Entering College: A Big Step

John W. Harp, Vice President for Student Affairs

It’s almost time for your son or daughter to take the big step of leaving home and entering college. This will be both an exciting and anxiety-filled experience for new college students (and for parents). When new students across the country arrive on their college campuses soon, it will start the clock on a critical six- to 10-week period in which they will engage in new experiences related to their immediate and eventual success in college. Adapting to new surroundings, new friends, new academic expectations, new routines, and a roommate are just a few of the transitional challenges that new students encounter. But rest easy, the faculty and staff at Cornell College are well-trained to assist your son or daughter with these and other transitions.

As you will soon learn, Cornell College is a special place; a place that makes differences in the lives of students, differences that last a lifetime. Students are expected to learn in a unique format, and live harmoniously in a close-knit and responsive campus community.

Learning to learn

First and foremost, your Cornell student will be challenged to learn in a fast-paced, yet in-depth manner closely resembling the ways of the world of work and life. Most importantly, new Cornell students will enhance their abilities to learn, a skill that will benefit them for a lifetime. The first few months may be trying, but with the right dedication and support, your son or daughter will get the hang of it and will meet this challenge.

Finding their place

Secondly, your son or daughter will experience membership in the Cornell community. Almost immediately, he or she will realize that, along with learning, our community values involvement, leadership, service, diversity, and caring about others. New Cornellians will experience meeting people similar to and very different from themselves. Your son or daughter will reap the rewards of participating in student organizations and service outings, attending campus cultural events, and engaging in thoughtful conversations. He or she will reflect critically after listening to new ideas, being part of a team, and finding activities of interest. Experiences in this community will produce times of joy and celebration and times of pride and belonging. But along the way there may also be times of anxiety and self-doubt. Your son or daughter will learn from these experiences and will develop a deep connection that will cause them to consider the Cornell community as a second home.

Developing as an adult

From the beginning, your son or daughter will be treated like an adult in progress. As you well know, this means having both significant responsibility and freedom. With this freedom and responsibility, your student can expect support and challenge from staff, faculty, and peers. As your student joins organizations, participates in service or excels in class, he or she will receive positive feedback, support and advice. However, if your student skips class or meetings with an advisor, there may be consequences. Finally, if a student makes inappropriate, unhealthy, or dangerous choices, he or she will likely have more serious interactions with staff members. Responses will be firm, fair, and supportive of the development of personal responsibility leading to adulthood.

This is just a capsule of the unique challenges and experiences that lie ahead for your Cornellian this fall. We are proud that more than 8 out of 10 first-year students return for their sophomore year at Cornell; a success rate that is above average compared to similar institutions. We continually strive to provide an outstanding educational experience for Cornellians in and out of the classroom and to engage students in extraordinary opportunities with meaningful outcomes. We are very excited that you and your student will be a part of our community and hope you cherish the experience.

6 ways parents can help students have a successful first-year experience

1. Encourage them to establish guidelines with roommates early, and to talk regularly with each other about how they are getting along.

2. Discuss the necessity to attend every class meeting, prepare beforehand, and turn in all assignments.

3. Stress the importance of effective time management, and discuss the dangers of spending too much time online.

4. Encourage them to meet with professors and advisors, and use resources including the writing studio, academic media studio, quantitative reasoning studio, and the counseling center.

5. Advise them to take in campus events, meet people, and get involved. Engagement outside of the classroom can contribute to learning and development.

6. Ask what they like most and least about college; help them build on the positives and develop solutions for alleviating the negatives.
**MOVE-IN DAY SCHEDULE**

Tuesday, August 28, 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon</td>
<td>Move in (your student’s residence hall) and Validation (Thomas Commons). Students with last names A – M go through validation first, then move in. Students with last names N – Z will check in to the residence halls first, then go through validation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:45, 9:45, &amp; 10:45</td>
<td>Financial Aid &amp; Billing Info Session (Thomas Commons) Attend one of these sessions while your student is busy with Validation. Learn about how billing and financial aid works at Cornell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.</td>
<td>Campus Tours for parents and students (leaves from King Chapel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Lunch (Thomas Commons) Meal plans begin for new students. During Validation, each student will receive two opening day lunch tickets for use by parents or guests. Otherwise, cost is $6.30 for adults and children over 13; $3.50 for children 6-12; free for kids 5 and under.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m. OR 1:45-3:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Parent Orientation session (attend one). Choose the time that best meets your needs; the later program will be a repeat of the earlier one. Facilitators will provide insight about academic and campus life, offer tips for success, and answer your questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15 p.m - 3:45 p.m.</td>
<td>Parent &amp; Academic Advisors Info Sessions (locations will be provided at Validation) Meet your student’s academic advisor and learn about Cornell’s advising system.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:00 p.m. - 4:20 p.m.</td>
<td>New Student Convocation (College Hall Quad; rain location: King Chapel)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:20 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Family Farewell</td>
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**Academics**

