Happy April Fool’s Day, everyone! With April upon up, this means that there are just four weeks before Finals Week (April 29-May 3) and the official countdowns are on. Below you will find some new Graduation News with that weekend a short 40 days away. The Parents of Incoming Students section included some details for technology discounts/parameters as well as helpful next steps – and for most of you, that is New Student Orientation that starts in just 60 days. Before we all know it will be time to start all over again with the first day of classes just 143 days away on Wednesday, August 21!

And as you plan ahead please read the items under Aid, Billing and Scholarship Updates. This gives details on payment plans fall term that will be opening May 1 to help spread payments out over several months, summer term payment plans, and important details on fall aid packages – if your student hasn’t yet received theirs, as they may have outstanding tasks to complete at http://bit.ly/WVUVerifyMyFAFSA before their eligibility can be determined. Finally, Other Campus Updates has football ticket details, 1098-T tax reminders (15 days until Tax Day!) as well as tips on end of the year housing and storage options, among others. It is a busy time on campus so read and share reminders with your students! In this edition:

AID, BILLING, and SCHOLARSHIP UPDATES

- Financial Aid Offers – New Step to accept aid
- Tuition Payment Plans
- Summer eBill to students – April 4
- Exit Counseling Required for Those with Loans
- Scholarship Opportunities
- Student support fee for WVU online courses to begin this fall

PARENTS OF INCOMING STUDENTS - Helpful Resources for Common Questions

GRADUATION NEWS

- Lodging option for families for graduation weekend
- Final Steps to Graduate
- Additional Graduation Highlights and Tips

OTHER CAMPUS UPDATES

- WVU’s inaugural Research Week celebrates ‘research with purpose’ – April 1-5
- Bookstore Graduation Regalia Updates and April Sales
- Last-Minute Tax Day Reminders on 1098-T Tax Forms
- Athletics: New Football Season Tickets Now on Sale for 2019 – Priority deadline April 26
- Mid-Year Student Insurance Enrollment
- A Note on Honoraries
End of the Year Reminders – Housing and Storage

AID, BILLING, and SCHOLARSHIP UPDATES

Financial Aid Offers – New Step to accept aid

It’s time for students to review and accept their aid offer for next year! Financial aid offers have been going out since January. To accept or decline aid, students should go to their Portal.

If your student submitted a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and has not yet received a financial aid offer, they may have outstanding tasks to complete before their eligibility can be determined. They should go to http://bit.ly/WVUVerifyMyFAFSA and login with their WVU student credentials. They may be asked to verify first and last name, date of birth and Social Security number; this must match the information on their FAFSA. Any outstanding tasks or unsatisfied requirements that can delay financial aid will be listed; they may click on each task for additional information. Click here for more tips and helpful information on the financial aid process.

Tuition Payment Plans

If you are interested in monthly payments to spread the semester cost over multiple months, the payment plan for fall will open May 1. The earlier you enroll the better as you will be able to make payments over a longer period! If you have questions on financial aid or payment plans, you can contact the Mountaineer Hub online under “Public Inquiry Submission” or call 304-293-1988.

Summer eBill to students – April 4

If your student is registered for summer, charges are now posted. If a balance is owed, your student will receive an eBill on April 4 which is due May 1. If you need to make monthly payments, the Tuition Payment Plan for summer is now available. Sign up by April 30 to enroll in the three-payment option (May, June, and July).

Exit Counseling Required for Those with Loans

Students who are graduating, transferring, or no longer enrolled at least half-time who have federal student loans must complete Exit Counseling. Emails from the Mountaineer Hub will be sent soon to federal student loan borrowers who have applied to graduate in May. The email will include instructions on how to complete Exit Counseling.

Exit counseling helps students through an important transition to loan repayment. To better understand loan repayment options, we encourage students to come to the Mountaineer Hub for personalized Exit Counseling; an expert will walk them through the online counseling process and answer any questions they may have. Questions? Contact the Mountaineer Hub online or
304-293-1988. Follow us on Facebook (WVU Mountaineer Hub) and Twitter (@WVUSFSS) for tips and reminders.

