

# Co-opting the Helicopter Parents

OrACRAO Annual Meeting  
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# Agenda

- **Who** are the parents we serve?
- **What** is our goal in our service to parents?
- **How** have we implemented effective strategies to reach this goal in our service to parents?
- **Discussion:** What goals and strategies have you set and implemented in your service to parents?

**Who** are the parents we  
serve?

# Trends in Parental Relationships

- Baby Boomers (Born 1943 - 1960)
- Generation X (Born 1961 - 1981)
- Millenials (Born 1982 - present)

# Generation

- These parents were the Baby Boomers
- Their generation prompted FERPA
- Distrust for authority
- Their children are wanted and special
- Their children must be protected
- Knew they could raise their kids "better"
- Believe they can change education to be what their student needs - home schooling is an example

# Motivation

- Pre-school to PTA, their involvement continues
- Helped their student get into college, want to help them stay
- See college as a continued investment
  - Financially
  - Emotionally

# General Characteristics

- See themselves as managers
- Problem solve for their kids—parents and kids are used to parents “handling it”
- Close to their students
  - Freshman year
  - Senior year & beyond
- Top Concerns in College
  - Health & safety
  - Career planning
  - Academics
  - Finances

# Electronic Umbilical Cord

- Phone and text messages, sometimes more than once a day
- Requests for web passwords
- Students “bring” parents to meetings they have via the cell phone

What is our goal in our  
service to parents?

# Determine your Mission & Goals

- Parents can play a wide range of roles in the life of a college or university.
- Agreeing on the mission and goals of your Parent Relations strategy is critical to the success of your efforts.

# Questions to ask

- How much involvement from parents do we want?
- What is our philosophy of student development?
- Who interacts with parents?
- Do parents have ready access to faculty?
- How do parents have access to web information about their student?

# Key Considerations

- How does the culture of the institution guide the parent philosophy?
- Development of a communication plan is key - who communicates when with parents? What do they say?
- What role does fund-raising play?
- Who makes promises to parents and how are those promises communicated?

# Tips for working with Parents

- Expect parents to have heard things from their students.
- Help parents understand the transition periods their student is going through.
- Emphasize FERPA is federal law, not college or university policy.
- Encourage them to have their students get answers on their own.
- Put the discussion back where it belongs– with the parent and student.

# Tips for working with Parents

- Be willing to explain the rationale behind a policy.
- Help them reconsider their definition of student success (it's not all about grades).
- Remind them their student can do amazing things, and reassure them that college is a reasonably safe place to flail and even fail.
- Recognize that parents are transitioning too, and many are struggling with their new role.

**How** have we implemented effective strategies to reach this goal in our service to parents?

# Biola University Mission Statements

The mission of Biola University is biblically centered education, scholarship and service—equipping men and women in mind and character to impact the world for the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Mission of the Office of Parent Relations at Biola University is to serve parents of **current**, **future** and **alumni** students by providing education, advocacy and meaningful opportunities to stay connected to the University as we **partner** to achieve the educational goals of their students.

# Goals at Biola University

- Accept the trend of helicopter parenting
- Anticipate the needs of parents
- Educate and inform parents on what to expect during their student's college experience (roles, FERPA, etc.)
- Address the specific needs of parents

# Department Structure

Vice President  
University Advancement

Manager, Parent Relations

Service Coordinator, Parent Relations

Student Worker, Parent Relations

Student Worker, Parent Relations

# Whose parents do we serve?

- Parents of Future Students
  - Partner with Admissions
- Parents of Current Students
  - Partner with departments across campus
- Parents of Alumni Students
  - Partner with Alumni & Development

# I. Education



- Weekly E-mail to 2000 parents
- Subscription to the Chimes (Student University Newspaper)
- Parent Handbook
- Web Page
- Academic Calendar & Important Numbers
- Parent Access to BSI (Biola's portal)
- Parent Mailers
- One-to-One Conversations

# II. Advocacy

- Volunteer Parent Council
- Personal Situations
- Issues that effect families



# III. Opportunities to Connect

- Events
- Our “Hugs from Home” Care-Packages
- Weekly E-mail
- Parent Donation Programs

The screenshot shows the Biola University website's "PARENT RELATIONS" page. The top navigation bar includes links for ABOUT, ACADEMICS, ADMISSIONS, ATHLETICS, NEWS & EVENTS, RESOURCES, and OFFICES. The Biola University logo is prominently displayed, along with the tagline "BIBLICALLY CENTERED EDUCATION". A search bar and a "GO" button are located to the right of the logo. Below the navigation bar, the "PARENT RELATIONS" section is highlighted in a dark blue banner. On the left side of this section, there is a vertical menu with the following items: "Calendar and Events" (with sub-links for "Academic Calendar 06-07" and "Academic Calendar 07-08"), "Campus Services", "Contact Us", "Parent Council", "Parent Relations Info", "Hugs from Home", "Resources", and "Visit Biola". The main content area features two featured articles. The first article, titled "Parent Orientation, Opening Weekend, August 17-18, 2007", includes a photo of a group of people and links for "Photo Highlights" and "Common Questions". The second article, titled "Parent Weekend 2007, October 5-7, 2007", includes a photo of hands holding a heart and links for "Schedule", "Photo Highlights", and "Common Questions". At the bottom of the page, the Biola University logo is repeated, along with the address "13800 Biola Ave. La Mirada, CA 90639" and phone number "1-562-903-6000". There are also links for "Contact Biola", "Request Admissions Info", "Library Employment", "Giving to Biola", "Press Room", and "Maps & Directions". The copyright notice "© 1996-2007 Biola University" is located at the bottom left.



