

Parent Electronic News
West Virginia University
November 16, 2018

****[Spring Charges](#) are now available online in STAR or the Parent/Guest Portal. 5-month payment plan available through November 30. Charges due January 4****

The days that residence halls close on a college campus brings all sorts of fun sights. Rather than backpacks we see suitcases rolling towards buses and carpools of students piling into cars and heading home. One mom looked thankful to have a trunk for the ***large*** bag of what appeared to be (still dirty) laundry her son was toting – that is one way to pack clothes for break (and get clean one for the rest of the semester!) College students are nothing if not resourceful. Realizing this is the first long break home with your students this year, [this Psychology Today article](#) from last year has some interesting insights that might be helpful.

We also like to include a few topics for discussion and conversations while your students are home with you. *Housing Conversations* contains some points for consideration and reminders before leases are signed for next year – for freshmen - seniors. Those who will be rising seniors should note the 2020 May graduation dates in relation to lease end dates when signing – these are included in the article below. Also included is information regarding *Parents Club Winter Break Buses* that are now accepting reservations. *Finals Prep and End-of-Semester Academic Reminders* gives some good tips on ways to check in with your students on advising, final exams, fall grades and spring (as well as possible winter and summer) class registration. Remember, while home, your students can pull up [DegreeWorks](#) to review progress towards their degree as they plan for classes in winter, spring or summer sessions.

Note that in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday, [some schedules will be adjusted next week](#) and University offices will be closed from Wednesday, November 21 to Friday, November 23. Classes resume and offices will reopen with regular business hours Monday, November 26. Residence Halls will reopen Sunday, November 25 at noon.

Happiest of Thanksgivings to you and your family and thanks again for all you do to support your WVU students! In this edition:

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An Important Update from Fraternity Life

In an effort to keep you apprised of happenings on campus, please see the following update regarding [WVU issuing an interim suspension of students and the SAE chapter](#).

Reserve Parents Club Winter Break Holiday Buses Today

We know it's barely Thanksgiving, but time to think about getting students home for Winter Break. The [Winter Break buses](#) travel to Allentown, PA; Carlisle, PA; Hagerstown, MD; Secaucus, NJ; King of Prussia, PA; and Highland, NY, which also services those in the Connecticut, New York and New England areas. The Southern New Jersey, Northern VA, Central Maryland and Long Island, NY, Mountaineer Parents Clubs also offer buses to their areas. Please note that the residence halls are closed for the winter break holiday from Saturday, December 15, 2018 - Saturday, January 5, 2019. Reservations must be made online by following the link above and details can also be found there. The last day to request a refund for the winter buses is Thursday, November 29.

Housing Conversations

While your students are home, please remember to have the conversation about housing ... for next year. We had sent details in a prior Parent E-News in October but want to reiterate these helpful reminders while your students are home. While the searches are under way and students are getting excited about their "new place," staff members from [Student Legal Services](#) and the [Off-Campus Housing Office](#) offer great tips and remind students and parents to look at all the details and consider individual circumstances before signing a lease.

Some key items to remember: Leases are legally binding contracts, and after signing a lease – no matter what happens to your status as a student – students are bound by the terms of that lease for the stated period. While many landlords and property managers will tell students that they must sign early, in reality there is a healthy supply of housing, with many leases not starting until August 2019. Many leases in the Morgantown area are joint leases, so a potential pitfall is signing a lease with another student who may not return for next year. Friendships can also change in the next few months. And how are grades for all the roommates? Fall grades will not post until noon on December 19 at the earliest. Consider waiting to avoid the risks of signing a lease many months prior to moving into an apartment – friendships can change or new friendships are made. Here are other thoughts for consideration.

Lease Start and End Dates Matter: Is your student graduating next year? [2020 commencement dates](#) are posted as May 15-17, 2020. Students should be sure to read the fine print, check lease ends dates and consider their personal situation in regards to a lease such as, what is the last day on the lease compared to graduation for those graduating in May – or speak with a landlord in advance for other options. Is there an option for early termination or subletting for those graduating in December? For those staying on in town who might simply be moving out from the residence halls or on to a new apartment, be sure the lease start and end dates match up (or consider storage options now).

