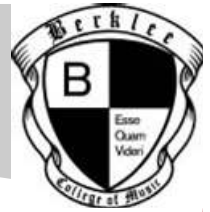


Family Weekend Parenting Tips



Family Weekend can feel a bit like a tug-of-war. Your student might seem really excited to see you, only marginally excited, or express some degree of emotion in between the two. You might feel like you are embarking on a weekend mini-vacation, but your student is smack dab in the middle of the semester, with homework to do, pending tests, and juggling everything common to a busy student. Your student might feel kind of awkward, especially if he or she is exploring a new sense of self. You might be thinking, “Who is this kid?” and your student might be thinking, “Oh yah, I have to act a certain way in front of my parents.” This isn’t always the case, but it is fairly common to experience moments of stress and for there to be competing desires and priorities.

Consider these strategies to help ease Family Weekend tension:

- give your student an “out” to step away without having to ask you if he or she can do so – it is sometimes hard for the student to express what he or she needs or wants to do during the weekend;
- connect with other parents – they are likely having similar experiences;
- engage in family weekend activities and access campus resources -- as your student will likely be doing other things during part of the time, including sleeping late, studying and/or practicing;
- ask your student if there is anything in particular that he or she would like to get done or have happen while you are physically around;
- find things to do on your own in the local area – there is much to explore;
- overlook messy rooms and seemingly disorganized spaces – in this moment think guest, not parent;
- find opportunities to also spend time with your student outside of the more formal or structured events;
- ask your student to show you some of his or her favorite spots on and off campus;
- consider having your student bring friends if you are treating for a meal – your student’s friends and their interactions usually offer a window into your student’s life, without having to ask lots of questions;
- don’t surprise your student by discussing a major issue (do this at another time);
- observe more than ask direct questions;
- recognize the positive changes you see in your student and let him or her know you notice.

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