# Reed College

- Reed is a private, independent liberal arts College in Portland, Oregon dedicated to high intellectual and scholarly standards.
- Reed records grades for students twice each semester, but does not release them to students unless requested, or when a student experiences difficulty.

# Reed Parent History

- Reed was founded in 1908 as a residential college and drew most of its students from the Portland area.
- Local parents were very involved in the College, even to the point of participating in a “Moms’ Committee” that contributed to the life of the College.
- In 2008, only 8% of our students are from Portland. Most parents live at a distance. Yet many of them are very close in other ways.

# Reed Parent Outreach

- Parent orientation during student orientation
- Parent handbook on the web
- Parent & family weekend in fall
- Electronic newsletter
  - Twice a year parent focus
  - Twice a year “Reed in the media”
- Parent Council
- Invitations to alumni events across the country
- “For Parents” web site
- Care packages through the bookstore



## For parents

[About Reed](#)[Bookstore](#)[Business office](#)[Common questions](#)[Contacts](#)[Cooley Gallery](#)[Events](#)[Financial aid](#)[Giving to Reed](#)[Handbook](#)[Newsletter](#)[Parent council](#)[Parents of prospective students](#)[Reed magazine](#)[Visit information](#)

[For Parents homepage](#)

[Parent handbook](#)

[Parent newsletter](#)

[Contacts](#)

## For Parents

### Parent Newsletter



#### Current Articles

[How do some Reed students spend their summers?](#)

[How to help during finals week](#)

[Care boxes](#)

#### Help us keep in touch

Parents, please provide us with your email addresses so that we may keep you up to date on Reed events. Also, let us know if you have a preferred first name, and we will make a note of it. Send this information and other inquiries to [parents@reed.edu](mailto:parents@reed.edu). Thanks!

#### Past Articles

- For Parents homepage**
- Parent handbook**
- Parent newsletter**
- Contacts**

# For Parents

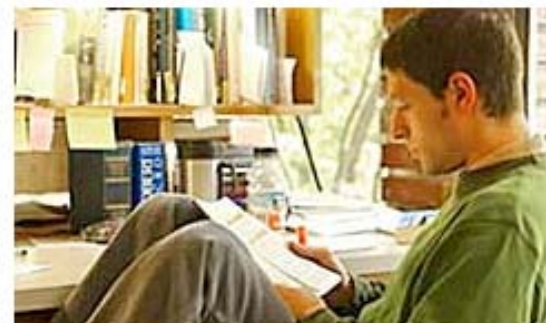
## A Resource Guide for Reed Parents

### Greetings, Reedie parents!

Whether your student is new or returning to Reed, we are delighted to welcome your family to this extraordinary community.

As a parent, you already have a direct link to the most exciting and interesting source of information about the college—your son or daughter. Nevertheless, you might find this guide useful as you get to know Reed and the resources and services that are available.

Parents are an important part of life at Reed. Your comments and suggestions are encouraged as the college continually seeks to improve each student's experience. We look forward to sharing in your enjoyment of your student's progress in the years ahead.



- Important numbers**
- General college information**
- Academic life**
- Student life**
- Residence life**
- Health and counseling services**
- Other student services**
- Financial aid**
- Calendar 2007-08**

# Strategic Approach

- A key to successful work with parents is a college- or university-wide agreement on how to deal with parents.
- Offices that typically lead such an initiative: student services, college relations, and admission.
- Areas that must be involved: business office, financial aid, registrar, academic affairs.

# Do as I say, not as I do...

## ■ Mistakes to avoid:

- Sending the tuition increase letter and the annual fund solicitation letters such that they arrive the same day
- Sending the tuition increase letter without a note from the president explaining the increase
- Allowing an orientation event for students to be hijacked by returning students

# Managing the Relationship

- Parent-to-parent program in admission
- Parent Council for ideas, testing initiatives, fund-raising
- Establishing and maintaining consistent contact fosters the sense that we care, and we will be in touch.
- Campus-wide consistency makes the boundaries clearer - Core Parent Committee

# Initiatives under consideration

- Career Services is exploring inviting parents to serve as resources
- Alumni College for parents
- Sibling program during parent/family weekend

# Remember...

“The less anxious parents are, the more likely they are to support their child’s growth in appropriate and meaningful ways—and the less likely they are to intervene inappropriately.”

Karen Levin Coburn

# Payoffs

- Parents know we care.
- If they trust that we will be in touch when necessary, they are less likely to worry when they don't hear.
- We can help them manage the transition.
- Parents are the single largest growth area in the annual fund.

# Discussion

- What goals and strategies have you set and implemented in your service to parents?
- What obstacles do you foresee or have you encountered in this area?
- What questions do you have for your colleagues?

# Resources

- “Heliparents & E-Kids” by Deborah Harr Clark:  
[http://www.pomona.edu/Magazine/pcmsp06/FS\\_heliparents.shtml](http://www.pomona.edu/Magazine/pcmsp06/FS_heliparents.shtml)
- College Board’s “Helicopter Parents Reconsidered: Take the Quiz”  
<http://www.collegeboard.com/parents/plan/getting-ready/155044.html>
- Coburn, Karen Levin (2006). “Organizing a Ground Crew for Today’s Helicopter Parents.” *About Campus* 11 (3): pp. 9-16.

- Nora McLaughlin, Registrar

Reed College

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[http://web.reed.edu/for\\_parents.html](http://web.reed.edu/for_parents.html)

- Thanks to:

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