

CMC Parent News - Summer 2019

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Emily Mendell P'22 and Chase Mendell '22

What, Me Worry? Confessions of a First Year CMC Parent

By Emily Mendell P'22

Like many first year college parents, I experienced a fair amount of anxiety in the weeks leading up to dropping my son off on campus 3,000 miles away from our east coast home. He was not our first to go away to school but, as I learned, each school comes with its own nuances and uncertainties that can result in a little hand wringing. CMC was no different; and in the spirit of parental camaraderie, I confess here my top 5 worries that were unique to the school, but perhaps not so much to other parents.

(Spoiler alert: All my worrying was for naught. As this year's incoming families will discover, CMC – and our students – have it all figured out.)

#1 - My child will go hungry. A quick calculation using “Mom Math” resulted in the early realization that the most generous plan of 16 meals a week did not equate to three square meals a day. My child enjoyed breakfast, lunch, and dinner most days at home. How could he possibly survive? The answer came in the first week when he informed me that not only was the plan adequate, but the food options at Collins and the rest of the 5C dining halls were quite robust. Brunch was a common occurrence – and nightly “snack” and daily afternoon Ath Tea fueled the students all year long.

#2 - My child won’t know how to pick classes. While most universities have students selecting their first semester classes during the summer, CMC waits until the students are firmly ensconced on campus to begin that process. This deliberate approach leaves us parents out of the picture, and relegated to watching from the sidelines as our children make some important decisions without us. It is the first of many opportunities granted to CMC families to gently but properly cut the cord. With the help of his advisor and his First Year Guides (FYGs), my son not only chose the right classes, but also got a good sense as to professors and schedules.

#3 - My child will be confined to campus. Without a car and in the middle of the Inland Empire, I feared my son would have few options to explore the Southern California region which drew him to CMC in the first place. As you might guess, confinement was not an issue. At all. [Zip Cars](#) (which can be rented to those students 18 and over) and Ubers took him where he wanted to go. Off campus excursions were plentiful. Weekend surfing, hiking and camping trips were very common, many sponsored by CMC at little or no cost to the students. These opportunities kept my son busy, and, admittedly, left me a little jealous.

#4 - My child won’t find his people at such a small school. My son was just one of two first-year students admitted from our state. He arrived knowing only a few other students he spoke to briefly at the [summer meetups](#) (Hint: If you can get to one of those events – go!) Yet even before we left campus at drop-off, the kids were already settled into their [Weekend Orientation Adventure \(WOA\)](#) groups; it was where many made their closest friends. And while I won’t go so far as to say that all CMC students are alike, they do share a love of community which transcends cliques and fosters opportunities to engage with one another in many ways.

#5 - The long distance will be difficult. Truth be told, I knew this one would be harder on my husband and me than my student. I was most worried about not being close should “something” happen. Nothing did, and Skype was only a click away. One of the most heartwarming moments came when a fellow first-year parent put a call out on the [Facebook parent group](#) for guidance in helping her international student who was ill in his dorm. Within the hour, other parents had their kids checking on her child, and the CMC administration and [RA](#) also jumped in to make sure he was properly cared for. Our kids are in good hands. As first year parents you have probably heard from those who came before you that CMC is indeed a very special place. And it is. The school’s commitment to fostering an environment where students can think and grow independently may make us nervous on the front end. Yet, after just a semester we understood the process and have been forever grateful. Don’t be shy about

sharing your concerns with other parents; we are here to put your mind at ease, and next year you will certainly pay it forward. See you soon, P'23s!

¿Le gustaría leer este artículo en español? Por favor haga [clíc aqui!](#)

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Experiences of a First-Year International Family

What to expect when you arrive at CMC in August

By Rick Verjee P'21

If you are the parent of an incoming international student, let me assure you that you are in for quite an amazing experience during the events hosted by CMC [International Place \(I Place\)](#).

Prior to our experience in 2017, we did not realize that the orientation process for international students ([NISSO](#)) was enhanced as compared to the regular orientation for domestic students. Although we did not require it, I-Place would even have arranged for complimentary airport pick-up for our student (with prior registration), if needed. Amazing!

For 2019, move-in day for international students is **Wednesday, August 21**, and NISSO starts on **Thursday, August 22**.

