

## **Meredith and Families – A Partnership for Success**

The undergraduate experience is a significant part of one's lifelong developmental process. For traditional-aged students, it is a time of transition from dependence on family through interdependence with family and the campus community and, ultimately, to independence. Meredith College's faculty and staff are committed to providing an academic and living environment that fosters students' progress towards independence. We regard traditional-aged students as young adults and encourage in them the development of problem-solving, critical thinking and life skills. The College recognizes the unique role of the family in supporting student success. We acknowledge the importance of shared expectations about that role and about the relationship of the College with students and with their families. The statements below are principles to guide our interactions and to ensure intellectual and personal development for all our students.

### **We expect the student to:**

- focus on her education, including developing good habits of the mind and examining ideas from varying perspectives
- demonstrate academic and personal integrity
- assume personal responsibility
- use effective communication
- develop perspectives that lead to an appreciation of difference
- develop a commitment not only to self, but also to community

### **To support these expectations Meredith offers:**

- a rigorous education that lays the groundwork for professional excellence, civic engagement, and lifelong learning
- a commitment to student governance and a student-led honor system
- a living-learning environment that provides for intellectual and social development
- support, as well as challenge, in her pursuit of educational, vocational and personal goals

### **We encourage families to:**

- support her educational development, including the exploration of new concepts and academic opportunities
- encourage personal responsibility and integrity in the face of new challenges
- promote her personal development by allowing her to solve problems, make and communicate decisions, and own the consequences of those decisions
- empower her to seek information, resources, and resolutions independently

Working together toward a common goal and with a shared understanding of our roles, the Meredith College community can fulfill our institutional mission of “developing in students the knowledge, skills, values, and global awareness necessary to lead responsible lives.”

## **Frequently asked questions from parents and family members:**

### **Advising, Records and Academic Resources**

At Meredith, administrative staff and faculty advisors provide tools, encouragement and guidance for students. However, students are ultimately responsible for making academic decisions, including creating course schedules, choosing majors, and keeping informed of policies and requirements. It is in this spirit that the Office of Academic Advising, the Office of the Registrar, faculty advisors, and other college staff work to support the academic pursuits of our students.

#### **Q. What if my daughter is having trouble deciding on a major?**

**A.** Some students may know what major they wish to pursue upon entering college, while others need several semesters to explore various interests. If your daughter is undecided about her major, she is in good company. Approximately 70 percent of college students change their major at least once. So even if she enters Meredith with a very clear idea of where she is headed, she may find that she needs to consider alternative majors, due to interest or ability.

New students are encouraged to take courses in areas of possible interest while taking general education courses (i.e., English composition, foreign language, history, religion, math, science, social sciences, arts, health, etc.). Many students find that general education courses open them to new areas of academic interest and, eventually, lead to selection of a major field of study.

Meredith has many resources and opportunities for students who wish to explore a variety of academic and career options, including the Office of Academic Advising and the Career Center. If your daughter is undecided about your major, she should begin to explore majors at Meredith early. Students must declare their major by the end of their sophomore year.

Undecided students should recognize that some majors require specific courses to be taken in a structured sequence. Being undecided for too long or changing majors can lengthen the time in college.

#### **Q: My daughter does not seem to know what her professional aspirations are? How can I help her?**

**A:** It can be overwhelming to make decisions with so many options available. Your daughter is fortunate to have many resources available to her at Meredith College and you can share these with her. The Career Center and Academic Advising Office work closely in helping students select majors and encourage students to explore the various choices during the first year. Careers counselors are available to work individually with your daughter to help her identify her interests, what she feels passionate about, and the skills she prefers to use. She may choose to take an assessment test or register for CPS 101, a course geared to making major and career decisions during the first two years of college. This type of personalized exploration will continue throughout her years at

Meredith. We encourage you to listen to her in a non-judgmental way, provide her with feedback, and help her clarify ideas and concerns. Your opinion is very important to her!

