

# The Wolfpack

March 2014

An update for freshman students' parents

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## Coached to coach: freshmen can be peer coaches for 2014-15 academic year

by Madeleine Faircloth, '17

The First-Year Experience at St. Bonaventure University would not be complete without peer coaches. They are among the first friends made and key in helping guide new students through their extraordinary journeys.

Peer coaches are volunteers chosen specifically for their involvement on campus and their academic successes. They love St. Bonaventure and want to pass that love and passion on to incoming students. "I just wanted to make sure every new student has as good an experience as I did my freshman year," said sophomore Peer Coach Jillian Hammell.

The peer coaches are assigned to incoming students based on an informational activity form each Peer Coach fills out. Incoming students are then contacted by their respective peer coaches during the summer so any lingering questions they might have can be answered. During Welcome Days, groups meet and learn how their peer coaches can support them. Peer coaches check on their assigned students throughout the year, occasionally reminding first-year students their coaches are available if they have any questions. Freshmen are also encouraged to get involved with clubs and activities on campus.

Students acknowledge the influence of their peer coaches. "(He) goes out of the way to say 'hi' to me and make sure everything is going great," freshman David

Bryant said of his peer coach, sophomore Ryan McDonough. McDonough keeps in touch via email with the students he peer coaches.

McDonough and Bryant are in the same major, which is common and helpful in peer coaching match-ups. This adds to the connections made early into the Bonaventure career. "His being there just made my transition so much easier," Bryant said.

Freshman Ellen Piper and her peer coach, Elizabeth O'Rourke, have a similar relationship. O'Rourke is an elementary education major and Piper is a theology major — the only one in the freshman class — but that did not make them any less compatible. Before Piper moved in, O'Rourke encouraged questions about anything from packing to move-in information. O'Rourke convinced Piper to join clubs she never would have considered.

"It's nice to have an upperclassman that is just a text, email or call away to get the scoop on anything at all," explained Piper. "Sometimes if I don't have anyone to sit with, she'll be there," she added.

Interested students are expected to pick up applications from the FYE Office, Doyle 108, and turn them in by Friday, March 14.

Interviews will commence with the final roster of peer coaches chosen and notified by April 2.



photo credit: gobonnies on Instagram

Players on St. Bonaventure University's women's basketball team wore the sneakers featured above for their game against La Salle on Friday, March 7. Designed by graduate student player Chelsea Bowker, the sneakers commemorated Brian Moretti, assistant sports information director, who died unexpectedly of apparent cardiac arrest on Wednesday, March 7 in Richmond, Va. The Bonnies won the game, 54-42.

information source: Office of Communications and GoBonnies.com

Keep up with more sports-related photos via Instagram by following @gobonnies.



# MIDTERM GRADES —

*the rundown with First-Year Experience director, Chris Brown*

Last Wednesday, March 5, students received midterm grades reflecting their academic progress halfway through the spring semester. If your student signed a FERPA release form, you should receive a copy of those grades in the mail shortly. Midterm grades are intended to provide a realistic snapshot of how well a student is doing. Students can gauge their midterm grade point average by using the GPA Calculator on the SBU website.

We have researched midterm GPAs for many years at St. Bonaventure and consistently find them to be important markers of student success. Even though the midterm GPA is not completely predictive, if a student's midterm grades are good, there is about a 95 percent chance that her end-of-semester grades will also be good. The flip side of that is if a student's midterm grades are below a C, there is a 50 percent chance that her end-of-semester grades will be less than a C. While midterm grades can help predict a student's final grades, it is not too late for students to change their performance.

For students who are doing well, parents should challenge them to keep up the good work. While congratulations are in order, every student has room to improve. Students need to continue (or even increase) the amount of effort they are putting towards their classes to make sure their final grades are as good – if not better – than their midterm grades. Time management can become especially difficult as the spring weather emerges, so don't stop encouraging your student to prioritize academics. We hope to see many students achieve the Dean's List this semester. A semester GPA of 3.25 is required for this honor.

For students who are not happy with their midterm grades, there are many things they can do to improve. As a parent, you can encourage your student to do the following:

1. **Speak with your professor** to discuss any issues, problems or concerns you may have. Often times, they can provide you helpful advice and materials; some professors may offer

extra-credit opportunities.

