Panorama December 2008

Southern Adventist University
Laurie Gauthier was determined that her children’s college experience would be different from hers. "When I was in college, I was under-involved," says Gauthier, "so I encouraged my kids to take advantage of opportunities."

Gauthier’s two children, Kelly, a 2006 graduate, and Brian, senior history and international studies major, were very involved. Both of them enjoyed music and joined Southern’s I Cantori choir. But as classes became more challenging, Gauthier advocated balance. "If you’re stressed and you’re not getting enough sleep and you’re having a hard time getting your assignments done," she told them, "you might need to take another look at this."

A successful college experience means maintaining balance between study and involvement. Parents have an important role to play in helping their students find that balance.

Encourage Participation
"Studies consistently show that students who get involved in campus activities do better academically and socially," says Sarah Schupp, CEO of University Parent Media.

However, some students find it easier to get involved than others; while naturally social students will get involved on their own, Schupp says parents should gently point shy students to outside activities they enjoy.

"Parents should encourage students to get involved by talking to their students about their interests and then leading them to the school’s resources," she says.

Kari Shultz, director of student life and activities at Southern, encourages reluctant students by telling them, “Get out of your rooms, quit playing those video games, and have some fun!”

Encourage Balance
However, Schupp and Shultz agree that students can become too involved. Slipping grades are one of the first indications your student is being spread too thin.

"If they're spending more time doing extracurricular activities than doing academics, which they're paying to do here, there’s a problem," Shultz says.

Shultz advises limiting involvement if students are having trouble: choose one or two favorite activities and leave the rest for another year.

Gauthier says the best way for parents to help their children is to act as a “sounding board" for students to explore options and find balance.

"Just talk things through," Gauthier says, “Ask open-ended questions like ‘What do you think is important to get involved in?’ That’s what college is about: learning to make your own decisions.”
Change at McKee Library

In the past year, the McKee Library has undergone a makeover, making the area more attractive and useful to students. The renovations gave the library eight group-study rooms which can be reserved on the library’s website, write.library.southern.edu. Some of the study rooms are equipped with projectors and screens for practicing presentations.

“Being able to reserve the study rooms online made it easier for me and my fellow history seniors to study for our oral exam,” says Jaime Myers, senior history, international studies, and English major, the first student to reserve a study room. “It was a convenient place for us to meet and have a quiet space without disturbing other students who are trying to study.”

Providing Writing Confidence

Students waiting with essays, resumes, speeches, and much more are able to find that help at the Writing Center located in McKee Library.

“The staff is really friendly and helpful,” says Paul Tenorio, senior theology major, “but most importantly, they taught me how to write things correctly so I wouldn’t make the same mistake the next time I wrote a paper.”

The Writing Center’s mission is to offer a relaxed but professional environment where students are taught to capitalize on their writing strengths and how to identify and fix their weaknesses in cultivating better writing skills.

“We are an educational facility,” says Debbie Higgins, English Professor and Writing Center director, “We are here to help the students learn how to write better papers and gain more writing confidence.”

Many professors encourage their students to use the facility for help with papers or to take grammar contracts, tests meant to help improve grammar skills.

“Students have taken the tools of the new way worship is planned and appreciated the focused atmosphere Renewal provides,” says Donella Smith, a junior nursing major. “You get what the service is pointing to; there’s a goal.”

Because Renewal is student led, there are many ways that students can get involved—through greeting guests, ushering, taking up offerings, helping with the children’s ministry, and much more.

“Our ultimate goal is that we don’t just want Renewal to be a worship service that takes place on Sabbath,” says John Nixon, Collegedale Church Pastor. “We’re hoping for this worship service to open up young people to greater involvement in the ministry and mission of the church.”

Worship Renewal

Worship on Southern’s campus is a little different than it used to be. Over the summer, Southern Missionary Church, affectionately known as SMH, and the Collegedale Seventh-day Adventist Church joined to create Renewal, a student-led church service.

Renewal offers a worship service with no standard format. Every week, Renewal’s worship committee, which comprises students and pastors, meets to plan the services completely from scratch. They build each service around the Bible verse and message that the speaker will present.

Services often include both contemporary and traditional aspects, but Renewal isn’t focused on the style. The goal of the service is to point the audience back to the text and then modeled after it.

In fact, because of his involvement in non-academic activities and his youthful spirit, he is often mistaken for a student.

“Yesterday I was playing table tennis with a couple of former students and one guy, he had to be new, stepped in and asked what my major was,” he says. “The whole room went silent. Then the other guys started laughing. He was so embarrassed.”

This ability to blend in with students makes him easy to relate to, says Arvin Tanag, a junior computer systems administration major. “He’s a fun and cool guy to hang around during non-school hours,” Tanag says.

Trimm’s most significant memory since coming to Southern happened in Hickman Science Center, but it had nothing to do with science.

“In the first year,” Trimm says, “I didn’t think there could be any more fulfilling experience than the world.”
Students Say

We asked students what campus place or event they would show their parents if they could. Here are their answers.

“My parents don’t live in America, but I would show my mom the archaeology museum. My mom is interested in that stuff. It would be different for her because she’s never really seen that before. I think she’d like it.”

~Nigel Francois, junior theology major

“The Gym-Masters home show is pretty fun. It’s a good show, and it’s fun for parents to come to that. It’s a good school spirit thing too, I think. Since we don’t do interscholastic sports, it’s kind of our little way of outreach.”

~Renee Mathis, senior secondary education major

“I would like to show my parents the biology trail because they enjoy taking long walks outside.”

~Kevin Quintey, sophomore accounting major

“I would take my parents to all-night softball because we like sports at our house, and I think it would be cool to show them what’s going on here.”

~Sabine Monice, freshman biology major

“I would probably show them the InTents meetings so they could see all the students worshipping together. That’s a good thing to show parents, that community on campus.”

~Daniel Cooper, sophomore animation major

“I would like my parents to see the new wellness center, because my parents like places that provide a healthy environment, and probably KR’s, because my mom likes to cook and she likes that kind of setting.”

~Andreea Leonce, sophomore psychology major