On August 30th, over 300 first year students were inducted into the River Hawk Scholars Academy!

**RHSA Newsletter: A Roadmap**

Each month, the RHSA Newsletter will follow the same format. The regular sections of the Newsletter are:

- **Last Month in RHSA:** Each month, the highlights of the previous month’s events will be reviewed.
- **Student Spotlight:** This section will highlight our students of the month. This month, this section contains welcome notes from the three RHSA professional staff members.
- **Advice from an Advisor:** Each month, a member of the First Year College-Based Advising Team will write a piece about what students’ family members and supporters can do to support their student during that month!
- **Students’ Corner:** Each month, the newsletter will contain a page directed at students specifically, which will contain important reminders, highlighted upcoming events, etc. Students: if you only read one part of the newsletter, this should be it! Event titles are hyperlinks to sign up.
- **First-Gen Spotlight:** Each month, we’ll feature a faculty or staff member at UMass Lowell who was a first generation college student. These features take many different forms and avenues throughout the year, so be sure to check in each month to see which new person we’ll be featuring!

In this issue:

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5 … Jen Keene-Crouse, First-Gen Spotlight
Matthew Hurwitz, Faculty Director

Why am I the Faculty Director of the River Hawk Scholars Academy?

I believe that UMass Lowell’s history is inseparable from the aspirations of people throughout the state and the country who are the first in their families to get a four-year degree or who are rising up to face challenges in their pursuit of higher education.

I believe that students who are the ones blazing new paths for themselves, their families, and their communities are the ones we want to support and celebrate.

I believe that not knowing all the ins and outs of how college works should not hinder your ability to become your best self while on our campus.

I hope that you all are getting the most out of your first few weeks at UMass Lowell so far and I am proud that the RHSA can be a part of that story. As you continue on, I ask you the question now that I asked you at our welcome day: what is your story? How are you telling it? Is your story of your first semester at UMass Lowell one that you are proud of? What could you be doing better? Differently? And how can we help you?

Every single person at UMass Lowell – from Chancellor Jacqueline Moloney, to all of the faculty teaching your classes, to the staff working tirelessly in front of and behind the scenes, to the students striving towards graduation – has people in their lives who helped them along the way. There is no shame in asking for help, only a recognition of our shared humanity and of our commitment to supporting you. Let us know how we can help you when you need it and celebrate your accomplishments when you achieve them.

Think about what RHSA events you’re going to be a part of. We have an exciting slate of opportunities this year, designed with you and the objectives of the RHSA in mind. What are you going to sign up for?

After you read this, make a commitment to yourself: pick the next RHSA event you are going to attend. And when you do so, ask yourself: what is the story that you want to tell about your first semester at UMass Lowell?

Students eat lunch during the RHSA Welcome Day on August 30th, 2019.
ADVICE FROM AN ADVISOR

Justin Gerstenfeld, Director of College-Based Professional Advising

You’ve made it! You have successfully supported your student and guided them through the start of their educational journey at UMass Lowell. So, now what; what’s next? How do you continue to support your student from a distance if they are living on campus; or, from across the room if your student is commuting? Here are some tips to support your student in the month of September and into October.

One of the best ways to support your student is to know who to refer them to when they have questions. Universities are full of resources, but how do you and your student narrow down which one is best? This is where your student’s professional academic advisor comes into play. Your student’s professional advisor is their person to go-to with any and all questions, concerns, and celebrations. The professional advisors at UML are specifically trained to help your student navigate their major and the university. When in doubt, help your student connect with their advisor. Your student can find their advisor in the UML Now Dashboard. Professional advisors are available in their offices and the lobby of University Crossing every Wednesday for “Walk-in Wednesday” where your student can come by with no appointment needed to talk about anything. Students can also schedule appointments with their professional academic advisor through their NOW Dashboard.

My other advice for being the best supporter of your student is to meet them where they are. How can you do this? Trust them! Your student’s first year of college is filled with opportunities to discover new and exciting things; but, it’s also filled with times of self-doubt, disappointments, indecision, and most of all, mistakes. Finding yourself is a challenging enough process without feeling that the people who you admire most are second-guessing your second-guessing.

Finally, help your student not feel additional pressures. We challenge our students in the classroom. We want them to learn, grow, experience new things, and graduate to be productive people. But we also know that students have outside responsibilities like work, sharing cars, picking up siblings, attending appointments with families to be a translator, and many other important responsibilities. During this month as your student adjusts to their new normal, try to help balance some of the outside responsibilities that might be adding more difficult decisions for your student.

To wrap things up, know that we at UMass Lowell want you to be involved and help us support your student. But know, we are also here to support you! Don’t hesitate to reach out and ask questions. We can always guide you on the best ways to support your student or resources they can take advantage of on campus. If you find yourself needing some supporter guidance, don’t hesitate to reach out to me at 978.934.5925 or Justin_Gerstenfield@uml.edu.

Go River Hawks!

