A LETTER FROM PRESIDENT GEE

Dear Students, Parents, Faculty, Staff and Friends:

During my three decades as a University president, I have witnessed many changes and learned many lessons. But one truth stands out most clearly: We must always invest in our students’ success.

Everywhere I go — around the state, nation and world — I meet West Virginia University alumni who are passionate about their University. These men and women are grateful for the academic and personal experiences they had as Mountaineers.

And those experiences lead to remarkable opportunities. Take for example, Emily Calandrelli, a 2010 mechanical and aerospace engineering grad, who was both a Truman Scholar and a Goldwater Scholar. Now, as host of Fox’s “Xploration Nation: Outerspace,” she is sharing her love of science and technology with America.

Or alumnus Dr. Rustin Moore, a world-renowned equine surgeon. He is best known for giving a pony named Molly a new leg and a new lease on life after Hurricane Katrina.

Nothing is more important than preparing people for successful, meaningful futures. It is at the very core of this institution’s mission. It is the reason we are here.

And while tuition increases are difficult choices to make, I believe that our Board of Governors acted wisely today by approving an increase in resident and non-resident rates. I am extremely cognizant of the challenges our families face in pursuing a higher education. And I want to assure you that as we discussed the needs of the University, we also discussed the needs of our students and their families.

So as we adjust our tuition rates, West Virginia University is also vigorously expanding student scholarships and need-based aid to ensure that our educational quality grows even stronger.

In partnership with the WVU Foundation, we are launching a $50 million student scholarship fundraising campaign to support students as they “dream big” in the pursuit of their academic passions. The University is also increasing need-based student aid by $2.25 million.

And as we are increasing our financial support to students, we also are investing in a Student Success Initiative that will provide a more integrated, personalized four-year approach to students’ development. The initiative will enhance all facets of student life, including a more
unified approach to advising; investments in additional team-building and leadership programs like Adventure West Virginia; and the expansion of Living-Learning communities.

These new initiatives will work together to increase retention and graduation rates, improve the student experience, attract the best faculty, and offer the modern facilities that today’s students need.

With these new programs, I believe we are positioning West Virginia University to become one of the premier institutions in this country — while remaining affordable and accessible, especially when compared to our regional and Big 12 peers and other in-state colleges and universities.

We cannot and will not sacrifice the quality of this institution. We will continue to invest in our University and in our students' future.

E. Gordon Gee

President, West Virginia University

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Congratulations! You made it, parents. Today officially marks the last day of classes for the 2014-15 school year. Now only finals week stands between your students and summer vacation! As you progress to “Parents of sophomores, juniors, seniors or graduates” freshmen move-in day seems like a distant memory. We are happy to report that move-out is typically a much calmer time as students pack up to head to summer jobs, internships or off to embark on their career. Read on for information on residence hall move-out, storage units, honors and commencement. If you are the parent of incoming students, be sure to check out the Tips from the Trenches piece below for info on New Student Orientation that begins in June. As this chapter comes to a close, we certainly look ahead to some bright futures! In this edition:

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END-OF-YEAR WRAP-UP

Residence Hall Closing Procedures

Many of you are planning to return to Morgantown to help your students move out of University housing. You will notice that move-out is much calmer and more relaxed than what you may have experienced during move-in. University Police Officers will be on hand again to help direct traffic.

In the next week, Resident Assistants (RAs) will meet with all students in University housing. Students will be given a brochure with information on how to make move-out go smoothly. Rooms, kitchens, closets and other space inside student rooms must be cleaned prior to leaving. During their meetings, students will be given the opportunity to identify any damaged or missing items so the appropriate student can be billed.

Nothing should be left in the room except WVU furniture. Students can obtain trash bags at their main desks. Some cleaning supplies are also available at the main desks. When students move out, their last step will be a quick stop at the main desk to check out. When checking out, the student must turn in all keys and provide a mail-forwarding address. They need to stop at the main desk even if they have programmed door and mailbox locks.

