

Shelly Laurenzo: Hello, and welcome to the Decipher podcast. This podcast is hosted by William and Mary, staff members who are committed to student success. Join experts from around campus, as they discuss ways to decipher common college experiences. Hello everybody, and welcome to the summer session of the Decipher podcast. So during the summer, we are going to focus on [00:00:30] pieces of information, updates, conversations that are going to be useful for our incoming students and their families. So to get us started, our first episode today of the summer session will be a real, a high-level look at the summer checklist and processes for our students coming on board and kind of getting them an idea of what's happening and when, and try to hit on some of those key areas of [00:01:00] concerns like classes and where am I living and all of those good things. So today it'll be me, Shelly Laurenzo, and Lauren Garrett. Hi Lauren.

Lauren Garrett: Hi Shelly. And welcome to those. That might be new to the Decipher podcast, a whole new year of listeners. We're one year in.

Shelly Laurenzo: One year in.

Lauren Garrett: We're slowly but surely gaining some traction, which is exciting. And as Shelly has mentioned, [00:01:30] trying to focus on things that are pertinent to current students and families as they're working through the William & Mary experience. So a lot of questions right now coming in, probably to both of our offices about what's next and what should I be doing now and how do I prepare for the fall.

Shelly Laurenzo: Yes. So I think Lauren, a great place to start, or what I talk to students about a lot is just the tribe guide checklist. [00:02:00] You know, students have questions or concerns about what they should be working on or what should be top of mind for them. I refer them back to the checklist.

Lauren Garrett: The checklist is definitely a great place to start especially if you are a planner. There will be moments during the summer where we will update the checklist based off of either updated guidance from the university around COVID or changes to policy or practice. [00:02:30] Students and families will be notified of those updates within the checklist through either the student hot topic email, or their family newsletters. So again, encourage not just the checklist to get bookmarked, but also making sure that you are checking your William & Mary email address students, and you are paying attention to the messaging that's coming in from parent and family programs to the email addresses you have on [00:03:00] file with the university.

Two primary forms of communication, where we will definitely be doing outreach over the course of the next few months, pretty heavily. And then of course, phone calls and emails are also welcome, especially as we transition the university back to on campus physical office spaces. So you're going to start seeing a little bit more of the physical William & Mary campus come back to life

with protocols [00:03:30] and practices in place and hopes of a fully resumed in-person fall semester.

Shelly Laurenzo:

And I for one cannot wait. So when we're recording this, this past weekend was commencement and I was able to volunteer for one of the ceremonies and just being able to see students face to face was phenomenal. And I'm so excited about the prospect of having us all [00:04:00] reconvening together on campus again. So I know I'm excited about that. I think it's safe to assume for the majority of our incoming students and their families, their big questions at this point are around classes and around living situations and housing and those pieces. So I'll talk a little bit about the class piece and then Lauren, if you want to talk a little bit about the housing piece, I think that might be helpful.

[00:04:30] So for our incoming students, registration for the fall semester is a two part process. So during the summer, students will register for some of their courses and then they will finish their course registration at orientation. Now there's a couple of different pieces to the academic advising process in the summer. Number one, we need students to complete the new student inventory. So the new student inventory asks lots of different [00:05:00] questions and helps us as an institution get to know you better and, and prepare for your arrival. Part of that is us asking questions about intended majors and intended programs of study.

All of our incoming students come in as undeclared students, small asterisks there for our joint degree program students, but everyone else comes in as undeclared students. And so we take that information that you give us to match you with a faculty advisor, what we call a pre major advisor. Now these are faculty members [00:05:30] who are here to support you in your pre major status before you declare a major and you'll meet with them at orientation, but I need you to do that new student inventory now, so we can match you to meet with them at orientation. So that's my first piece.

The second piece is college studies. College studies is an online short course hosted through Blackboard that is designed to introduce students, it's two parts, it's designed to introduce students to the William & Mary curriculum. So we start really high level [00:06:00] with what is the liberal arts all the way down to our specific registration system. Part two is all about information literacy and making sure students are comfortable and confident using the resources that the student library provides.

After completing part one of college studies, you will then have the opportunity to register for a few of your fall semester courses. When you're going through college studies and when you're registering, you will have a peer advisor that's a student volunteer who is specially [00:06:30] trained to support you in this process. So you have no fear. You will have support as you are doing this process in the summer.

Now, fast forward a little bit to orientation. And when you're here for orientation, you will have the opportunity to meet with your pre-major advisor, get some feedback from them and then register for your remaining courses to be at that full-time status for the fall, and then start classes, right? September 1st, it's going to be easy for me to remember this year, is the first day of classes. So that again [00:07:00] is a really high-level quick snapshot of what the summer looks like as far as preparing for classes. So, no, it's a two-part process. As Lauren already stated, please pay attention to your William & Mary email. That's where you will be getting notifications about registration and college studies. That's my kind of big picture view of registration. Lauren, do you want to talk a little bit about housing pieces?

Lauren Garrett: [00:07:30] Absolutely. So housing also happens in a multi-stage process. Students are required to live on campus for their first two years at the university dependent on social class. So class of 2025 and class of 2024 are required to live on campus for those two years in theory. So transfers, if you're coming in as a class of 2024 or class [00:08:00] of 2025, you'll need to be planning to live on campus. Make sure that you complete your housing application by the deadline, which is May 31st so that we can fully get you into the system so when residence life begins to make those roommate matches, they have a complete picture and pool to work from.

