



The Parent Connection

A Student Affairs Division Newsletter

Southern Polytechnic State University



Study Confirms Grades Go Up, Down With Health

*Josephine Marcotty
Star Tribune - Minneapolis
Tuesday, October 28, 2008*

Quit smoking. Turn off the computer. Go to bed.

It could improve your grades. Of course, parents have always known that. Now, in the first study of its kind, researchers at the Univ. of Minnesota have proved it. They matched grade point averages with the typical health problems such as smoking, drinking and stress reported by nearly 10,000 Minnesota college students. They found a clear connection between student health and academic success.

"Health is important," even for young adults who seem to be in the prime of their lives, said Dr. Ed Ehlinger, director of Boynton Health Services at the University of Minnesota and a lead author

of the study. Both parents and college administrators "need to make sure that students have access to health care."



What affects grades the most? Stress (lots of it), excessive screen time, binge drinking and gambling.

Students who reported eight or more emotional stresses, anything from failing a class to credit card debt to a conflict with parents, had an average GPA of 2.72. Those who said they had no significant stress reported an average GPA of 3.3.

"Stress is one of the biggest factors," said Marcus De La Garza, a senior from Duluth, Minn. A year ago, just before finals, he had to go home to take care of relatives with serious health problems, and it showed in his grades, he said.

"I was out of the game," he said Friday. "Now I'm bouncing back." His GPA is up to 3.5.

The ability to handle stress was equally important, the survey found. Those who said they could effectively manage it performed much better than those who said they couldn't. That's an important finding, because it can persuade colleges to provide students with the resources they need to learn how to manage stress, Ehlinger said.

Earlier surveys showed that students who spend a lot of time on the computer, watch-

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Spring, an ideal time to go kite flying!

Phased Registration Comes To SPSU

SPSU is set to implement phased registration beginning with enrollment for the summer semester. Our current system of opening registration and allowing it to remain open for months is inefficient and creates a distinct and permanent disadvantage for students who have later registration times.

Many times, students would register and tie up classes for months, and then decide to not attend just before the last day to pay. They'd drop the

classes, but it would be too late for anyone else to add them. The result would be classes that were not filled, yet no one could register for either.

The new system will still allow students who have early times to register and secure their schedule. But it will remove schedules of students who do not pay, thus allowing students who need those classes an opportunity to get them before the end of registration.

In addition to being fairer to all students, the new system is much more efficient in terms of filling classes, predicting need, and budgeting.

For additional information on phased registration, visit one of the following links:

[General Information](#)

[FAQ's](#)

[Summer 2009 Registration Plan](#)



SPSU
Athletics

Check out [Baseball Coach Matt Griffin's 200th victory](#), [Mark Doll's no-hitter against AUM](#), [Mamadou "Futty" Danso getting picked up by DC United in the MLS draft](#), [Men's Basketball Honors](#), [Women's Basketball Honors](#), and other great stories about SPSU Athletics at the following links:

[Baseball](#)

[Soccer - Men](#)

[Basketball - Men](#)

[Basketball - Women](#)

[SSAC Conference](#)

[NAIA](#)



["Baseball Hall of Fame Day"](#)

5th Annual Diamond Reunion

Saturday, April 11, 2009, 1pm

SPSU Hornets vs. Brewton-Parker College (DH)

Cookout begins at 12:30pm

Questions? 678-915-7351

Parents' Guide To College Depression

Allison Van Dusen
Forbes Magazine



The rate of students reporting ever having been diagnosed with depression increased 56% between 2000 and 2005, from 10% to 16%, according to the American College Health Association's National College Health Assessment.

But just how common is the problem?

The organization's fall 2007 survey showed that, of more than 20,000 students questioned at 48 schools, 36% were so depressed that it had caused difficulty functioning on one to 10 occasions during the previous year.

Why Now?

Depression has likely grown among college-aged students in the U.S. due to more diagnoses (an effect of increased awareness), more campus mental health resources and a greater willingness to discuss the problem and seek treatment for it, says Dr. Rachel Glick, Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Michigan and former co-chair of the Presidential Task Force on Mental Health on College

Campuses.