**Focus on Academics during NSO**

A significant portion of NSO sessions are dedicated to introducing and immersing students into Cornell’s academic culture. Most sessions are led by faculty members, and include:

- Introduction to the liberal arts
- One Book, reading program
- Individual and small group meetings with academic advisors
- Registration assistance
- Academic expectations (led by upperclass students)
- Blockbuster lectures
- Pre-Law and Pre-Health interest lunches
- Interactive Library Tour
- First Year Seminar course preview

Academic resources are listed here: [http://www.cornellcollege.edu/student-gateway/academic-resources.shtml](http://www.cornellcollege.edu/student-gateway/academic-resources.shtml)

**Grade Reports**

Students receive a grade for each course taken and the grades are available to students on a secure web site by the first week of the next term. A student's academic information, including grades, is considered confidential information by federal law. Students can share their grades via email with parents (and others) by following instructions found here: [http://www.cornellcollege.edu/information-technology/software-training/self-service/sharing-grades.shtml](http://www.cornellcollege.edu/information-technology/software-training/self-service/sharing-grades.shtml)

Additionally, under federal law, Cornell personnel cannot necessarily discuss academic information with parents, even if you receive grade reports. Please expect that Cornell College faculty and staff will pause to verify that they have permission to speak with you before they share any information about your student. If your student has not given us permission to speak with you and wishes to do so, he or she can fill out the "Parental Release" form at [http://www.cornellcollege.edu/registrar/gb-resources-student/Parental%20Release%20Directory%20Information%](http://www.cornellcollege.edu/registrar/gb-resources-student/Parental%20Release%20Directory%20Information%)

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**Questions and Answers**

Many questions, particularly regarding financial aid, registration and billing, will be answered during Validation and the morning session.

Please refer to the NSO webpage (see link below) for your student’s checklist, a parent’s schedule for Move-in Day, and much more.

Can’t find answers to questions before your arrival? Use this guide [http://www.cornellcollege.edu/parents-gateway/resources-at-a-glance.shtml](http://www.cornellcollege.edu/parents-gateway/resources-at-a-glance.shtml) or call the Thomas Commons Info Desk at (319) 895-4334.

**Early Arrival Fall Athletes**


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**New Student Orientation Website** [http://www.cornellcollege.edu/nso](http://www.cornellcollege.edu/nso)

Important links are included for parents and incoming students.
Health & Wellness

Student Physicals

All students are required to submit health information forms (http://www.cornellcollege.edu/student-health/newstudent-healthforms/index.shtml) by July 31. Students who have not turned in the required health forms cannot attend class beginning second block, until the information is complete. Please make sure that the medical history, immunizations, physical forms and insurance information have been sent in.

Health Insurance

Although students are not required have health insurance, we strongly encourage them to enroll in a plan that provides coverage in the Mt. Vernon area. Before your student arrives on campus review your current policy so that you are aware of your student's coverage away from home. To see information about factors to consider in weighing health insurance options and local health insurance options go to http://cornellcollege.edu/student-health/health-insurance/index.shtml. Questions about student insurance can be directed to the Health Center at (319) 895-4292.

Meningitis Vaccine

The Centers for Disease Control highly recommends immunizing all incoming freshmen against meningococcal disease. The meningitis vaccine can be obtained from your family physician or at the Cornell Student Health Center. Sign-up and prepay ($100) for the vaccine at Validation on August 28, or later at the Student Health Center in Ebersole.

Emergency Planning

Family, campus or regional emergencies may occur while your son or daughter is at Cornell. Have multiple options for communicating (e-mail, cell, text, designating a friend of family member outside your hometown and Mt. Vernon through which to relay messages) in case one mode is down.