Dining Services will provide study snacks during Finals Week. Regular dining hall meal service will end on Saturday, May 9 at 2:00 p.m. University Housing closes, and the outside doors will lock for the academic year, at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 9.

For detailed instructions on checkout and move-out procedures, see http://housing.wvu.edu/move_in_out/moving_out_of_residence_halls/2014_end_of_year_move_out_information

If you have any questions when you are on campus, feel free to stop by any residence hall main desk. Move-out tip: when you come to Morgantown to help your student, be sure to bring a dolly to help move heavy items and boxes.
Blue and Gold Mine Sale Collections Begin April 27: Sale May 23

As students are packing up their dorms, apartments and houses for the summer, the WECAN Program helps them take care of items that won't make it to the fall. The 11th annual Blue and Gold Mine Sale will be held at Milan Puskar Stadium on Saturday, May 23. It's held every spring to keep roughly 30 tons of material out of local landfills. Students can drop off any unwanted items in collection areas at all University residence halls or at one of four drop-off locations around town. Acceptable items include but are not limited to furniture, clothing, appliances, décor, sporting equipment and electronics. Proceeds benefit WVU's annual campaign for the United Way of Monongalia and Preston Counties.

Collection spots April 27-May 20, at all WVU residence halls, at the East Concourse of Milan Puskar Stadium (Monday-Friday 9:00-4:00), WVU Chateau Royale, Falling Run Road, Seneca Center and Woodburn School.

Is your student stocking a new apartment? Stop by the sale at Milan Puskar Stadium on Saturday, May 23 from 7:00 a.m. to noon! Visit http://bit.ly/1MHxKwW for more info.

City Move-Out Dumpster Program April 29-May 11

If an item cannot be donated to the Blue and Gold Mine sale, students are encouraged to review the City Move-Out Dumpster program to dispose of items appropriately (and avoid fines). Additional dumpsters will be placed around town starting this week. Graduates especially are encouraged to take advantage of this program and begin their move-out prior to graduation week so as not to create delays when they're ready to leave town after graduation: http://bit.ly/1JePlku.

Storage Facilities

Parents often ask about local storage facilities. Although it’s now perhaps a bit late, as these can fill up early, there should still be spaces available either in Morgantown or surrounding areas. Our best advice to find what fits your student’s needs (size, climate-controlled, location, price, etc.) is to do a broad search online for Morgantown and the region. You can find contact info, location on maps and take a look at reviews.

Additionally, we have Zipcars located on campus that students can rent by the hour. These have been helpful if they do not have a vehicle and need a method of moving items to a unit: http://bit.ly/1DaGLrc.

GRADUATION

Grads and Gee Together for Mountaineer Send-off
Will you be in town on Thursday, May 14? Grads and families are invited to join the fun at the first-ever Mountaineer Send-off, 7:00 p.m. at the Coliseum, where President Gee will wish a fond farewell to graduates – and is eager for a lot of final selfies! This free event will feature brief words of encouragement from Dr. Gee; a special gift for grads; snacks (one more chance for pepperoni rolls and famous Flying WV cookies!); photo and video booths; music; and a few surprises! It’s a laid-back, lots-of-fun event, no tuxes or graduation attire necessary!


Commencement Details

As we head toward commencement, be sure to check out the graduation website for details such as parking, accessibility related questions, attire, professional photography options, program length, etc.: http://bit.ly/1Bdbyjd. If you need directions to any of the locations, use the online campus map: http://bit.ly/1dBH1ad.

We will be highlighting some of our graduates in the coming weeks in segments called “Meet the Grads,” so be sure to watch the Mountaineer Parents Club Facebook page or check these stories out on WVUToday: http://bit.ly/1Q88ez5. And if your student hasn’t yet learned the words to our Alma Mater (we sing it before each home football game, so they most likely know it), now is the time to learn it: http://bit.ly/1bmfMie. “Hail, all hail! Our Alma Mater, West Virginia U!”

