

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

SWANSON school of engineering

**freshman  
engineering**

# Student Stress Calendar

## STUDENT STRESS CALENDAR - FALL SEMESTER

### SEPTEMBER

- Homesickness, especially for freshmen.
- Values crisis: Students are confronted with questions of conscience over value conflict areas of race, drugs and alcohol experimentation, morality, religion and social expectations.
- Feeling of inadequacy and inferiority develop because of the discrepancy between high school status and grades and initial college performance.
- "In Loco Parentis Blues" Students feel depressed because of real or perceived restrictive policies and regulations of the college.

### OCTOBER

- Freshmen begin to realize that life at college is not as perfect as they were led to believe by parents, teachers and counselors. Old problems seem to continue and new ones are added. An external reality they had put their hopes in has failed them.
- Grief develops because of inadequate skills for finding a group or not being selected by one.
- Mid-term work-load pressures are followed by feelings of failure and loss of self-esteem.
- Sexual conflicts and confusion result when confronting, for the first time, different heterosexual standards and homosexuality.
- Non-dating students sense a loss of esteem because so much value is placed upon dates.
- Homecoming blues develop because of no date and/or lack of ability to participate in activities.

### NOVEMBER

- Academic pressure is beginning to mount because of procrastination, difficulty of work and lack of ability.
- Depression and anxiety increase because of feelings that one should have adjusted to the college environment by now.
- Economic anxiety. Funds from parents and summer earnings begin to run out; loans come due.
- Some students have ceased to make attempts at establishing new friendships beyond two to three parasitic relationships.

### DECEMBER

- Extracurricular time strain--seasonal parties, social service projects, religious activities drain student energies.
- Anxiety, fear and guilt increase as final examinations approach and papers are due.
- Pre-Christmas depression especially for those who have concerns for family, those who have no home to visit, and for those who prefer not to go home because of family and conflicts.

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# Student Stress Calendar

## STUDENT STRESS CALENDAR - SPRING SEMESTER

### JANUARY

- Post Christmas depression at again being away from home, security, and positive strokes.
- Depression and feelings of failure over needing to retake first-semester classes.

### FEBRUARY

- Many students experience optimism because semester is perceived as going "down hill".
- Vocational choice causes anxiety and depression.
- Couples begin to establish stronger ties or experience weakening of established ones.
- Depression increases for those students who have failed to establish social relationships or achieve a moderate amount of recognition.
- Social calendar is non-active.

### MARCH

- Drug and alcohol use increases.
- Depression begins due to anticipation of separation from friends and loved ones at college.
- Academic pressures increase.
- Where is God? Why am I not making it?

### APRIL

- Academic pressures continue to increase. Everything has been put off until after spring break.
- Frustration and confusion develop because of decisions necessary for pre-registration.
- Selection of major.
- Papers and exams are piling up.
- The mounting academic pressures force some students to temporarily give up.
- Social pressures: Everybody is bidding for your participation at trips, banquets, picnics and special weeks of recruitment panic.
- Summer job pressures.

### MAY

- Anxiety develops because of the realization that the year is ending and that a deficiency exists in a number of academic areas.
- Depression over leaving friends and facing conflicts at home with parents.

*Adapted from A Model for Identifying and Responding to Stress Periods of Students, Paul Larson and William Laramie, Berea College, KY*