Only in Morgantown Half the Year? If your student is graduating mid-year, or leaving the area for study abroad, co-ops, internships, student teaching, National Student Exchange or similar programs next year, residence hall housing options could make sense because of their flexibility. Students in these circumstances may be released from a WVU Residence Hall Room and Meal Plan contract for that period, with proper documentation. A limited number of upperclassmen spaces are held for returning students and offered with discounts for a limited time. If interested, students should complete the [residence hall interest form online today](#). A staff member will be in touch to walk them through the process.

Free Lease Reviews: It's a great idea for students to have a lease review performed by Student Legal Services prior to signing. Services are free for students, and it is important for them to understand the legal document they are about to sign. Call [Student Legal Services](#) at 304-293-4897 for an appointment.

Residence Hall Options: Limited spaces do exist for upperclassmen who wish to remain in the [residence halls next year](#) and are available now with discounts for a limited time. If interested, students should complete the interest form online today. A staff member will be in touch to walk them through the process.

Consider University Apartments: With four [University Apartment](#) properties managed and operated by WVU (University Place, University Park, College Park and Vandalia) these properties offer a convenient, secure and independent living environment with the freedom of 24-hour access all year.

Off-Campus Housing Fair: Many students attended the first fair held this week, but if they were unable or still have questions, please encourage your students to attend the final [Off-Campus Housing Fair](#) on Evansdale to educate themselves about the process and explore all housing options: *February 23, 2019 in the ERC/Towers Blue and Gold Rooms.*

Finals Prep and End-of-Semester Academic Reminders

The end of the semester is almost here! While your students are home for break, we encourage you to talk with your student about his or her academic performance this fall – and plans for the spring semester. Below, we highlight information about winter, spring and summer registration, withdrawing from the fall semester, finals prep and final grades, academic probation and the Mid-Year Academy.

Registering for Spring 2019 – Your student should be registered for spring 2019 courses – and possibly winter term. In order to register, students should have met with their academic advisor and cleared any registration holds. Ask to see their spring schedule or degree progress in [DegreeWorks](#) while they are home. If they have not yet registered for spring, encourage them to meet with their advisor as soon as possible. Successfully completing 15 credits per semester will help your student stay on track for graduation in four years. It's important that students register for spring classes prior to returning home for the winter break. Also note that spring bills will not

be accurate until your student is registered as a fulltime student (12 hours or more) for spring term.

Withdrawing from the Fall Semester – We want all students to remain enrolled and in good standing at WVU, but we also understand that sometimes students need to completely withdraw from a semester. If your student is considering a withdrawal from the current term, before they make any changes to their schedule, be sure they discuss their options with an academic advisor, a professor, financial aid counselor or another WVU faculty or staff member. Students can also call Regan Swan, the student success director, at 304-293-5804. The last day to withdraw from this semester is Wednesday, December 5.

Preparing for Final Exams – Final examinations are scheduled at different times than the original class meeting times and, in some instances, in different building locations. Has your student planned out their final exam schedule with dates, times and building locations to make sure they are prepared? Refer to the [Fall 2018 Final Exam Schedule](#) for details. Finals week begins December 10. Looking for some downtime or puppy stress-relief before finals? WELLWVU will be hosting a chillFEST Extravaganza at the Rec Center on November 29th from 4-8pm. Students can stop by to de-stress with fitness classes, free massages, therapy dogs, snacks, giveaways and more! [Tutoring](#) is also still available if students need help prepping for finals and there is also a final student success seminar on December 3 at 4:30 titled “[Ending the Semester with Success.](#)”

Winter Intersession courses filling fast! – Time is running out for students to secure their spot in [Winter Intersession](#)! Students can earn up to three credits in three weeks by taking an online course over winter break. Students must call WVU Online for departmental approval at 304-293-2834.