**Q. Who will help my daughter select courses?**

**A.** As a freshman, your daughter will be assigned an academic advisor who is specially trained to work with incoming students during the transition from high school to college. Transfer students work with a faculty member in the department for their intended major. Your daughter's faculty advisor will help with course schedule creation, although the ultimate decisions belong to the student. Faculty advisors are responsible for:

- Assisting students in their consideration and clarification of educational goals.
- Assisting students in developing a plan of study consistent with their goals and objectives.
- Providing accurate information to students.
- Being knowledgeable about programs, resources, policies and procedures.
- Being appropriately available to students.
- Providing timely attention to academic advising matters.
- Assisting students in evaluation and re-evaluation of progress toward established goals and educational plans.
- Making referrals to resources within and outside of the college as appropriate.
- Expecting the advisee to assume her share of the responsibility for the advising relationship and encouraging her to do so.

Your daughter is responsible for :

- Giving thoughtful consideration to personal goals, so academic and career/professional goals can be coordinated with them.
- Discussing long-range personal and career goals with her advisor.
- Knowing the basic requirements of her chosen major well enough to be able to ask meaningful questions (information found through the *College Catalogue*, which the student receives during Orientation, and from specific academic departments).
- Planning ahead for meetings with her faculty advisor.
- Accepting responsibility for making final decisions on academic matters.
- Being familiar with the *College Catalogue* and the course schedule for the current semester.
- Keeping the advisor informed of all changes in her schedule, problems encountered, and those questions that arise which could effect her academic life (such as possible change of major, study skills concerns, etc.).
- Visiting her advisor promptly if she receives any low grades.
- Keeping personal copies of grade reports, requirement sheets, etc.
- Seeking out-of-class activities (i.e., cultural events, interest-related clubs, student organizations, convocations, etc.) relevant to her desired major and other interests.

When your daughter declares her major, she will be transferred to an advisor from the major department.

**Q. Are there specific classes my daughter must take?**

**A.** Educating women to excel is Meredith's mission. Central to that mission is the academic curriculum, which is designed to assist students in acquiring a comprehensive understanding of themselves and a concern for the unity and diversity of the human experience. Students actively participate in the study of a wide variety of disciplines through the **general education curriculum**, focus on a **major field** for in-depth study and also enroll in **electives courses** to complement their choice of major or to explore other interests. This combination of courses will lead to one of the following degrees: Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Music, or Bachelor of Social Work.

Within General Education, students take foundational courses in English Composition, history, and religion. They also complete a series of three multidisciplinary CORE courses that provide cultural and global knowledge. Additionally, a wide variety of courses are offered to develop skills and knowledge in the liberal arts. For more information on General Education at Meredith, see the General Education Website or the *College Catalogue*.

**Q: I heard that my daughter can take courses at other colleges while she is at Meredith. How does that work?**

**A:** Meredith, Peace, and Saint Augustine's Colleges, and North Carolina State and Shaw Universities form a consortium through which they provide their collective educational resources to students at each of the five institutions. Under this agreement full-time Meredith students may take collegiate level courses at any of the other campuses in the consortium. These courses are used for general enrichment, to strengthen particular majors, to enhance career training, and, in certain situations, to earn an additional major or degree. Web-based and video courses at North Carolina State University are not included under the CRC agreement.

A student may take up to three courses per year during the fall and spring semesters through the CRC agreement. She may not take courses available at Meredith, except in unusual circumstances. The approval process begins with the student's academic advisor and requires approval from the head of the respective department or school. A CRC Application form is available at <http://www.meredith.edu/registrar/forms.html> and in the Office of the Registrar. Approval is subject to space availability, as determined by the host institution.

**Q: My daughter is coming home for the summer, and she wants to take a couple of courses at the local college. How can she transfer the credit to Meredith?**

**A:** Your daughter needs to fill out an application for off-campus credit. The form is available at <http://www.meredith.edu/registrar/forms.html> and in the Office of the Registrar. The completed form needs to be turned in to the Office of the Registrar before she takes the course. She will also need to order an official transcript from the college she is attending to be sent to the Office of the Registrar, Meredith College, 3800 Hillsborough St, Raleigh, NC 27607, once she has completed the course. Only courses with a grade of C- or better will be transferred.

