



The Year-End Boost: Helping Your Student Finish Strong and Plan What's Next

An OS3-sponsored Parent/Family Webinar
April 2026



Webinar Overview

- Finishing the semester strong
- Supporting motivation without adding pressure
- Staying organized and managing finals
- Planning for summer
- Preparing for fall 2026

What's Missing?

In the Chat:

- Let me know what you hope I will cover before the end of the webinar.



Who's Here Tonight?

Using Chat:

- If your student is graduating in May, type MAY
- If your student is returning in the fall, type FALL
- If your student will be living on campus, type RES
- If your student will be living off campus, type OFF

Poll

I'm attending tonight's session because...

1. I'm worried that having my child home all summer will cramp my style and I need some tips to deal with them.
2. I don't know how to help my student finish the semester without falling apart (the student or the parent).
3. I'm trying to figure out if "senioritis" is contagious.
4. Googling "how to motivate a college student" felt insufficient.
5. I just want to help without getting the eye roll.



This Time of Year Can Be Challenging

- Finals & major assignments (including SMPs)
- Motivation dips
- Room selection and housing decisions
- Course registration & academic planning
- Questions about majors, internships, summer plans
- Goodbyes (for 3 months or longer) to friends, significant others, faculty/staff



How Parents/Families Can Help

- Be a coach, not a manager
- Help your student prioritize
- Encourage use of campus resources (it's never too late!)
- Normalize stress and help them plan ahead
- Focus on effort, progress, and persistence (and not just on grades!)



Simple Questions You Can Ask Your Student

- What are your biggest priorities before finals?
- What's your plan for studying and completing projects?
- Do you need to meet with any professors?
- Have you registered for fall classes? If yes: What classes did you get? If no: Who can you talk to about fall classes?
- What are your summer plans?



Staying Organized for Finals

Encourage your student to:

- Write down all exam dates, due dates for assignments, papers, projects, presentations
- Work backward to make a study plan
- Use a planner or calendar to keep track of all dates
- Study in focused blocks of time
- Start early to reduce stress



Maintaining Momentum

- Remind your student that this is a short, important stretch
- Encourage routines: sleep, meals, study time, exercise
- Celebrate progress, not just results
- Encourage them to ask for help



Campus Resources That Help Students Finish Strong

- Academic Advisor
- Professors' Office Hours
- Tutoring: 240-895-4388 or tutoring@smcm.edu
- [Writing & Speaking Center](#)
- Counseling Services: 240-895-2159
- OS3: 240-895-4388 or os3@smcm.edu



Red Flags Parents Should Watch For

You may want to encourage your student to seek help if they:

- Stop attending classes
- Miss major assignment deadlines
- Talk about failing multiple courses
- Seem overwhelmed or shut down
- Are not registered for next semester
- Avoid checking email or communicating with professors



What Not to Say (Pressure)

- Why didn't you start earlier?
- You just need to work harder.
- This is unacceptable.
- You're going to fail if you don't fix this.
- You need to figure this out right now.
- "When I was in college, I never ..."



What to Say (Coaching)

- What's your plan for finishing the semester strong?
- How can I support you?
- What are your biggest priorities right now?
- Have you talked with your professors or advisor or OS3?
- Let's think through your next steps together.
- I know you can handle this; you've done hard things before.

The St. Mary's Way

At SMCM, we emphasize:

- Academic challenge and support
- Close faculty/staff mentoring
- Experiential learning & research
- Community & belonging
- Preparing students for life after SMCM

Finishing strong is part of developing resilience, independence & responsibility.



End of Year Academic Reminders

- Submit all work by deadlines.
- Dress professionally for presentations.
- Get enough sleep.
- Eat nutritious meals, stay hydrated.
- Show up for exams! Contact professor immediately if missing an exam.
- For students using the Testing Center: Schedule all exams now.



End of Year Non-Academic Tasks

- Return rented books to the Campus Store
- Pick up regalia at Campus Store by 5/15
- Start packing before exams begin
- Clean & vacate room and complete express check-out process. Return room/mailbox keys.
- Non-graduates: vacate by noon on 5/12
- Graduates: Residence Halls & Suites: 3 PM on 5/16
- Graduates: Townhouses & Apartments: 5 PM on 5/16



For Parents of Seniors Graduating in May

- Arrive early on 5/16
- Dress for the weather (rain or shine), sunscreen
- No alcohol or pets
- Official photos will be taken and sent home
- Plan lunch/dinner/party for after 3 PM (for residence hall/suite residents) or 5 PM (for townhouse/apartment residents)



For Parents of Graduates: Looking Ahead

- Are they living at home? Are they paying rent and/or helping with chores?
- Work on professional wardrobe
- Update resume, LinkedIn profile
- Discuss expectations (Curfew? Use of family car? Meals? Food in the fridge? Significant other?)



For Parents of Seniors Not Graduating in May

- Summer graduates: Attend your class/finish work by August.
- Send transcript to SMCM, if applicable
- Fall graduates: Attend your classes/finish work by 12/18.
- 30 of the last 36 credits must be taken at SMCM



For Parents of Continuing Students: Summer

Summer can be a time to:

- Recharge their batteries
- Take a class and transfer credits back to SMCM
- Work/earn money
- Complete an internship
- Volunteer or do research



How Families Can Support Over the Summer

- Discuss goals for the summer
- Encourage career exploration
- Help them plan for fall costs and logistics
- Encourage independence and responsibility (remember: they've been on their own for 9 months)
- Discuss expectations



Reminders for Continuing Students: Fall

Students should:

- Meet with their advisor
- Check their class schedule; make changes as needed through 9/11/26
- Review degree requirements and progress
- Explore majors/minors
- Plan involvement and leadership opportunities



For Parents of Continuing Students

- Your support matters.
- Students do best when families:
 - Encourage
 - Listen
 - Ask open-ended questions
 - Connect students with resources
 - Remind them they belong at SMCM



Contact Information

Office of Student Success Services (OS3)

240-895-4388

os3@smcm.edu

Seahawk Family Liaison

240-895-4388

families@smcm.edu

Facebook: St. Mary's College of Maryland Parents' Group



Thank You for Joining Me!

Please share suggestions for newsletter articles and/or webinars for next year by going to families@smcm.edu.

Q&A

