

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

Deck the Halls with college students, Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la! Happy holidays, WVU families! Before sending them home to you, check out some of the holiday fun we had when your students pitched in to lend a helping hand to some campus visitors including a [trapped Buzz Lightyear](#), a [reindeer with a missing nose](#) and a [student who got a little too tangled up](#) in the decorating spirit. We do hope you are enjoying your time with your students and with final grades now posted, hope they added 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.

As a final reminder, **the last day to enroll in a [payment plan](#) for spring is Dec. 31**, and [spring bills](#) are due Jan. 4. See the *Payment Tips* section below for additional help and suggestions and 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 or the [Parent/Guest portal](#), if granted access by your student, during that time. We also realize that over 2,600 families got an early holiday gift in the form of a [December 2018 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!

The new year is just around the corner so be sure to check out the *Looking ahead to 2019* section and mark your *Spring Calendar* to help you plan ahead for important dates. And with that, we wish you the happiest of holidays from all of us at West Virginia University! In this edition:

#### ACADEMICS AND FINAL GRADES

- Good Grades and Goals!
- Considerations for those Struggling Academically

#### PAYMENT TIPS

- Spring Bills Due Jan. 4 to avoid 2.25% late fee; Last day for payment plan – Dec. 31

#### OTHER CAMPUS UPDATES

- Winter Break Hours
- Last day to use Financial Aid for Spring textbooks – Dec. 26
- Mountaineer Card Service outage – Dec. 27
- Fall Rental Books Returns Now Past Due

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS

- FINAL REMINDER: Spring Health Insurance Waiver available until Dec. 28
- Healthy Holiday Conversations: Stress and Substance Use
- BOG proposes tightening of tobacco-free campus policy

## LOOKING AHEAD TO 2019

- Winter Break Parents Club Buses – limited spaces remain for return trips Jan. 5
- Mark your Spring Calendar: University Breaks and Dates

HOUSEKEEPING: Removal from the Parent E-News Listserv and the Mountaineer Parents Club

## ACADEMICS AND FINAL GRADES

### Good Grades and Goals!

Grades were officially posted on Wednesday, Dec. 19, after noon, 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 2018 Dean's and President's lists will post in late January/early February. 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](#) in late January.

*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.
- 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 receive both an email and mailed letter indicating they are strongly encouraged to attend the Mid-Year Academy on **Sunday, Jan. 6**.

*Mid-Year Academy* – During the Mid-Year Academy on Sunday, Jan. 6, first-time freshmen placed on academic probation will meet with advisers 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, this is **strongly encouraged** for first-time freshmen on academic probation.

*Academic Suspension* – Students whose GPAs fall below a an overall 2.0 GPA are eligible for academic and financial aid [suspension](#) from the University in May. If placed on suspension, students are required to sit out for a semester or more, depending on the suspension terms. Students currently on Contractual Readmission could have their suspension reinstated if they remain below a 2.0 overall GPA.

*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.
- 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. 11), 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](#).
- Finally, 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.

## PAYMENT TIPS

### **Spring Bills Due Jan. 4 to avoid 2.25% late fee; Last day for payment plan – Dec. 31**

If your student hasn't paid their spring bill, the rush is on! Students must be enrolled in the CASHNet payment plan by Dec. 31 or paid in full by Jan. 4. Waiting until close to the deadline may mean longer wait times. When you call or log on we will provide you with the best experience we can. Here are a few hints to help you through the process:

- Make sure that your students are checking their MIX e-mail! If they still had a spring balance due (and were not enrolled in a monthly payment plan) they would have received an eBill to their MIX account 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 bills will not be correct and final 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 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 four months.**

- At peak times the online systems may run slower than normal. Try logging on to STAR or 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 and your student's 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 spring term, students should be sure to withdraw from any classes as early as possible to avoid tuition and fee charges. Students should note [Housing withdrawal policies](#) if they are not returning to avoid charges.

The Mountaineer Hub will be open normal business hours during the winter recess on Dec. 27-28: 9am -4pm lobby and 8:15 am to 4:45 pm for phone. All University offices will be closed Dec. 24, 25, 26, 31 and Jan. 1.

## OTHER CAMPUS UPDATES

### Winter Break Hours

Over the holidays, some [adjusted winter break hours](#) will be in effect across campus.

### Last day to use Financial Aid for Spring textbooks – Dec. 26

Students can order their spring textbooks online and place their order using excess financial aid until December 26 and 11:59 p.m. Students should follow the steps below and *choose* "Financial Aid" option during the checkout process. For questions about financial aid for book purchases, go to <https://studentaccounts.wvu.edu/bookstore-programs> or e-mail [bookreserve@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:bookreserve@mail.wvu.edu). For questions about the book order: [sm583@bncollege.com](mailto:sm583@bncollege.com). NOTE: The WVU Bookstore offers a full refund through January 14 (after add/drop week!) with a receipt for books students may need to return. Many other store and online services do not offer this service.

1. Have your student log in to [STAR](#)
2. Select "Student Service and Housing" tab
3. Select "Registration" menu
4. Select "WVU, PSC, and WVU Tech Bookstores"
5. Select "Spring 2019" term from the drop-down menu.

