

## NEWS

# Calming nerves

*UF's Preview eases transition for new students and parents*

**BY KRISTEN LANDREVILLE SPECIAL TO THE SUN**

Published 12:01 a.m. ET June 3, 2003 | Updated 9:50 p.m. ET June 2, 2003

Choosing the perfect major, scheduling classes and figuring out financial aid can be intimidating for new students at the University of Florida.

Throw in making friends, and it can be overwhelming.

"I'm a little nervous because I don't know many people coming here from my high school," said Alisha Motl, an incoming freshman from Temple Terrace who is attending UF's Preview program this week.

Preview is a mandatory orientation for students and an optional look at what is in store for them for their parents.

There are 20 two-day sessions from May to July, with about 400 students attending each one. Students choose their major, register for classes and receive general guidance from the Preview staff and academic advisers.

Motl isn't the only student wary of what to expect.

Past Preview students also have shared concerns about making friends, said Megan Manning, director of new student programs, which coordinates Preview.

Manning said connecting with other students is important, and that's why changes were made two years ago. Students are now required to stay on campus for the night during Preview.

There's food, music and games designed to encourage the students to get to know each other, she said.

Previously, students and parents could stay in a dorm or a hotel together. Parents now stay off-campus during Preview.

Requiring students to spend the night in the dorms is just one recent change to the Preview program that is intended to better serve students.

A new-student information session about financial aid, transportation and meal plans was added to accommodate students whose parents don't attend Preview. Previously, only a parent's session on such money matters was held.

Additionally, registration for Preview has become available online, Manning said.

She said that 98 percent of incoming students register for class online.

"There was less confusion, and people didn't miss any steps (of the registration)," Manning said.

Len Fischman of Jupiter, a parent attending Preview on Monday, said, "I think the program is very well done. They're right on schedule."

He said he didn't have a program like Preview when he went to college, and thought every college should have such a program.

"It's straight information - not glossy or sugar-coated," Fischman said.

Fischman's son, Cory, said he asked some scheduling questions.

"I would ask something like, 'If you're a dual major, how do you schedule classes?' " said Cory, who plans to major in music and business.

He even got a jump-start on making friends.

"We're in small groups, and we all get to know each other," he said.