2023

PARENT HANDBOOK

OFFICE OF PROSPECTIVE STUDENT PROGRAMS
AND NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION

Mobile Townhouse
5910 USA South Dr.
Mobile, Alabama 36608

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PARTNERSHIP FOR SUCCESS

The University of South Alabama is committed to establishing and maintaining a sound relationship with family members. This handbook is designed to help familiarize families with the University and provide information about campus services and programs. We view our role as partners in your student's success and hope this handbook will assist with:

Being Informed. Family members can help their student by being informed about the programs, services, and activities the University of South Alabama offers.

Communication. One of the most helpful things family members can do for their student — whether it's homesickness, academic problems, roommate difficulties, or something else — is to ask them, "What are you doing to resolve the situation?" and encourage them to handle it. Learning to do this builds self-esteem and gives students a sense of control over their environment.

Understanding Campus Culture. Family members can support the University's efforts in holding students accountable for their behavior. Family members should give the University the chance to work with students to resolve issues they may face. USA works to be as thorough and consistent as possible in our application of policies, but we know that parents may want to solve their student's problems for them. Of course, we encourage parents and guardians to be supportive of their student. However, the student must learn to take the lead in resolving issues.

Letting Go

Like most changes or transitions that produce personal growth, moving away to college may bring pressures, stresses and challenges for both students and their parents. During this time, some of the most important life transitions occur. For students, effective adjustment to college requires coping with feelings of loss when moving away from home and finding new friends and relationships. Effective time management and caring for self can also be challenging for many students. Support from parents and family is critical to a student's successful transition to college.

Leaving Home

The initial separation of moving away to college can evoke many feelings. When a student leaves home, a number of things are left behind: the familiarity of one's house, room, friends, parents, school, etc. Separation from these things and people must occur so that the individual can invest in college life. For students, potentially positive involvement in campus life, activities, experiences and friends may be hindered by anxiety, a temporary sense of loss of self and confusion (or even chaos). The associated inner conflicts are sometimes conscious, but more often they are not.

Listening

Parents who actively listen will usually allow their student to express underlying feelings, which provides the parents with a better understanding of the feelings behind the student's behaviors. Ongoing communication between parents and students supports the young person's ability to make more positive and effective adjustments. It can be difficult for parents to allow their child to "work through" a problem or situation. However, each time a student finds a solution to a problem, it can enhance their self-confidence and teach them important life lessons. Many young people today possess a great deal of knowledge, but developing problem-solving skills allows them to translate that knowledge into making thoughtful and wise decisions.

Identity Development

A major task of early adulthood is to develop meaningful relationships with others. This requires a certain amount of experimentation and possibly rejection of parental values. The rejection of parental advice by college-age adults may be difficult for parents to accept. Parents may feel frustration and anxiety during these times and attempt to "regain control" or to withdraw emotionally from their children. Remember that some degree of exploration and testing of new ideas is required for the development of a clear self-image.

New Relationships

A major task of adolescents and young adults is to develop significant relationships. Some will be lasting and others will not. Relationships developed during college are important to the student's feeling of acceptance by their peer group. These relationships can provide a source of social support during times of stress. Mentoring relationships with faculty and staff can also be beneficial.

Competition

Entering freshmen may also sense a higher level of competition in the university setting. Students may experience either academic or interpersonal failures for the first time. Parents should not try to protect their children from experiencing failure. Learning how to rebound is a very important lesson for young adults.

Residence Life

Throughout the first year, tensions may develop between your child and their roommate. It is always an adjustment to learn to live with someone else. Few students have shared a room at home, and whether their new roommate(s) were strangers or friends prior to living together, conflicts may occur. Living in the residence halls provides students with an opportunity to recognize, accept, and adjust to individual differences.

