WVU will be closed for the holidays December 24-26, 31 and January 1.

Happy Holidays, WVU families! I have been enjoying hearing from many of you and seeing pictures you have been posting of your students at home. Before sending them home to you, check out some of the fun we had celebrating the holidays at their Home away from Home! We do hope you are enjoying your time with your students and with final grades posted as of this afternoon, hope they add to the joy of the season. Whether your student did well or might need to look for some new study skills in their stockings, be sure to read the section on Academics and Final Grades for tips, opportunities and considerations for all students whether struggling or excelling as they head into the new year.

As a final reminder, the last day to enroll in the 5-month payment plan option for spring is Tues., Dec. 31, and December eBills (with spring charges) are due Mon., Jan. 6. See the Payment Tips section below for additional help and suggestions. Please remember University Offices will be closed for the holidays as noted above, but billing and payment details can be accessed online via the student’s STAR Account on their WVU Portal or the Parent/Guest Portal, if granted access by your student, during that time.

This past weekend, many WVU families got an early holiday gift in the form of a December 2019 Graduate – Congratulations! Please ask your graduates to complete a quick survey for feedback and if you now wish to be removed from the Parents Club listserv, see the Housekeeping section at the end and let us know what the next step is for your new graduate. We always love to hear where are students are headed next! As a reminder, any students who graduated, are transferring or will no longer be enrolled at least half-time who have borrowed federal student loans must complete the federal Exit Counseling process online. This helps students understand their options, rights, and responsibilities as they make the important transition to loan repayment. Ah, adulting.

And as we all turn the corner into this new year, be sure to check out the Looking ahead: Mark Your Calendars section to help plan for the coming months. With that, we wish you the happiest of holidays from all of us at West Virginia University – we’ll see you in the new decade! In this edition:

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PAYMENT TIPS
December eBills Due Jan. 6 to avoid 2.25% late fee; Last day for 5-month payment plan – Dec. 31
If your student received a December eBill and hasn’t paid their balance due, the rush is on! Students who received a December eBill must be enrolled in the CASHNet payment plan that covers their balance or paid in full by Jan. 6. Waiting until close to the deadline may mean longer wait times. Here are a few hints to help you through the process:
- Make sure that your students are checking their MIX email! If they still had a spring balance due (and were not enrolled in a monthly payment plan to cover the balance) they would have received an eBill to their MIX email around December 5 with their charges, aid, balance and due date.
- If your student hasn’t registered for spring, now is the time to do it. Spring charges will not be correct until they have finalized their registration and/or dining/housing options. Check with your student and have them talk to their advisor as soon as possible to ensure they are fully registered.
- Paying online is the quickest and easiest method for either you or your student.
- Although credit card transactions do have a processing fee, you can pay online with the routing and account numbers for your checking account (an e-check) with no processing fee.
- You can enroll in the CASHNet payment plan by the deadline of Dec. 31 to spread the payment over five months.
- At peak times the online systems may run slower than normal. Try logging into the Parent/Guest Portal early or late in the day.
- Phone lines will be busy close to the due date, so if you need to call in, please be patient. We are doing our best to serve everyone as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- Parent/Guest Passphrase – If you are calling in on behalf of your student, remember that we cannot speak with parents or guests regarding a student account without this passphrase used to confirm your identity. As we are often discussing personal and financial information please know that this is for your student’s and your protection to make sure we are discussing matters with the appropriate person, as designated by your student.
- If they have not yet, have them set up Parent/Guest Portal access and, at the same time, a Parent/Guest passphrase for you for your own easy online and call-in access. (This takes
just a few steps: 1. They designate who gets access to their records. 2. What access each person gets. 3. Set a unique passphrase for you to use when calling in on their behalf.

- If not returning for the spring semester, students should be sure to withdraw from any classes as early as possible to avoid tuition and fee charges. Students should also note Housing withdrawal policies if they are not returning to avoid charges.
- Exit Counseling Required for Those with Loans - Students who are graduating, transferring or no longer enrolled at least half-time who have borrowed federal student loans must complete the federal exit counseling process online. Exit counseling helps students understand their options, rights, and responsibilities as they make the important transition to loan repayment.

