

Advice from an alumna, parent and trustee: Parents as Partners

12/01/17



Trustee Chris Kulp '72

Dear Alfred University Parents,

It's a pleasure to be writing to you! My husband, Bruce, and I are also proud Alfred University parents of Rachel '99 and Devan '02.

Over the years, volunteer activities for Alfred University have enriched our lives. Our volunteer service began when Bruce and I became co-chairs of the Annual Parents Fund in 1996 until 2002. Through phone calls, emails and other writings we got to know and enjoy contact with so many parents. This led to our seeking even more involvement as co-presidents of the Parents Association from 1997 - 2002.

During our years with the Parents Association we enjoyed writing the Parents Association home page for the Alfred University website, planned agendas and conducted Parents Association meetings and receptions at Fall and Spring Family Weekends, helped with annual updates to the Alfred University Parent Handbook, welcomed and spoke to first-year parents during the orientation session on move-in day, responded to phone calls and emails from prospective and current AU parents, communicated with administrators, staff and sometimes faculty about parent concerns and student problems, represented the Parents Association at on-campus junior open houses and accepted student open houses, and researched/wrote a pamphlet for distribution to prospective and current parents titled "Which Way to Home?" (transportation to and from Alfred). This was all great fun!

No matter where we come from, Alfred University parents have always shared the same goals. We want our students to quickly adjust to college life and learn and grow academically and personally. We want our students to graduate, on time, and with knowledge and skills to succeed professionally, personally and in their communities.

These are our goals, but where do we, as parents, fit in?

Parents are partners according to Alfred University's philosophy. We are included in the life of the university community in so many ways - the admissions process, open houses, tours, accepted student receptions, alumni, sports

and other events, parents weekends, the Parents Association and Parents Advisory Council, parent handbook, internet links to general articles, mailings, emails, newsletters, E-News, Facebook pages and informational pages on the Alfred University website specifically designed for parents as well as the Alfred University website in general.

In these and many other ways, the university shows that it is serious in designating parents as partners in the college experience. The university has provided us with tools for success - information and activities to help us support our students. I guarantee if you are looking for information on a particular topic, you will find it, complete with contact information to speak to just the right person at the university.

Take advantage of this treasure trove of information and activities to stay informed and get to know university staff, faculty, alumni and other parents. Parents who do this will be “at the ready” when they or their students need guidance and support.

There is another important way in which we can help our students. If we are armed with information about academic and student life, aware of our child's personality, relationships and habits, and watchful for problems, we can and should be able to respond, or intervene appropriately. Interventions should most often be about encouraging students to take responsibility for seeking information from the appropriate source, independent thinking, advocating for oneself, problem solving and learning from one's problems, thereby becoming increasingly independent.

Where do we, as parents, fit in? To recap, be informed about college life, be involved by attending events/activities for parents and alumni, be watchful for problems and support your student in ways that promote independence. I guarantee that one of the proudest days of your life will be when you see your student walk across the stage at commencement.

Remember that every Alfred University parent is automatically a member of the Parents Association. The association is important because it promises reliable information, the ability to offer feedback to the university, and offers social and educational venues so that you can meet and establish relationships with other parents, faculty, staff, and administration. Be sure to watch for announcements about Parents Association events and activities, especially during Family Weekends.

I would like to thank Alfred University staff who have written the very informative articles included in this publication.

Best wishes to Alfred University parents and students!

Fiat Lux!

Christine P. Kulp '71

Member, Alfred University Board of Trustees