

Parent & Family Newsletter



Strong Start With Academics

Encourage your student to stay on top of their course content by attending class, regularly checking Canvas and other online course resources, visiting instructors' office hours, reading their Illinois State email, and seeking academic assistance. If students need help, many free academic services are available, including [Peer Success Advocates](#), tutoring for many courses, [seminars and workshops](#), [writing assistance](#), and more. Students can visit [University College](#) for more information.

Assisting Your Student Navigate an Absence from Class

There are many differences between high school and college in terms of class attendance.

Students in college are expected to meet the attendance expectations set individually by each instructor. Instructors include their attendance expectations in their course syllabi and/or on their Canvas sites.

Unlike in high school, where parents, guardians, or students may have reported absences to a central office, Illinois State does not require centralized reporting of absences unless the student is requesting to be excused under a University policy.

University policies override instructor-specific expectations **only** for these student absence reasons: (1) bereavement due to the loss of a family member, (2) military duty or training obligations, or (3) isolation/quarantine that is mandated in writing by a health official. To utilize one of these excused absences policies, your student can complete the [Absence Reporting form](#) or contact the Dean of Students Office at (309) 438-2008.

[Accommodation requests for religious obligations](#) can be submitted to Student Access and Accommodation Services. If granted, these accommodation requests may also result in university-approved absences. The Athletics department helps NCAA athletes manage absences that are required to attend athletics competitions/meets/games.

The Dean of Students Office can issue [courtesy absence notifications](#) to instructors to assist students who would otherwise not be able to contact all their instructors in a timely fashion themselves (e.g., due to hospitalization or significant health or family matters). However, the Dean of Students Office **does not** have the authority to determine what absence is or is not excused. Students are expected to meet the attendance expectations set individually by each instructor and/or seek clarification from their instructors about whether a certain absence is excused.

Family Weekend 2025

There are many exciting activities planned to enjoy with your student during Family Weekend on September 19-21. While registration is not necessary for Family Weekend, certain events do require a ticket purchase.

Family Weekend highlights include:

OC101: An Orientation to Living Off-Campus

Saturday, 9:30–10:30 a.m. • Old Main Room, Bone Student Center

Learn what to consider when moving off-campus. Staff from the Dean of Students Office will cover rental searches, leases, safety, and other important aspects of living off-campus—valuable information to know before signing a lease.

Parent and Family Services Photo Station

Saturday, 10 a.m.–Noon • Turner East Lawn (south of Hancock Stadium)

Stop by for a free commemorative group photo and meet staff from the Dean of Students Office.

Redbird Football vs. North Alabama

Saturday, 12 p.m. • Hancock Stadium ([Ticket required](#))

Cheer on the Redbirds as they take on North Alabama. Families who want to sit with students should purchase west-side general admission tickets—student and general admission sections will be combined for this game.

Dinner & Dueling Pianos

Saturday, 4 p.m. & 7:30 p.m. • Brown Ballroom, Bone Student Center ([Ticket required](#))

Enjoy an interactive evening of music and comedy with *Cool 2 Duel*. Tickets (\$40) include the show, a taco/nacho bar, and dessert.

Comedian Ryan Hamilton

Saturday, 7 p.m. • Braden Auditorium, Bone Student Center ([Ticket required](#))

Don't miss nationally acclaimed comedian Ryan Hamilton, known for his Netflix special *Happy Face* and appearances on *The Tonight Show* and *The Late Show*.

Legacy Brunch

Sunday, 10 a.m.–Noon • Brown Ballroom, Bone Student Center ([Registration required](#))

Legacy students and their families are invited to celebrate their Redbird connection over brunch. Hear from Vice President for Student Affairs Levester Johnson and enjoy a program highlighting what it means to be a Redbird Legacy. Admission is \$20 per person; register by September 15 at 4:30 p.m.

Laser Fantasy at the ISU Planetarium

Felmley Hall of Science Annex 167 (white domed roof, east end of Felmley Hall)

Experience dazzling laser light shows set to music, including the Beatles, Queen, Elton John, Pink Floyd, and this year's highlight—Taylor Swift. Admission is \$15 per person; children 12 and under are \$10 before 6 p.m. (cash or check at the door). See [schedule](#) for show times.

For a full schedule of events and ticket information, visit the [Family Weekend website](#).

Homecoming 2025: Raise the Banner

Homecoming 2025 takes place on October 13-19. With a [full schedule of activities](#), there are many ways to get involved throughout the week, including the Homecoming Parade, Town and Gown 5K, tailgating, and Redbird Football vs. Youngstown State on Saturday, October 18. Raise the Banner at Homecoming 2025!

Fall Internship and Career Fairs

The upcoming Fall Internship Fair and Career Fair provide great opportunities to connect Illinois State students with potential employers.

To help Redbirds prepare, Career Services is hosting a [Navigating Career Fairs](#) event from 5 to 7 p.m. on Wednesday, October 1, in the Bone Student Center. Employers from various industries will be available to provide practical tips about job searching. Participants rotate through various sessions on the basics of how to make a great first impression, research employers, incorporate skills and experiences into their pitch, and much more.

The [Fall Internship and Career Fair](#) takes place on Tuesday, October 7, from 2 to 5 p.m., in the Brown Ballroom, Bone Student Center. Redbirds can connect with employers from various organizations and learn about internship and full-time positions.

Additional information can be found on the [Career Services website](#).

Adding Emergency Contacts

It is important that every student has an emergency contact listed in their profile. Encourage your student to add emergency contacts by logging onto [My.IllinoisState.edu](#), going to the My Profile section, and scrolling down to the Emergency Contacts button under “Manage Your Profile Information.” Multiple contacts can be listed, though only one can be selected as preferred.

Safe Redbirds App

Safe Redbirds is the official safety app for Illinois State University. Through the app, users can access important safety alerts and provide instant access to campus safety resources.

Download the free app today from the [Apple App Store](#) or [Google Play](#).

Parent and Family Services at Illinois State University

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