**Q. How will my daughter know if she is achieving academically?**

**A.** End-of-semester grade reports are available to the student on their WebAdvisor account, which requires a unique username and password. At Mid-Term, students who are performing at the D or F level receive mid-term reports on or about the seventh week of the semester. These mid-term reports also provide information on how a student may be able to improve their standing in the class.

**Q. What should my daughter do if she is experiencing academic problems?**

**A.** Because the transition from high school to college can be quite challenging, some students may discover that they are not doing as well as they could or should be. Meredith has several ways to reach students who may be academically at-risk, however, it is up to each student to work with her faculty members if she is unsure about her performance. The staff in the Academic Advising Center is also available for assistance and will make referrals to resources available on campus.

In addition to mid-term reports, students may also be contact through the Early Warning System if a faculty member is concerned about them. A collaboration between the Dean of Students and Academic Advising, the Early Warning System offers a comprehensive approach to preventing continued academic difficulty.

If a student finds herself on academic probation, she is given the chance to improve her grades the next semester. If she fails to achieve minimum standards again, she will be suspended for one semester. The Office of Academic Advising provides support for students on probation through workshops and individual assistance. Additional information about satisfactory academic progress can be found in the Undergraduate Catalogue.

**Q. What academic resources are available for my daughter?**

**A.** Many offices on campus offer students academic assistance. If she is having difficulty with general study skills, she should seek support from the Office of Academic Advising. They sponsor study skills workshops and offer individualized assistance. The Learning Center has tutors for math, writing, and some science and foreign languages. Disability Services provides coaching and advice for those with documented disabilities. Of course, faculty members in specific disciplines are more than willing to help students who are having difficulties in their subject areas.

**Q. What if my daughter misses classes because of personal illness or a family emergency?**

**A.** It is her responsibility to notify instructors of personal illness or family emergency and to consult with the faculty to determine how the missed work will be handled. In cases of extenuating circumstances (emergency illness, accident, or extended illness) the Office of the Dean of Students should be notified.

**Q. What if my daughter must stop attending during the course of the semester?**

**A:** There are two options for leaving the college: Leave of Absence or Withdrawal. If your daughter wishes to return to Meredith after an absence of one or two semesters, a leave of absence is appropriate. If her future plans do not include completing further work at Meredith, an official withdrawal is the route to take. Information on both of these procedures can be found on the Registrar's Website. The Leave of Absence and Withdrawal forms are available at <http://www.meredith.edu/registrar/forms.html> and in the Office of the Registrar.

**Q: What is FERPA?**

**A:** FERPA, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, requires Meredith to hold your daughter's student records confidential. The law does allow the College to release information that it has designated as "directory information," such as

- Name, address, telephone number and e-mail address
- Date and place of birth and country of citizenship
- Dates of attendance, academic major, degrees and awards received

Information not designated as directory information will only be released under the regulations promulgated by FERPA. The law permits Meredith to release information to parents of a dependent student as defined in section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 among others. Meredith may also release information to a parent with a signed consent form authorizing the release by the student.

We encourage you to talk with your daughter about her academic work at Meredith. We hope you will find her ready and willing to share the information with you that you wish to see.

For a full description of FERPA and how it relates to your daughter's records, you may see the *Student Handbook* link at [http://www.meredith.edu/students/04\\_05\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.meredith.edu/students/04_05_handbook.pdf)

**Q: I pay my daughter's tuition, and I want to be able to see how she is progressing. How can I do so?**

**A:** The law permits Meredith to release information to parents of a dependent student as defined in section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. Meredith may also release information to a parent with a signed consent form authorizing the release by the student. You can obtain a consent form in the Office of the Registrar and may also present the federal tax documentation to either the Dean of Students Office or the Office of the Registrar to gain access to her academic records. Please also consider asking your daughter to share her grades with you.

**Q: Can I pick up a transcript for my daughter?**

**A:** We need your daughter's signature to release her transcript. If she asks you pick it up you need to have a letter signed by her authorizing us to hand you her transcript. There is a form on-line at <http://www.meredith.edu/registrar/forms.html> which she can use to request a transcript. The request needs to be sent to the office of the Registrar, and must

include her signature. You must show us a photo ID when you come to pick up the transcript.

