

Parents Electronic News  
West Virginia University  
February 24, 2017

*\*FINAL REMINDER: parents of current and incoming students, the 2017-18 FAFSA priority deadline is less than a week away (March 1.) If you have not already, file today: <http://1.usa.gov/1TB28Kx>.\**

Hello from Sunny Morgantown! With temperatures reaching near 80 today, many students already have their sites on Spring Break and shorts and flip flops are gracing campus! Residence Halls close next Friday, March 3 at 7 p.m. for Spring Break and parents club holiday buses also leave that day. Even though it is within reach, students need to stay focused. Next week also marks the mid-semester point meaning midterms are underway. Details follow on spring break prep, buses, and the mid-semester help center and other midterm support options, so read on. Don't forget to let us know how your student will be spending Spring Break in our Question of the Month: <http://bit.ly/2l2nbfi>.

This point in the semester is also when we begin to have many parents of newly admitted students for Fall 2017 join the Mountaineer Parents Club - welcome! While some of the Parent E-Newsletter information is directed to parents of current WVU students, there are some items specific to just you, such as the Adventure WV information below. Curious about what to expect next in the enrollment process? Check out this website: <http://bit.ly/1UmPSyb> and keep an eye out for New Student Orientation information that will be mailed to your student in mid-March.

In addition to the items above, I have also included some details on financial news and scholarships for parents of both incoming and current students as these are hot topics this time of the year. This is a key time in the semester with a number of deadlines related to advising, course registration and graduation among others, so before checking out for spring break, be sure to share with your student and read on yourself. Enjoy the weekend, everyone, and remind your students to stay safe as they head out for Spring Break! In this edition:

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## PARENTS CLUB NEWS

### **See the nationally ranked men's basketball team if you come to pick your student up for Spring Break**

Parents – If you will be in town to pick up your student, Friday, March 3, plan to stay the night and catch the last home game of the year for our nationally ranked men's basketball team. Have your student purchase a guest ticket for you when they get their student ticket at <http://bit.ly/2kUTRIY>. Let's Gooo Mountaineers!

### **Spring Family Days**

The Mountaineer Parents Club has pulled together some great suggestions for spending time on campus with your student the weekends of April 7-9 and April 21-23. There are not specific planned events so that you can enjoy the campus and Morgantown community with your student. No registration is needed in advance. <http://bit.ly/2mgiz6B>

## **SPRING BREAK REMINDERS**

### **Seats remain on most Spring Break Buses**

We are still taking reservations for the Spring Break buses to Allentown, PA; Carlisle, PA; Hagerstown, MD; Secaucus, NJ; King of Prussia, PA; and Highland, NY, to service the Connecticut, New York and New England areas. The Southern New Jersey and Central Maryland and Long Island, NY Mountaineer Parents Clubs also offer buses to their areas. The Northern Virginia bus is full.

Please note that the dates for the spring break holiday buses are listed below. WVU Residence Halls close for the week on Friday, March 3 at 7:00 pm. They will reopen on Sunday, March 12 at 12:00 pm.

- Buses leave Morgantown – Friday, March 3
- Buses return to Morgantown – Sunday, March 12

For specific schedules and to make reservations, see: <http://bit.ly/2IEaTbq>. The last day to request a refund for the spring buses has passed. No other refunds will be issued.

### **Limited spring break parking available – new lot added**

Students leaving campus for spring break can store their vehicles on campus in short term lot 2 (upper lot of the Mountainlair garage) and just added Area 81 (in front of Mountaineer Station.) Temporary student permits can be purchased for \$10, which covers March 3-12. To purchase a permit, students should visit Mountaineer Station, located at 1112 Van Voorhis Drive or call the WVU Parking Office at 304-293-5502.

### **Spring Break Residence Hall Housing Message**

Parents – students in our residence halls were sent this message last week as a reminder.

“This serves as a reminder that all residence halls will be closing on Friday, March 3 at 7:00pm. All residence hall residents must vacate their spaces by that time. If you are in need of housing over the Spring Break, there are limited spaces available with University Apartments in University Place during the break.

If this is an option you wish to explore, please visit the University Place Leasing Office between 9am – 4:30pm, located in the North Tower. The deadline for securing space is Saturday, February 25, 2017. Staff at UPlace will be able to answer any questions you might have. There is additional cost for this option. Residence Halls re-open on Sunday, March 12 at noon.”

### **Spring Break Hours**

During Spring Break, several student services and resources adjust their hours and services. You can find these here: <http://bit.ly/2kVf0T5>.

