February is a busy – but important – month, so here are some key reminders for you and your student. If you have not done so already, this is the time to complete the 2018-19 FAFSA for next year before the quickly approaching March 1 deadline. I have included the first part of two segments regarding Scholarships and Funding that also references the importance of filing a FAFSA every year, on-time, so read on and have your student check out FAFSA Filing Fridays if they need assistance.

Academically, the deadline to apply for May graduation (March 2) and other Graduation Reminders and deadlines follow. Be sure to check in to make certain your students are studying and keeping up in classes as Early Alerts are out and midterm is just around the corner. Details follow on that, the Mid-Semester Help Center and updated suspension policies that hopefully won’t come into play. The good news is it is not too late to turn things around so read on and have your students reach out for assistance, if needed.

More on Spring Break Transportation options follow and well as Upcoming Events, Health Updates, and updates specifically for Parents of Incoming Students, so read on for these and other timely topics. Also, please see President Gee’s statement on the Interfraternity Council decision that occurred last night: http://bit.ly/2o6Qg96. In this edition:

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FINANCES

FAFSA Filing Fridays

This is the last month to complete the 2018-2019 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) before the **March 1 priority deadline**! If students would like consideration for federal financial aid, they must complete a FAFSA each aid year at [http://1.usa.gov/146X9ep](http://1.usa.gov/146X9ep). It’s important to file early! We anticipate financial aid award notifications will begin soon to continuing students who have filed a FAFSA, do not have any unsatisfied requirements on STAR, and are meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements for financial aid eligibility.

Parents - If your student needs help with the 2018-19 FAFSA, the WVU Mountaineer Hub is offering free help to students who need to submit their FAFSA for next year. Students can come into the Mountaineer Hub every Friday in February from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. for assistance so they can meet the March 1 priority deadline. The Mountaineer Hub serves our students as a friendly and convenient one-stop shop to aid and assist your students: [http://bit.ly/2o5pxKe](http://bit.ly/2o5pxKe). For more on the FAFSA process: [http://bit.ly/2Ggv0Fw](http://bit.ly/2Ggv0Fw).

Reminder: February e-bills are now out

Parents, if your student has accrued charges or has a balance on their account, monthly e-bills went out this week to the student’s MIX account. These are due by March 1 to avoid any penalties on new charges: [http://bit.ly/2CLBuyh](http://bit.ly/2CLBuyh) so be sure to check in with your student.
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/2F4s53m](http://bit.ly/2F4s53m), in addition to in-state and out-of-state freshmen: [http://bit.ly/2DyYXmp](http://bit.ly/2DyYXmp). There may also be scholarships available from outside sources: [http://bit.ly/2CmVcMk](http://bit.ly/2CmVcMk). For WV residents, the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission pulls together a great listing of resources: [http://bit.ly/2HjPK0k](http://bit.ly/2HjPK0k).

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/2m4S5Dl](http://bit.ly/2m4S5Dl). 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 submit a FAFSA by the March 1 priority deadline:** Parents often ask, ‘Do I have to file the FAFSA every year?’ Often parents complete a 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/146X9ep](http://1.usa.gov/146X9ep)

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 for the upcoming academic year are due between the mid-fall semester and early spring semester for the following school year: [http://bit.ly/2F5HGQ1](http://bit.ly/2F5HGQ1).

**ACADEMICS**

**It is Early Alert Time**

This past week faculty in certain courses have been reporting Early Alert grades for students that are underperforming in the course. Underperformance could include a below average grade on a first test or assignment as well as lack of attendance. Students that have an early alert have
received an email indicating they need to seek support in that particular class. Support includes visiting the professors’ office hours as well as free tutoring that is available every day of the week in locations across campus and in many subjects: http://bit.ly/2i1wDNs. Be sure to ask your student if he or she has received any emails regarding early alert.

Mid-Semester Help Center – February 28

As mid-semester approaches, midterm grades will be available on Wednesday, February 28th. If your student has granted you access to see these, you can view them at that time in the Parent Guest Portal: http://bit.ly/2BA3Cji. At midterm, faculty are required to report grades of a “D” or “F”. If your student is having difficulty please, in addition to other resources, let them know that the Mid-semester Help Center is a one-stop shop to help them get back on track. On February 28 from 1-5pm in the Mountainlair Vandalia Lounge, staff from various offices including advisors, student success and tutoring, the Mountaineer Hub, etc. will be available to help students triage where they are and adjust to get back on track. The timing is in sync with mid-semester classes that will start March 1 should students need to adjust their schedules. The Help Center is informal so students can simply drop by – no appointment needed.