Our first stop was to check in at the [I-Place offices](#). They were very well organized and had all kinds of student volunteers welcoming the new students and helping them get checked-in, escorting them to their dorm rooms and answering any basic questions along the way. Although the students were given their dorm keys and had a quick peek at their new home, there was no time to actually get unpacked because soon after the dedicated check-in time, students were whisked off to a welcome breakfast and the parents had an altogether different agenda for the duration of orientation.

I-Place wasted no time in cutting that parent-child cord and getting the new students fully engaged in various activities. There was an information fair to learn about campus life and activities, a [Claremont Village](#) tour where students could stop to open a bank account or arrange for cell phone plans, and even an organized bus trip to the nearby shopping center for lunch and last minute dorm room shopping. There was also some free time slotted in before a student dinner and social group activities designed for the students to get to know one another, and that was just the first day!

The next days activities included various programs including, *Introduction to Your Immigration Status*, *Life in the US: Strategies for Support and Culture Shock*, *Life on Campus*, *Safety on Campus and Beyond*, *Staying Healthy on Campus*, *Academic Support & Resources*, *Meeting your Faculty*, *Support For Your Career*, *Student Life at Your College*, and so on. Needless to say, we did not see our daughter until Saturday when the students were given the day off to finish unpacking and picking up any last-minute items!

So, what happened to answering all those parent questions? Well, while the students were busy with their own agenda, I-Place hosted an [International Family Orientation](#) where information and guidance was tailored to an international perspective, answering all those questions likely be on every parent's list of questions coming into Claremont! I recall we heard from the Dean of Students, Dean of Faculty, and older international students, to name just a few. These visits gave us parents some terrific advice about what to expect from the students during their first term, such as, do not expect to hear from your kids on a daily basis! They explained that parents should give students some time to settle in to their new home, make new friends, explore Claremont and the surrounding areas, get involved in extra curricular activities, and yes, get used to the challenging academics as well! (They were right! Around November we started hearing from our daughter more frequently.)

One of the highlights for us was a [welcome reception](#) on Friday evening, hosted by President Chodosh and his wife Priya Junnar at their lovely home which is walking distance from the CMC campus. This is something we would not have expected and certainly something which is not commonly done, not even at many other private colleges. We got to meet other parents from all over the world, many of whom we keep in regular contact with today, as well as senior members of the administration and staff of CMC. President Chodosh and Priya made everyone feel so welcome and invited us all to make this our home whenever we are in town visiting. I have yet to take him up on that offer!

Finally, for those parents who are able to stay through Sunday, I would highly recommend attending [CMC's Parent and Family Orientation](#) on Sunday, August 25. The highlight of this day is the Welcome to CMC event in Roberts Pavilion, where student are officially welcomed to the College.

As a fellow international parent, the biggest piece of advice I can offer parents of incoming first-year students is not to worry about anything. CMC has it covered and they do an amazing job; sharing information, answering questions, and making families feel at ease before they leave their kids to go back home. Enjoy the experience as I promise it will be a memorable one for your family.



¿Cuáles son mis preocupaciones? Confesiones de un padre de CMC

Por Emily Mendell P'22 y traducido por Rebecca Pelén

Al igual que muchos padres universitarios de primer año, tuve bastante ansiedad en las semanas previas a dejar a mi hijo en el campus a 3000 millas de nuestra casa de la costa este. Él no fue el primero en irse a la universidad, pero, como aprendí, cada universidad viene con sus propios matices e incertidumbres que pueden resultar en un pequeño apretón de manos. CMC no fue diferente; y en el espíritu de camaradería de los padres, confieso aquí mis cinco preocupaciones principales.

(Alerta: todas mis preocupaciones fueron en vano. Como lo descubrirán las nuevas familias entrando este año, Claremont McKenna College y nuestros estudiantes, lo tienen todo resuelto).

