEASONS OF ADJUSTMENT

College is a transitional period for all - whether it is a student's first experience with a university or they are transferring away from home. Common fears, worries, and excitements related to the college experience are widespread and follow similar trends, no matter what university a student is attending. You can use this document that outlines seasons of adjustment through the academic year that your students may experience to help support them throughout their first year at SUNY Oswego.



## AUGUST

- Feelings of excitement
- Experimenting with new-found freedoms
- Frequent calls and visits home
- Becoming familiar with campus
- Homesickness and loneliness
- Anxiety about classes, professors, roommates (unsure what to expect)
- Students ask, "Do I fit in here?"
- Experience culture shock (institution, community, social norms, traditions)
- Off-campus students feel disconnected.
- Values are challenged

## SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER

- Students ask, "How can I fit in here?" (student involvement)
- First assignments/test grades returned
- Romantic relationships from home are challenged, some grow and some do not
- Experiencing the consequences of decision-making
- Roommate problems may arise (honeymoon stage is over)
- First midterm exams at the end of October
- Talk to friends from home and compare college experiences
- Seeking to form connections with others
- Learning how to manage time/finances

## NOVEMBER

- Midterm grades returned
- Excitement/anxiety about going home for Thanksgiving
- First series of campus-wide illness (colds, flu)
- Time management issues (balance the demands of school, work, family, and social life)
- Roommate challenges may intensify
- Begin planning for the next semester (meet with advisors, research engagement opportunities)

## DECEMBER

- Anxiety over preparations for finals
- Feelings of exhaustion
- Excitement/anxiety over going home for holiday
- Sadness about leaving new friendships and/or new romantic relationships for the holidays
- Financial strain due to lack of budget experience/holiday expenses
- Adjusting to being back home and adapting to old family rules and routines
- Adapting to old friendships when back home

## JANUARY/FEBRUARY

- Satisfaction and/or disappointment with last semester's grades
- "Fresh start" mentality sets in with new semester
- Homesickness after break
- Continuing roommate challenges
- Relief may be felt at being away from home and being back at school
- Loneliness for relationships back home
- Feelings of cabin fever and depression with winter
- Begin experiencing the local community
- Potential increase in alcohol or other substance abuse
- Challenges with romantic relationship back home may begin to develop
- Valentine's Day may increase feelings of loneliness and isolation
- Anxiety about finding a roommate/housing for next year
- Spring break planning begins
- Scholarship and internship application process begins
- Searching for involvement opportunities

## MARCH

- Anxiety about Midterm exams
- Excitement and/or disappointment regarding Spring Break plans
- Spring Fever
- Concern over winter weight gain
- Concern about finding summer employment

## APRIL / MAY

- Burned out feeling
- Concern over declaring a major
- Final exam anxiety
- Stress over moving when semester ends
- Uncertainty about returning home for summer
- Sadness over leaving new friendships and/or new romantic relationships at school
- Beginning to realize how college will influence future life decisions
- Questioning "Will it be the same when I get back?"
- Thoughts up giving up
- Anxiety about final grades

These research results were collected by the Office of First Year Experience and Parent Programs at the University of Alabama through a survey with over 7,000 students responding while in their first year of college.



## NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION

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