**Q: How can I see the schedule of classes?**

**A:** You may access the schedule online at <https://advisor.meredith.edu>

Please choose the link for “Students” and then “Search for Sections”. You need to select a term, and you may search in a variety of ways including by specific sections, subjects, academic level or days offered, or even faculty member.

**Q: Where can I find the dates for classes, breaks and commencement?**

**A:** You can access the academic calendar, which includes all of the semester dates online at <http://www.meredith.edu/registrar/acallink.htm>

**Q: My insurance company requires verification that my daughter is a full time student. How can I handle that?**

**A:** Your daughter can request verification from the Office of the Registrar after the drop-add period for the term ends.

### **Honor Code and Honor Council**

**Q: What if my daughter or family member is accused of violating Meredith College’s Honor Code?**

**A:** Meredith College’s Honor Code is a treasured tradition and supports Meredith’s commitment to student self-governance. As members of the Meredith community, students pledge themselves to developing and affirming in each student a sense of personal honor and responsibility. The Honor Council, a branch of the Student Government Association, is comprised of student officers, student representatives from each class, faculty representatives, and an administrative advisor.

If a student is suspected of violating the College’s Honor Code, in or out of the classroom, she is asked to report herself to the Solicitor General of Honor Council or the Dean of Students. If there is sufficient evidence of a violation, an Honor Council hearing will be scheduled to hear facts of the case and to determine an appropriate sanction if the outcome warrants one.

Often a student will contact her parents for guidance and support. Specific Honor Council hearing information, as with all college educational records, is protected by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Although parents/family members may not attend Honor Council hearings, you may provide support and assistance to your student by encouraging her to be an active participant in the Honor System. You can help your family member by staying calm and encouraging her to stay connected with her student support counselor and to prepare for the hearing. Information about specific Honor Council process and procedures may be found in the *Student Handbook and Activities Calendar* (each student receives a copy or it may be found on-line). Please contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 760-8521 for more information or assistance.

## **Residence Life Issues**

### **Q: What is my daughter is having conflict with her roommate or she is having difficulty with another issue related to residence life?**

**A:** The residence life staff is here to help your daughter with her adjustment to college and to community living. Living on campus is like no other experience your student will have and at times she may find it challenging and exciting. To help your daughter have a positive experience, residence life staff are available for assistance. If a student is having difficulty with a roommate conflict, community living, or with other residence life concerns (maintenance, noise, etc.), please encourage her to contact a member of the residence life staff. Residence life staff members include:

- a Resident Assistant (RA) - a student leader on each floor responsible for conducting hall meetings, providing information to residents, fostering a sense of community among residents and assisting with issues such as roommate concerns and homesickness.
- a Residence Director (RD) – full-time professional staff member who lives in the residence hall. Provides supervision for RAs, acts as resource and mentor to residents, and provides support for the community.
- Director of Residence Life – supervises the Residence Directors and oversees the operation of the residence halls. The Director serves as part of the staff in the Office of the Dean of Students.

Students are encouraged to contact a member of the residence life staff about her concern to work toward a solution. Students may also contact the Director of Residence Life and her office assistant by emailing [reslife@meredith.edu](mailto:reslife@meredith.edu)

## **Sources of Support for Students**

### **Q: How are disability services different in college than it was in high school?**

**A:** In college, it is the student's responsibility to request disability accommodations, if she desires them. While this is a legal requirement, it is consistent with our philosophy to empower students to advocate for themselves as they prepare for the transition to life after graduation. Being able to request accommodations and play an interactive role in addressing disability related issues is a valuable skill in self-advocacy. For this reason, disability counselors in the Counseling Center work directly with students to arrange accommodations and other disability related services.

Additionally, faculty and staff are only able to provide accommodations after they have received written notification from our office. If your daughter has disability-related concerns about a particular class, please encourage her to contact the professor or the Disabilities Service Office so that we may assist her in resolving the situation.