Preocupación # 1 - Mi hijo pasará hambre. Hice un cálculo rápido y realicé que el plan más generoso de 16 comidas a la semana no equivalía a tres comidas cada día. Mi hijo estaba acostumbrado a comer tres veces al día en nuestra casa. ¿Cómo podría él sobrevivir? La respuesta llegó en la primera semana cuando me informó que no solo era adecuado el plan, sino que las opciones de comida en el comedor llamado Collins y el resto de los comedores en los otros colegios eran bastante sólidas. El brunch, una comida que se da generalmente luego del desayuno y antes del almuerzo, era común. Los estudiantes tienen la oportunidad de tomarse un té o cafecito por la tarde en el Ateneo con sus profesores favoritos y regularmente se comen un antojito por la noche.

Preocupación # 2 - Mi hijo no sabrá cómo escoger sus clases. Mientras que la mayoría de las universidades o colegios tienen estudiantes que seleccionan sus clases durante el verano, CMC espera hasta que los estudiantes estén firmemente instalados en el campus para comenzar este proceso.

Aunque nos deja a nosotros como padres fuera de la imagen, esto ayuda a nuestros hijos e hijas a comenzar a tomar sus propias decisiones. Con la ayuda de su consejero y sus Guías de Primer Año (FYG, por sus siglas en inglés), mi hijo no solo eligió las clases correctas, sino que también tuvo un buen sentido de los profesores y los horarios.

Preocupación # 3 - Mi hijo estará confinado en el campus. Sin un automóvil y en medio del Inland Empire, temía que mi hijo tuviera pocas opciones para explorar la región del sur de California, el cual es lo que lo atrajo a CMC en primer lugar. Como puede imaginar, esto no fue un problema. [Zip Cars](#) son carros que están disponibles para alquilar a estudiantes mayores de 18 años. Lyft y Uber son vehículos de transporte que están disponibles a cualquier hora a través de su aplicación móvil. Con estas opciones, nuestros estudiantes tienen muchas opciones para los fines de semana. Muchos disfrutaban sus días libres en la playa, otros hacen una caminata en las montañas locales, o participan en excursiones las cuales son patrocinadas por CMC. Estas oportunidades mantuvieron a mi hijo ocupado y, ciertamente, me dejaron un poco celosa.

Preocupación # 4 - Mi hijo no encontrará a amigos en una escuela tan pequeña. Mi hijo fue solo uno de los dos estudiantes de primer año admitidos en nuestro estado. CMC estuvo preparado para este pequeño problema. Durante el verano, hay eventos para los nuevos estudiantes y sus familias en su región, conocidos como New Student Parties. Aquí, mi estudiante pudo conocer a sus compañeros de clases y nosotros padres pudimos convivir con otras familias en la misma situación. Le sugiero que visite el sitio de web donde podrá encontrar información de los eventos: <https://online.cmc.edu/cmc-new-student-parties>. Los nuevos estudiantes también son parte de [Grupos de Aventura de Orientación](#) (conocidos como WOA por sus siglas en inglés). En estas aventuras, las cuales llevan a los estudiantes visitar varios lugares en California por un fin de semana, es donde encuentras a amigos y amigas para el resto de sus años.

Preocupación # 5 - La larga distancia será difícil. A decir verdad, sabía que esta sería más difícil para nosotros como padres que para mi hijo. Estaba más preocupado por no estar cerca si algo sucediera. Hay que recordar que vivimos en una etapa donde el móvil nos conecta a todos rápido. Padres también se pueden conectar con otros padres por [Facebook](#). Uno de los momentos más conmovedores se produjo cuando un padre de familia de primer año hizo una llamada a la página de Facebook para que la ayudara a su estudiante internacional que estaba enferma en su dormitorio. En menos de una hora, otros padres hicieron que sus hijos visitaran a la estudiante. Es más, la administración de CMC y un asesor residencial (conocido como [RA](#) por sus siglas en inglés) también intervinieron para asegurarse de que se cuidara adecuadamente. ¡Nuestros niños están en buenas manos!

Déjeme decirles que CMC es un lugar muy especial. CMC se dedicara a crear un ambiente donde su hijo/a podrá crecer como adulto. Creará una comunidad para que su estudiante crezca en sus estudios. No tenga miedo de compartir sus preocupaciones con otros padres. Estamos aquí para tranquilizarlos y el próximo año sin duda usted podrá ayudar a otros padres. ¡Hasta pronto, P'23s!



