

Parent Electronic News
West Virginia University
August 27, 2018

And we're off! Just last week I stepped outside Stewart Hall and the slightest hint of fall weather seemed to be hanging in the air. It is amazing how the start of the semester seems to signal a change. The semester is now in the second week, and routines are starting to settle. I have included some details on *Transportation Tips*, including the addition of some extra WVU buses that have been added to help transport students between campuses. Encourage your students to follow @WVUDOT on Twitter to stay as up to date as possible on transportation. Reminders are also included about *Graduation News* including December and May graduation dates just released, *Billing and Financial Updates* regarding bill reminders (to avoid removal from classes next week!) and *Parents Club News* on buses home for the holidays and move in surveys. The final section, *Helpful Tips and Reminders*, is based on recent calls/e-mails from parents like you so I thought I'd share in case you were also curious about settling in, getting involved, health and wellness, mail, enrollment verifications and many others. So check out these quick bits of info and two recent videos that we thought you'd enjoy from the start of the semester:

- Gold and Blue Planet II: <http://bit.ly/BGPlanet2>
- Gee-Mail: Get to know Gee in 57 questions in 2 minutes: <http://bit.ly/Gee57questions>

Please scan the topics below and share any items of interest with your students! If you have questions, reply here or call us at the Parent Helpline 1-800-988-0096. We're always happy to help! In this edition:

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GRADUATION NEWS

December and May Graduation Dates Announced

The December 2018 and May 2019 Commencement schedules have been announced. August and December graduates will celebrate their achievements at the WVU Coliseum on Saturday, December 15, in two ceremonies. Commencement exercises for May 2019 graduates are planned for the weekend of May 10-12, 2019, and specific schedules for individual school and college ceremony dates are now set:

<http://bit.ly/1819GraduationDates>

December Graduation Application Available – Due by October 5

For students looking to graduate in December, the graduation application is now open and must be completed by October 5: <http://bit.ly/DecGraduationApp>. Those anticipating a May 2019 graduation will apply to graduate in the spring term. Stay tuned.

Encourage Your Student to Prepare for a Fall Job Search

If your student is in the market for a summer internship or full-time job after graduation, now is a great time to start preparing. Career Services hosts or co-hosts a variety of career fairs to connect students with over 300 different employers before the end of September, who are committed to hiring from West Virginia University. So, what does this mean for your student? If they start their search in September, they will have access to the maximum number of available opportunities. Here are some suggestions to help:

1. Encourage your student to attend career fairs and workshops: <http://bit.ly/CSCEvents>. Free professional headshots are available at several career fairs.
2. Send them to Career Services to have their resume reviewed: <http://bit.ly/CSCResumeReview>.
3. Tell them to search opportunities in MountaineerTRAK: <http://bit.ly/CSCMTrakLogIn>.

Make sure they have at least one business-appropriate outfit at school. If not, don't miss the JCPenney Suit-Up Event on September 9: <http://bit.ly/CSCSuitUp>.

BILLING AND FINANCIAL UPDATES

Ensure that your student's bill is less than \$1,000 by September 1 to avoid their removal from classes.

Has your student changed residence halls, meal plans or majors since you paid the bill? Are you still working to secure a loan to cover the full fall balance? Be sure that your student checks their student account for any outstanding bills (messages have been and will continue to be sent) and please note these important dates:

- August 22 – E-bills were sent to students' MIX account to those with a remaining balance.
- **September 1 – Date by which students have to pay their balance down to less than \$1,000 to avoid removal from classes and loss of use of the PRT, Rec Center and eCampus access.**
- September 4 – Date students will be removed from classes if they do not pay their balance down to less than \$1,000 or are enrolled in a payment plan that covers the balance.
- September 7 – Last date students can be reinstated with payment that will take their balance owed to \$1,000 or less. They will be assessed a reinstatement fee of \$250 that must be paid prior to reinstatement. Students have until the close of business on September 7 to be reinstated. <http://bit.ly/WVUBilling>

Financial Tips: The Dollars and Cents of Adulting

Please send money! This is a common plea in college years. Expenses can grow for both you and your students, and without good planning this can be overwhelming. We offer a variety of tools and practical tips to help students and parents plan ahead and become more financially knowledgeable.