Fall 2018 Final Grades – Final grades for the fall 2018 term will be posted online to the student’s STAR account beginning at noon on December 19. Your student may view their final grades by logging on to DegreeWorks or STAR to access their unofficial transcript through their WVU Portal. Please remind your student that faculty are also on winter break and may not immediately respond to inquiries regarding the authenticity of a final grade. If your student granted you access to view their grades in the [Parent/Guest Portal](#), these will also be viewable at this time.

Academic Probation and the Mid-Year Academy – Students are placed on academic probation if their cumulative grade point average (GPA) falls below 2.0. All students will be notified during winter break if they are on academic probation. All first-time freshmen on academic probation are asked to return to campus no later than 1:00 p.m., Sunday, January 6, 2019, to participate in Mid-Year Academy. This is a program that connects students with academic advisors to build a success plan for the spring term. Our faculty and staff are committed to helping your student succeed and getting them back on track. Students who have below a 2.0 cumulative GPA after the spring 2019 term are subject to [academic suspension](#).

Summer 2019 – Have you begun to discuss with your student their prospects for [summer 2019](#)? Will they be taking courses at WVU or an institution near home, pursuing summer employment or internships or engaging in an international experience (i.e., study abroad)? It’s never too early to plan for next summer.

Bookstore Updates

With the end of the semester approaching, here are some tips and reminders from the WVU Bookstore:

[Black Friday and Cyber Monday Sales!](#) – Looking for the perfect gift? Check out the [WVU Bookstore](#) Black Friday and Cyber Monday sale online only.

[Rental Returns Due by December 14](#) - Please remind your students to bring back their fall 2018 rental titles to the bookstore they originally rented them from by December 14. (Per the rental agreement signed by all customers at the beginning of the semester, customers who do not bring back their rentals will be charged the full price of the book, and an additional late fee).

[Book Buyback](#) – also known as “Cash for Books.” After classes end, students can resell their books. The best time to do so is December 5-14. Students must have valid WVU ID to conduct buyback, and it must be done in person at the stores.

[Purchase Spring Books Today!](#) - Did you know that your student can purchase or rent their spring 2019 textbooks as soon as they register for the spring term? Here are details on [online registration integration](#) including a quick [video](#) on the topic.

[Caps and Gowns](#) – Available in store through the morning of Commencement (December 15, 2018) at all locations. We have plenty of stock available for everyone. Pre-ordered caps and gowns will be available for pickup starting December 3.

The WVU Bookstore is here to help you through your student’s journey, in the classroom and on campus. For emails that include everything you need to know about textbooks, supplies and more, [sign up](#) today. The WVU Bookstores are proud to give \$1.5 million each year to WVU in non-athletic student scholarships. Sorry, discounts cannot be combined.

End of the Semester Dining Updates

[Dining Dollars and Meal Plans Expire at the End of the Semester](#) – Dining Dollars are flex funds good at all WVU Dining locations and do not carry over to the next semester. Meal plans are charged semester by semester, and also expire at the end of the semester. If Dining Dollars remain, students can use them now to stock up on study snacks for finals or restock for spring. Students can consider going to the Lyon's Den convenience store at the Evansdale Residential Complex to stock up on packaged food, beverage items, laundry detergent or other toiletries they may need to resupply their room. They can grab a snack at any campus dining location or retail location – including those in the libraries – while studying for finals.

Students can check their Dining Dollars balance, as well as their remaining Dining Plan swipes online by choosing “Check your Balance” [here](#). Whenever they make a purchase, the remaining balance will appear at the bottom of their sales receipt. *NOTE: [Mountie Bounty](#) is separate and those balances **can** be carried over to the spring term.*

Spring Dining Plan Changes – Does your student need to make changes to their spring dining plan? Students can [make changes](#) to [on campus meal plans](#) online from now until Tuesday, January 15. Note that making changes to a plan may result in a billing adjustment. Spring Dining Plans can also be purchased through this site for [students residing off-campus](#).