- NOTE: Health Sciences, Law, Potomac State (PSC), and Tech (WVUIT) students, please use the appropriate link after you have completed the above steps. Need Additional Help? <http://bit.ly/2Df3OGB>

### **Mountaineer Card Service outage – Dec. 27**

Mountaineer Card-related services, including the MyMountaineerCard website, will be unavailable from 8 a.m. to noon Thursday, Dec. 27 while we do work on the underlying system. You will be unable to purchase or change meal plans, make Mountie Bounty deposits or check balances until the work is finished. Please direct any questions to [ITSHelp@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:ITSHelp@mail.wvu.edu).

### **Fall Rental Books Returns Now Past Due**

Did your student forget to bring their rental books back to the WVU Bookstore? Books rented for the fall semester were due back on Dec. 14; however, we will still accept them back so please return them at your next immediate opportunity. Please include a slip of paper with the books with NAME, PHONE #, EMAIL ADDRESS, and order number (*if available*). Please ship to the original store where the rental was made. If your student ordered online, please send to the Downtown/Mountainlair store. Questions? [sm583@bncollege.com](mailto:sm583@bncollege.com):

#### **WVU Bookstore**

Mountainlair Bldg.

1550 University Ave.

Morgantown, WV 26506

#### **WVU Bookstore – Evansdale**

Evansdale Crossing Bldg.

62 Morrill Way

Morgantown, WV 26505

## **HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

### **FINAL REMINDER: Spring Health Insurance Waiver available until Dec. 28**

NOTE: Students with an approved waiver on file from fall of 2018 have opted out of the WVU Aetna student health insurance plan for the entire 2018-2019 academic year and do not need to complete this spring waiver. For those others who wish to request a spring waiver, the [spring 2019 student health insurance waiver](#) opened on Monday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, with a deadline for completion of December 28<sup>th</sup>. Eligible students without an approved student health insurance waiver on file will be automatically enrolled in the WVU Aetna student health insurance plan at a cost of \$1,000 per term, assessed to the student's account. For more information about the WVU Aetna student health insurance plan, view the 2018-19 WVU Aetna Plan Summary. Contact the WVU Student Insurance Office at [sio@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:sio@mail.wvu.edu) with questions or concerns, or for assistance completing the student health insurance waiver.

## **Healthy Holiday Conversations: Stress and Substance Use**

Winter break can be a good time to help your student talk about and reflect on the semester. For example, what sources of stress did they encounter and how do they think they managed? Your student's behavior could also offer some clues in this regard. Changes in [appetite, mood, energy, or sleep](#) could be potential warning signs for depression, while [muscle tension, GI complaints, difficulty concentrating, and persistent worry](#) could signal difficulties with anxiety. Popular lore may assume that some college students turn to alcohol or cannabis as part of a “work hard, play hard” mentality, but substance use can sometimes represent [covert efforts to self-medicate depression, social anxiety, or stress](#). Consider [these tips](#) for talking with your student about alcohol or other substance use, and if your student might benefit from on-campus support for mental health and/or substance-related challenges, you might recommend that they explore the [services offered at the WVU Carruth Center](#).

## **BOG proposes tightening of tobacco-free campus policy**

The [proposed new rules regarding tobacco use](#) clarify that the ban includes not only the use of tobacco products, but any form of smoking, including electronic smoking devices and vapor products. Comment period is now open.

## **LOOKING AHEAD TO 2019**

### **Winter Break Parents Club Buses – limited spaces remain for return trips Jan. 5**

We hope you are enjoying break with your students! A limited number of seats remain for one way trips back to campus January 5 on the Parents Club holiday buses. Due to limited seats, to make a reservation, [please call](#) the Parents Club Office at 304-293-2506. 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 (waitlisted), Southern NJ and Long Island Mountaineer Parents Clubs also offer buses from their areas. To review the schedules and details, please go to <http://bit.ly/WVUMPCBuses>. Again, only phone reservations will be taken 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.

## **Mark your Spring Calendar: University Breaks and Dates**

Afternoon of December 19 – Grades posted to students' MIX/STAR accounts and Parent/Guest Portal (if granted that access by your student) <http://bit.ly/PGPortal>

*Monday, December 24-Wednesday, December 26 – University Holidays/offices closed*

Friday, December 28 – Spring student health insurance waiver deadline (no need to complete if you previously opted out this fall). <http://bit.ly/2BneXY1>

*Monday, December 31 – Tuesday, January 1 – University Holidays/offices closed*

Thursday, January 3 – New Student Orientation for incoming students starting in spring 2019

Friday, January 4 – Spring charges/bills due <http://bit.ly/2ya7EC1>

Saturday, January 5 at noon – Residence halls reopen

Sunday, January 6 – Mid-Year Academy for any first-year student on probation (students will be notified over break via email and letter)

Monday, January 7 – First day of classes

Friday, January 11 – Last day to add/drop classes

Tuesday, January 15 – Last day to adjust spring dining plans <http://bit.ly/WVUDining19>

*Monday, January 21 – University Holiday – no classes/offices closed/residence halls remain open*

Friday, March 8 at 7 p.m. – Residence halls close for Spring Break

Sunday, March 17 at noon – Residence halls reopen from Spring Break

*Friday, April 19 – University Holiday – no classes/offices closed/residence halls remain open*

Monday, April 29 – Friday, May 3 – Finals Week

Saturday, May 4 at noon – Residence halls officially close for the spring term (students must vacate rooms 24 hours after their last final)

Friday, May 10-Sunday, May 12 – Commencement Weekend <http://bit.ly/2gUpka6>

## **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