Student Privacy for Healthcare and Academics

“My child tells me nothing” is statement commonly heard among parents – and it’s no different when it comes to healthcare and grades while at college. CMC complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which was designed to protect student’s rights by maintaining the privacy of educational records, and providing guidelines for the correction of inaccurate or misleading information. CMC also encourages students to take responsibility and advocate for themselves, but realizes that some students may want to share their academic progress with their parents and welcome parental support when it comes to healthcare.

The bottom line? Parents and students over the age of 18 may want to have a conversation regarding the release of educational and medical records, and arrive at a mutually satisfactory agreement. More information regarding the specific forms is below.

Healthcare: Student Health Services (SHS) and **Monsour Counseling and Psychological Services (MCAPS)** follow all required HIPAA and privacy guidelines, unless students pose a danger to themselves or to others. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), protects the privacy of medical records. As soon as a child turns 18, parents no longer have access to their medical information even if they are still covered by the parents’ health insurance. Students may elect to sign a [Medical Release of Information Form](#), which allows health-care provides to share information with the authorized person.

If your student is a CMS athlete, be aware that athletes will be asked to complete the annual [NCAA Student-Athlete HIPAA Authorization Form](#) with the rest of their NCAA Eligibility paperwork. This allows athletic trainers, physicians, and other medical providers to freely communicate about an athlete’s healthcare-related information. It also allows coaches to be kept informed on the status and

severity of injuries. In order for parents to be informed about sports-related health information, athletes would have to also sign the aforementioned SHS Medical Release of Information Form.

Grades and Educational Records:

The [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#), is a federal law administered by the Department of Education. FERPA applies to all institutions that receive funding from the department. Once a student reaches the age of 18 and enrolls in college, FERPA rights transfer from the parent to the individual student. As a result, CMC cannot release education records—including grades—to parents unless the student has given prior express written consent. Students may fill out and sign an [FERPA Release Form](#) and bring it to the Registrar in order for their parents to have access to their grades. (In accord with FERPA laws, CMC's full written policy with regard to educational privacy and student privacy rights can be found on the [CMC website](#).)

Parents with questions regarding FERPA policies can contact the CMC Office of the Registrar at (909) 621-8101 or registrar@claremontmckenna.edu. Parents with questions regarding HIPPA can contact the Student Health Center at (909) 921-8222 or SHSrecords@cuc.claremont.edu

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Move-in Day and Parent & Family Orientation

Here's What to Expect

Move-in Day will be one of the most memorable occasions of your family's CMC experience. For both you and your student, this day marks the beginning of a journey. You will both feel the excitement of

this new chapter, be eager to meet new friends, faculty and staff, and no doubt experience some anxiety about this transition as your student becomes increasingly independent.

Move-in Day is the first day of a week-long Orientation for students designed to prepare them to thrive academically and personally. While students are meeting each other and attending their own orientation sessions, parents are invited to attend **Parent and Family Orientation** and offered the opportunity to learn how to partner with the College to support their student's educational experience.

Sessions will focus on CMC's academic philosophy and the many opportunities and resources offered at CMC. This is powerful information to share and encourage students to leverage as they create their own unique CMC experiences. The sessions offered are optional, and not meant to interfere with the move-in process. You can view the entire schedule of events and register for the event on the **Parent and Family Orientation website**.

REGISTER FOR PARENT & FAMILY ORIENTATION

Things We Wish We Had Known

Three years ago, when the Communications Committee discussed writing a brief article on "things we wish we had known," I eagerly volunteered to write it so that I could learn from others in the Claremont McKenna community. Little did I know how many wonderful nuggets I would receive! We did a second version of the article a year later, again based on suggestions from parents.

Here is a summary of those that are most relevant to the first part of the school year.

I wish I had known...

. . . more about orientation/moving to CMC.

- The [Ontario Airport](#) is the closest to campus and easiest to navigate, but does not have direct flights from many places, complicating the airport decision.
- Local hotels often offer discounts to CMC families. A phone call directly to the hotel seeking information on a possible discount may result in an unofficial reduction in the rate.
- The roommate selection process at CMC is thoughtful and deliberate, which means that students may not have roommate assignments/information as soon as other schools (but, roommate matches usually work out well!).
- Move-in is very organized and will go much more smoothly than expected.
- Orientation weekend has tracks for parents and students. The two do not overlap much, so don't expect to spend much time with your student after move-in.