- *Return loans* – Did you know that you can reapply money to bring down the principal of student loans? Simply returning \$100 can save \$125 or more in future payments. The Mountaineer Hub will soon reach out to student <http://bit.ly/FedStudentLoan> and parent borrowers <http://bit.ly/FedParentLoan> who had federal loan disbursements to remind them that if they got back more than they actually “need,” they can stop by the Hub with a check and reapply that amount to the principal of the loan. A smaller principal means less interest accrues, meaning less is owed in the long run.
- *Nonresident Meal Plan* – For upperclassmen residing off campus, often the reality, hassle and cost of shopping and cooking end up being a cost sink. Many off-campus students use the nonresident (off-campus) dining plans to secure some hot meals throughout the week to supplement their often “new and emerging” cooking skills. <http://bit.ly/DiningUpperclassmen>

- *Meal plans can be changed until 3 p.m. on September 4* – Now that students are settling in, check in about their dining plan. Students can adjust their dining plans through 3 p.m. on September 4. Remember, dining plan changes may cause another bill to be issued, so students should check and pay in their student account. <http://bit.ly/DiningChange>
- *Mountie Bounty* – If students make requests for money, Mountie Bounty provides parents and family members a way to send money. Some safety features are built in; these funds can be used in a variety of locations on and off campus: <http://bit.ly/MountieBountyLocations> for many basic necessities, but not tobacco or alcohol. To add funds, go here: <http://bit.ly/MountieBounty>.
- *Avoid late fees* – Late fees are assessed monthly on outstanding balances not in a current payment plan that covers the full balance due <http://bit.ly/WVUBilling>. Students can see if they have a balance due on the WVU Portal dashboard at a quick glance or log onto their STAR account anytime to see the real-time balance and make payment if new charges are incurred.
- *How to maintain scholarships and aid* – Now is the time for students to review what they need to maintain scholarships or financial aid for next year: <http://bit.ly/MaintainAid>. Whether a certain number of credit hours and a minimum GPA or something different, once they have lost it, it is too late. So encourage your students to explore the site now.

TRANSPORTATION TIPS

Getting Around Campus and Town

At the start of each semester, one of the biggest tips you can pass along is to allow for extra time to get between areas of campus and classes. During the first few weeks, everyone is trying to get used to a new schedule and find the easiest way to and from classes and work, meaning commutes will take varying amounts of time. To help students plan and for the most up-to-date transportation details, students should be following @WVUDOT and @MountainLine on Twitter for live bus and PRT updates. Students can also track Mountain Line buses with their free mobile app: Mountain Line Bus Finder. Have them download this today. Here are some transportation options:

PRT: The WVU Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) resumed operations on August 9 after being closed this summer to complete modernization activities. To enhance system reliability, phase 2 upgrades involved replacing the train control system, all the electronics, passenger signs and faregates. <http://bit.ly/WVUPRTS>

Please note that as with any new deployment, we anticipated scenarios that we could not test for and have been working on the appropriate fixes to reduce any disruption. While we continue to work through these upgrades, it is important that students allow extra time for daily commutes. Riders are also asked to adhere to all safety protocols.

Mountain Line bus: Students can ride the Mountain Line local bus service free of charge with their WVU ID. Popular routes, such as the Blue Gold Express (Route 38) that connects the

Evansdale and Downtown areas and the Beechurst Express (Route 39), are available to help campus traffic move efficiently. <http://bit.ly/WVUBuses>

NEW additional WVU buses: In addition to the Mountain Line buses and the PRT, as another means to help students traverse campuses, starting August 23 WVU added three to four additional WVU buses that will loop continuously daily from each PRT station, meaning students can catch a bus from these stops or the PRT. For schedule details: <http://bit.ly/ExtraBuses>.

Need other ways to get around town? There's Uber, Lyft, hourly rentable Zipcars (cost includes gas and insurance; students 18+ can rent) and two cab companies. <http://bit.ly/OtherTransport>

PARENTS CLUB NEWS

Parents Club Buses Home for the Holidays – Reservations Begin Mid-September

The Parents Club offers holiday buses home during the breaks when WVU residence halls close: Thanksgiving, Winter and Spring breaks. Currently buses are confirmed to go to Allentown, PA; Carlisle, PA; Hagerstown, MD; Secaucus, NJ; Philadelphia, PA, and Highland, NY, to service the Connecticut, New York and New England areas. Online reservations for Thanksgiving Break will begin mid-September on the Parents Club website.

The Northern Virginia, Southern New Jersey, Long Island and Central Maryland local Mountaineer Parents Clubs also organize buses to their areas. PLEASE NOTE: No phone reservations for the buses will be taken. Details on all buses will be posted on the Parents Club website by mid-September: <http://bit.ly/MPCBuses> so be sure check back!

