



STONEHILL COLLEGE

Office of Student Affairs

July 18, 2018

Dear Stonehill Families,

It is hard to believe that we are already halfway through the summer and a new academic year will soon be upon us. Starting college is one of the most exciting times in a young person's life, and it is important for students to fully understand the responsibilities that college life brings. Your student could encounter many situations, including two of the most significant, perennial challenges facing college students — high-risk drinking and sexual assault. As I mentioned during our Family Orientation Program, Stonehill is committed to addressing these issues using a comprehensive, evidence-based approach, but we cannot do it alone.

As a parent or guardian, you are in a unique position to have considerable influence over your student's success in college. You play a vital role in shaping their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. The first six weeks of college in particular have proven to be critical, as during this time, students develop behavioral patterns that can then continue throughout their four years. As such, I am asking you to partner with us in our efforts and engage your student in meaningful conversations about drinking and healthy decision-making.

While it can be an anxiety-provoking experience to try to talk with your student about alcohol, sexual assault, healthy decision-making, and healthy relationships, these are critical and meaningful conversations to have. There is considerable evidence that having proactive conversations, setting clear and realistic expectations, helping your student realize the importance of respecting self and others, and keeping open lines of communication will help them make more informed decisions. Therefore, I encourage you to discuss these topics early and often. The College has dedicated a webpage (www.stonehill.edu/title9) for important information regarding sexual assault and Title IX resources, which may help to shape your conversations.

In addition, please encourage your student to complete both *AlcoholEdu for College* and *Sexual Assault Prevention for Undergraduates*, two online educational programs that are required of all incoming first-year students. I also invite you to access these programs as additional resources. The use of these programs is one of several steps the College has taken over the past number of years to reduce alcohol use and sexual assault on our campus. Our educational efforts will continue throughout the academic year, and our student programming committees have already planned a variety of fun, social options for all students in order to positively engage them within the community.

As students' overall safety, health, and well-being is critical to their success, we take seriously the issues of alcohol use and sexual assault. It is our hope that ongoing conversation and education will lead to informed decision-making, and that ultimately, our students will engage their studies with greater dedication, and their experiences with one another will be broader, richer, and more respectful.

I hope to meet you in the days ahead. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of Student Affairs at 508-565-1363.

Sincerely,

Pauline Dobrowski

Vice President for Student Affairs