All University offices will be closed Dec. 24, 25, 26, 31 and Jan. 1. The Mountaineer Hub will be open normal business hours during the winter recess on Dec. 23, 27 and 30 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm in the lobby and 8:15 am to 4:45 pm for phone: 304-293-1988. All offices will reopen January 2.

ACADEMICS AND FINAL GRADES

Good Grades and Goals!
Grades are now officially posted for students in their MIX/STAR Accounts and parents who have been granted the access via the Parent Guest Portal. For those who did well, here are some continued goals to shoot for!

**Dean’s and President’s Lists** – The online fall 2019 Dean’s and President’s lists will post in late January/early February 2020. The Dean’s List highlights undergraduates who earned a 3.5 GPA or higher, and the President’s List recognizes undergraduates who achieved a perfect 4.0 GPA. To be recognized, students must be enrolled in 12 credit hours or more of graded courses with no grades of I (incomplete), NR (not reported) or W (withdrawal). Only the highest honor is awarded, and it will be noted on the transcript as well as on the online searchable listing when it goes live.

**Latin Honors** – As students progress toward graduation, Latin Honors (Summa Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude, and Cum Laude) are another recognition they could receive. These graduation honors are based on cumulative GPA requirements of a 3.4 and higher. These can be good goals for students to work toward to help them stay focused and on track – and a nice addition to a transcript and diploma!

**Good Fall Grades: Now What?** – There are a number of resources students can explore from home as they make plans for upcoming semesters:
- **Summer classes** are posted now and can help students get ahead or provide time to focus on a challenging class.
- **Education/Study Abroad** options might be worth considering to broaden a plan of study. WVU offers opportunities that take place over spring break, in the summer or over a fall/spring term.
- If graduate school is in the future, Undergraduate Research opportunities are something students may consider to enhance that resume and many applications are now open.
- **Adventure trips** (both domestic and international) are available including weekend getaways throughout the spring and summer options, with some offering class credit and global experience.
- Do you have a budding entrepreneur in the family? Our **Launch Lab and IDEA Ecosystem** helps students while they are in college get their ideas rolling, patents underway, pitches heard, and teams built to support their efforts.
- Once students return, many **spring career fairs** are planned. Encourage them to check these out to explore summer internships, co-op programs or long-term hire possibilities.

**Considerations for those Struggling Academically**

If final grades did not bring tidings of glad joy, we encourage you to talk with your student about their academic performance and plans for the upcoming semesters. Below, we highlight information about academic probation and the Mid-Year Academy to help students get back on track.

**Academic Probation** – Students are placed on **academic probation** if their cumulative GPA falls below a 2.0. All students will be notified by e-mail if they are on academic probation. First-time freshmen on academic probation will also receive an email indicating they are required to attend the **Mid-Year Academy** as scheduled by their College/School.

**Mid-Year Academy** – During the **Mid-Year Academy**, first-time freshmen placed on academic probation will meet with advisors to make changes to their course schedule, if needed, as well as learn more about the terms of academic probation and strategies for transitioning to good academic standing at WVU. As noted above, attendance is **required** for first-time freshmen on academic probation.

**What Can They Do Now?** – Encourage your student to have an honest look at why they didn’t have a good semester. Mistake and bumps in the road happen, but it is important to know how you got somewhere to avoid stumbles the next time. There are resources students can explore from home to help them plan for their particular circumstance:

- Check out the **WVU Catalog** – It offers guidance on grades, GPA calculation and D/F repeat policies.
- Major Change – If they are considering a change of major, they can review **DegreeWorks** to use the “What If” feature. It allows students to explore how changing a major might affect their path to graduation and what coursework it might require in relation to what they have already completed.
- GPA Calculation Planning – **DegreeWorks** offers help projecting what students need to meet a certain GPA with various GPA calculation tools. If a student needs to have a cumulative 3.0 GPA at the end of spring to maintain a scholarship or avoid suspension, these tools can help determine how many hours and what GPA they need in an upcoming semester to reach that goal.
- **Summer classes** are posted now and can often help students get back on track or provide time to focus on a challenging class. Consider **Summer Boost**, a program designed to help students with a financial incentive.
- Before making changes to spring schedules, students should be sure to consult an academic advisor to make sure they remain on track. *(Note: University offices will be*
closed Dec. 24-26, 31 and Jan. 1 and some staff take days off around the holidays to spend time with their families, so please be understanding that response times may be slightly slower than normal.) Keep in mind that students have the chance to finalize and adjust spring schedules from now until the end of the first week of the semester (Friday, Jan. 17), which is referred to as Add/Drop Week. First-time freshmen on probation can make schedule adjustments and meet with an adviser at the Mid-Year Academy.

- Seek out tutoring resources as well as other support including success coaches to start the semester strong and on the right foot.
- Is there a chance your student is struggling with an undiagnosed learning disability? Check out the resources offered by the Office of Accessibility Services.
- If your student has not yet registered for spring classes, be sure they complete course registration before the start of the new semester so they can go in prepared and ready to be as successful as possible.
- Final Grade Appeals – If your student received a grade that they feel was in error, there is an established Final Grade Appeal process that they should explore and follow, if necessary.

What is at stake? – Now is a good time to review where they are, but also to make a plan and know what could happen if they do not correct any deficiencies.

- Academic Suspension – In May, students whose GPAs are below an overall 2.0 GPA are eligible for academic suspension from the University. If placed on suspension, students are required to sit out for a semester or more, depending on the suspension terms. Students who experience extenuating circumstances can appeal their suspension. More details will be sent in the spring semester. Students currently on Contractual Readmission could have their suspension reinstated if they remain below a 2.0 overall GPA.
- Satisfactory Academic Progress for Financial Aid – There are various criteria students must meet to maintain their financial aid eligibility. At the end of the spring semester, students are reviewed to ensure they are meeting satisfactory academic progress (SAP) standards for financial aid. Students must have 1. a certain minimum overall GPA, 2. complete a certain percentage of their attempted classes with a D or higher, and 3. complete their degree program within a certain number of attempted hours. In addition to SAP, different types of financial aid – such as scholarships or the WV Higher Education Grant – have their own renewal requirements. They may need to obtain a number of earned credit hours and overall GPA to keep that type of aid.

TAX INFORMATION

2019 W-2 Information - Address Updates due by Dec. 31, 2019
For students who worked at WVU, to ensure that your 2019 Form W-2 is mailed to your current home mailing address, WVU Tax Services reminds all employees, including student employees, who have moved during 2019 to update their mailing address at the Personal Information link through the MyHR tab at portal.wvu.edu. All addresses should be updated by 12/31/2019 to ensure your W-2 form is mailed to the correct address.

The 2019 W-2 forms will be mailed to the employee’s home address for all WVU employees on or before January 31, 2020 and will be also available online through the MyHR tab at
portal.wvu.edu. The release date for the on-line W-2 forms is not available yet but will be before January 31, 2020.

To protect personal information, employees should not access either their pay stub or W-2 from a public computer. For your security, when accessing either your paystub or your W-2 form from an off-campus computer, please use WVU’s Workspace. Once logged into Workspace, select the Internet Explorer icon and go to the portal.wvu.edu website.

W-2 form questions can be directed to WVU Tax Services at tax@mail.wvu.edu. Please provide your name, contact telephone number, month and year of birth and either your WVU ID or your employee number for verification purposes. For your protection, please do not provide your Social Security number via e-mail when requesting W-2 information. Please note that WVU Tax Services cannot provide personal tax advice. Please consult your professional tax preparer for individual tax advice.