- During the [WOA](#) trip, no cell phones are allowed (with limited exceptions) making it virtually impossible to check up on your child (who is doing just fine!).
- Parents can sign up to become involved in several volunteer activities. During Orientation, look for the parent volunteers in the Hospitality Center. They can find ways to get you involved, and are also terrific resources for new families.
- The [private Facebook group](#) for parents has several discussion threads about move-in topics, including information for international students, who are able to arrive on campus a few days before other students.
- Although it is hard to leave your student for the first time, CMC provides all kinds of support for parents and students.

... that getting involved with CMC is easy and fun!

- The [Parent Network Board \(PNB\)](#) meetings (four times a year) are open to all CMC parents. Three meetings are held on campus: one in the fall, one during Family Weekend, and one in April following Inside CMC Day. The fourth meeting is a summer teleconference. All parents are welcome and encouraged to attend.
- Parents can volunteer to join a [Parent Network Board Committee](#). The current Committees include Admissions, Career Development, Communications, Parents Fund Giving, and Programs. Parents do not have to be on the PNB to be part of a committee.

... more about local things to do in the Claremont area.

- One parent wished she had known sooner about the [Claremont Wilderness Trail](#).
- On Sundays in the Village, you will find a [street market with local vendors](#) selling produce/fresh food, art, and handmade items.
- Several parents offered recommendations and suggestions for local restaurants and bakeries that would deliver birthday cakes for CMC students. Many of those can be found in our [Facebook group](#). (If you seek a recommendation, pose the question in the FB group and you should receive answers from the CMC parent community quickly.)
- Students can take the train from Pomona to Union Station in downtown Los Angeles, which provides numerous other transportation options.

... to trust and support CMC students.

- It is important to support students as they acclimate to college at their own pace. Some will dive in right away, and others may need to get the lay of the land before they are prepared to fully utilize campus resources and networks.
- It is ok if a student is not selected for opportunities on the first try. It may seem like every CMCer has a great leadership role, institute research job, internship, etc., but students should be encouraged to keep learning about CMC offerings, keep applying for opportunities that capture their interest, and

keep an open mind and positive outlook. Things will fall into place soon enough. At CMC, the opportunities are many and varied!

... that career opportunities exist on and off campus.

- Many students work on-campus doing jobs of all types. They find these jobs posted on [Handshake](#).
- Handshake also is the site where internships for CMC students are posted. [Help a student by soliciting internships in your area](#)! CMC funds internships in certain circumstances.
- Although some employers recruit for internships and jobs in the fall, many others wait until spring, so students should keep looking and applying throughout the year.
- There are fewer internships for freshman and sophmores, so don't get discouraged. Gaining experience of any kind, including volunteer work, additional education, travel, and other types of summer jobs all demonstrate a quest for learning and show initiative. Don't worry if a freshman does not land a "perfect" summer job!
- CMC students have access to career services at all 5C colleges, so they should check out career fairs and company visits at the other Consortium colleges for career opportunities.
- Many of the companies that come to campus to interview for junior year summer internships arrive in the fall of junior year. This means that students who are away for that semester (abroad programs/DC or Silicon Valley programs) really need to stay on top of the interview schedules at CMC. Many finance and consulting internships are filled by Thanksgiving! Student who are off campus may have to be more pro-active.

... that there are many ways to communicate within CMC!

- CMC parents have a private Facebook group – [Claremont McKenna Parents and Families](#)
- In addition, you can find contact information for the [Parent Network Board on the website](#).
- We will be adding suggestions and resource lists for popular requests for recommendations on Facebook and encouraging others to share as well. (Storage facilities for the summer is already posted!)

As I mentioned at the outset, this article does not include all the terrific suggestions I received. This conversation will continue in the CMC Parents and Families Facebook Group, and I encourage parents to add suggestions and list things they wish they had known so that others in our CMC community can benefit from their experiences.

Michelle Cash P'20

Parent Network Board Meetings

The Parent Network Board meets quarterly to discuss board business and to hear from College leadership. Read the minutes from the April 13, 2019 meeting [here](#).