Kids today are also being treated for psychological problems earlier than ever before, enabling them to attend college when it might not have been possible otherwise.

There's also a lot to be said about the powder keg that can be a young adult's transition to college. Not only are kids aged 18 to 22 experiencing a flood of developmental changes, they're also usually living on their own for the first time, dealing with the stresses of figuring out their careers and staying up all night. Some are experimenting with drugs and alcohol. And then there are all of those expectations.

“. . . there's no weakness in seeking counseling to get through a period of depression.”

"There are a lot of notions that this is the way college has to be, this is the way I've planned on it to be my whole life," says Todd Sevig, Clinical Director of Psychological Services at the University of Michigan. "When that starts to change, it's disconcerting."

What You Can Do?

While many parents are aware of their college-bound children's vulnerabilities,

whether due to past experiences with depression or a family history, others are caught by surprise.

"Some people are quite vulnerable to depression, but it doesn't emerge until the highly stressful years of separation and trying to grow into adulthood," says Dr. Chris Martin, staff psychiatrist and team leader of the Menninger Clinic's Compass Program.

That's why it's crucial for parents to keep an eye out for changes in their child's attitude and behavior during the transition to college, as well as other periods of change such as the times leading up to summer break and graduation. This can be tricky to do, especially from afar, but the key is to look for unusual changes in your child's appetite, sleeping habits (such as a sudden onset of insomnia), ability to concentrate and energy levels, Martin says.

If you spend a lot of time talking with your child about college, consider discussing the problems he or she might encounter too. Bringing up the topic now can make it easier for your child to open up about problems later. Sharing the fact that there's no weakness in seeking counseling to get through a period of depression can also, in a subtle way, influence your child to get help if he or she ever needs it.

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KEY PHONE NUMBERS

SPSU General Information	(678) 915-7778
ATTIC	(678) 915-7361
Bookstore	(678) 915-7355
Business Office	(678) 915-7216
Career & Counseling Center	(678) 915-7391
Financial Aid	(678) 915-7290
Library	(678) 915-7276
Registrar	(678) 915-1999
Residence Life	(678) 915-7335
Tutoring Center	(678) 915-3052

(College Depression – Continued from page 2)

Parents whose children are currently dealing with depression would also be wise to compare the mental health resources at the schools on their child's wish list, Sevig says.

If a child's problem is severe, it might mean asking if he or she would be able to work with a psychiatrist or inquiring about whether students are ever hospitalized if their illnesses progress. It's smart to look into what your health insurance covers in terms of mental health care in different states, too.

With some planning, parents can position themselves so they're better able to help their children deal with depression and get as much as possible out of the college experience.

"Kids with depression and anxiety disorders should be able to succeed with good treatment," Glick says. "I think it's harder, but it shouldn't be a block to their being successful."

(Millennials – Continued from page 4)

By 2008, seniors' top ten list had shifted to include the U.S. Department of State, Peace Corps, NASA, CIA, FBI, and Teach for America.

- A record share of new students report feeling so "overwhelmed" that they have sought counseling, according to UCLA's *American Freshman* survey.
- Parents report talking on the phone with their collegiate children an average of three to four times a week, and welcoming them home for visits seven or eight times each school year.
- Parents agree by four to one that they are more involved in helping their children succeed at college than their own parents' generation was.
- Millennial parents are extremely likely to intervene on behalf of their children when facing a variety of problems, from poor quality housing and food to unfair pay at a campus job to problems with class attendance and substance abuse.

Tornado season is here, are you ready?

Tornado season in Georgia hits its peak from March to May. Information provided on the radio or TV is often confusing as to what you need to do. Here is a quick guide to the information Weather Service personnel pass along:

- **TORNADO WATCH:** Tornadoes are possible in your area. Remain alert for approaching storms.
- **TORNADO WARNING:** A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. If a tornado warning is issued for your area and the sky becomes threatening, move to your pre-designated place of safety.
- **SEVERE THUNDERSTORM WATCH:** Severe thunderstorms are possible in your area.
- **SEVERE THUNDERSTORM WARNING:** Severe thunderstorms are occurring.

For additional information on tornadoes and thunderstorms, check out the National Weather Service's [Preparedness Guide](#).