Care Packages – With holidays and final exams coming fast so check out our variety of [care package options from WVU’s Culinary Creations](#). We’ve got a whole list of baked goods that can be delivered to WVU residence halls or held for pickup in the Mountainlair.

Dining Plan Refills Available – If your student’s fall dining plan is depleted, refills are available at <http://bit.ly/2yOdzwB>. Refills must be purchased through a student-only WVU web portal, so be in communication with your student if you’re anxious about their dining plan running out

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, feel free to reach out to us at dining@mail.wvu.edu or visit <http://bit.ly/WVUDining>.

December Commencement Reminders

We are just a few weeks away from December Commencement. All students who will be participating in these ceremonies need to [register to walk](#) online no later than December 7. Also, caps and gowns are available in the WVU Barnes & Noble Bookstore through the morning of Commencement (December 15) at all of our locations. *Pre-ordered caps and gowns will be available for pickup starting December 3.* Any other updates for Commencement will be [posted here](#) including commencement speakers and last-minute updates.

Comparing Health Insurance Plans

For many families, health insurance open enrollment periods for health plans are just around the corner. Or maybe you just want to be sure that your student has the best coverage available. Reviewing your current health insurance coverage and comparing it to other options is always a good idea. Here are some helpful tips and resources

When comparing plans, consider your out-of-pocket costs. These are expenses that you or your student will pay, and may include your [premium](#), [copayments](#), [deductible](#), and [coinsurance](#). For example, a plan may have a low premium but a high annual deductible. Consider whether you would prefer to pay a higher premium but have lower out-of-pocket costs for your student’s medical care in the form of lower copayments, coinsurance and deductible, or whether you would prefer to pay a lower premium but risk higher out-of-pocket medical costs if your student needs medical care. Out-of-pocket costs will vary from plan to plan and should be listed in the

plan summary provided to by your insurance carrier. You should also consider whether your student will have coverage in West Virginia. A plan may provide excellent coverage in New Jersey, but perhaps only emergency coverage in West Virginia. Contact your insurance carrier directly to confirm whether your student has adequate coverage.

To compare your current plan to the WVU Aetna student health insurance plan, please visit the [WVU Aetna Student Health Insurance site](#) for an overview and a detailed plan summary. If you want to enroll your student in the WVU Aetna plan, and have already opted your student out of the plan by completing the fall 2018 student health insurance waiver, your student may request enrollment in the WVU Aetna plan effective January 1, 2019, by completing the [Spring Enrollment Form](#) by December 31, 2018. If your student did not opt out of the student health insurance by completing the waiver, and is eligible, they will be automatically enrolled in the WVU Aetna plan for the spring term and do not need to request spring enrollment. Reach out to the Student Insurance Office at sio@mail.wvu.edu with questions or concerns.

Health Conversations: Tobacco, Vaping, and E-Cigarettes

While your students are home over break, WellWVU knows that health and habits often become a topic of conversation. Since July 2013, WVU has implemented a tobacco-free campus policy. In recent years, nationally there have been some new products that have hit the market such as e-cigarettes. While the dangers of tobacco products are well known, some students see vaping and e-cigarettes as healthier alternatives. However, [a new study](#) suggests that chronic vaping / e-cigarette use may potentially lead to the same cardiovascular health risks as smoking tobacco. Students also may not realize the [high amount of nicotine](#) contained in these products. A single pod for the popular JUUL vaping product contains as much nicotine as a full pack of cigarettes! Learn more about e-cigarettes and vaping [here](#).

If your student wants to decrease their nicotine use, a helpful resource could include the [WVU Student Assistance Program](#). Your student can also check out these [helpful tips](#) from former smokers, and these [recommendations from Wellness and Health Promotion](#). In addition, 1-800-QUIT-NOW operates 24/7 and Smokefree.gov has information about text, apps, and social media options for support in quitting tobacco products.

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Office of Parent Relations

West Virginia University