HONORS

Something to Strive For: Honors and Honoraries

This is a nice time to remind students who still have some years left at WVU that they should set goals and plan ahead. During commencement weekend we will recognize those who have achieved the honors of cum laude, magna cum laude and summa cum laude. To achieve these honors, students must work hard for all four years! I get a lot of questions about national honorary information students receive in the mail. Here are a few helpful notes when considering what to join and how students might spend their time and resources.

i. Is there an active chapter of the national honorary on our campus? Students can check our Student Activities website and look under "Honorary" to see if a local chapter exists: http://bit.ly/1JeQ22S. There are many honor societies, ranging from Golden Key National Honor Society to major-specific honor societies such as Kappa Tau Alpha for journalism majors. Students should join organizations they plan to participate in. Putting something on a resume means they may be asked about it in an interview.

ii. There are many WVU-specific honor societies. Helvetia, Chimes and Mortar Board are our current freshman/rising sophomore, current sophomore/rising juniors and current juniors/rising senior honor societies that induct eligible students in the spring. These are just three of many!

iii. Upon graduation, students who have achieved certain cumulative GPAs will be bestowed Latin honors. Students may receive summa cum laude (with highest honors, a minimum
3.8 GPA); magna cum laude (with high honors, a minimum 3.6 GPA to less than a 3.8 GPA); or cum laude (with a minimum 3.4 GPA to less than a 3.6 GPA) recognition. These honors do not require students to join anything but rather to simply excel in their studies. These honors are noted on the student's diploma, and honor cords are offered to students to wear at graduation. More info can be found in the Undergraduate Catalog at http://bit.ly/1OMx62l.

iv. Dean's and President's lists are issued at the end of each semester after final grades are calculated and confirmed. These lists recognize all undergraduates who were enrolled in 12 credit hours of graded courses with no incompletes or withdrawals who obtained a 3.5 to a 3.99 GPA (Dean's List) or 4.0 GPA (President's List) for that semester. For spring these lists typically come out in June/July, and for fall in January/February. In addition to having their names added to the roster, students will see this honor noted on their official transcript: http://bit.ly/1c3dZQk.

MOUNTAINEER PARENTS CLUB QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Parents, we are always interested in what you have to say, so we developed the "Question of the Month." Visit our website at http://bit.ly/1oDaO75 and click on "Question of the Month" to answer this month's question. What is your top resource for advice on parenting your college student?

TIPS FROM THE TRENCHES — FOR PARENTS OF INCOMING STUDENTS

New Student Orientation Just around the Corner!

By Katlin Swisher, Interim Coordinator, New Student Orientation

Congratulations! You and your student are one step closer to joining the WVU family. Our New Student Orientation programs take place during the month of June. To prepare for the first semester and fully become a Mountaineer, your student needs to register for and attend New Student Orientation.

If your student has paid the academic deposit, he or she received New Student Orientation registration information by mail. In May, all students who have registered for a June Orientation session will receive a confirmation email with final details. Be sure to remind your student he or she needs to be checking their WVU MIX email account daily for updates!

New Student Orientation will introduce you and your student to campus. Orientation activities are offered to both students and their guests; however, some sessions are just for students while others are only for parents and guests. You will learn about your student’s academic program and Living-Learning community; meet faculty, academic advisers, and current WVU students; and learn how WVU supports your student academically, personally, financially and professionally.
Your student will register for fall semester classes after discussing options with an academic advisor. You will also experience all of our student services while meeting other incoming Mountaineers and their families.

Orientation is also encouraged for parents and guardians. Even if you are a parent of a current college student or even an alumnus now returning with an incoming student, many details change each year. As part of our Mountaineer family, we recognize that families are in transition when students leave home for college. To help alleviate concerns and questions, parents and guests will attend a special program designed to give you the information and resources you will need to help your student become a successful Mountaineer and learn how you can help support your student.

If you have any questions or concerns about orientation, please visit http://bit.ly/1bmgcFa or contact the New Student Orientation Office directly at orientation@mail.wvu.edu or 304-293-2264. I look forward to meeting you this summer!

Katie Gallagher and Lisa Hanselman
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