Dr. Justin Gerstenfield
Director, College Based Professional Advising
STUDENTS’ CORNER

Highlighted Events this Month:

Each month, we’ll highlight some events that are happening and give links for you to register for them (event titles are hyperlinks: click to register)! Some of these events may have an limit on the number of attendees, so don’t delay signing up for the event! If the event has special attendance requirements (is only for students in a certain college or major, for example), that will be noted in the event description. Remember, you need to attend three RHSA events per semester to maintain your RHSA membership and benefits!

Important: you must register to attend events. If you sign up for an event and find out you cannot attend, please be sure to cancel your registration for the event by emailing RHSA@uml.edu! This is extremely important, as events with an attendee limit have a waitlist. Canceling your registration allows another student to attend in your place!

Manning School of Business & RHSA Dinner: Wed. 9/18, 4:30-7PM at Alumni Hall.
If you’re in the Manning School of Business, this event is for you! Join RHSA and Manning faculty for a networking opportunity and get to meet professors on a personal level. We want to see all Manning School of Business students at this event, so sign up now!

University Crossing 3rd Floor Open House: Tues. 9/24, 5:30-8PM at UCrossing.
Join RHSA in exploring the third floor of University Crossing and all it has to offer: Club Hub, the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the Wellness Center, the Office of Study Abroad, and the LGBTQ Resource Center!

Latinx Heritage Month Student and Alumni Connections Social: Wed. 9/25, 6-8:30PM at UCrossing Moloney Ballroom (2nd Floor)
Celebrate Latinx Heritage Month during a special student and alumni networking social! Hear from Zoila Gomez ’00, managing partner of Gomez & Palumbo, LLC, who will share insight on navigating your career path, being a Latina professional in the law field and owning a business. This event is in partnership with the Office of Multicultural Affairs and the Latin American Student Association. Register online to attend!

Kennedy College of Sciences Faculty-Student Social: Thurs. 9/26, 4-6PM, at the Saab Center ETIC Atrium
Calling all Kennedy College of Sciences students! This event is especially for you, and we want to see you all at this faculty-student social. A great opportunity for networking and meeting the professors in your college and department!

September Reminders:

- If you attempt to register for an event and receive an email that you are on the waitlist, look out for another email telling you you’ve been moved off the waitlist. Being on the waitlist does not mean you’re able to attend the event, it means you are in line to attend if someone cancels their registration.
- If you sign up for an event you are expected to attend. This allows us to give accurate counts for food, participants, etc. at all events.
- Make sure to see a Peer Leader to sign into RHSA events!

Your 2019-2020 Peer Leaders
FIRST-GEN SPOTLIGHT: JEN KEENE-CROUSE

Jen Keene-Crouse is the Assistant Director of College-Based Professional Advising (CBA). Originally from Wisconsin, where she was a first-generation college graduate from UW-Green Bay, Jen earned her BA in Communication. Upon graduation, Jen threw caution to the wind (knowing no one or anything about New England) and moved to New Hampshire for a graduate assistantship. Following an adventurous path for both her graduate education and career, Jen found her home here at UMass Lowell both professionally and personally. After having met her wife when first starting at UML years ago, and upon completing her ME.d in Higher Education in Student Affairs from Salem State University in 2010, Jen currently serves as the Assistant Director of College Based Advising, working with freshmen Nursing and Exercise Science majors.

Jen’s College Career and Experience

The best thing about Jen’s college experience: Jen says that the best thing about her college experience were the friends she made. Because she got involved fairly quickly on campus, she made friends immediately. Her membership in these clubs also allowed her to grow into leadership roles within them, so upperclassmen friends and club supervisors (staff) became mentors to her. Jen says that she met many of her lifelong friends in college, and many of them were part of her wedding party.

What Jen would tell her freshman self: “Whatever reason you’re in college, the reasons don’t have to be in a box. You really do have the world in your hands.” When Jen went to college, the original goal was to be able to graduate and get a job, to eventually be able to do better than her parents could. But, over time, she realized something: she didn’t just have to do better for her parents, she could do better for herself. “College is more than being able to pay the bills once you graduate.” She wants to tell students that they can thrive on campus and do better for themselves, not necessarily for anyone else.

Whatever reason you’re in college, the goals and the reasons don’t have to be in a box. You really do have the world in your hands.

Jen’s Advice:

For students who are developing their leadership skills: The first thing: “Lean in and make mistakes.” Try new things, because this is a place in which you are allowed to make mistakes. UML is a place with an “unbelievable net to catch you” when you try things and make mistakes. The second thing: watching individuals who you want to emulate and using those observations. Students don’t necessarily need a role model, but should take bits that they notice from people whose skills they admire (maybe a memo is very well-written or they like the way a professor presents information to the class). If possible, connect with those people to learn about what they do and what tips and tricks they use. Once you pick up those tricks? Give them your own flair. You’re not looking to copy, you’re looking to do things with your own style.

For students who are looking to find a mentor on campus: Lean in and put yourself out there. If you see something or someone that you want to do, be, or learn more about, talk to them about it! You absolutely do not need to be in a formal mentoring program to find a mentor on campus. Talk to people, make connections, and you’ll be on your way to finding your support system!