Scholarship Opportunities

Spring is a great time for students to explore what scholarships may exist for upcoming years as new options are always coming about! WVU just announced 13 new Addictions Studies scholarships for students enrolled in the new Addiction Studies minor and the deadline for application is April 15.

Encourage students to check out external scholarship opportunities for offers that might also be available from local or national civic organizations, places of work, or businesses. If a student receives an external scholarship, be sure to alert the Mountaineer Hub as soon as possible so they can make that adjustment on their aid package – 304-293-1988.

Student support fee for WVU online courses to begin this fall

Beginning fall 2019, students will be assessed an Online Learning Student Support (OLSS) Fee of $25 per credit hour for online courses listed as Off Campus/Online. This fee will cap at 3-credit hours per course ($75) and will be charged across all credit hours taken, regardless of full-time status. Course sections being assessed the fee will have the Instructional Method of WEOC and the Schedule Type of W (web-based). Exceptions to this fee include the following: High School ACCESS, Education Abroad, summer graduate remedial medicine, and tuition-waived courses. For more information, please visit WVU Online’s FAQ page.

PARENTS OF INCOMING STUDENTS – Helpful Resources for Common Questions

The Families of the Class of 2023 Facebook page provides a resource for you to virtually meet other families with students looking to enter WVU this fall. Below is some more info on some recent top topics and some quick resources on each that we are seeing being discussed on the page currently:

What should I be doing now?

If your student is still trying to decide if WVU is the right choice for them, our final Decide WVU Day is coming up April 13: https://admissions.wvu.edu/visit/decide. For those who have made their decision, congrats! We look forward to welcoming you and your student in June for New Student Orientation – be sure they sign up today! Between now and then, be sure that your student is checking their WVU online account and e-mail regularly as this is how we will begin communicating with them. We also know often parents have questions about the financial aid process this time of the year. Be sure to check out the Financial Aid section above for some additional info and this site also provides a lot of helpful info so you know how the process...
Submit Student ID Photos online

New this year, students can submit up to three photos to be considered for their official Mountaineer ID Card in advance of New Student Orientation. Students should follow these requirements and instructions and approval or denial decision will be sent to students within three business days. Parents: We know you want to help, but your students must submit photos on their own after claiming their WVU Login accounts. Logging on for them is a violation of University policy (and will cause bigger issues for your student in the coming months!) NOTE: Incoming students must register for New Student Orientation before they will be permitted to submit a photo and should allow a day or two for their Orientation registration to process before trying to submit photos.

Computer Tips and Technology Discounts

Thinking of buying a computer before your student heads off to college? First, find out if your student's major has a specific computer requirement. If not, we recommend hardware specifications based on the way your student will use their device. Review the Student Technology Guide. Students also get free Microsoft Office and Sophos Anti-Virus software, as well as many other technology and product discounts.

Fall Family Weekend: As you look ahead, we invite families back to campus for Fall Family Weekend, September 27-29, so mark your calendars and check back for more details closer to the fall term. NOTE: This weekend is intentionally scheduled on a non-football weekend so you can easily get hotel rooms, more easily navigate and enjoy campus and the surrounding community, and spend time with your student. We will also be sharing details on a discounted football ticket opportunity in July/August for Mountaineer Parents Club members who wish to come in for a football game (or see the Athletics update below for season ticket info). Stay tuned to upcoming Parent E-Newsletters like these.

GRADUATION NEWS

Lodging option for families for graduation weekend

Housing and Residence Life will provide overnight accommodations in Lincoln Hall for families of graduating seniors. Convenient and affordable, rooms are available Thursday, May 9 through Monday, May 13. Continental breakfast, afternoon snacks, linen service are included in these suite-style rooms; rate is $80 per night, including tax. For more information or to make a reservation or call 304-293-2790.
Final Steps to Graduate

Students who officially applied to graduate in May by the March 1 deadline should be sure to complete these additional final steps.

1. **Register to walk.** After they’ve applied to graduate, students must register if they would like to participate in the actual graduation ceremony. May graduates can register to walk through their WVU college/school’s website.