2. **Attend every class** between now and the end of the semester. Class attendance will increase your chances of understanding the course material, and will help prevent your grades from slipping even further.

3. **Seek support resources** such as the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC), located in the basement of Doyle Hall. The TLC provides tutoring for most introductory classes and hosts a peer editing service called the Writing Lab. Students can set up appointments by visiting the TLC in person or emailing TLC@sbu.edu. The Plassmann Writing Center also reviews student papers and the Math Lab hosts regular support for any math class.

4. **Develop a regular schedule** for studying and re-evaluate your time management skills. Utilize the student planner you received to schedule the times you are in class, when you need to study, and when your assignments are due.

5. **Become knowledgeable** of your Financial Aid package. It is important for you to know the GPA requirements you must fulfill for any aid, including grants and scholarships.

6. **Speak with a Peer Coach, a counselor in the Wellness Center, an RA, or RD** if you are having any issues outside the classroom that may be impacting your academic performance. Issues like irresponsible alcohol use or roommate problems need to be addressed so that your academics emerge as your number-one priority.

Lastly, all students are welcome to meet with the staff in the First-Year Experience office. The FYE graduate assistant and I both offer one-on-one sessions to help create an improvement plan for courses of concern. Students can email [cbrown@sbu.edu](mailto:cbrown@sbu.edu) or call 716-375-2692 to set up an appointment.

*“Like” SBU’s Facebook page to see what’s going on, university-wide.*

## The housing process, post-freshman year

by Kailyn Jennings, '15

Room selection can seem intimidating for students. What if my lottery score is high? What if I don't get to live by my friends? What if I don't get an apartment? But those what ifs are easily answered. Room selection is not as scary as it seems if students are prepared.

Sophomore-year room selection is among the final pieces your student will enter in his or her freshman-year puzzle.

Lottery scores determine when a student can select his or her room. The lower the lottery score, the better. Four factors determine those lottery scores: a random number, an academic excellence score, a co-curricular score and a judicial score.

The random number is between 1000 and 1300. However, if students paid their room deposits late, the score increases to between 1500 and 1600. The academic excellence score is based on students' cumulative GPAs and the number of credit hours they have completed. The academic excellence score is then deducted from the lottery number, improving it. The co-curricular score is dependent upon campus involvement; co-curricular forms were due on Friday, March 7. That score is once again deducted from their overall score. The judicial score is based on violations some students may have to the Code of Conduct; that score would be added to the overall score. After the adjustments, students are left with a final lottery score that determines when they should attend a room selection event. Those with lower final lottery scores get priority positions.

The next step is deciding what type of room the students desire for the upcoming school year. Single rooms are available in Devereux and Francis residence halls. They have shared bathrooms and lounges on the floor for interaction with other students. Doyle offers seven deluxe single rooms, each complete with a private bathroom. These rooms are usually only available to seniors and graduate students.

Students who desire single rooms rely only on their individual final lottery score. If those rooms are filled before they are able to choose, they must sign up for a double room with a roommate. Those who do not have a roommate in mind may be put with a random incoming transfer student or another returning student who also lacked a roommate. Still, single-room seekers are able to put their names on a waiting list in case any single rooms do become available.

Double rooms are available in Devereux and Doyle halls. They also have shared bathrooms and lounges. Students who desire double rooms select a roommate and attend the room selection event together. The better lottery score between the two roommates is the one taken into consideration when deciding upon which day they select their room. Again, if all the double rooms are occupied, students need to sign up for a single room but can be put on a waiting list if any doubles become available.

Students seeking rooms in Devereux, Doyle and/or Francis participate in the General Housing Selection. No applications are needed for this. Students will be emailed a specific date and time to select their room based upon their lottery score. Those

who plan to live together should attend the selection event on the earliest date between the two of them. Again, those with the lowest lottery scores get to go first. Layout maps of each building are available at these times for students to pick the room they want from the map.

The Shay suites application process is a bit different. Shay offers four-person suites, with two double rooms joined by a private bathroom. Shay suites require an application, which was due on March 7. The overall lottery score for the group is determined by adding the sum of all the lottery scores for each student on the application. Those groups with the lower overall lottery scores have priority pick over the others.