(Grades – Continued from page 1)

ing TV or playing video games were more likely to engage in other unhealthful habits such as eating fast food, Ehlinger said. Now it's clear that these activities cut significantly into their grades as well. Four or more hours of screen time a day resulted in an average GPA of 3.04 or less. Less than an hour a day bumped it up to 3.3 or better.

The same pattern held with binge drinking. Teetotalers reported an aver-

age GPA of 3.31, compared with 2.99 for students who drank excessively at least once in the previous two weeks.

Ben Flatum, a university senior from Stillwater, Minn., just completed what he called "the year of being healthy." He stopped the regular partying, started eating better and began training for a race in Chicago that he ran last week.

"My time and energy has been exponentially better," he said. His weight is

down 25 pounds, and his GPA is up to 3.3 from the 2.5 he had as a partying freshman.

There were some surprises, especially in how resilient young adults can be, Ehlinger said. Students who said they had been sexually or physically abused at some point in their lives had no significant differences in their GPA compared with other students. It shows, he said, that with time, young adults can overcome such trauma, at least as far as their grades are concerned.



Helicopter Parent or Transitional Supporter?

For many parents, sending a child off to college can be a tough transition. Adjusting to an empty or emptier nest, shifting roles from primary caregiver to “distant” supporter, and learning to communicate in different and less frequent ways are all demands that require patience and new approaches. To help with this transition, I’ve listed some books that you may find useful as you move through this time of change and adjustment.

- **Empty Nest ... Full Heart: The Journey From Home to College** (2002), Andrea Van Steenhouse, ISBN: 0961980621
- **College Survival Tips for Parents: Fostering Growth and Independence in Your Kids** (2008), Ceil Hall, ISBN: 1439205124
- **You’re On Your Own (But I’m Here If You Need Me): Mentoring Your Child During The College Years** (2003), Marjorie Savage, ISBN: 0743229126
- **Parenting College Students: 27 Winning Strategies for Success** (2008), Debi Yohn, ISBN: 1440464626
- **She’s Leaving Home: Letting Go As Daughter Goes To College** (2002), Connie Jones, ISBN: 0740723464
- **Letting Go: A Parent’s Guide To Understanding The College Years** (2009), Karen Coburn and Madge Treeger, ISBN: 0061665738
- **I’ll Miss You Too: An Off-to-College Guide for Parents and Students** (2006), Margo Woodacre Bane and Steffany Bane, ISBN: 1402206410



• **Millennials Go To College**

• *Strauss & Howe, 2007*

- **Some facts from the 2nd edition:**
- Nine in ten teens now describe themselves as “happy,” “confident,” and “positive.”
- 70 percent of Millennial teens said it is essential or very important to help others who are in difficulty—the highest response in twenty-seven years.
- The share of teens reporting “very different” values from their parents has fallen by roughly half since the ’70s, and the share who say their values are “very or mostly similar” has hit an all-time high of 76 percent.
- An MTV survey of how much time teenagers spend on various activities added up to 26 hours each day—not including sleep.
- The share of teens age 16 to 19 who are employed (part time or over the summer) is at the lowest in recorded history.
- 57 percent of college students consider the amount of time they spend with full-time faculty to be “very” or “extremely” important.
- A higher share of men than women say that the “social” part of college is “extremely important,” including such activities as meeting new people, having fun, being part

Key Dates To Remember

- National Anxiety Screening Day – April 1 [More Info](#)
- Baseball Diamond Reunion – April 11 [More Info](#)
- GACE College To Career Fair – April 14 [More Info](#)
- Last Day of Classes – April 30
- Final Exams – May 2 – 7
- Graduation – May 9
- Summer Semester Begins – May 18
- Payment Deadline For Tuition / Fees – May 21
- Memorial Day – May 25 – University Closed

of a student body that shares values, and joining an alumni network.

- The proportion of incoming college freshman who say it is “very likely” they will volunteer in college is at an all-time high.
- College seniors’ top ten “ideal employers” in 2001 were 3M, Amazon, Accenture, IBM, Walt Disney, Microsoft, Cisco Systems, BMW, Abbot Labs, and Dreamworks.

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