Overcoming Stress

Your student will begin making adjustments as soon as they arrive on campus. Some freshmen identify the first month at college as the most stressful time during their first year. During this time, they may make frequent calls home. Your student may even expect you to know that they are lonely and to know when to call (by reading his or her mind). Parents can be most helpful by listening actively and empathetically to students' concerns. Stay calm; listen for the feeling the student is attempting to express and try to understand it before responding. In surveys at universities across the country, the most common areas of concern included:

- Dealing with emotions/feelings (loneliness, depression, anxiety, etc.)
- Stress (social, family, time management, etc.)
- Health Issues (colds/flu, exercise, nutrition, sleep, etc.)
- Interpersonal conflicts and relationship difficulties
- Academics

Parents can help students get through a particularly tough time by mailing a special letter or package and offering their support. Some helpful suggestions include:

- Maintain contact with your college student, but don't over-identify or try to over-control them.
- Be available to listen. Your primary role during this stage of development is to act as a sounding board and guide by reflecting the young person's thoughts back to them and allowing that person to reach their own decision.
- Give specific advice only when asked and don't feel rejected when your advice is questioned. This is normal! Allow for learning by trial and error when possible.
- Encourage and be positive when possible. Do not use guilt or threats. Show empathy.
- Be a good role model.
- When these suggestions do not appear to be helping, suggest campus resources and/or contacts such as resident assistants, deans, professors, the Student Health Center and the Counseling and Testing Center.

Returning Home

When freshmen return home on weekends, holidays, and summer breaks, they often practice new behaviors and express new ideas within their old environment. Parents may feel that their child should be excited to see them and spend time with them. Most students will be excited to see you for the first 24 hours, but then the excitement may wane. Even sleeping late may be viewed negatively by parents, but coveted by exhausted freshmen.

Freshmen may identify holidays and the first summer home as stressful because they are again subject to rules and regulations of the home. While at school, they come and go as they wish and set their own limits. Some feel that they are forced to return to a child's role. Students may find this adjustment difficult. Both parents and students should be aware of these issues. Hopefully, each will be able to discuss the expected rules and regulations associated with time spent at home during breaks.

Personal Family Changes

Most parents of freshmen are at or near midlife. Many are experiencing their own midlife changes. Family stability is important to most students during the process of separation and independence. For more information and resources about the college transition for students and families, call the USA Counseling and Testing Center at (251) 460-7051.

Adapted from "Thoughts and Suggestions for Parents of First-Year Students," John W. Green, M.D., professor of adolescent and young adult medicine, Vanderbilt University.

NOTES

STUDENT FINANCIAL SERVICES

The Division of Student Financial Services (SFS) understands how complex the world of financial aid and educational expenses can appear. We are committed to offering students support in meeting their financial obligations, understanding the policies of the institution, understanding how to budget for the now AND plan for the future, as well as navigating the everyday college experience. SFS includes Financial Aid, Scholarship Services, Student Accounting, USA One Stop and our student support program, South CARES.

Payment Deadlines

Students must pay the balance on their account in full in the Office of Student Accounting or online via PAWS. Payment methods include cash, check, money order, ACH webcheck, VISA, MasterCard, American Express or Discover card. Financial aid authorized to a student's account or enrollment in the USA Payment Plan are also applied as payment toward charges for the semester. Spring term balances are due in full by Wednesday, January 4. 2023. If a student misses this deadline, their schedule will be released and they will be given an opportunity to re-register. However, there is no guarantee that their original schedule will be available.

USA Payment Plan

The USA Payment Plan is offered through the Office of Student Accounting. Students or an authorized user must enroll and pay a $35 nonrefundable processing fee each term to participate. The plan features 3-4 monthly payments for each semester (Late enrollment may reduce the number of payments available) based on actual charges and plan enrollment date. For more info, visit southalabama.edu/studentaccounting

USA Bookstore Charges

If a student has excess eligible student aid funds after all charges on the student account are covered, students may charge up to $1,500 (or the available balance, whichever is less) of books at the USA Bookstore. The Bookstore will have the student's account balance at checkout after the student has registered. Bookstore charges will be placed on the student's account in order to be covered by excess student aid funds. Financial Aid Bookstore charges for the spring semester run Monday, December 5, 2022 - Tuesday, 17, 2023.