2. **Pick up required cap and gown.** For those who ordered online prior to March 24, official WVU regalia will be available for pick up at the WVU Bookstore locations starting April 22 to May 11. Students can still purchase online until April 12 and pay to ship to their address or they can purchase direct at the [WVU Bookstores](https://www.wvu.edu/bookstores) (Mountainlair, Evansdale, Law, and HSC) during regular store hours between April 22 and May 11. To ensure delivery, students are encouraged to **order by April 12** (direct customer ship option remains available through that date.) No regalia will be sold at the venue.

3. **Look into Honor cords.** Is your student graduating with honors? Check out the details here about how students receive [honor cords and graduation stoles](https://www.wvu.edu/graduation/honors/) and what is permitted.

4. **Check for any outstanding fees and holds** (unpaid parking tickets, overdue library books, fees, etc.). Students are not allowed to graduate if there are any unpaid fees. They should make sure they are set to graduate by going to their WVU Portal and looking for holds.

5. **Check Mountie Bounty balance.** Students should check their Mountie Bounty account balance and either spend remaining funds or [request a refund](https://www.wvu.edu/financialaid/bounty) within 125 days of graduation to avoid a $10 account processing fee – have students check today!

6. **Complete Exit Counseling Required for those with Loans:** Students who are graduating who have borrowed federal student loans must complete the [loan exit counseling](https://www.wvu.edu/financialaid/exit) process online. Emails from the Financial Aid Office will be sent soon to federal student loan borrowers who have applied to graduate in May and will include exit counseling instructions.

Additional Graduation Highlights and Tips

As Graduation approaches, here are some additional highlights and helpful tips to consider and pass along:

- **“Cap it Off” events April 12, 15, 17:** For students who wish to decorate their mortar boards, Student Life will be hosting free “Cap it Off” events April 12 from 10 p.m. - 2 a.m. at the Lair at WVU Campus, April 15 from 1-5 at the Crossing Bookstore, and April 17 from 5-9 p.m. at Morgan House on the Downtown campus. Graduates-to-be can just drop by with their caps to decorate their mortar boards!

- **Woodburn graduation photos May 8:** University Relations will be offering graduating students free photos outside Woodburn Hall once again this year. The date for this year’s event will be Wednesday, May 8 and students will see info on the [Current Student site](https://www.wvu.edu/currentstudent)
Commencement Brunch May 12: On Saturday, May 11, join us to celebrate your new graduate and gather your family at the home for alumni, the Erickson Alumni Center. Multiple seating’s are available from 10am to 2pm. Brunch is FREE for 2019 graduates, discounted for members of the WVU Alumni Association ($24.95), adults ($29.95) and children 4-12 ($12.50). Go here to purchase tickets.

Gift Ideas: Looking for a gift for your graduate-to-be? Check out the WVU Bookstore for diploma frames and much more. (NOTE: Diploma frames will also be sold at the ceremony venues.) You may also wish to visit the online WVU Alumni Store, consider a gift of membership to the WVU Alumni Association, or purchase a brick in the WVU Alumni Walkway to commemorate your graduate!

Looking ahead? Is you student scheduled to graduate in December 2019 or May 2020? Check out upcoming Graduation dates and be sure to stay tuned in early fall for more details!

FAQ page: Students and guests can also visit the Graduation FAQ page to get answers to any other commencement related questions.

OTHER CAMPUS UPDATES

WVU’s inaugural Research Week celebrates ‘research with purpose’ – April 1-5

West Virginia University’s inaugural Research Week (April 1-5) is more than a showcase of the work done at the state’s only R1 Research Institute; it’s a celebration of the faculty and students across campus who pursue ground-breaking research in all disciplines.

Bookstore April Sales

Upcoming Sales at the WVU Bookstore - available online and in-store (Text your student to tell them to drop in!)

- Get 25% All Nike items – April 1 - 5
- HATS - Buy One and Get 50% Off a second – April 8 - 12
- TEES - Buy One and Get 50% Off a second – April 22 - 26

Customers looking for more alumni options, visit our online WVU Alumni Store.