Rapid Alert Messaging

All new students should register for Cornell’s emergency text messaging service ("RAM Alert") that notifies them of safety concern situations on or around campus. Students will receive an email with a link to confirm their registration. You can read about the RAM Alert system at http://www.cornellcollege.edu/campus-safety/emergencies/ram-emergency-system.shtml

Renter’s Insurance

Cornell highly recommends that you obtain a renter’s insurance policy to cover replacement of your student’s belongings while living away from home. Just like in your home, destructive events (like pipes bursting) can destroy property. Cornell, like other colleges, does not insure students’ personal property, but we do provide immediate assistance. Think of us like the Red Cross; we’ll intervene right away to place students in safe and secure places to live and help meet immediate needs (e.g., textbooks, clean clothes). But replacing entire wardrobes, computers, etc. is the purpose of insurance. Check with your agent or research online to obtain a policy to cover your student’s belongings on and off campus.

Information Technology

Personal Computers Security and Virus Protection

- It is the responsibility of each student to ensure that their personal computer which they will use on campus is virus-free and has a current version of a Cornell supported anti-virus software package when they arrive to campus. A list of supporting packages can be found at http://www.cornellcollege.edu/information-technology/gb-students/system-requirements/index.shtml.

- In addition to having current virus protection, it is extremely important that your student’s computer is up-to-date with the latest available security patches. Please use the appropriate update method for your operating system. The two most popular methods are by running Windows Update on your Windows based computer or Software Update on an Apple system.

ResNet, Telephone, and Cable TV

- All on campus residence hall rooms have network access, both wired and wireless. To connect a personal computer to the Residential Network (ResNet), students must have a computer with a network card. If the computer does not have a network card already installed, one can be purchased at any local computer store. Once you have a working computer with a network card installed, simply connect it to the network port in the room using an Ethernet cable, or in the case of a wireless connection, follow the connection instructions at http://www.cornellcollege.edu/information-technology/gb-students/wireless-networks/index.shtml. When your student opens a web browser, they will be directed to Cornell’s online registration page. If needed, IT will assist in connecting a working computer that is virus-free and spyware-free to ResNet.

- All residence hall rooms are equipped with a telephone line that will allow for free local calls. Students need their own handset and voicemail system if they wish to use one. All students need to provide their own long distance access. Due to Cornell’s location, some brands of cell phones do not receive a reliable signal on campus. The four providers that we have found to provide the best reception are US Cellular, Verizon, iWireless, and Nextel, but there may be campus trouble spots for those providers as well.

Smoke-free Campus

State law requires all indoor and outdoor campus spaces to be smoke free.

Questions?
Contact Cornell’s Information Technology (IT) Department at 319-895-4357
Or www.cornellcollege.edu/information-technology
Stay Connected with Cornell

- This regularly updated site serves as the Parents online newsletter. Many helpful tips, links and contact information are listed here: [http://www.cornellcollege.edu/parents-gateway/](http://www.cornellcollege.edu/parents-gateway/)
- Follow the happenings at Cornell via the news center page at [http://news.cornellcollege.edu/](http://news.cornellcollege.edu/)
- Watch the Student Gateway for announcements students receive [http://www.cornellcollege.edu/student-gateway/](http://www.cornellcollege.edu/student-gateway/)
- Find us on more than a dozen social networking sites. [http://news.cornellcollege.edu/find-us-on-the-web/](http://news.cornellcollege.edu/find-us-on-the-web/)

Transportation to airport or bus station

Mount Vernon is just 20 minutes from both the Eastern Iowa Airport and the bus terminal in Cedar Rapids. Students who need transportation to or from one of these points can find options at [http://www.cornellcollege.edu/info-desk/accommodations-and-transportation/index.shtml](http://www.cornellcollege.edu/info-desk/accommodations-and-transportation/index.shtml)

Hertz On Demand Car Sharing Program

Two Hertz rental cars are stationed on campus and available for use by Cornell students who join the Hertz On Demand program. The car sharing program makes rental cars available to 18-20 year olds 24/7, offers hourly rates that includes gas and insurance coverage, and has cars available in dozens of cities around the country. All transactions are handled online. Students should submit their applications several weeks in advance of needing a car. For more details visit [www.hertzondemand.com/CornellCollege](http://www.hertzondemand.com/CornellCollege).

Money matters

There are three local banks in Mount Vernon (links on NSO webpage); one has an ATM in Thomas Commons. Iowa Banking laws require anyone using it be charged $1.50 per transaction with the exception of Mount Vernon Bank & Trust customers or Shazam Privilege Status card holders. Students may cash checks for up to $100 in Old Sem during business hours Monday-Friday.