NOTES

STUDENT AID REFUNDS

If the total amount of student aid exceeds the charges on the student account, the student account will be assessed for eligible refunds. Any refunds are processed by the Office of Student Accounting.

1. Any tuition refunds for which tuition was originally paid by credit card will be refunded to the credit card. If enrolled in Electronic Direct Deposit (EDD) through the Office of Student Accounting, the refund will be deposited to the student's checking account.

2. If not enrolled in EDD, the refund will be mailed by the Office of Student Accounting to the mailing address in PAWS. This process may take up to 10 business days.

3. Please refer to the Academic Calendar for the dates each semester that refunds will be issued.

OFFICE OF FINANCIAL AID
Meisler Hall Suite 1200
(251) 460-6231
finaid@southalabama.edu

OFFICE OF SCHOLARSHIP SERVICES
Meisler Hall Suite 1225
(251) 461-1958
scholarships@southalabama.edu

OFFICE OF STUDENT ACCOUNTING
Meisler Hall Suite 1300
(251) 460-6195
studentaccounting@southalabama.edu

USA ONE STOP
Meisler Hall Suite 2100
(251) 341-4872
onestop@southalabama.edu

SOUTH CARES
Meisler Hall Suite 2100
(251) 341-4872
southcares@southalabama.edu

STUDENT ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Student Academic Success supports the mission of the University by offering, supporting, and assessing programs and services designed to improve student academic success, including but not limited to retention and graduation. The following offices and programs fall under Student Academic Success: Academic Advising & Transfer Services, Career Services, Center for Academic Excellence, freshman learning communities, the university first year experience courses, and the USA Scholars Initiative, including our Earn Back program. For more information, visit SouthAlabama.edu/sas.

Academic Advising & Transfer Services

Academic advising is the process where students obtain the critical information they need to make thoughtful decisions about their college career, such as deciding upon a major or solving any roadblocks they may encounter along the way. An academic advisor's purpose is to encourage students to develop as self-directed learners and decision makers. Finally, good academic advising supports the mission of the University of South Alabama through encouraging student academic success and persistence towards graduation. For more information, visit SouthAlabama.edu/fyac

ACADEMIC ADVISING & TRANSFER SERVICES
(251) 341-4017
aats@southalabama.edu
111 Student Services Drive
Academic Support Center, Suite 1380

Career Services

USA Career Services is committed to providing Jaguars with competitive career development opportunities throughout their time at the University of South Alabama and beyond. Our team is dedicated to seeing your student succeed in their education and career. We help students explore careers and majors, gain practical, related experience prior to graduation, and prepare them for their professional careers and graduate or professional school plans. We're here to help create a path for your student's future. For more information, visit SouthAlabama.edu/careerservices.

CAREER SERVICES
(251) 460-6188
careerservices@southalabama.edu
111 Student Services Drive
Academic Support Center, Suite 1370

Center for Academic Excellence (CAE)

The Center for Academic Excellence (CAE) is an important part of the Student Academic Services team and offers a variety of academic resources. We are committed to helping students reach their academic goals by offering free peer tutoring and mentoring to enhance their learning. These services are provided by trained peer tutors who maintain at least 3.0 GPA, have recommendations from faculty and staff, and make As in the course.

In addition to resources provided through Student Academic Success, some departments offer tutoring to support their courses. Our tutoring partners may include:

- ThinkingStorm Platform - Offers 24-hour peer tutoring on demand via Zoom: https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/academicsuccess/cae/thinkingstorm.html
- Math Lab Tutoring - The Math Lab offers additional help for students in MTH 100. Trained math tutors are available in the lab (ASC 1301) throughout the week.
- Physics Tutoring — The Physics Department has tutoring available each semester in the lab (MSPB 215).
- Foreign Language Tutoring — The Foreign Languages Department typically offers free tutoring in French, German, Russian and Spanish during fall and spring semesters.