Important Academic Suspension Updates

As a reminder, starting in May 2018 the standards used to determine a student’s eligibility for suspension will be based on an overall GPA below a 2.0. If placed on suspension, students are required to sit out for a semester or more, depending on the suspension terms. Students whose GPAs fall below a 2.0 GPA are eligible for suspension from the University in May. They will also face possible suspension of their financial aid. As a new streamlined online process, students will have the opportunity to apply for Contractual Readmission to appeal both academic and financial aid suspensions until June 1, 2018. More information about the process and next steps please review and continue to check back here: http://bit.ly/2Bw6O2K.

Do you want to finish your degree or start a new one?

Parents - are you thinking about finishing your degree? Or about starting one? WVU’s College of Business and Economics is offering a new online general business degree. To learn more, visit: http://bit.ly/2ELWsOw. You are able to start in fall, spring, or summer. The cost per credit hour is the same for in-state and out-of-state students. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Rebel Smith, Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Programs, at rebel.smith@mail.wvu.edu. Interested in something other than Business? WVU Online offers a host of online degree programs: http://bit.ly/2EvhAck.
Graduation Reminders

As graduation weekend approaches May 11-13 [http://bit.ly/2gUpka6], please remind your seniors that they must apply for graduation no later than March 2: [http://bit.ly/2DDuN1x]. Also, if your senior has excelled and holds a 3.8 of greater cumulative GPA, encourage them to apply for the WVU Foundation Outstanding Senior award by February 26: [http://bit.ly/2EsSbvY].

Caps, gowns, diploma frames, class rings and many other items are also now available for order through the WVU Bookstore: [http://bit.ly/1LuzSpZ]. Online order deadline is March 25th for all cap & gowns (can be ordered by individual pieces or by a set) and frame orders. Students that choose the FREE pick-up option (most popular option) will have their choice to pick up items at the Downtown or Evansdale Crossing Bookstores beginning April 23rd or have items shipped to their home address for a nominal fee. [http://bit.ly/2BxMD4n].

TRANSPORATION NEWS

As you look ahead to spring break, check out the bussing updates below and also, we wanted to remind parents that students can fly from Morgantown (MGW) to both BWI and PIT daily: [http://bit.ly/2yWHvWC]. For more transportation options, [http://bit.ly/1OF8ap3].

Reminder: Spring Break Parents Club Buses – last day to cancel February 22

Spring break is coming up! If you student is looking for a ride home, the Mountaineer Parents Club offers spring break buses to a variety of locations -- Allentown, PA; Carlisle, PA; Hagerstown, MD; Secaucus, NJ; King of Prussia, PA, and Highland, NY (which serves the Connecticut, New York and New England areas): [http://bit.ly/2yGUzii]. The last day to cancel a reservation and still receive a refund is Thursday, February 22, 2018.

Local clubs are also sponsoring buses to Central Maryland, Northern Virginia, Long Island and Southern New Jersey/Delaware. (The Central MD bus is not taking reservations until February 19). Details on these trips can also be found online here: [http://bit.ly/2yGUzii].

Please Note: Residence halls will close for spring break Friday, March 9 at 7:00 p.m. and reopen on Sunday, March 18 at noon. NOTE: Limited Holiday Break Housing is available for those who need a place to stay during break, but advance application is required: [http://bit.ly/2gP4Lz0].

Mountain Line Grey Line Bus Info for Spring Break

As a reminder, the Send Off Service from our regional bus carrier, Mountain Line Grey Line, to and from Pittsburgh airport, bus and Amtrak stations are now posted for Spring Break: [http://bit.ly/2Ew4ur2]. We recently received a bit of clarification from our friends at Grey Line regarding the Send Off Service routes that occur over the University breaks when travel volume is high. Though Grey Line and the national carrier Greyhound have a partnership, when a seat is booked through Grey Line they can guarantee that seat. When a trip on their bus is booked
through Greyhound the bookings serve as standby seating only. To avoid overbooking and guarantee a seat during high ridership times such as university breaks, Grey Line encourages all riders to book the Morgantown/Pittsburgh leg of any trip directly through Grey Line (or call their office to alert them of your reservation with Greyhound) so students are assured a seat. By making this booking locally, Grey Line can also manage the demand and add additional buses if needed during these peak times. For questions or to make a reservation, contact Grey Line at 304-296-3869.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND REMINDERS

- **Body Positive Event – February 19** - Students are encouraged to check out a night of body acceptance events titled “Accepting EveryBODY” on February 19, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the WVU Recreation Center, Meeting Room A. [http://bit.ly/2Gddx0L](http://bit.ly/2Gddx0L)

- **Next Law School Info Session – February 27** - If your student is considering Law School, have them check out one of the upcoming info sessions: [http://bit.ly/2stwaLM](http://bit.ly/2stwaLM).

