

West Virginia University  
Parent Electronic News  
December 11, 2007

Just a few short months ago it seemed we were gearing up for the beginning of the term. This past weekend, however, we recognized the hard work of our most recent graduates at December Convocation and this week we bring the fall semester to a close with finals. How quickly time flies!

As the semester comes to a close, our hopes are that report cards bring good grades and tidings of joy. The entire University community wishes you and your student a happy and healthy holiday season. President and Mrs. Garrison's official holiday message follows, along with a few quick reminders to pass along. And with that, until 2008, I leave you with best wishes to all students, and to all parents, a good night! In this edition:

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Dear Friends:

During the holiday season, our thoughts turn toward home.

So, wherever the holidays take you this year, as you gather with family and friends, remember that Mountaineers always have a home at West Virginia University.

We wish you a joyous holiday season and a healthy and prosperous new year. Please take a moment to view a special holiday message at: <http://www.wvu.edu/Redirect/?id=825>.

Very truly yours,

Mike and Heather Garrison  
West Virginia University

**PARENT INPUT REQUESTED ON TOPIC OF OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING**

When President Mike Garrison announced last week the University's plans to build a \$20 million residence hall near the downtown campus as noted in the following news release <http://www.wvu.edu/Redirect/?id=826>, he also took a step to outline the University's hopes for other safe housing options in surrounding neighborhoods.

Last week he posted a statement and raised questions pertaining to this on his blog <http://www.wvu.edu/Redirect/?id=827>, and he invites parents and students alike to weigh in with their ideas and comments on this topic - "Off-Campus Housing ... How can we improve conditions?"

Please log on and share your ideas about what you think landlords can do to improve the student housing situation in Morgantown and what responsibilities tenants have.

### **2008-2009 FAFSAs ARE AVAILABLE**

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSAs) are now available for the 2008-2009 school year. You can access these online at <http://www.wvu.edu/Redirect/?id=828>. Remember, FAFSAs must be completed each year for use in distributing various forms of federal, state, and private aid programs. The priority deadline to submit the FAFSA for students attending school in West Virginia is February 15, 2008, with the absolute deadline of March 1, 2008.

### **SPRING 2008 BILLS AVAILABLE ONLINE - Due January 12, 2008**

Spring 2008 invoices were made available online through students' STAR/MIX accounts the week after Thanksgiving break. As a reminder, bills can now be paid online. If a paper copy is needed, students can request these online through January 5, 2008 for spring 2008 or a print screen feature can facilitate a paper bill more immediately directly from STAR. Balances for the spring term are due Jan 12. For more on spring 2008 bill payment <http://www.wvu.edu/Redirect/?id=829>.

### **HOUSING - CLOSING UP FOR A LONG SEMESTER'S BREAK**

As a reminder, all University-supervised housing will close for semester break on Saturday, December 15, 2007, at 5:00 p.m. Dining Services will serve meals at their usual locations and times through 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 15, 2007. Prior to leaving for break, residence hall students should lock valuables in their closet, close and lock their windows, close curtains, throw out food subject to spoiling, empty their trash, and unplug appliances such as clothes irons, hair dryers, and curling irons. Students should make sure their room door is closed and locked when leaving. During the semester break, students will neither be permitted into their rooms nor have access to their mailboxes.

Students who are graduating or not returning to West Virginia University for the second semester must check out at their main desk and remove personal items and clean their part of the room. Students who aren't returning also should turn in their room keys to their main desk before leaving and provide mail-forwarding information.

The residence halls will reopen at noon on Saturday, January 12, 2008.

Off-campus students should also be reminded to prepare their apartments for being away. With a long break ahead of us, unfortunately break-ins do tend to increase around the holidays, and student neighborhoods are often targets. Having students hold their mail and put their lights on a timer are quick and easy steps to help prevent any hardships. Here's to a safe and restful break!

### **WRAPPING UP FALL 2007 WITH SEMESTER GRADES AND TIPS FOR '08**

Finals week is wrapping up on WVU's campus just in time for the holiday season. Fall grades should be posted to students' STAR accounts by Thursday, Dec. 20. For many students the anticipation of grades will be the well-deserved reward for spending countless hours in the library, reviewing class notes on a nightly basis, or getting extra help from a tutor at the Academic Resource Center. For others it will be a reality check that study habits need to change or solidify the realization that they need extra help in future semesters.

We know your students turn to you for support, so we would like to share with you some of WVU's services to help your students be even more academically successful next semester. Encourage your students to talk to their professors and visit them during posted office hours. Your student should do this early in the semester, before problems arise. Other areas of academic support include:

Academic Resource Centers - free, walk-in tutoring on many WVU subjects. For locations and hours visit <http://www.wvu.edu/Redirect/?id=830>.

Chemistry Learning Center - free tutoring on general chemistry classes. For more information visit <http://www.wvu.edu/Redirect/?id=831>.

Math Learning Center - free help in math classes. For more information visit <http://www.wvu.edu/Redirect/?id=832>.

Term Paper Clinic - help with research papers. For more information visit <http://www.wvu.edu/Redirect/?id=833>.

Center for Writing Excellence and Writing Center - their mission is to help students become better writers. Visit <http://www.wvu.edu/Redirect/?id=834> and <http://www.wvu.edu/Redirect/?id=835>.

Many individual departments also offer tutoring specific to classes they offer. Students can also be directed to their departmental offices to check what other services might be available.

### **Academic Probation**

Students are placed on academic probation if their cumulative GPA falls below a 2.0. First-year students on academic probation are required to attend a workshop on Sunday, January 13. If this applies to your student, more details will be mailed. Failure to bring up grades can result in academic suspension. We encourage students on academic probation to take a three-hour Educational Psychology (EDP) 101 or two-hour Multidisciplinary Studies (MDS) 293-N class to help improve their study skills. These courses focus on time management, taking lecture notes, active monitoring of academic progress, and how to use campus services and develop professional relationships with faculty.

### Financial Probation

As a separate issue, students' financial aid - including loans, scholarships, work study, and grants - can be affected by poor academic performance. For the sake of financial aid probation/suspension, the academic year at WVU consists of fall/spring/summer enrollment periods. The measurement of academic progress is made annually at the conclusion of the spring semester. If a student has had a poor academic fall semester, it is important to work hard during the spring term to bring up both their GPA and successfully complete all attempted classes. Financial aid determines probationary students by both a GPA standard and completion percentage, which refers to students enrolling in and successfully completing all classes. For more detailed information, visit <http://www.wvu.edu/Redirect/?id=836>.

### Emotional Support

Students can often feel overwhelmed or stressed when it comes to grades or other personal issues. The Carruth Center for Counseling offers free, individual counseling for students on a drop-in basis. Group sessions and classes to support your student will be offered in the spring term. Information is still being finalized, but you can check back in the coming weeks for more details at <http://www.wvu.edu/Redirect/?id=837>.