

# January 2009

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## Dear CSU Parents and Families:

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I hope you all enjoyed some time with your students during their Winter Break from Colorado State University. Some of you may have welcomed home a student who is far easier to live with than when you dropped him or her off to school last fall. And others ...well... let's hope for positive growth and development this spring semester! Incidentally, parents most frequently report the greatest positive growth and development occurs during the summer between the first and second year of college.

Over break I received a number of phone calls and emails regarding disappointment over the fall semester grades and concern about this spring semester. Enclosed in this newsletter are a few articles focused on academic and personal success (Getting to Year 2@CSU, Changing Majors, Strategies for Success). Colorado State University has numerous resources and services available to help students, the hardest part is getting the students to make contact with these resources and avail themselves of the services. Your encouragement, and setting expectations and then holding students accountable for making and keeping appointments with academic advisors, faculty (before & after class as well as during office hours), counselors, staff members, and mentors is key to your student success. I know this is incredibly hard when you are not physically present on campus, but, it certainly does provide a window on whether your student is ready to be in college. Students need to take responsibility for advocating for themselves and seeking assistance.

Our partnership is crucial and we will do our best to make our services accessible and available for your students. If your students run into a snag, chances are great that someone is right here on campus to help problem solve with your student. Students are not left on their own...it's just getting them connected to the right person(s)/office(s)/resource(s). Together, we can be more successful than when we go it alone!

As a reminder, classes begin on Tuesday, January 20. We have an amazing Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration on Monday, January 19 that includes the Fort Collins community. Here's a link for the schedule of events if you and your students want to take part in the march and programs: <http://www.colostate.edu/events/mlk.aspx> (<http://www.colostate.edu/events/mlk.aspx>).

Best wishes for a successful beginning of the spring semester!

### Jody

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## Academic Success at Colorado State University

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*By Christopher Bryson, Academic Coach,  
Center for Advising & Student Achievement*

The academic challenges for first year students are potentially the hardest to overcome. Students' academic responsibilities in higher education are much different than those they faced in high school. A simple explanation that outlines the differences between high school and college can be found at this Southern Methodist University website: <http://smu.edu/alec/transition.asp> (<http://smu.edu/alec/transition.asp>).

For this main reason, some students may be returning to CSU for the spring 2009 semester on academic probation. Fortunately, there are a variety of programs and services that CSU offers to students on academic probation. It is extremely important that student (and their families) have a thorough understanding of academic policies at CSU. The CSU Registrar's website provides a thorough explanation of many important academic policies: <http://www.colostate.edu/Depts/Registrar/> (<http://www.colostate.edu/Depts/Registrar/>).



When a student's grade point average (GPA) falls below a 2.0, the student is placed on Academic Probation 1. Students have two semesters to raise their cumulative GPA to 2.0 or higher and return to good academic standing. If students fail to raise their cumulative GPA above a 2.0 within those 2 semesters, they will be academically dismissed from the University.

It is extremely important that students on academic probation meet with an academic advisor as soon as possible. Academic advisors will assist students to create an academic plan to give students every opportunity to return to good standing. Academic advisors will also calculate the GPA a student needs to earn to get off academic probation, and they will provide a student with information about resources such as tutors, study skills workshops, and much more.

One campus resource that has proved to be especially beneficial to students on academic probation is the Learning Assistance Program (LAP). The LAP is a specialty service offered through Hartshorn Health Service and the University Counseling Center. The LAP offers psycho-educational evaluations for learning difficulties to identify whether any learning disorders and/or attention deficits are impeding a CSU student's academic performance. Additionally, the LAP's website offers a number of helpful academic tips regarding time management, study skills, test-taking, note-taking, and more. This website is located at: <http://www.counseling.colostate.edu/services/academic/learning-assistance-center/index.asp> (<http://www.counseling.colostate.edu/services/academic/learning-assistance-center/index.asp>).

Finally, it is important to note that students on academic probation commonly experience feelings of isolation, shame, and/or guilt. Academic success at CSU may be difficult to achieve, and the changes a student may need to make are often followed by experiencing academic difficulty initially. It is essential that students understand the resources on campus that are offered to them. Meeting with an academic advisor is a crucial step to quickly get them back on track. Ultimately, academic success is up to the student. However, the faculty and staff at CSU are committed to offering support and guidance to students struggling academically, and those personal relationships with our students can make the difference.

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## **Bonus RamCash Offer for a Limited Time**

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Students at Colorado State University have many convenient and delicious dining options located right on campus. Paying for those meals is also convenient. RamCash accounts can be used to purchase food and beverages across campus. And now, until February 13, 2009, student will receive an additional \$5 in their account for every \$50 added.

RamCash accounts are accessed using the CSU RamCard (student ID). Your student simply shows their card at any of the on-campus dining venues and the money is deducted from the account. It is accepted at Durrell Express, the Lory Student Center, any Residential Dining center, Aspen Grille, Cam's Lobby Shop, Brewed Awakening in Rockwell Hall and Cram-A-Latte in the Morgan Library. Your student can also use RamCash at familiar venues such as Panda Express, Taco John's and Carl's Jr, also located in the Lory Student Center. Students simply show their RamCard to purchase items and the receipt will tell them how much money remains in the account.