## GRADUATION

### Graduation reminders – Last day to apply to graduate is March 3

As a reminder, the last day to apply to graduate in May 2017 is Friday, March 3. Once registered, students should complete these final steps.

1. Register to walk.
  - After you've applied to graduate, tell us if you would like to participate in the graduation ceremony. May graduates can register to walk through your WVU college/school's website.
2. If you have not already, order the required cap and gown and other optional graduation products (announcements, invitations, etc.).
  - Official WVU regalia is available at the two WVU Bookstore locations and online at Herff-Jones: <http://bit.ly/1LuzSpZ>. Please purchase all caps, gowns, tassels and hoods prior to the day of your ceremony as no regalia will be sold at the venue. See our Commencement Attire Page for more information about attire requirements: <http://bit.ly/1PczQQy>.
3. Check for any outstanding fees and holds (unpaid parking tickets, overdue library books, fees, etc.).
  - Students are not allowed to officially graduate if there are unpaid fees. They should make sure they are set to graduate by checking for hold in the WVU Portal <http://bit.ly/1m8XLtH>.
4. Students and guests should visit the Graduation FAQ page to get answers to any other commencement related questions. <http://bit.ly/1RPgPp0>.

## MIDTERM AND ACADEMIC UPDATES

We are approaching the mid-semester mark and this means midterm exams or projects are underway. Be sure to check in with your student and if they need assistance, they can explore tutoring support options through our Academic Resource Centers <http://bit.ly/1Gn6MnW> or explore the "Additional Tutoring On Campus" section of that site for a list of all learning centers and resources across campus. This is also a great time to remind students that visiting faculty during office hours is also a great idea if they need assistance in a course. Some key dates follow:

- March 1 – Mid-Semester Help Center – 1-5 p.m. Vandalia Lounge of the Mountainlair (See below).

- March 6 – Midterm grades of a D or F at the eight-week mark will be recorded and posted to the STAR system and Parent/Guest Portal: <http://bit.ly/119XiAm>. Remember – no news is good news.
- March 24 – Last day to drop a class with a “W.” Students should consult with their academic advisor prior to dropping a class to determine what impact it might have on their academic progress.

### **Managing Midterm Stress and Anxiety Workshop – Tuesday, February 28**

With midterms fast approaching, it is normal for students to experience increased stress and anxiety. This workshop, being sponsored by our Carruth Center for Counseling, is designed to help students manage these feelings in healthy, effective ways. Students will learn about evidence-based strategies to help control worry, relieve tension and reduce the overall impact of stress on their lives. Workshop is free and open to all WVU students. All students are welcome to attend on Tuesday, February 28, from 6:30-7:30 p.m. in CPASS Room G06.

<http://bit.ly/2cQXqZ9>

### **Mid-Semester Help Center – Wednesday, March 1**

We will also be offering a One-Stop Shop called the Mid-Semester Help Center. If your student is not sure where to go, needs assistance, might need to drop or add a midterm class, the Mid-Semester Help Center is a great resource to meet with academic advisors, financial aid/Mountaineer HUB staff, Accessibility Services staff, etc. This will be held Wednesday, March 1 from 1-5 p.m. in the Vandalia Lounge of the Mountainlair. No appointment is necessary – students are encouraged just to drop by. As always, students should keep their assigned advisor posted on their current progress and decisions to add or drop any classes, as advising appointments for summer and fall are under way at this point as well.

### **DegreeWorks**

If your student has not yet, they should be logging into their DegreeWorks account to review their academic progress. DegreeWorks is an online checklist for their majors and much more! If they wish to explore what GPA they need to get this semester to reach a certain cumulative GPA, DegreeWorks can help with its various GPA calculation tools. Are they considering changing their major but curious how this will affect their progress? DegreeWorks’ “What If” feature allows them to seamlessly explore how their completed courses would work toward another major and see what else they might still need. If they are getting close to graduation or simply looking ahead to pick courses for the upcoming summer or fall semesters, DegreeWorks tracks their progress so far and allows them to see what they still need to complete or identify any missing items they need to discuss with their advisor well in advance. Check out this helpful tutorial and encourage your students to do so as well: <http://bit.ly/1p8EN7T>.