CENTER FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE
(251) 460-6480
cae@southalabama.edu
Marx Library, Second Floor

STUDENT RESOURCES

The Division of Student Affairs is responsible for the part of the student's total educational experience which takes place outside the formal classroom program. Among its responsibilities are maintaining the Student Center, student activities and recreation, student organizations and programs, disciplinary actions, special student services, community service, counseling, multicultural student affairs, and testing services. In addition, programs such as the Student Government Association give the students a responsible voice in the governance of the University. For more information, visit SouthAlabama.edu/studentaffairs.

Center for Educational Accessibility & Disability Resources

The University offers special services to students with disabilities. Students requesting services must submit documentation regarding the student's needs to the Center for Educational Accessibility & Disability Resources. Accommodations are offered in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disability Act of 1990.

CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL ACCESSIBILITY & DISABILITY RESOURCES
(251) 460-7212
disabilityservices@southalabama.edu
Athletics Annex
6001 South Dr, Suite 75

The University Counseling and Testing Center

The University Counseling and Testing Center's mission is to provide high quality counseling, testing, outreach and consultative services to the University community. The staff strive to facilitate the academic, emotional, social, and career development of students. The University Counseling and Testing Center provides confidential, free counseling and crisis intervention services to eligible USA students and consultation and outreach services to members of the USA community.

THE UNIVERSITY COUNSELING & TESTING CENTER
(251) 460-7051
counselingservices@southalabama.edu
300 Student Center Circle

Multicultural Leadership Center

The Office of Multicultural Student Affairs is committed to providing programming for cultural awareness, coordinating efforts to increase the retention of minority students, encouraging minority students to participate in all aspects of campus life, and providing leadership development for aspiring student leaders.

MULTICULTURAL LEADERSHIP CENTER
(251) 460-6895
mlc@southalabama.edu
5930 South Drive

USA Police Department

The University of South Alabama Police Department exists to meet the unique law enforcement needs of the University community. The department is led by a Chief of Police and reports to the Executive Vice President of the University. The department is comprised of sworn law enforcement officers, civilian support staff, and student assistants. All sworn University police officers are state law enforcement officers with full arrest powers as provided by Alabama State Law (Tit. 16-55-10) and have been certified by the Alabama Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission. The department's primary mission is to provide a safe environment so the University can fulfill its educational purpose. The department offers crime prevention programs throughout the year and is responsible for enforcing all state criminal and traffic laws, as well as the policies of the institution.

Everyone plays a role in safeguarding the campus community. Please report all crimes or suspicious activity to the University Police immediately, 24/7. Students can also file a report in person at police headquarters which is centrally located in the residential area of campus in the Beta/Gamma Commons building.

Learn about crime prevention programs, fire safety, emergency/evacuation procedures, and relevant campus safety policies by reading the Annual Security and Fire Safety Report. This report, which also contains crime and fire statistics, is updated annually by October 1 in accordance with Federal law. You can read and print the electronic version of this report at SouthAlabama.edu/departments/police. You may also request a paper copy at the University Police Department headquarters. If you see something, do something!

USA POLICE DEPARTMENT
24 Hr. Patrol/ Dispatch: (251) 460-6312
24 Hr. Text-A-Tip: (251) 219-0219
police@southalabama.edu
290 Jaguar Blvd.

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USA Housing

Students have a substantial number of choices when it comes to on-campus housing. Whether a student's plans include taking classes the entire academic year or simply during a singular semester, they can find housing on campus. South's 33 residence halls can be found on the west side of the main campus divided into 7 residential communities that are home to approximately 2,500 residents. South students who live on campus say it's definitely the best choice for getting involved, making friends, and staying on top of studies. Research shows that students who live on campus have a higher GPA and graduation rate along with a greater sense of belonging. Consider the benefits:

- Your student can be steps away from everything — classes, dining, library, rec center and athletic events. Students meet dozens of fellow students through numerous activities and programs.
- Everything's included — furniture, utilities, laundry, mail, designated parking, Internet and cable TV. USA's dining plans reduce time spent shopping, cooking and cleaning up.
- Academic year contract — no commitment to stay for the summer unless your student needs to.

