

The Rhythm of the Academic Year

(Austin & Sousa, 1991)

Timeframe	Student may experience:	Potential Program Planning
August/ September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homesickness, loneliness • Excitement • Doubts about choice of school • Tendency to test new limits and boundaries • Frequent calls or visits home • Anxiety about roommates and professors • First rounds of tests possibly at the end of the month 	
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roommate problems begin to arise • Concerns about social climate (Do I fit in here?) • First grades may be returned • Midterm exams • Romantic relationships from home still going strong • For seniors, concerns re: post-graduation plans begin to surface (including resume preparation, grad school applications, testing) 	
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midterm grades returned • Roommate problems getting more serious • Lots of exams and papers due before Thanksgiving • Pressure building regarding coursework • First wave of apartment-wide homesickness 	
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety about going home for the holidays • Anxiety and sleeplessness because of finals • Sadness about leaving new romantic relationship • For freshmen, anxiety about putting class schedules together for the next semester • For seniors, realization that this is the last time that they register for classes • Feeling of missing out on holiday fun due to studying for exams; sense of being cheated 	
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homesickness • Loneliness for romantic relationship from home • Disappointment or excitement about first semester grades • Seeing this as a time to make a fresh start • Relief at being away from home/back to school • For seniors, frustration due to barrage of questions over the holidays from relatives, neighbors, etc., re: post-graduation plans 	
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feelings of claustrophobia due to the weather; short tempers, high tension level • Increase in alcohol and substance abuse • Breakup of romantic relationships back home • For Valentine's Day: feelings of loneliness, alienation (lack of purpose or identity... everyone has someone but me) 	

Timeframe	Student may experience:	Potential Program Planning
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety over choosing roommate(s) for the following academic year • Disappointment for students who can't afford to travel over spring break • For seniors, realization that this is the last spring break – last chance for free time • Anxiety about midterm exams • Beginning to worry about summer employment • Depression over winter weight gain (especially women) • For seniors, issue of post-graduation plans intensify 	
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excitement about arrival of good weather • Anxiety about choosing roommate(s) for next year • Panic about not finding a roommate or being abandoned • Nervousness about registering for courses • End-of-semester pressure begins • For seniors, feelings surrounding separation issues become intense (may displace feeling of loss into family setting) 	
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety about final exams • Apprehension about returning home for the summer • Sadness over losing touch with new friends • Sadness over losing contact with romantic relationship • For seniors, ambivalent feelings: pride in graduation, relief/sadness it's all over, excitement about entering the adult world, anxiety over having to produce in a competitive world, fear of the unknown 	
Entire Academic Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing birthday celebrations at home • Missing holiday celebrations at home (Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Thanksgiving, Passover, Easter, etc.) • Missing family-specific traditions such as carving pumpkins, picking out the Christmas tree, going skiing over midwinter break • Feelings of being left out of decision making in family matters, important or not (buying a new car, putting pet to sleep, getting new pet, reassigning bedroom space, making choices about vacation) 	