Help Your Student Make a Strong Start

Tulane Family Webinar

September 2, 2026

TULANE UNIVERSITY
Office *of* Family Programs

RIDING THE FIRST-SEMESTER WAVE: HELPING YOUR STUDENT NAVIGATE THE TRANSITION TO TULANE

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CMVSS

Fall 2026

TULANE UNIVERSITY
Case Management &
Victim Support Services

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TULANE UNIVERSITY

Case Management &
Victim Support Services

HOW CMVSS SUPPORTS STUDENTS

- Help students understand and navigate available options
- Coordinate support when multiple concerns overlap
- Connect students with campus and community resources
- Assist following hospitalizations, medical emergencies, mental-health concerns, victimization, or other significant disruptions
- Communicate with faculty about temporary circumstances when requested by the student
- Help students build self-advocacy and problem-solving skills

WHAT BRINGS UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS TO CMVSS?

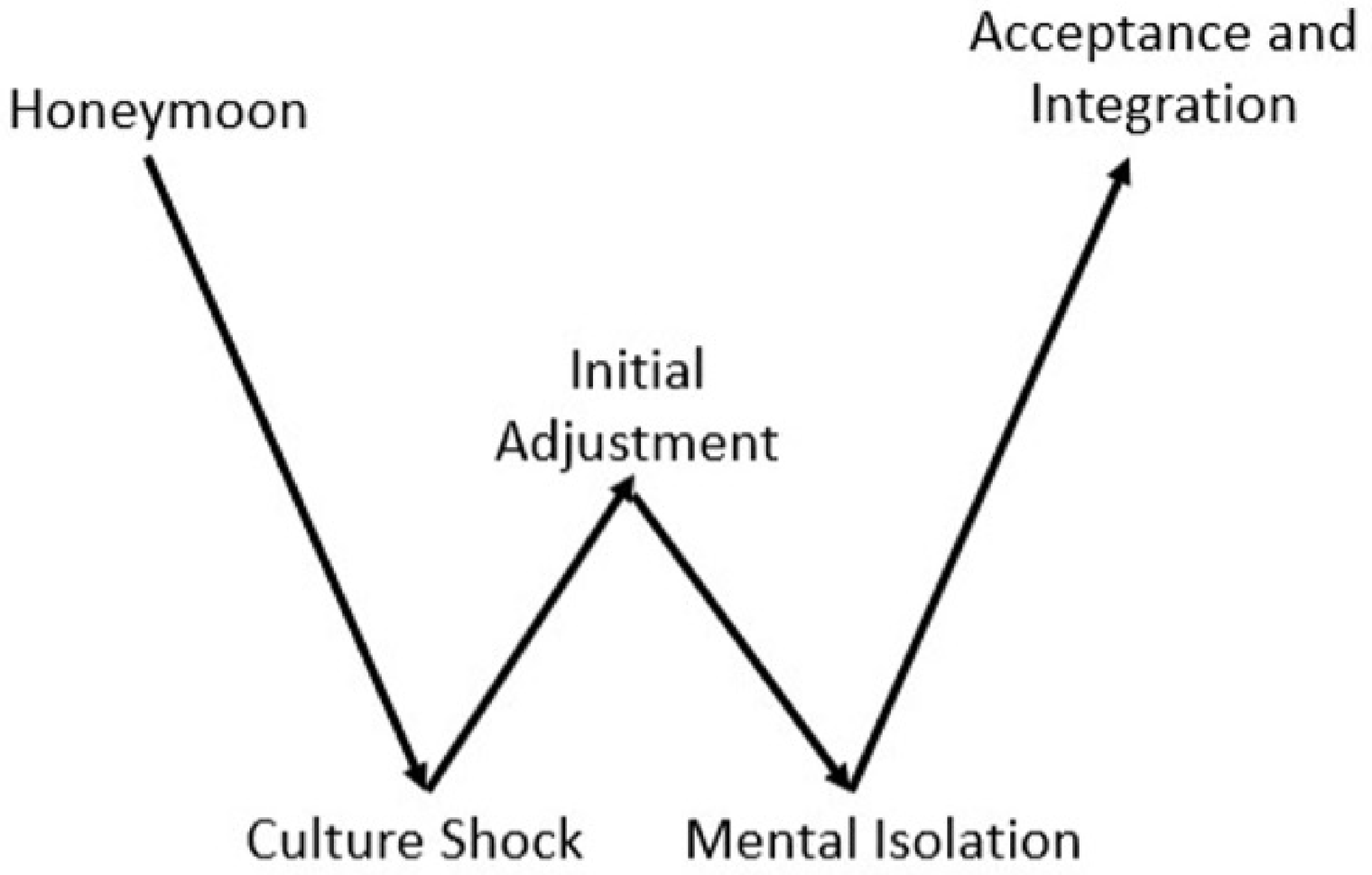
- Mental health and student welfare
- Illness, injury and hospitalization
- Academic disruption
- Alcohol and substance-related concerns
- Housing, relationships and safety
- Financial and basic-needs concerns
- Withdrawal, leave and return planning