Care Packages

Share your love and support all year long with the University of South Alabama care package program. A care package is the best way to remind your student that their family is thinking of them on a birthday, a holiday, and during final exams. A care package says it all. Each of our care packages are loaded with all of your student's favorite snacks, including fresh baked cakes or cookies, fresh fruit, candy bars, and more! The best part is that you can include your own personal note to your student in every package. Don't just show them how much you care - tell them!

HOUSING
(251) 341-4663
housing@southalabama.edu
251 Delta Loop

USA Dining

USA Dining offers a wide variety of food and convenient services across campus. These services are designed with the student's needs in mind, providing flexibility, and convenience to meet their demanding schedules. All students living in University Housing are required to have a meal plan. Other meal plan options are available for faculty, staff and commuter students.

- **Eat.** Living where you learn means that eventually, you'll need to eat. With the dining experience at South, students will never have to worry!
- **The Meals.** This portion of each meal plan is available at the Fresh Food Company, South's all-you-care-to-eat dining location. The Fresh Food Company is located on the 2nd floor of the Dining Hall adjacent to the residential communities.
- **The Bucks.** Bonus Bucks supplement your student's meal plan and are accepted as payment at all USA Dining locations. Unused Bonus Bucks roll from fall to spring but expire at the end of the spring term.
- **How it works.** Once your student has a meal plan, their student ID works like a debit card. Just swipe the card, and the amount is deducted each time there is a food service transaction.
- **"Get Funds" app.** A secure service providing students with online account management capabilities to view balance inquiries, check transaction history, report cards lost/stolen, make online deposits, and view off-campus merchants accepting Jag Cash.

DINING
(251) 460-6296
dining@southalabama.edu
350 Campus Dr.
Student Center #232

USA Bookstore

The USA Campus Bookstore is the source for all things South! At the bookstore, students can find new, used and rental textbooks, student supplies and Jaguar apparel. The bookstore has a full assortment of laptops, computer accessories, and other merchandise. Visit the bookstore on campus in the Student Center and online at southalabama.bncollege.com.

USA BOOKSTORE
(251) 460-7012
340 Student Center Circle

USA Mail Hub

The University of South Alabama Mail Hub is located on the first floor of the Student Center. The Mail Hub is a copy, print, pack and ship center and distributes all University intra-campus mail. US Mail is delivered to the Mail Hub, which then delivers it to boxes in the facility. Students living on campus are required to have a box at the Mail Hub and should apply for one. Payment for the box is included in the housing contract.

USA MAIL HUB
(251) 414-8191
mailhub@southalabama.edu
350 Student Center Circle

Student Health

The Student Health Center is available during each semester to all students actively enrolled in the University. All first-time entering students born after 1956 must provide proof of adequate immunization against measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) and answer a TB questionnaire. All students living in University housing are also required to have the bacterial meningitis vaccine (within the last five years).

STUDENT HEALTH
(251) 460-7151
studenthealth@southalabama.edu
5870 USA South Dr.

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ALUMNI RELATIONS

Now, more than ever, connection is critical.

Stay connected to all things South Alabama through a parent membership in the USA National Alumni Association. When you join, you'll receive access to members-only scholarship opportunities for your student, on-campus events at the new MacQueen Alumni Center, monthly email news, and a wide range of money-saving new benefits.

Money-saving benefits include:

- Nationwide hotel, rental car and travel discounts including Disney, Universal Studios, SeaWorld resort, and many more!
- USA Bookstore discount on Jaguar items and supplies (textbooks excluded)
- Discounts from Liberty Mutual Insurance
- Area retail and dining discounts

Visit alumni.southalabama.edu to learn about all of the benefits of joining your National Alumni Association, or call (251) 460-7084.

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South Alabama
NATIONAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

100 Alumni Dr.
(251) 460-7084
alumni@southalabama.edu
Facebook: @USAAlumni
Twitter: @USAAlumni
Instagram: @usa_alumni
LinkedIn: University of South Alabama National Alumni Association