INDIANA UNIVERSITY KOKOMO

News Release

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Mother and daughter bond through college experience

KOKOMO, Ind. — Many teenagers use their college years to distance themselves from their mothers, asserting their independence.

But for IU Kokomo freshman Ashley Miller and her mother, Jennifer, college has been a bonding experience, drawing them closer.

“We’re still mother and daughter, but we have more of a friendship now,” said Jennifer, a junior.

“I get to know her on a more personal level now,” Ashley added. “She’s a cool mom.”

The two have a lot in common — both are studying health management, they are in the same folklore class, and both serve on the IU Kokomo Student Alumni Association board.

Jennifer began attending IU Kokomo four years ago as a part-time student, and enrolled fulltime in fall 2012. She plans to graduate in 2014, and then plans to pursue a Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) degree before seeking a job. Ashley is a recent high school graduate.

Jennifer was first to join the student alumni association, as a way to make the transition to being an alumna in the near future. She encouraged her daughter to join as well to help her make a connection to the campus.

“The student alumni association works hard to bring events to campus for campus unity,” she said. “As I’m getting closer to graduation, I’m enjoying the opportunity to get to know alumni, making connections that could help me in my career.”

Ashley enjoys being involved in the group with her mother, and is glad she pushed her to join.

“She encourages me to find ways to be involved with the group and on campus,” Ashley said. “I like it.”

Jennifer said, in the past, she tried to be just like all the other college students – having her daughter on campus has been an adjustment. She laughs, recalling their first week on campus together when Ashley called to her from across the quad.

“She yelled, ‘Hey, Mom!’ at me, and I was kind of embarrassed at first,” she said. “I’ve always tried to feel like I’m just one of the students. Then I realized she was excited to see me at an age when most girls don’t want to hang out with their moms.”

They’ve also had to learn to work together as colleagues, rather than as a mother and daughter.

“I have to remind myself that I don’t have to be the mom all the time,” Jennifer said. “I have to remember that Ashley has her own opinions, and we are in this as equals.”

Indiana University Kokomo serves north central Indiana.

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