AGENDA

- The first-semester W-Curve
- What students may experience at each stage
- Common academic, social, and emotional challenges
- Important fall dates and transition points
- How families can support without taking over
- When and how to encourage students to seek help
- Tulane resources for students and families

W-CURVE MODEL

The W-Curve is a model that maps the predictable emotional ups and downs students experience during their first college semester



Students may move through the phases differently, revisit an earlier phase, or experience several phases at once

Gullahorn, J. T., & Gullahorn, J. E. (1963). An extension of the U-curve hypothesis. Journal of Social Issues, 19(3), 33–47.

HONEYMOON

Before arrival through now (September)

College feels new and exciting. Students are eager to meet people, try activities, and experience greater independence.

What families may notice:

- High enthusiasm, a very full schedule, frequent social activity, confidence, and little initial homesickness.

CMVSS TRENDS

HONEYMOON PERIOD
BEGINNING OF SEMESTER - EARLY SEPTEMBER

Alcohol Amnesty

- Freshman = half of all transports

Acute Medical Needs

Residence-Hall concerns

Initial Academic Disengagement

HONEYMOON - RESPONSE & RESOURCES

Before arrival through now (September)

Supportive response:

- Celebrate the excitement without expecting it to last unchanged.
- Encourage sleep, meals, routines, and a sustainable schedule.
- Let the student handle ordinary questions and tasks.
- Ask what they are learning about themselves, not only whether they are having fun.

Resources:

- First-Year Experience and TIDES Peer Mentor
- RA and Housing
- First-Year Academic Advisor
- Academic Advising
- Goldman Center
- Tulane Recovery Community

IMPORTANT DATES:

- August 9–11 — First-Year Student Move-In
- August 9–16 — Hullabaloo Hello Orientation
- August 13 — Last Day to Join a Course Waitlist
- August 17 — First Day of Classes
- August 21 — Last Day to Confirm Enrollment
- August 28 — Last Day to Add or Register for a Course
- August 28 — Last Day to Drop with a 100% Tuition and Fee Refund

CULTURE SHOCK

September through early October

The newness begins to wear off, and the realities of college may feel harder or different than expected.

What families may notice:

- Homesickness, roommate tension, disappointing grades, difficulty managing daily responsibilities, social comparison, or questions about belonging.

CMVSS TRENDS

CULTURE SHOCK - SEPTEMBER THROUGH EARLY OCTOBER

Homesickness
Mental Health
Right Fit

Roommate
Conflict
Social
Concerns

Missing
Classes
Academic
Overwhelm
First Grades

Illness/ Injury
Alcohol
Incidences

CULTURE SHOCK - RESPONSE

September through early October

Students may call after:

- A roommate conflict
- A poor grade
- Feeling excluded
- An illness
- A disciplinary or alcohol-related incident
- An upsetting interaction
- A desire to transfer or come home

Suggested responses:

- Listen: “That sounds really difficult.”
- Clarify: “What feels most urgent right now?”
- Explore: “What have you tried?”
- Connect: “Who at Tulane could help with this?”
- “What is one step you can take today?”

CULTURE SHOCK - RESOURCES

September through early October

Tulane Recovery Community / **BASICs** — Provides connection, support, and substance-free community for students in recovery or exploring changes to their alcohol or drug use. Students can access peer support, recovery-focused programming, and opportunities to build relationships with others committed to recovery and well-being.

Counseling and Psychiatric Services

Supports students experiencing anxiety, homesickness, depression, relationship stress, or difficulty coping. CAPS also offers same-day consultations and crisis support.

RA and Housing & Residence Life

Students should begin with their RA when experiencing roommate conflict, difficulty communicating, or concerns about their residential community.

Academic Learning and Tutoring Center / **Success Coaching** / **Peer Success**

Offers peer tutoring, supplemental instruction, writing support, academic-skills assistance, and study space.

