NOTES FOR PARENTS OF STUDENTS ENTERING IN FALL 2011

Arrival and Customs Week
Most members of the class of 2015 will be coming to campus on Wednesday, August 24th for the start of Customs Week, but some members of the class have been invited to move in earlier to participate in pre-season athletic team practices or the International Students Orientation. All new students are officially welcomed on August 24th. Arrival day and the Customs Week are designed to assist entering students as they embark on their college experience.

Customs Week involves new students in activities that help them get to know one another, the College community, its norms, and the many campus resources available to them. Parents are often concerned about getting students moved into their rooms and helping them make essential arrangements for living away from home. The residence halls open at 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday, August 24th. Keys are available beginning at 8:30 a.m. at Facilities Services in the Ward building next to the Schwartz Gym. New students and their families travel to Bryn Mawr from all over the world, so please do not encourage students to take a “first come, first served” approach to starting off the year in a double or triple room. Assignment of spaces within a room or suite needs to be negotiated in a way that includes all the students involved. While the majority of students arrive with their families, there are also students whose parents cannot be here on moving-in day. Please extend your help and courtesy to all the members of the Class of 2015.

Parents often ask about remaining on campus during Customs Week. While we understand your concern about your daughter making a successful early transition to Bryn Mawr, we ask that you not stay on or near campus through Customs Week. We suggest that you make plans to leave campus just before dinner on the arrival day, Wednesday, August 24th.

If family members do remain in the area, they may not stay in the dorms. It is important for students to participate fully in the Customs Week orientation program, so family visits should be planned around scheduled Customs events. Customs Week assists any students prone to loneliness or homesickness by connecting them to their peers and the College community as a whole. Students are introduced to classmates, advisers, faculty, and staff members. A brief description of the Customs as well as a schedule for parents on arrival day is available at http://www.brynmawr.edu/enteringstudents/arrival_moving_in.shtml.

Access Services for Students with Disabilities
Bryn Mawr College is committed to the full participation of individuals with disabilities in all aspects of campus life and welcomes students with disabilities to the College community. The Access Services office in Canwyll House provides individualized support and reasonable accommodations for eligible students with learning, physical, or psychological disabilities. If you think your daughter may need academic adjustments in the classroom or access in the dormitory or other campus facilities, please have her contact Stephanie Bell (sbell@brynmawr.edu, 610-526-7390), Coordinator of Access Services, as soon as possible. For additional information -- including the eligibility criteria and documentation requirements -- please visit the Access Services website at http://www.brynmawr.edu/access_services/.

Drug and Alcohol Use
In the remaining weeks before your daughter leaves for Bryn Mawr, it is important for you all to be aware of some of the challenges that she may face during her first year of college. In particular, she will need to be prepared to make informed decisions about using alcohol or drugs. Bryn Mawr does not have sororities, fraternities, or other kinds of social clubs that frequently
provide alcohol at parties and other events. This does not mean, unfortunately, that we are immune from the problems caused by students abusing alcohol and drugs. We are proud of the efforts of our students, faculty, and staff to address the problems posed by alcohol and drug use on campus. There is a strong campus consensus that stresses safety, responsibility, and care for fellow members of this community.

Parents play a vital role in reinforcing these values. We hope you will talk frankly with your daughter about your expectations and concerns. Useful websites for parents of students leaving for college include: http://rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/ and the section on Alcohol and the Law at www.lcb.state.pa.us. The interaction of alcohol with prescribed and over the counter medication is summarized at http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/Medicine/medicine.htm. Campus policies, expectations, and services related to alcohol and drug use are available for your review at the entering students’ website: http://www.brynmawr.edu/enteringstudents/AlcoholDrugPolicy.shtml and the Health Center website: http://www.brynmawr.edu/healthcenter/drugsandalcohol/index.htm.

This summer, new students will be expected to complete an on-line education program CollegeAlc as part of the first-year Wellness program. With a common knowledge–base in place about alcohol and its use and misuse, we will be better able to use the Customs Week and Wellness program to help students prepare for some of the most difficult challenges involved in living safely and happily in a college community: responsibility for one’s own behavior, responsibility to the community, confronting problems which arise, and using the supports and resources available.

**Health and Counseling Centers**

We also urge you to encourage your daughter to let the Medical Director of Student Health Services know if she has had medical or psychological problems in the past which might resurface under the stresses of adjusting to a new environment. Sometimes parents want so much for their children to have a “fresh start” as they begin college that they discourage them from seeing a counselor or local physician who can support them through the transition to college. While this is an understandable impulse, it can be a problematic one. As all medical and psychiatric information is kept strictly confidential, it certainly does not compromise your daughter’s privacy to inform Bryn Mawr’s medical professionals of your daughter’s history. In addition, providers at the Health Center and Counseling Center can refer students to off-campus specialists in this area if that seems more appropriate or comfortable for the student.

Talking about sleep and nutritional needs is also valuable. College students tend to get far less sleep than they need. This deficit impairs their cognitive capacities at the very time when they need them most. Just as sleep deprivation is an issue at college, so, too, are body-image concerns. We share a full time-time nutritionist with Haverford, and any student may meet with her. The Body Image Council (http://bodyimagecouncil.blogs.brynmawr.edu/), a group for students concerned with body image and eating, meets weekly, led by a counselor with expertise in this area. Please encourage your daughter to take advantage of these services if she needs them.

Health Center staff will join the Dean’s Office staff at sessions for parents on Wednesday, August 24th. The location will be included in the Customs Week schedule. Kay Kerr, M.D., the Medical Director of Student Health Services and Reggie Jones, M.S.S., LCSW, Director of Counseling Services, will be available for individual appointments as well. If you and your daughter would like to make an appointment, please email Ronda Taylor at rtaylor@brynmawr.edu at the beginning of that week, indicating your availability on Wednesday or at other times during that week.