- **Summer Undergraduate Research Experience (SURE) – February 28 deadline** - Applications are open until February 28 for undergraduates from all majors. SURE is a paid undergraduate research experience for students interested in graduate school and research/creative work within their discipline or a related discipline. 2018 SURE program dates are May 29-July 27, 2018. [http://bit.ly/2o9DUgx](http://bit.ly/2o9DUgx)

- **2nd Annual Undergraduate Spring Symposium – March 2 deadline** - WVU undergraduates are encouraged to submit and abstract on their research/creative project for potential presentation at WVU’s 2nd Annual Undergraduate Spring Symposium by March 2. This is a campus-wide, culminating poster event to celebrate undergraduate scholarly activity (research/creative endeavors). In 2018, this event is set to take place on Saturday April 14, 2018 in the Mountainlair Ballrooms and will coincide with prospective student and family attendance at the April 14 Decide WVU Day at the Mountainlair. [http://bit.ly/2EMbkfP](http://bit.ly/2EMbkfP)

- **TEDx WVU Talks – March 2** - WVU alumni, faculty and students will take the stage in March as part of the first campus TEDx Talk. themed “Leading with Hope in a Changing World,” the full-day conference will be held March 2 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and feature culturally relevant topics and boasts a line-up of locally high-brow influencers at Evansdale Crossing Media Innovation Center and be streamed live on Facebook for those unable to attend. [http://bit.ly/2sysecF](http://bit.ly/2sysecF)

- **Professional Etiquette Dinner to help students rise above the competition – register today** - Encourage your student to attend an evening of networking and honing their etiquette skills at the Eaton Professional Etiquette Dinner on April 3, 2018 from 5:00 to 8:30 p.m. at the Morgantown Marriott at Waterfront Place. The evening, hosted by the College of Business and Economics Center for Career Development and the Career
Services Center, will include a certified etiquette coach to provide tips during a professional dinner, mocktail reception, professional attire fashion show, multi-course plated dinner, and raffle to send some lucky students home with gift cards or items to further aid in their professional development. Several colleges, departments and student organizations are helping to offset the $30 student registration fee for a limited number of students. Have your student visit http://bit.ly/2mykJJQ to register and find out if they are eligible.

PARENTS OF INCOMING STUDENTS

Living-Learning Communities

Help your student find their niche! At West Virginia University, learning doesn't stop when your student leaves the classroom. Housing and Residence Life offers ten Living-Learning Communities (LLCs) that allow them to become immersed in their passions and build a network of friends and professors who can help them land internships and find jobs - all while keeping them on track to graduate. And there's a community for everyone. From first-generation college students to artists to engineers to innovators to health professionals. Students make their selection during the housing application process. http://bit.ly/2Gitq69.

Adventure WV opportunities

Adventure WV First-Year Trip registration went live on Monday, February 5 at 9:00 am. Registration will stay open until the trips are full or the trip occurs. Early move-in, college specific and priority date trips will fill quickly. For more on the mission of Adventure WV First-Year Trips, how that mission is achieved and the logistics of each trip, go to: http://bit.ly/2sBQc72.

HEALTH UPDATES

Student Health offers more than just Urgent Care

Parents – did you know that Student Health offers Women’s Health Services to WVU students? With two nurse practitioners and two physicians who have extensive training in women’s health, you can rest easy knowing that your student is receiving top-notch care. Female students can establish care with one of our providers and schedule women’s health appointments five days a week and walk-ins are welcome.

For students considering travel abroad, Student Health also offers Travel Medicine Clinic onsite. Travel Clinic appointments start at $75 and can increase depending on what vaccination might be needed depending on the area the student will be traveling to. Payment for this service is due at the time of service. http://bit.ly/2ErSaMC.
Student Health is conveniently located on the Evansdale Campus on the first floor of the Health Education Building: http://bit.ly/2nx7bSU. Student Health operates as an Urgent Care setting for major and minor illnesses so students can walk in to be seen Monday – Saturday in these instances. A wait time app is available if they wish to check that before venturing over. Primary care, travel and gynecology appointments can be scheduled by calling 304.285.7200. The Mountaineer Pharmacy is located directly next door to Student Health for a convenient one stop shop when needed. http://bit.ly/2hiSDSS.

HLC Accreditation Visit

West Virginia University will be undergoing the next required evaluation to continue its accreditation status from the Higher Learning Commission during their site visit March 5-6, 2018 at Erickson Alumni Center.

The HLC reviews WVU's ongoing adherence to criteria for accreditation and to ensure the quality of the University, in addition to providing opportunities for continued improvement. Please let your students know that they are invited to participate in the process by visiting and talking with the HLC during their visit. A full schedule will be shared in the coming weeks on the website at http://bit.ly/2sBRvTu.

/Katie Gallagher and Lisa Hanselman

Office of Parent Relations

West Virginia University