

## Tips for Parents

### What can you do to help your child from a distance?

Of course, you are still a parent to your college student, and he or she does still need your support and guidance during these years. Here are some ways you can express your caring and enhance your child's experience at MSJ.

- **Stay in touch!** Even though your child is experimenting with independent choices, he or she still needs to know that you're there and are available to talk over both normal events and difficult issues. Make arrangements prior to each school year, in agreement with your child, to write, email, or call on certain agreed-upon times.
- **Allow space for your college student to set the agenda for some of your conversations and interactions.** It can even be normal and developmentally appropriate for some college students to want little contact with their parents. Some students choose their most important relationships to be with peers and/or significant faculty. This is an important part of gaining personal identity and autonomy and can assist the college student in being able to relate to you.
- **Be realistic with your college student about financial matters.** Most students come to school with a fairly detailed plan about how tuition, fees, books, and room and board will be paid for, and what the family's expectations are about spending money. Being specific at the outset may help avoid misunderstandings later.
- **Be realistic as well about academic achievement and grades.** MSJ attracts bright students from all over the country, and not every first-year student who excelled academically in high school will be an all-A student. Developing or refining the capacity to work independently and consistently and to demonstrate mastery can be more important than grades, as long as the student meets the basic academic requirements by the college.
- **If your child does experience difficulties at MSJ, encourage him or her to take advantage of the wealth of resources available for students.** For academic issues, talking with the professor or academic advisor is probably the first step, but know the resources available on campus so that you can direct your child.