## **Advising Appointments Being Scheduled Now**

Summer registration is open now and fall online course registration will begin in late March (see below). Students must have met with their advisor prior to scheduling for classes online: <http://bit.ly/1ycPaJz>. If students need help determining who their academic advisor is, this can be found in DegreeWorks. Appointments fill up more quickly the closer registration dates get, so students are encouraged to schedule early. Students register according to their class rank, but classifications are based on previously earned hours plus those being attempted in spring 2017. For example, if your student is a first-year student who has 15 earned hours after fall 2016 and they are attempting 15 hours now, they would register as a sophomore (29-58 hours.) STAR priority registration dates are:

March 28 : Professional, Graduate, Honors-SR, and Exceptions, Law-L3

March 29: Honors-JR, Law-L2

March 30: Honors-SO, Law-L1

March 31: Honors-FR

April 3: Seniors (89+ hours)

April 5: Juniors (59 – 88 hours)

April 7: Sophomores (29 – 58 hours)

April 10: Freshmen (0 – 28 hours)

## **FINANCIAL NEWS**

### **Academic Progress can impact Financial Aid**

As your students reach the midterm portion of the semester, it is important to again remind them that academics can impact their access to financial aid, and not just scholarships. Students should be sure to review the renewal criteria for all scholarships (those WVU based scholarships can be found here: <http://bit.ly/1AMXYZ9>) and also requirements to meet Satisfactory Academic Progress to maintain all forms of federal aid: <http://bit.ly/2cTjLSU>. All students must have a minimum of a 2.0 cumulative GPA at the end of the spring term to continue receiving aid. There is still time this semester to impact their financial future.

## Scholarships and Funding 101 – Part 1

Whether you are the parent of an incoming or current student, there are always questions about scholarships and funding. Here are a few tips that can help your students be savvy when it comes to funding their education. I will include a second part to this article in the next Parent E-Newsletter so stay tuned!

1. Know the requirements: Starting early and doing some research is helpful. Is an additional application needed for scholarships or are they considered simply by applying to the school? What are the deadlines? Scholarship requirements often vary due to donor funding requirements. For instance, specific scholarships are available and designated for transfer students (<http://bit.ly/1EaHyJH>) in addition to in-state and out-of-state freshmen: <http://bit.ly/1vxfodo>. There may also be scholarships available from outside sources. For WV residents, the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission pulls together a great listing of resources: <http://bit.ly/2mtWcqf>.
2. Achievement and renewal: For incoming students who are close to meeting requirements but just shy of a test score, perhaps taking the test again may move the score within scholarship range and be worth the cost of the retest. For current scholarship students, making sure they know if an award is renewable and the requirements (GPA, credit hours, etc.) to maintain it, from the start, is crucial (<http://bit.ly/1AMXYZ9>). Also, how long do they have to meet the requirements? It might be worth paying for a summer class to maintain a longer-term scholarship.
3. Always file a FAFSA form by the March 1 priority deadline: Often parents file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and assume if they don't get any scholarships or grant aid one year, they may not get any in future years. Finances can change, and there are often additional scholarships available to students from year-to-year. Also keep in mind that many scholarships often have a requirement that a student have a current FAFSA on file. Don't let this step count your student out! <http://1.usa.gov/ITB28Kx>.
4. Have students check out opportunities in their areas of study: Through the generosity of our alumni and friends WVU offers scholarships to both current and incoming students. Most applications come out in the spring for the following school year: <http://bit.ly/1EtT017>.

## PARENTS OF FUTURE MOUNTAINEERS

### Adventure WV's Orientation Trips Registration Open

WVU's Adventure Orientation Trips are 5 and 6 trips that prepare incoming WVU students for life at WVU. Trips offer participants diverse experiences and opportunities to learn about themselves, classmates, WVU and West Virginia. Trips take place the summer before freshman year. Due to generous subsidies from WVU, these programs are offered for only \$95! Programs are FREE for students who are Pell Grant-eligible. Adventure WV Orientation Trips are

recommended by 99% of participants and over 99% of parents of participants. Trips also have significant effect on student success, retention, and graduation!

The trips offer something for everyone; *no previous outdoor experience is necessary and activities are designed for beginners*. The trips include activities such as rock climbing, backpacking, and whitewater rafting, Habitat for Humanity home builds, a challenge course (high and low ropes course), and Service. Many programs, when combined with Fall coursework, come with 3 academic credits which meet the GEF 4 Graduation Requirement. Non-credit options are also available. Department-specific trips are available for students in Business & Economic, College of Creative Arts, Honors College, College of Media, College of Physical Activity & Sport Science, Engineering, Forensics, and Davis College. To learn more about Adventure WV Orientation trips, visit: <http://bit.ly/1xolaKv>. Registration is first come-first served: <http://bit.ly/1L589eb>.

**/Katie Gallagher and Lisa Hanselman**

Office of Parent Relations

West Virginia University