Last-Minute Tax Day Reminders on 1098-T Tax Forms

With tax day just around the corner, I have had a few calls about where to find the 1098-T tax forms. WVU Tax Services partners with ECSI Heartland for preparation of the Form 1098-T Tuition Statement used by students or parents when filing the 1040 personal tax return. Each
year Form 1098-T for the recently completed calendar tax year became available online in January and hard copies are mailed in January to the student’s permanent mailing address listed in the student’s STAR account. Contact ECSI Heartland with questions about your Form 1098-T here or 866-428-1098.

Athletics: New Football Season Tickets Now on Sale for 2019 – Priority deadline April 26

A new era of Mountaineer football under coach Neal Brown kicks off this fall and new season tickets for the 2019 campaign are now on sale to fans who did not purchase season tickets in 2018. The Mountaineers have an exciting six-game home schedule and season tickets start at $365, a savings of $35 off the single game price. (NOTE: depending on seat locations, tickets may require a Mountaineer Athletic Club (MAC) annual fund gift.) New season ticket holders will have the option to select their own seats using an interactive seating website during the Optional Seat Selection process, if they purchase by the priority deadline of April 26. New season ticket orders can be made online, by calling 1-800-WVU GAME or in person at the Mountaineer Ticket Office located in the Coliseum. West Virginia opens the 2019 season on Saturday, Aug. 31, against James Madison at Mountaineer Field at Milan Puskar Stadium.

NOTE: Single game tickets will go on sale in July/August. Also at that time, we will share via this Parent E-Newsletter with Mountaineer Parents Club members a discounted football ticket offer for an upcoming game. We will not know what game that will be for until closer to that time. Stay tuned!

Mid-Year Student Insurance Enrollment

Did your student recently turn 26 and lose his or her health insurance coverage? Qualifying life events, such as aging out of a parent’s coverage or losing health coverage for another reason, such as a change in employment, allow eligible students to enroll in the WVU Aetna student health insurance plan mid-semester.

Students who previously had opted out of coverage through the WVU Aetna plan and have lost their current coverage due to a qualifying life event may be eligible to enroll in the Aetna plan mid-semester. Interested students should complete the Mid-Year Enrollment Form and submit the required documentation to the Student Insurance Office.

Stay tuned, the annual Student Insurance waiver for the upcoming 2019-20 school year will come out on June 3rd.

A Note on Honoraries

With many students receiving accolades, this time of year I also get calls from parents about invitations their students have received to join various Honoraries and how to determine what to join, what is legitimate, and what is helpful. A number of years back, our former dean of the
Honors College passed along these helpful tips for parents when their student has been invited to join a group.

- Have them look to see if there an active chapter of any national honoraries on our campus? Joining is great but being engaged or in a leadership capacity is better. Students can check our Student Engagement and Leadership Organization Listing and look under "Honorary" or their major heading to see if a local chapter exists and determine if it is active.
- There are many different honor societies and honoraries available to our students. These range from the more general Golden Key National Honor Society to major-specific honor societies such as Psi Chi (Psychology Honorary). Perhaps one makes more sense than another to join, depending on your student’s major, area of emphasis or interests.
- Students should join organizations they plan to participate in actively. Putting something on a resume means they may be asked about it in an interview. They need to be able to speak about their involvement. There are a number of these students can join for free (or minimal cost) to gain experience, add to resumes, etc. Typically unless a student has no other involvement and plans to will be active in the honorary - exploring leadership positions, attending conferences, or if this is something well regarded in his/her field - simply joining an honorary and paying to do so, is not necessary.
- Our Office of Student Engagement and Leadership oversees all student organizations and can help guide students with additional questions: 304-293-4397.

End of the Year Reminders – Housing and Storage

As a reminder, the Residence Hall Closing Schedule notes all students are to be out of their residence halls 24 hours after their last final exam to keep the halls quiet for those still studying. Be sure to check with your student about his/her finals schedule. Officially, all residence halls close and lock for the term on Saturday, May 4 at noon.

Often parents ask about storage options for the summer depending on what leases start and end. There are many options available in town but I typically suggest a parents do a search for "Storage Unit Reviews Morgantown WV." These results can typically give you not just contact info, but also links to their sites with details (temp control, unit sizes, prices, etc) and locations on map view around town so you find something close to where your student either is now or where they will be moving for the fall – depending on your preference. These also often offer reviews by actual customers that have used the facilities.

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