



PARENT NEWSLETTER | December 2023 Edition

Hello! We're happy to bring you exciting and important news especially for 'Roo Parents and other supporters. The topics below are timely and of interest to Austin College families from first year to final year. If you have questions about anything covered here, please contact us by email at vicepresident@austincollege.edu.

Spring Term Bills Available Now

Your best resource for information related to tuition, fees, and all things money related is the [Austin College Business Office](#) webpage. These are the high priority points for this month:

- Spring 2024 bills are in your student's portal and are **due January 15, 2024**.
- Spring payment plans, administered by [ACI Payments](#), are open now. You can still enroll in a 4-month plan with payments beginning in December or a 3-month plan with payments beginning in January.

As always, Austin College sends the tuition bill and account updates to your student, and all business can be conducted online through WebHopper.

FAFSA: New Form, New Date

All Austin College students who receive financial aid are required by the school to complete the FAFSA each year. Historically, the FAFSA has been available annually beginning October 1st. However, because of significant changes to the application and the FAFSA processing system, the U.S. Department of Education says **students can complete the 2024-25 FAFSA beginning December 31, 2023**. Schools will begin receiving FAFSA data by January 31, 2024.

Based on this new schedule, Austin College Financial Aid will be able to notify students that their FAFSA has been received at the College sometime after February. Your student should complete the FAFSA application as soon as possible after it becomes available on December 31, 2023.

For general information about the 24-25 FAFSA launch and how you can prepare for your student's application, follow the link below.

[NEW FAFSA INFORMATION](#)

Not a Creature was Stirring; Residence Halls Closed for the Holiday

Residence Halls close at 5 p.m. today, Friday, December 8. Students may return beginning at Noon on Sunday, December 31, 2023.

IMPORTANT NOTE: On-campus food service begins on January 2, at 7 a.m. for JanTerm. Students on meal plan should be prepared to cover their own meals between their arrival to campus and the first day of JanTerm classes.

Between the Terms: 5-Day Break in January

JanTerm classes end Wednesday, January 24, and Spring Term classes begin on Tuesday, January 30. During the five days between, students may stay in their residence halls, however the dining hall will be closed. **The Pouch Club will be open from noon to 7 p.m.** each of those days serving lunch and dinner. Spring Term Hopper Dollars will be activated and available to purchase lunch and dinner in the Pouch Club. Please plan accordingly.

Didn't we just get here? Housing Selection for Fall 2024 Coming Soon

As a four-year residential college, most students are required to live on-campus for six semesters. Room selection for **Fall Term 2024** begins soon after students return for spring semester. You can read the [Room Selection Booklet](#), produced by the Office of Student Life, for all the information your student needs. Please note, some choices will affect a student's financial aid package.

[Patrick Miller](#), Director of Residence Life, says two important points to know are:

1. The College uses a ranking system for housing selection that prioritizes upperclassmen students (based on when they started at Austin College, not necessarily on academic credits).
 2. First year students who want to maximize their chances of getting into an apartment community should look at the overall group GPA of the applicants in their group. Higher group GPA increases their odds. That's one way to incentivize good study habits!
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Campus Policy for Inclement Weather Protocols

Here are the campus procedures in the event of inclement weather such as ice and snow. Students should always use good judgment regarding their ability to travel safely to campus.

- Being a residential campus, Austin College will generally remain open even during inclement weather. If the College cancels classes or other services at any point, notifications will be sent via email and/or the college's emergency alert system and posted on the college's webpage. Otherwise, assume the campus is open and classes are in session during any academic term.
- While the campus remains open during inclement weather, decisions about the need to cancel a particular class or hold it remotely can be made by individual faculty members. Should a faculty member cancel a class or hold it remotely, they will notify their students directly.
- Students are not expected to place travel for class attendance above their own individual health and safety. Students who are unable to attend class for safety reasons should not be penalized.
- It is the student's responsibility to contact faculty prior to missing class for any reason.

- Physical plant and campus police routinely patrol the campus. When there is ice on the ground, sidewalks and hard surfaces will be sanded and salted for safety, but it is recommended to walk on the grass when possible.
 - Regardless of weather conditions, Austin College Dining Services will remain open according to their regular schedule and meal plans will be active.
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Extra news you can use! *Special for Parents of Seniors*

Q: When is Commencement?

A: May 18, 2024, beginning at 8:30 a.m. The ceremony is held outdoors on Clyde L. Hall Graduation Court where seating is open and plentiful. In the case of bad weather, students receive 4 guest tickets for the indoor ceremony.

Q. How does my senior get their regalia?

A: Standard commencement regalia, including mortarboard, tassel, gown, and hood are paid for by the student's fees. There is no additional cost for the standard regalia.

Many seniors have already picked up the regalia they wore to Opening Convocation in August. If your student did, the question is—do they know where it is? Is it in good order?

Seniors who do not have their graduation regalia yet or need to replace a part will pick it up at Commencement Fair, held in the spring. For questions about regalia, email [Sonya Richardson](#). The date of Commencement Fair is TBA, and your student will receive adequate notice for this event.

Q. Can we order graduation announcements?

A: Yes. Optional formal graduation announcements are available for order at the Commencement Fair. Orders are placed through [Jostens](#) for these and class rings.



Austin College
900 N. Grand Ave., Suite 6G
Sherman, TX 75090-4400
903.813.2000