Our Time with YOUR STUDENT

Purple Knight Family:

I am so pleased to share a few moments with you through this family newsletter. The University of Bridgeport community includes not only our students, but their parents and families as well. As part of our “university community,” we appreciate all you do to support your student through their college experience. Know that all of us at UB are eager to help your student succeed. At the same time, we know that the end of a semester can be stressful for everyone — student and parent alike. As finals approach, we would appreciate your support through checking in with your student regarding their level of stress. Students may be in a variety of places in terms of how they are doing academically. From doing well across all courses to struggling in a few or all, it’s important that students realize the campus has a variety of resources to support them. Additionally, it is never too late for students to visit their professor during office hours, work with their peers to form study groups, identify ideal study spaces in Wahlstrom Library, or visit the Academic Resource Center (ARC) website for academic support resources.

I enjoyed meeting so many of you at New Student Orientation, Welcome Back Weekend, athletic events, and other campus celebrations. I look forward to meeting more of you in the months and years to come. Should you have questions or concerns regarding your student, the Office of the Dean of Students is a good place to start. We may be reached at 203-576-4273 or deanofstudents@bridgeport.edu. Wishing you all a successful conclusion to the fall semester and the happiest of holidays.

It’s great to be a Purple Knight!

Sincerely,

Craig Lennon
Assistant Dean of Students
John “Doc Roc” Nicholas has been a professor at the University of Bridgeport since 1971. With 44 years of experience, his knowledge about finals week is not something to be overlooked. Recently he received the Purple Knight Shield of Merit Award at the 2015 Athletics Hall of Fame banquet. Doc Roc says that receiving this honor felt “fantastic,” going on to say it was one of the best recognitions of anything he has ever done. The award was given to him for helping with the athletic program in the role of the Faculty Athletic Representative (FAR). The function of this position is to form an alliance between the athletic and academic programs. Specific functions involve giving exams to coaches to continue recruiting and giving surveys to athletes ranging from academics, alcohol, cheating, and drugs. If there were any problems between coaches and students, which have been very few and far between in his 30 years of experience, he would be the one to step in. Doc Roc has proven to be an asset to not only the athletic program, but also in the world of academia. In his 44 years of service to the University of Bridgeport, he has impacted the lives of many and continues to be an esteemed educator in the UB Community.

What resources are available on campus to help students prepare for finals?

Many take advantage of the extended library hours. I personally don’t require students to do anything outside of class but many take advantage of the Academic Resource Center in the library for a little extra help before finals.

With your experience here at UB, is there anything special you do for your students during finals week?

Finals week is an interesting time because many students are heavily interested in their grade. As opposed to midterms, finals are the absolute end, so students tend to take the class a little more seriously during crunch time. Throughout the semester I prepare my students for finals by giving frequent quizzes and exams at least once a week. Taking these quizzes week to week forces the student not to fall behind in the course and gives them a much better idea of what's going on. From my personal experience, taking a quiz every week during the semester motivated and forced me to excel in my courses.

How can parents and families help prepare students for finals?

Show an interest. Even though as a parent or friend you may not understand the subject material it is always a good idea to encourage study habits by simply asking how they are doing, and stress that studying can be the difference between a B and an A. Just be there for them by encouraging study habits and by learning what’s going on in their collegiate lives.

What is the experience like for the students during finals week?

Obviously the most stressful. With the ‘finality’ in mind, students seem to come alive between their interest level and attendance. It's a cycle. Prior to the midterm there is an increase in interest, then after there is a drop off, then about a month before the end of the semester, the motivation and drives comes back into play, with students accepting nothing but the best grade they can get in the course. Crunch time seems to bring out the best in students.

What can students do to help one another during finals week?

Study sessions. Coming together in groups and memorizing/working on the material really seems to help.

With your teaching experience is there any advice you can give to students heading into finals week?

I had a student athlete in my class many years ago. Throughout the semester he had a low grade, and didn’t say much. About a month before finals week he approached me after he handed in a quiz and said, “Is there anything I can do to improve my grade?” I looked at him and said, “Study.” After the next quiz a week later he received the highest grade he had received all semester and said to me, “Studying really helped!” Students find different incentives to study between the threat of losing a scholarship, push from a coach, or achievement of the highest grade possible. This short story can show that all students have potential, and will see progress after they study. Find a motivation to study, and achieve your full potential come finals week.
Eighty thousand miles later, UB bike patrol officer Ralph Gonzalez is still going strong. It only had one gear, but when UB security officer Ralph Gonzalez was a kid, his gleaming red Schwinn bicycle was a ticket to untold adventure. “On Saturdays I used to jump on my bicycle and ride all the way up to Easton to look at the farm animals and drink some milk. Then I’d ride back home to Bridgeport,” says Gonzalez. “It was a 20-inch bike, what the kids do tricks with today. Me and my friend Freddie, we’d go out there all day.” Gonzalez never stopped pedaling. For the past two decades he’s led the campus security bike patrol, and during that time, he’s seen it all. “When I first came here, there were only three residence halls open: Cooper, Chaffee, and Seeley,” says Gonzalez, 51. “Now, it’s beautiful out here.”

Gonzalez is well placed to make such assessments. He and 13 other bike patrol officers each ride an average 21.3 miles a day, per man. That works out to roughly 80,000 miles alone for Gonzalez over his career, maybe even more, depending on factors like the weather; he knows every nook, pathway, and corner on campus. “To me,” he says, “it’s just fun. I have a blast riding a bike.” Of course, there’s riding a bike and then there is of stairs? No problem. Chasing a crook who’s dumped a stolen pocketbook? Because Gonzalez doesn’t need to stop his bike to scoop up hastily discarded items, he can continue pursuing a suspect with barely a break in his pace. Maneuvers like these may look easy in the movies, but they take time and practice to learn. To keep the UB patrols extra sharp, Gonzalez leads training sessions for fellow UB bike officers throughout the year. Securitas, the security vending firm contracted with UB, has also hired him to train patrols assigned to other properties. Other skills are equally valuable. Take bike repair. “People come up to me and ask me to help with a flat or something,” he says. “Why not? I’ll go over their bike and tighten it up for them. It’s part of being a healthy community.” Because he’s so visible, Gonzalez has also become a fixture off campus. Wander out to Park Avenue, for instance, and you’ll likely see Gonzalez chatting with local elementary school kids and their parents as they walk to and from school. Or maybe he’s pedaled over to Iranistan Avenue, close to the Arnold Bernhard Center and the expansive playing fields used for pickup and community soccer matches. Or across campus, near the Health Sciences Building on Lafayette Street, giving directions to a lost driver looking for the turn off to the Long Island ferry. “It’s better than being in a patrol car,” he says. “You get to know the kids and the neighborhood. They know me.”
TWAS the week before finals when all through UB, not a student was stirring, could it really be?
The halls were all quiet and campus serene, students hoped that their focus would be noticed by the dean.

With a little more studying and cracking your books we know you’ll do well, you’ll be more than a rook.

Believe in yourself and know you are bright. Do well on your finals, be a proud PURPLE KNIGHT!