If the application is successful, the students will attend the Shay Suite Selection event. If the application is unsuccessful, the students will be placed on a waiting list and will have to participate in the General Room Selection event for Devereux, Francis and Doyle halls. If there are open rooms after the selection for Shay, the remaining rooms are put into the General Room Selection as double rooms. A pair of roommates thus can select a room in Shay but would not have say in who lives in the adjoining room.

Six- and four-person townhouses are also available for upperclassmen. They come complete with a kitchen, dining room, full bathroom, half-bath and single bedrooms.

The Garden Apartments are another option. They house six students in double bedrooms. They come with two full bathrooms, a living room and kitchen.

The townhouses are available only for students who have reached junior status. Sophomores are eligible to live in the Garden Apartments if they have completed an application, which, again, was due on March 7. The applications are sorted by two criteria. At first, a group class rank score is calculated; a senior earns four points, a junior earns three and a sophomore earns one. The applications are then ordered into tiers by the group class rank score from highest to lowest. Next, each student's final lottery score is added together to make a group final lottery score. Within each tier of class rank scores, the group final lottery score is ordered from lowest to highest. A successful application allows students to pick their apartment at the Apartment Selection Event on March 26. Times will vary. Those who are unsuccessful can be placed on a waiting list, apply for a Shay suite and/or participate in the general housing selection.

Students who cannot attend their designated selection time must choose another student to be their proxy. They need to email [resed@sbu.edu](mailto:resed@sbu.edu) before the selection process to notify the staff on who will be selecting their rooms for them.

The Residence Life staff wants to make the selection process as easy as possible. If your student has any questions or wants more information, suggest that he or she stop in RC 204, email [resed@sbu.edu](mailto:resed@sbu.edu) or click this link: <http://www.sbu.edu/sbucustom/Magazine/Housing/>.

# Dear Parents of Bonaventure Freshmen,

It is my pleasure to send a word of greetings to all of you with freshman students at St. Bonaventure University. By now your son or daughter has witnessed the toughest of winters, the stress of finals, the uncertainty of a new environment and his or her first taste of independence. As parents, we have endured the painful process of maturity as we see our children transition into young adults. As an example of that transition, I recently received the following text from our son, Liam, who is a junior, “Do you mind if I use the credit card to buy some clothes for a formal?” My response was, “Sure, when is the formal?” “Tonight,” he replied. Such are the timelines of 20-year-old young men.

As an alumnus of the class of '84, the 31-year husband of a girl I fell in love with at Bonas, father of an '05 alum and the aforementioned junior, I have seen, through the progression of time, a change in the methods we use to communicate with our children. When I arrived on campus with a milk crate full of LPs and a full head of hair, our parents called the hall phone to talk with us and we checked our mailboxes (#120 and I still remember the combo) for a letter. Dropping off our daughter, Katie, as a freshman in 2001, I told her if she needed anything to use the hall phone to give us a call. “The hall phone, seriously Dad?” was her response. Relaying that story to our son (who carries 1,000+ songs in his pocket) when dropping him off as a freshman in 2011 simply invoked a, “What’s a hall phone?”

Hopefully you will have noticed by now that the once-frequent communications (whether it be by phone, text or tweet) have tapered off and your “kid”

has begun to acclimate to his/her new home and friends. If he/she is as fortunate as I am (and our daughter) he/she will have forged bonds with classmates that will last a lifetime. “Home,” to your son or daughter, is now 3rd Rob (as it will always be for me), or 2nd Shay or Francis Hall and their childhood home is now a stomping ground for a hot meal, clean clothes, and a connection to the past. That is what separates St. Bonaventure from other universities; it becomes home. As a parent, this is sometimes a difficult transition as our kids still need us but are developing those relationships and skills that will lead them to independence.

Regardless of the changing technologies in the world in which we live, St. Bonaventure has the enduring tradition of developing exceptional people. Your freshman is in good hands; the Franciscan heritage of St. Bonaventure University is alive and well where the kids are more than students; they are family.

We will continue to communicate with our son via text and Twitter (Facebook is now passé) in the hopes we will get a picture of him and his date at the formal, however, I’m not counting on it — I just hope he remembered the flowers. I wish all of you a “Bona Venture” (good journey) as you witness the transformation of your freshman into adulthood and the St. Bonaventure family.

Best Wishes and Go Bona’s,

Bill Hanvey '84

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