IMPORTANT DATES:

- September 1 — IFC Recruitment Registration Opens
- **September 2–16 — Fall Room-Change Process**
- September 2–3 — NPHC Meet the Greeks
- September 4 — Last Day to Drop with a 75% Tuition Refund
- September 7 — Labor Day Holiday
- September 8 — Classes Resume
- September 11 — Last Day to Drop with a 50% Tuition Refund
- September 14–28 — Residence-Hall Health and Safety Inspections
- September 15 — Panhellenic Recruitment Registration Opens
- September 17 — Greek Unfiltered Information Session
- September 18 — Last Day to Drop with a 25% Tuition Refund
- **September 18 — Last Day to Drop a Course Without Record**
- October 1–4 — Fall Break
- October 5 — Classes Resume

INITIAL ADJUSTMENT

October through early November

Students begin learning how college works and developing routines that make campus life feel more manageable.

What families may notice:

- More realistic expectations, improved problem-solving, greater use of campus resources, and growing confidence with occasional setbacks.

CMVSS TRENDS

INITIAL ADJUSTMENT - OCTOBER THROUGH EARLY NOVEMBER

Short-term Accommodation Needs

Missing Class Time Management Study Skills

Peer / Roommate Conflict

Mental Health

INITIAL ADJUSTMENT RESPONSE

October through early November

Shift the conversation from “Why didn’t you do this?” to:

- “What is getting in the way?”
- “What have you already tried?”
- “Who at Tulane can help you make a plan?”

- Notice progress that the student may overlook.
- Praise problem-solving and follow-through rather than outcomes alone.
- Ask about routines, relationships, and coping
- Can they / do they need to drop a course?
- Continue allowing the student to lead communication with Tulane.
- Encourage involvement without suggesting that a packed calendar is the cure for loneliness.

INITIAL ADJUSTMENT RESOURCES

October through early November

Academic Learning and Tutoring Center

Provides tutoring, supplemental instruction, writing assistance, and academic-skills coaching—especially helpful following midterms.

Success Coaching

Helps students develop strategies for time management, organization, motivation, goal-setting, and exam preparation.

First-Year Academic Advisor

Helps students interpret midterm performance, consider course options, understand deadlines, and plan for spring registration.

CMVSS Short-Term Accommodations

May assist when a temporary illness, injury, concussion, hospitalization, or procedure affects attendance or coursework.

Goldman Center for Student Accessibility

Coordinates formal disability accommodations for students with qualifying ongoing conditions. For temporary or short-term concerns, students may begin with CMVSS instead.

IMPORTANT DATES:

- **October 12 — Midterm Grades Due**
- **October 16 — Last Day to Withdraw from a Course**
- October 16 — Last Day to Change Grading Rules
- **November 2 — Spring and Summer Course Registration Begins**
- **November 3 — Spring Housing Application Opens**
- **November 4–13 — Midyear Room-Change Process**

- *November 5–8 — Wave Weekend and Family Weekend*
- *November 7 — Homecoming Football Game*

MENTAL ISOLATION

November and the approach to Thanksgiving

Accumulated fatigue and changing relationships may lead students to question where they belong and whether they have meaningful support.

What families may notice:

- Lower motivation, withdrawal, loneliness despite appearing socially active, changes in sleep or routines, and increased academic or emotional stress.

CMVSS TRENDS

MENTAL ISOLATION- NOVEMBER AND THE APPROACH TO THANKSGIVING

Academic Consequences

Mental Health

Financial or Basic Needs

Victim Support

MENTAL ISOLATION RESPONSE

November and the approach to Thanksgiving

- Listen for changes in mood, energy, sleep, motivation, or confidence.
- Explore whether they feel known and supported on campus.
- Ask who they spend time with beyond their roommate or initial friend group.
- Encourage one manageable next step toward support or connection.
- Continue checking in without making every conversation an assessment

When Additional Support May Help

- The student describes feeling persistently hopeless, overwhelmed, or alone.
- They have stopped attending class or participating in usual activities.
- Sleep, eating, hygiene, or basic routines have changed significantly.
- They cannot identify anyone they trust on campus.
- They are relying increasingly on alcohol or other substances to cope.
- They express thoughts about self-harm, not wanting to be here, or being a burden.

MENTAL ISOLATION RESOURCES

November and the approach to Thanksgiving

CAPS and Mental Health Complete

CAPS provides counseling and psychiatric support. Mental Health Complete offers eligible students virtual coaching, therapy, psychiatry, and self-guided resources.

CMVSS

Can coordinate support when mental health, academics, family concerns, finances, health, or housing begin affecting one another. Victim Support Services provides student-centered support, safety planning, academic assistance, housing support, health and counseling referrals, and advocacy following violence, harassment, stalking, or other victimization.

Student organizations and campus communities

Can help students build deeper connections around interests, identities, values, service, culture, or faith, particularly when their initial social group no longer feels like the right fit.