TIP: We know you want to plan early, but please hold off until after Labor Day to make plane, train and bus reservations for Thanksgiving. In the next Parent E-Newsletter we will include a list of options available to get students home for the holidays as well as helpful tips, pitfalls to avoid and things to consider before making reservations. Stay tuned!

Letters From Home for Families of First-Year Students

Remember writing those letters from home to your freshmen at Orientation? Or perhaps you wrote it later and mailed it to the Mountaineer Parents Club Office? Well, the Parents Club will be mailing those to your students the second week in September. Tell them to check their mailboxes!

FERPA Parental Notification About Drug or Alcohol Violations

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) generally prevents WVU from disclosing information about student conduct charges to parents/guardians without authorization. However, FERPA permits, but does not require, disclosure to parents/guardians of “the student’s

violation of any federal, state or local law, or of any rule or policy of the institution, governing the use or possession of alcohol or a controlled substance.”

Accordingly, WVU may, but is not required to, notify parents/guardians of students under the age of 21 who are found responsible for violations of the University’s alcohol and/or drug policies. We wanted to alert you that if this type of notification is received, parents or guardians are encouraged to speak directly with their student to learn more about the student’s involvement or ask the student to sign a release of information form with the Office of Student Conduct.

<http://bit.ly/FERPAAlcohol>

Residence Hall and University Apartment Move-In Surveys

With Move-In 2018 complete, we are looking ahead to next year and how to make the process even better. While the event is fresh in your mind, please take a few minutes and provide feedback about your experience. The survey should take no longer than 5 minutes for you to complete, and the survey link will be active until midnight on August 31.

- Residence Hall Move-In Survey: <http://bit.ly/ResHallMoveInSurvey>
- University Apartment Move-In Survey: <http://bit.ly/UAptsMoveInSurvey>

Thanks for your participation and feedback!

UPCOMING EVENTS AND CAMPUS NEWS

Student Organization Fair – September 5

Remind your students to meet the representatives from more than 125 student orgs at the Student Organization Fair on Wednesday, September 5, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the Mountainlair Plaza. The event is open to all WVU students, and is a great opportunity to learn about organizations and other initiatives. DJ Dollar will provide entertainment. For more info, contact kim.harrison@mail.wvu.edu.

Career Services’ Suit-Up Event Discounts on Career and Professional Attire – September 9

On Sunday, September 9 from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., the Morgantown Mall JCPenney store will open their doors exclusively for WVU students and provide deep discounts on career and professional attire. Make sure your student checks out the professional wear, such as suits, ties, pants, blouses, etc. that will be marked down from original prices — ensuring students will be dressed to impress at upcoming interviews and career fairs. Students can check in to the event with their valid student ID and receive a special coupon for the evening for 40% savings. The coupon can be used on regularly priced and sale items in the store, which can result in an overall savings of up to 70% off professional attire. While the event offers discounts on professional wear for students, parents are welcome to accompany them as a style consultant. Everyone needs

to have clothes to interview in, so encourage your student to take advantage.

<http://bit.ly/CSCSuitUp>

AmeriCorps Opportunity

The Center for Service and Learning has a fantastic new service opportunity through the AmeriCorps State program called the Collaborative Direct. Students will receive the Segal Education Award, which is currently a little over \$1,250, at the completion of serving 300 volunteer hours in one year (average of 6-8 hours a week). This education award is good toward future tuition and previous accrued federal loans. There are other benefits, too: serving as an AmeriCorps Member is an amazing resume-builder, provides continuous professional development during a student's service year and builds a support network. There are two tracks:

- Peer Transition Leaders focus on increasing academic support and community building for at-risk students at WVU. Has a mid-October start-date.
- Innovative Service Champions connect with community nonprofits to serve those living in poverty in our communities. Has a September 24 start date.

For more details or for an application, go to: <http://bit.ly/WVUAmericorp>. Email Amanda Young at: anyoung@mail.wvu.edu.

HELPFUL TIPS AND REMINDERS

Here are some quick bits of helpful info.