2019 Form 1098-T Tuition Statement Information
For the 2019 calendar year 1098-T forms, WVU has continued to partner with ECSI Heartland. The Form 1098-T is for use by either the students or their parents in the filing of their 1040 personal tax return. Each year Form 1098-T for the recently completed calendar tax year will be available online starting mid to late January through ECSI Heartland. Hard copies will be mailed by January 31st to the student’s permanent mailing address as listed in the student’s STAR account.

Please note Form 1098-T is a calendar year tax form. Payments are reported based on the date posted to the student’s STAR account regardless of the academic or calendar year of the semester. Payments received, including financial aid, for a spring term that is posted in December will be reported on the current year form; while payments posted in January will be reported on the following year Form 1098-T. Note that financial aid for the spring semester 2020 will post as a payment in January 2020.

Prior years 1098-T forms are also available on-line through ECSI Heartland. If a student needs a Form 1098-T for the calendar year 2015 or prior, please contact the WVU Tax Services unit directly at tax@mail.wvu.edu or at (304) 293-3379 extension 3. Form 1098-T will not be issued to our international students unless requested by the student. An international student considered a Non-Resident Alien (NRA) for income tax purposes generally is not eligible for the various educational tax credits and/or deductions. The IRS therefore does not require WVU to issue Form 1098-T to international students. If you are an international student and have questions concerning this situation, please contact WVU Tax Services. Feel free to contact ECSI Heartland with questions concerning your Form 1098-T through live chat or at 866-428-1098.

CAMPUS UPDATES
Winter Break Parents Club Buses - spaces remain for return trips Sat., Jan. 11
We hope you are enjoying break with your students! A limited number of seats remain for one way trips back to campus Sat., Jan. 11 on the Parents Club holiday buses. Due to limited seats, to
make a reservation, please call the Parents Club Office at 304-293-2506. WVU buses are confirmed from Allentown, PA; Carlisle, PA; Hagerstown, MD; Secaucus, NJ; King of Prussia, PA; and Highland, NY, for those in the Connecticut, New York and New England areas. The Central Maryland, Northern VA, Southern NJ and Long Island local Mountaineer Parents Club chapters also offer buses from their areas. Check out the Holiday Bus Schedules and Details, but remember only phone reservations will be taken for the WVU buses above and the Parents Club Office will be closed along with all University offices on December 24-26, 31 and January 1, so please plan ahead. For info on the Local Club Buses, contact info is noted on the site.

**WVU Engineering Career Fair renamed to follow Career Pathways Model – Jan. 29**
The Career Services Center is pleased to announce the official name change of the Statler College of Engineering and Mineral Resources Career Fair to the STEM Career and Internship Fair, following the campus-wide adoption of career pathways. Career pathways group majors into related occupational fields that help students find the perfect major for their interests and passions. This approach is used to better prepare students for their first professional job, while also equipping them with a sustainable set of skills within a related group of industries and businesses, providing flexibility for an ever-changing job market.

One of the largest pathways at WVU, the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) pathway consists of more than 40 majors, representing seven schools or colleges. View the majors mapped to the STEM pathway.

The STEM Fair is the third major career event that has been rebranded with an emphasis on pathways. The Health Careers and Internship Fair, as well as the Agriculture and Natural Sciences Career and Internship Fair, were launched this fall to attract a larger number of students searching for internships and job opportunities within their pathway. With new emphasis on the pathway majors, we hope it will entice a broader range of students searching for internships and job opportunities within their pathway, while also attracting a larger and more diverse group of employers to recruit on campus.

This event will continue to provide students and alumni the invaluable opportunity to speak face-to-face with employers. The STEM Fair will take place on January 29, 2020, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Student Recreation Center, and is open to all majors.

The [WVU Career Services Center](https://www.career.wvu.edu) is a University-wide student resource serving undergraduate and graduate students, as well as alumni. Check out our [website](https://www.career.wvu.edu) for a full list of services and events.