Shelly Laurenzo: Whether it's the first registration window or kind of the first, getting that initial paperwork done for housing, it's a process and it takes [00:08:30] time. And so just give-

Lauren Garrett: Housing is not done first, come first serve. So encourage you to take your time as you're completing your lifestyle inventory or questionnaire within the housing application, because we want you to really think deeply about not just who you want to be while you're with us, but who you actually are and what those habits look like. So answering that you [00:09:00] are an early morning riser when in reality, you find yourself doing your best work at night is going to lead to potentially a roommate match. That doesn't always feel good, especially when your academic schedule perhaps gets a little bit more rigorous or deadlines, start to show up over the course of the fall semester. So being really reflective students about how you typically behave [00:09:30] over the course of an academic semester is going to be important. And families, this is one of those first moments where it's important to put the responsibility and the onus of completing the application on your students.

As we mentioned in the tribe guide checklist, it is against the William & Mary Honor Code for students to provide their login information and credentials to others to complete these forms. It is their responsibility to do so and [00:10:00] therefore it's really up to you as families to encourage them to think reflectively, and to be honest, but not necessarily to complete the work for them. And we know that this is difficult because there are often other competing priorities with wrapping up the current academic year, the current senior year, and

making sure that students sort of close out their final years of high school in a positive manner [00:10:30] before moving forward in the university experience. So just be mindful of some of those things as we move forward.

Housing wise, once the application is in Resident's Life will look at that complete pool. They'll take into account any accommodations that have been approved by student accessibility services in regards to air conditioning or physical accessibility needs and then they'll start to make those matches through the housing portal system. The algorithms that the system [00:11:00] uses will rely heavily on that inventory or questionnaire that students complete in terms of lifestyle choices and behaviors. And then from there, matches will be made. If you already know, or if your student already knows someone that they want to live with when they complete their application, they will simply put down that student's code and as long as it's a reciprocal match, everything should be well in the matching process for them.

Housing is typically, housing [00:11:30] locations as well as roommate information is typically released no later than mid July. Some of that will depend on the size of the class and the number of students and if there are any sort of mitigating factors first to consider in terms of either university holidays, or just simply timing of the summer weeks and tasks, but typically by mid July, families and students will know housing assignments and will know roommate [00:12:00] information, as it has been provided to the university.

Around that same time, you'll also receive information about moving routes and check-in. We have released that incoming students will be able to slate a move and appointment on either the afternoon of Thursday, August 26th or during the course of Friday, August 27th. And obviously these are the day of, and the day just before the start [00:12:30] of new student orientation. So mid-July instructions will be sent out to students about how they will set up their move in appointment. And at that same point in time, information will be sent out about the move in process itself. Once students have that housing information, they're going to start hearing from their student leaders within the orientation program about meeting up for some virtual community meetings [00:13:00] to get folks talking, not just with roommates, but also with one another so that they can start to build connections so when orientation does roll around those, get to know yous those conversations will be a little bit easier and students will be able to start placing names and faces together a little bit earlier on in the process versus waiting for their arrival on campus.

The question that I know that we'll probably get asked quite a bit is the packing [00:13:30] list. We will be sending out a packing list in terms of summer anticipated fall semester, late summer needs here within the next few weeks. We try to hold off a little bit on the Williamsburg specific items until we have a better sense of what to expect in terms of the semester's flow and timing. And now that we've gotten some or received some additional guidance around COVID processes, we'll be able to share out a packing list that feels a little bit

more applicable [00:14:00] to our current situation versus based off of hypotheticals.

Shelly Laurenzo: Awesome. Thanks so much, Lauren. I think it's both of these processes, whether it's registering for classes or preparing for housing are multi-step processes. And so I think it's really important for folks to remember that, give yourself some grace and give us some grace as we're going through this process, right? At the end of the day, we will find things that work for everybody, [00:14:30] but it's why both of these things are processes and not just transactional experiences. It takes some time for us to make sure that we have all of the pieces of the puzzle fitting, whether it's housing situations or classes. So just have faith, have patience. It will work out in the end. Lauren, before we wrap up, is there anything else that you wanted to share with students and families? I

Lauren Garrett: I think at this exact moment, considering [00:15:00] the joyousness of this past commencement weekend and seeing so many lovely faces and watching the class of 2021 cross the stage. I think my message today is that we're excited to be welcoming the class of 2025 as well as our new transfer joint degree program hosts students and exchange students to campus in the fall and [00:15:30] not to be afraid to reach out if you can be of help in the process, the number of families and students we work with over the course of the student's four years is immense. And the connections we build are lifelong. And this past graduation weekend just sort of solidified for me or affirmed for me how [inaudible 00:15:52] this community is, and how the connections we make, especially during a student's first year are [00:16:00] some of the most important connections.

And so just the reminder that we're here if any questions are coming up or any concerns are being pondered, better to ask and allow us to help you work through those things versus waiting to the last minute or being afraid to reach out. So rather start those conversations now and begin those relationships as folks are ready to have the conversations. We're here.

Shelly Laurenzo: [00:16:30] Yeah, I agree Lauren. Our office is also kind of on standby for support for incoming students as they're preparing for their first semester here. So I think that kind of a great way to end this conversation is, we've shared a lot of resources. We've talked about the processes and provided a high level overview of things, but if you ever have questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to our offices. We're here to help. As we know that this is a very [00:17:00] exciting time for folks. So we want to make that process on to come onboard as painless as possible. So don't hesitate to reach out. Well, thank you so much, Lauren. I look forward to us continuing these summer conversations to welcome our new students and their families.

Lauren Garrett: It's going to be a good one.

Shelly Laurenzo: Can't wait.

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