Settling In and Meeting Friends: At the start of the school year, it can take a bit to find a new rhythm, settle into a routine and meet new friends. This is a new start for all students, so remind your students to simply reach out and introduce themselves or invite someone else along to dinner or an event. Here are a few other tips:

- *Carruth Center for Counseling Life Hacks Workshops*: Our counseling center will be hosting free Life Hacks workshops for students. These are a great resource for students who are struggling with adjustment to college, academic success, self-care, etc. <http://bit.ly/CarruthWorkshops>
- *Residence Hall support*: If living in a residence hall, events are regularly scheduled and are a great way to meet others. Encourage your students to talk to their RA and follow their hall/floor on Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat. Or check about getting involved with the residence hall groups that plan the events, the Community Councils. <http://bit.ly/HousingCouncils>
- *Join a club or check out the Student Orgs Fair*. Many clubs and organizations are beginning their fall meeting schedules. Encourage students to keep their eyes on <http://bit.ly/StudentsPage> for posts from various clubs and orgs, such as the WVU Student Grotto (Caving) Club or WVU Debate Team. There is a Student Organizations Calendar on this page that lists upcoming meetings, and students can also attend the

Student Organization Fair on Wednesday, September 5 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the Mountainlair Plaza. <http://bit.ly/WVUStudentOrgs>

- *What else is there to do?* There are daily free classes at the Rec Center <http://bit.ly/WVURecClasses> offered through WellWVU <http://bit.ly/WellWVUClasses>. There is an intramural league that includes the chance to form their own team or participate as a free agent: <http://bit.ly/WVUIntramurals>. Club Sports are also an option and boast over 50 clubs: <http://bit.ly/WVUClubSports>. WVUp All Night events happen each weekend: <http://bit.ly/WVUpAllNight>. And the Outdoor Rec Center hosts events nearly every weekend <http://bit.ly/WVUOutdoorRec>.

Healthcare options: Does your student need to talk with a counselor or see a doctor? The Carruth Center for Psychiatric and Psychological Counseling <http://bit.ly/CarruthCenter> welcomes walk-ins as well as appointments to meet with psychologists and psychiatrists. Sick and need to see a doctor? Check out this helpful link about Student Health Services <http://bit.ly/WVUStudentHealth>. A list of other wellness resources can be found at our Wellness Health Promotions site: <http://bit.ly/WVUWellness> that you can print to have for easy access: <http://bit.ly/WVUWellnessResources>.

Enrollment verification available online: It is the time of year when many families need to obtain proof of enrollment for a myriad of reasons, including insurance or loans. Because WVU is a participant in the National Student Clearinghouse, this process can be handled online by your student. Any student who needs to verify that they are enrolled can log on through the WVU Portal and print a verification of enrollment by following the steps outlined here: <http://bit.ly/EnrollmentVerify>

Address updates: Please remind your students to update their mailing/local address in their STAR Account whenever it changes. For freshmen living in residence halls, these addresses are automatically updated. Upperclassmen who have recently moved to a new apartment off campus should update their address online through the WVU Portal. They can also update their emergency contacts there. <http://bit.ly/WVUAddressUpdate>

Residence hall mail: Residence hall students have mailboxes in their halls. Package slips are put in the mailboxes or sent electronically to a student when a package is received. Mail is not delivered on Saturdays in the residence halls. Students must show ID to collect packages at the front desk of their hall. Find your student's address here and please follow the guidelines to ensure delivery: <http://bit.ly/ResHallMail>

Safety first: We want our students to be safe. If your students ever need to report an incident to our University Police, remind them that the LiveSafe App allows them to send anonymous reports as well as attach video and photographs to help law enforcement. The SafeWalk feature on this app lets students have someone virtually walk them home.

<http://bit.ly/WVULiveSafe>. Also, students are automatically enrolled in WVU Alerts, but you can also be added to the system to receive text alerts in the case of an emergency or inclement weather. See the parent sign-up form under "how do I subscribe": <http://bit.ly/WVUAlerts>. Alerts are issued by University Police when necessary. Remind your students to heed them.

CARE team: Did you know we have a WVU CARE team? If your student is worried about another student, they can let us know: <http://bit.ly/WVUCareTeam>. As always, please contact the Parent Helpline if you have concerns you need to pass along – 1-800-988-0096 or ParentHelpline@mail.wvu.edu.

2018-19 academic calendar: Key dates for the 2018-19 Academic Year can be found here: <http://bit.ly/WVUAcademicCalendar>.

Residence hall opening/closing calendar: Residence hall opening and closing dates and times for the 2018-19 year can be found here: <http://bit.ly/2zRNIut>.

/Katie Gallagher and Lisa Hanselman

Office of Parent Relations

West Virginia University