**Reminders about dining plans for spring semester**

[Residential dining plans](https://www.dining.wvu.edu) for the spring semester can be adjusted and off campus dining plans purchased **until 3 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 21**. Please note that this may cause adjustments to your students’ accounts, so they should monitor this and make any new payment immediately to avoid late charges. As a reminder:

- Dining Dollars will roll over from the fall semester to the spring semester as long as the student still has a dining plan in the spring semester.
- Students on the Go Plans will have the same dining plan in the spring semester that they ended with in the fall semester. Students may also [upgrade or downgrade their dining](https://www.dining.wvu.edu).
**plan selections online** until Wed., Jan. 8. After spring plans start, changes can be made by calling Dining Services at 304-293-3166 between Thurs., Jan. 9, and Tues., Jan. 21.

- Meal swipes remaining from Prime Dining Plans will not roll over from the fall to the spring semester. If **off campus students would like to add a spring dining plan**, they may do so online until Wed., Jan. 8. After spring plans start, changes can be made by calling Dining Services at 304-293-3166 between Thurs., Jan. 9, and Tues., Jan. 21.

- Mountie Bounty stays with the student for their entire time enrolled at WVU.

If you have questions, please contact **WVU Dining Services** at dining@mail.wvu.edu or 304-293-3166.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

**December Important Dates**
Afternoon of December 23 – Grades posted to students’ MIX/STAR accounts and **Parent/Guest Portal** (if granted that access by your student)

*Monday, December 24-Wednesday, December 26 – University Holidays/offices closed*
*Tuesday, December 31 – Wednesday, January 1 – University Holidays/offices closed*

**January Important Dates**
Monday, January 6 – **December eBills (spring charges) due**
Monday, January 6 – **Spring student health insurance waiver deadline** (no need to complete if you previously opted out this fall).
Thursday, January 9 – New Student Orientation for incoming students starting in spring 2020
Saturday, January 11 at noon – Residence halls reopen
Sunday, January 12 – Mid-Year Academy for any first-year student on probation - students will be notified over break via email (NOTE: some schools and colleges will hold this Monday or Tuesday – see above)
Monday, January 13 – First day of classes
Friday, January 17 – Last day to add/drop classes
Saturday, January 18 – Off Campus Housing Fair - Evansdale Residential Complex Blue and Gold Room
*Monday, January 20 – University Holiday – no classes/offices closed/residence halls remain open*
Tuesday, January 21 – **Last day to adjust spring dining plans**
Wednesday, January 22 – Study Abroad Fair – 10 a.m. Mountainlair Vandalia Lounge
Wednesday, January 22 – Student Organization Fair – 3-6 p.m. Student Rec Center
Tuesday, January 28 – John Chambers College of Business Career Fair – 1-5 p.m. Student Rec Center
Wednesday, January 29 – STEM Career Fair – 10 a.m. -3 p.m. Student Rec Center

**A look ahead:**
Friday, March 6 – Midterm
Friday, March 13 at 7 p.m. – Residence halls close for Spring Break
Sunday, March 22 at noon – Residence halls reopen from Spring Break
*Friday, April 10 – University Holiday – no classes/offices closed/residence halls remain open*
Monday, May 4 – Friday, May 8 – Finals Week
Saturday, May 9 at noon – Residence halls officially close for the spring term (students must vacate rooms 24 hours after their last final)
Friday, May 15-Sunday, May 17 – May Commencement Weekend
Saturday, August 15 – Residence Hall Move In
Wednesday, August 19 – First day of classes
Friday, October 2-4 – Fall Family Weekend

HOUSEKEEPING: Removal from the Parent E-News Listserv and the Mountaineer Parents Club
With the end of the semester and commencement, many of you will be saying farewell and leaving the Mountaineer Parents Club. Thank you for all you have done supporting your students during their time at WVU. While you are welcome to stay on with us, we understand that many of you want to end your membership. To be removed, simply reply to this e-mail with the following information:
- Parent Name(s):
- Student Name:
- Other comments/farewell messages/What their next chapter entails (employment, grad school, etc.):

/Katie Gallagher and Lisa Hanselman
Office of Parent Relations
West Virginia University