

# FIVE WAYS TO HELP YOUR STUDENT TRANSITION HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS<sup>i</sup>

Who is that person walking in the door? How can you reconnect after living apart for the first time ever?

**1. EXPECT CHANGE.** (Reread the letter from VP for Student Development you received just prior to your student entering EU or [click here](#) for that letter.) New ideas, new friends, and a new environment have probably caused your student to change – physically, emotionally, mentally and even spiritually. Your student will likely look differently, act differently, and think differently all of which is okay. Your student is learning of the art of independence, and this can mean expressing the discovery of who they are as a person in various new ways. Some new ways will stick and many will not. Be patient.

**2. BE PREPARED TO LISTEN.** Your student has just spent a semester learning new things from new people and may have different perspectives on issues than they did when they arrived at Eastern in August. Rather than being judgmental, keep an open mind when it comes to listening to them share their newfound knowledge and ideas, and encourage them to do so. You might even find yourself learning something new!

**3. COMMUNICATE HONESTLY.** Not only have things changed for your student since they left for college, but there probably have been some changes in your family as well. Be open and honest with your student about what may have happened while they were away during the fall semester. This will help them to feel more like they are still an important member of the family.

**4. MAINTAIN A FLEXIBLE ATTITUDE.** The changes that have happened in your student may add a new layer of stress and frustration to you at times. Your student may now be used to going to bed at 2 AM and sleeping in until Noon, due to afternoon classes and late nights of studying for exams and writing papers, and occasionally just hanging out with new friends. Your student may be more interested in hanging out with old friends from high school than spending time with the family. While it is not best to abolish all rules, realize that your student needs to know your expectations about behavior and routines, and if you are up front with them about your expectations when they first return, you will likely have fewer conflicts.

**5. PLAN TIME TO RECONNECT.** Treating your student as the adult they are and being interested in what has happened in their life during their semester at college will mean a lot to your student. Set aside some time during the busy holiday season to do something with your student that will make them feel appreciated. Tell them that you are proud of them and all that they have accomplished during what may have been a very difficult semester for them.

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<sup>i</sup> Portions of this article were adapted from “’Tis the Season: Preparing for Your Student’s Return Home” published by PaperClip Communications, [www.paper-clip.com](http://www.paper-clip.com). Copyright 2008, 125 Paterson Ave., Little Falls, NJ 07424.