You and your student can easily access the account online at [www.ramcard.colostate.edu](http://www.ramcard.colostate.edu) (<http://www.ramcard.colostate.edu>). You will be able to view account history, check the account balance, and add money to your student's RamCash account as you wish.

For more information, come by the RamCard Office located on the lower level of the Lory Student Center, or call 970-491-2344 or email [ramcard@colostate.edu](mailto:ramcard@colostate.edu) (<mailto:ramcard@colostate.edu>). The special RamCash \$5 Bonus is only available until February 13, 2009.

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## To Change or Not To Change a Major

*By Judy Brobst,  
Career Center*

"Choosing a degree is so confounding that half of all college students change majors at least once," said Clifford Adelman, senior associate at the Institute for Higher Education Policy in Washington, D.C, so when your college students express an interest in possibly changing their major ask them to explain a few things:

1. What is going on with your current major that you don't like?
2. What other majors are you considering?
3. Who have you spoken with about changing your major?
4. What have you done to see if this is a good fit for you?



As a Career Counselor mom of two college students, both of them changed their majors, I can honestly say it was the most confusing time for me and my husband as to why this was happening. When our son went off to school, out of state (with scholarship money), he wanted to be an architect. He liked math and art and decided he could combine those in architecture. We agreed; sounded like a good major and off he went. Six weeks into his first semester we got the call: "I want to change my major." We asked the above questions, got answers, good solid answers, then sent him to career services to do some assessments to uncover his "interests, values, skills, personality"

and see if his new major, Art Education, would be a good fit. Turns out it was great for him and he was successful and happy.

When our daughter went off to school, out of state (with scholarship money), she wanted to major in graphic design. Always the creative one, the school she selected allowed her to explore this major and be creative in design and art. We agreed; sounded like a good major and off she went. Three weeks into the first semester we got the call: "I want to change my major AND oh yeah, I'll need to change schools since the school here doesn't offer the new major." We asked the above questions, didn't get great answers so we made her stay for another semester until she could talk with us about what was really happening. When half way through the spring semester of her first year she was able to tell us the answers with solid reasoning, we sent her to career services as well to make sure she had a firm understanding of what this new career field would be like and if it a good "fit" for her. Then we "insisted" that she do an internship over the summer to learn more. She was happy as could be working for a landscaping company and she knew the new major was right. Now she is at CSU majoring in Landscape Architecture. Still design oriented but with a totally different outcome. She has tangible results, loves to work inside and outside, is still drawing and designing and loving every minute of it. It's harder than her first major, but she is thriving and successful.

So, if you get "the call" don't forget to ask the questions and remind yourself and your student that The Career Center at CSU is here to help your student figure this all out.

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## Want to Help Your Student Get to Year 2 @ CSU?

*By Marlon Blake*

*Student Coordinator, First & Second Year Transition Programs*

Orientation & Transition Programs in the Center for Advising and Student Achievement (CASA) is dedicated to assisting first year students to successfully transition into CSU, through the entire first and second year and ultimately helping students return to CSU for a third year to eventually graduate! Preview Orientation, Ram Welcome, The First Year Mentoring Program, and the **Getting to Year Two @ CSU Conference** are programs designed for first year students to help with a successful transition to college.



This spring, the 2nd Annual **Getting to Year Two @ CSU Conference** will be held in the Lory Student Center on Thursday, February 12, 2009. **Getting to Year 2 @ CSU** is a one day conference for first year students (in the second semester). Students are able to select breakout sessions to attend throughout the day. Sessions will provide students with information and resources to assist students with the transition to a second year at CSU.

These breakout sessions are focused on topics such as:

1. Office Campus Living
2. Finding Internship Opportunities
3. How to work with Your Professors
4. Motivation, Goal Setting & Balance
5. Financial Management
6. And Much More!

Additionally, there will be keynote speaker during lunch to encourage success of students at CSU. The conference provides a flexible opportunity to select and attend sessions. Sessions are offered

multiple times throughout the day, so students can pick and choose which sessions work with their schedules. Also, a free lunch and breakfast are provided for students who attend the conference.

Students who attend the **Getting to Year 2 @ CSU Conference** will likely feel more prepared to begin a second year at CSU and are more likely to return for a second year. Of the students who attended the conference in the spring of 2008, 93% returned for a second year at Colorado State University. This conference provides tools, knowledge and skills for students to make their second year the best it can be.

As parents and family members who are engaged in your student's academic success, highlighting this conference is a way you can provide support and encouragement for your students!

For more information, contact Orientation and Transition Programs in the Center for Advising and Student Achievement (CASA) at (970) 491-6011 or e-mail Keith Lopez, Coordinator, Transition Programs at [keith.lopez@colostate.edu](mailto:keith.lopez@colostate.edu) (<mailto:keith.lopez@colostate.edu>).

For more information, a complete listing of sessions, or for students to register, visit: [www.otp.colostate.edu/conference](http://www.otp.colostate.edu/conference) (<http://www.otp.colostate.edu/conference>).

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Note: The above link will open up a new e-mail message for you to unsubscribe to the Parent-Family newsletter (please remember to send the message!). If the above link does not work, you may still unsubscribe from our newsletters by simply sending a message to [listproc@colostate.edu](mailto:listproc@colostate.edu) (<mailto:listproc@colostate.edu>). Include the words "unsubscribe PARENT-FAMILY" in the body of your e-mail and send the message to unsubscribe!

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