For more information about the unique expectations of students requesting disability services, or for more information about any of the policies of the Meredith College Disability Services office, visit our website at

<http://www.meredith.edu/students/counsel/disability/> . For more information about the Counseling Center please visit our website at <http://www.meredith.edu/students/counsel/>.

**Q: Can my daughter's IEP from high school serve as her documentation of a disability for college?**

**A:** No. See the documentation guidelines on the Disability Service website <http://www.meredith.edu/students/counsel/disability/> to see what is required. Once documentation is submitted a disability counselor will review your daughter's documentation to see if it meets the Center's criteria. If your daughter's documentation is incomplete, Disability Services will determine if your student has enough documentation to receive provisional services for a semester while she updates or gets the Center complete and current documentation in accordance with the guidelines. Encourage your daughter to schedule an appointment with a disability counselor to discuss her needs. This appointment is called an "Intake" and is required to receive disability services. A disability counselor can discuss the certification process and clarify questions regarding the documentation required during the Intake session.

**Q: How can I help my daughter if she is feeling overwhelmed, emotional, depressed or anxious?**

**A:** Let your daughter know you care about her and are concerned about her. You may want to identify some of specific behaviors that are worrying you. Encourage her to make an appointment with a counselor in the Counseling Center by calling 760-8427 or dropping by Carroll 106. Follow up and ask her if she's made the appointment. Ask her how the appointment went. If she is having trouble making an appointment, you can ask her what's getting in her way. She may feel more comfortable about making an appointment after learning about the Center and its staff at <http://www.meredith.edu/students/counsel/default.htm>. The Counseling provides free and confidential short term counseling to all students. And yes, that translates into the Center not being able to share information about your daughter without her written consent. Confidentiality is an important aspect of counseling that allows students to truly share what their issues are and work on them directly.

**Q: If my daughter seeks counseling or disability services will that be part of her academic record?**

**A:** No.

**Q: What if my daughter is busy or too shy to pursue an issue or concern?**

**A:** Acknowledge finding time and/ or being assertive can be difficult. Let her know that if the issue or concern at hand is important enough she can make time to place a phone call, send an e-mail, or seek faculty or staff who can answer her question. Remember, the answer to her question might be online, in the Student Handbook or College Catalog. Encourage her independence.

If she is shy or hesitant about approaching faculty or staff, you can role play with your daughter. Have her practice asking her question or discussing her concern with you prior

to approaching faculty or staff to build her confidence and fine tune what she wants to say. Encourage her to write out her questions or concern. She can refer to what she's written during the phone conversation or face-to-face meeting. Ask your daughter to assess the situation; does it lend itself to an e-mail correspondence? She may want to start off by asking her question or sharing her concern with an e-mail.

### **Parent and Family Involvement at Meredith College**

**Q: What is the Parent & Family Board, and how can I serve on it?**

**A:** The Meredith College Parent and Family Association was established in 1970 to provide parents with a means to share observations, suggestions and concerns about College programs and student life. All parents and legal guardians of Meredith College students are members of the Association. The Parent & Family Board serves as an advisory group to the Association and is responsible for administering the affairs of the Association. The Board is made up of caring parents who want to learn more about Meredith, affect change when necessary, and support worthy programs for the advancement of the College. Members of the Board support the College in three areas: student recruitment, fundraising, and on-campus event. The Board is comprised of no more than 18 members. The Board meets two times per year during the fall and spring semesters. If you are interested in learning more about or serving on the Parent & Family Board, please contact Hilary Allen, Director of Alumnae & Parent Relations, at 919.760.8751 or [allenh@meredith.edu](mailto:allenh@meredith.edu)

**Q: When is Family Day?**

**A:** Family Day is held during the fall of each academic year. Although there is not a set date each year, the date is typically set during the summer. Prior to the event, families will receive a mailed invitation. All members of a student's family are invited and encouraged to attend. Family Day offers parents and families a glimpse of what campus life is like and a chance to hear from students, faculty, and staff on various topics. All registrations and any questions should be directed to the Office of Alumnae & Parent Relations at 919.760.8548 or [alumnae@meredith.edu](mailto:alumnae@meredith.edu)