Swipe Out Hunger and food-support resources

Available for students experiencing food insecurity. CMVSS can help students navigate basic-needs support.

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IMPORTANT DATES:

- November 12 — Greek Unfiltered Information Session
- November 13 — Winter Break Housing Application Opens
- November 13 — Preferred Deadline for Spring Housing Applications
- November 23–29 — Thanksgiving Break
- November 30 — Classes Resume

EARLY ACCEPTANCE AND INTEGRATION

Late November through finals

Students begin developing a more realistic and sustainable sense of belonging at Tulane.

What families may notice:

- More stable routines, deeper relationships, greater comfort asking for help, improved self-advocacy, and thoughtful planning for the spring.

CMVSS TRENDS

EARLY ACCEPTANCE AND INTEGRATION - LATE NOVEMBER THROUGH FINALS

Academic

Mental Health

Executive Functions

Fear of Return

EARLY ACCEPTANCE AND INTEGRATION RESPONSE

Late November through finals

- Focus on effort, planning, and well-being
- Encourage students to contact instructors before a problem becomes a crisis.
- Ask about sleep, meals, medication, and study plans.
- Avoid repeatedly checking for posted grades.
- Help students distinguish a disappointing result from a failed college transition.
- Encourage early use of tutoring, advising, health, and mental-health resources.

- What worked this semester?
- What became difficult?
- What support should be in place before spring?
- What will the student do differently next semester?

EARLY ACCEPTANCE AND INTEGRATION RESOURCES

Late November through finals

Academic Learning and Tutoring Center

Students can use tutoring, supplemental instruction, writing support, and study resources as they prepare for final assignments and exams.

Success Coaching and Student Success Guides

Support planning, study strategies, organization, and exam preparation.

Faculty members and teaching assistants

Students should communicate directly about course content, missing work, exam expectations, and remaining options before deadlines pass.

Academic Advising

Helps students understand grades, registration, course sequencing, and potential changes for the spring. Students can also use Virtual Advisor or Peer College Advisor options.

CMVSS

Can assist when finals are disrupted by illness, injury, hospitalization, family emergencies, victimization, or significant personal circumstances.

IMPORTANT DATES:

- December 1 — IFC Recruitment Registration Closes
- December 4 — Last Day of Classes
- December 5–6 — Study Period
- December 7–12 — Final Exams
- December 14 — Fall Grades Due
- December 15 — Panhellenic Recruitment Registration Closes

NORMAL TRANSITION STRESS VERSUS SIGNS THAT HELP IS NEEDED

1. Periodic homesickness
2. Occasional roommate frustration
3. Exam stress / overwhelm
4. Uncertainty about friendships or major

SIGNS THAT HELP IS NEEDED

1. Statements about self-harm, suicide, or not wanting to live
2. Significant changes in sleep, eating, or hygiene
3. Persistent hopelessness or inability to function
4. Escalating substance use
5. Repeatedly missing class

LOOKING AHEAD TO THE SPRING SEMESTER

The transition continues

- What worked well, and what became difficult?
- Revisit routines for sleep, studying, health, and involvement.
- Confirm academic, medical, mental-health, and accessibility support before returning.
- Prepare: Review the spring schedule, registration, housing, finances, and important deadlines.
- New classes, relationships, responsibilities, and Greek recruitment may create another adjustment period.
- Encourage students to seek help before a concern becomes a crisis.

RESOURCE AVAILABLE AT EVERY STAGE

The Line

504-264-6074 — confidential, 24/7 crisis support

Student Affairs Professional On-Call

504-920-9900 — urgent support, 24/7

TUPD

Emergency:

504-865-5911 uptown; 504-988-5555 downtown

Non-Emergency:

(504) 865-5381

CMVSS:

504-314-2160

M-F 8:30 am-5:00pm

TULANE CONCERN REPORT

The online submission system is designed to solicit the concerns of members of the Tulane Community. All reports are received in real time and triaged for urgency.

concerns.tulane.edu

tulane.edu/concerns

All Concerns Reports are followed up on:

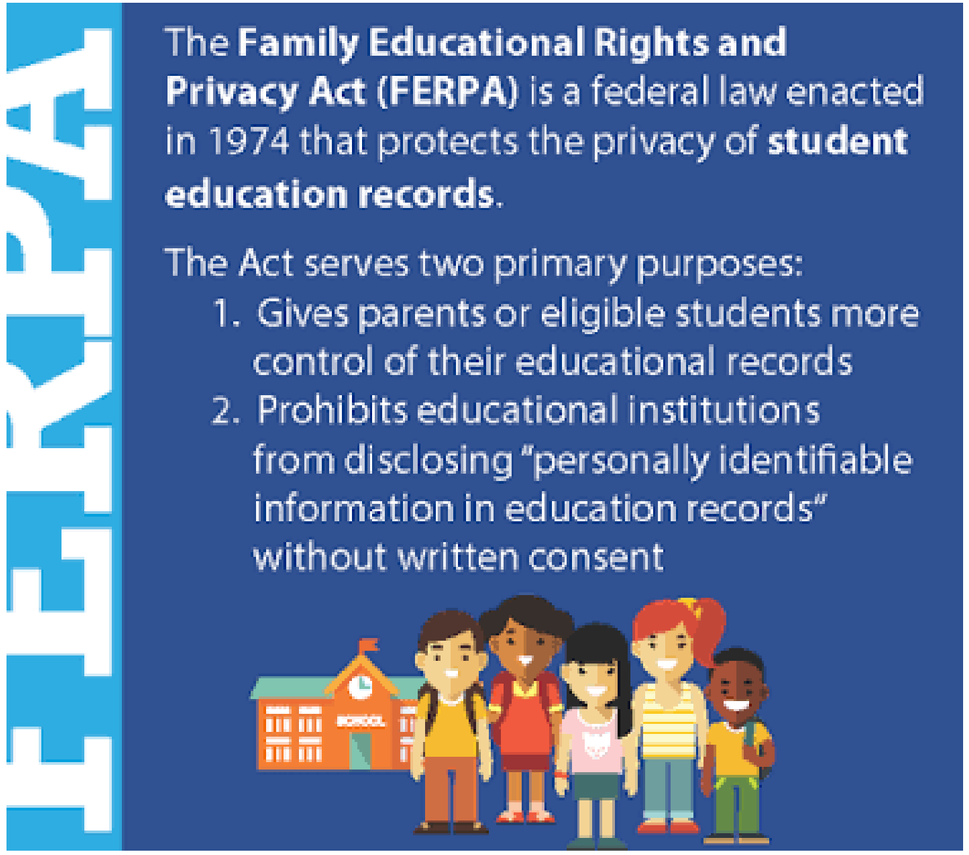
•SRSS, Administrative Program Coordinator, assigns student follow-up based on the nature of the report (CMVSS, Conduct, HRL, Reily, etc.)

•Each CMVSS case is assigned to a specific Case Manager

•Outreach to students are triaged based on priority and presenting concerns

FERPA

- Parents can always share information or concerns with Tulane.
- FERPA may limit what staff can disclose in return.
- A release can permit communication but does not require every detail to be shared.
- Whenever possible, the student should be part of the conversation.
- Privacy limitations do not prevent the university from responding to a reported concern.



QUESTIONS?

Links to Tulane Resources Mentioned in the Webinar:

Academic Calendar (deadlines, holidays, breaks, exam period, etc.)	https://registrar.tulane.edu/academic-calendars/undergraduate
Academic Learning and Tutoring Center (ALTC)	https://altc.tulane.edu/
Alcohol Amnesty Policy	https://cmvss.tulane.edu/case-management/call-for-help
Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students (BASICS)	https://campushealth.tulane.edu/departments/well/focus-areas/alcohol-tobacco-and-other-drugs/alcohol/basics
Case Management and Victim Support Services (CMVSS)	https://cmvss.tulane.edu/
Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS)	https://campushealth.tulane.edu/about/staff/counseling-center
Fall Room Change Process	https://housing.tulane.edu/room-changes
Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA)	https://registrar.tulane.edu/student-data/records-privacy
Family Weekend (Wave Weekend) - November 5 - 8, 2026	https://homecoming.tulane.edu/
Fraternity and Sorority Recruitment	https://greek.tulane.edu/prospective-members
Goldman Center for Student Accessibility	https://accessibility.tulane.edu/
Housing and Residence Life – main page	https://housing.tulane.edu/
HRL Health and Safety Inspections -- Explained in HRL's 2026-2027 Community Living Standards document, Environmental Health and Safety section, page 7, item #9.	https://housing.tulane.edu/community-living-standards
HRL staff - find full-time, live-in Resident Director staff members here	https://housing.tulane.edu/meet-our-staff
HRL's Cooperative Living Resources	https://housing.tulane.edu/living-cooperatively-resources
Success Coaching	https://success.tulane.edu/coaching
Swipe Out Hunger & food support services	https://srss.tulane.edu/
Tulane Recovery Community	https://campushealth.tulane.edu/departments/recovery-community
Wave Sync - student organization directory and event calendar - students log in with their Tulane credentials	https://tulane.campuslabs.com/engage/