I am unsure whose son I just saw loading laundry into a car near Boreman Hall, but I hope your washing machines are ready folks! Thanksgiving Break is here, and most students are now homeward bound. If your student will be in town during break let them know that Morgantown has a community-sponsored Thanksgiving Day dinner at Wesley United Methodist Church, which is located at the corner of High and Willey Streets. Your student can attend or drop by to volunteer between 12:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.; no RSVP required. This and other helpful break information for those still in town can be found here: http://bit.ly/2zM4hB2. While your students are resting up, below are a few reminders for discussions and follow-up over turkey and stuffing.

*Housing Conversations* contains some final reminders (and important questions to ask) before leases are signed for next year, as well as info about the final Off-Campus Housing Fair in January. 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 registration. Remember, while home, your students can pull up DegreeWorks http://bit.ly/2ipMGYA to review progress towards their degree as they plan for classes in winter, spring or summer sessions. Also double-check on STAR or in the Parent/Guest Portal that their student account is current, since winter session bills are posted (for those registered for the new winter intercession) and spring bills will be coming out soon and will be due by January 2.

*Note that in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday, University Offices will be closed from Wednesday, November 22 to Friday, November 24. Offices will reopen with regular business hours Monday, November 27. Residence Halls will reopen Sunday, November 26 at noon.*

In this season of Thanksgiving, thanks again for all you do to support your WVU students throughout the year! In this edition:

- Reserve Parents Club Winter Break Holiday Buses Today
- Housing Conversations
- Finals Prep and End-of-Semester Academic Reminders
- Comparing Health Insurance Plans
- Bookstore Updates

**CAMPUS REMINDERS**

- December Commencement Reminders
- Technology Reminders
Reserve Parents Club Winter Break Holiday Buses Today

We are now taking reservations for the Winter Break buses to Allentown, PA; Carlisle, PA; Hagerstown, MD; Secaucus, NJ; King of Prussia, PA; and Highland, NY, to service 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 the dates for the winter break holiday buses:

- Buses leave Morgantown – Thursday, December 14 (except Northern Virginia, which will leave December 13)
- Buses return to Morgantown – Saturday, January 6

For schedules and to make reservations, see: http://bit.ly/2lEaTbq. The last day to request a refund for the Winter Break buses is November 30, 2017.

Housing Conversations

While your students are home, please remember to have the conversation about housing … for next year. 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: http://bit.ly/2A9CwTR.

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 2018. 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. And how are grades for all the roommates? Fall grades will not post until December 19. Consider waiting to avoid the risks of signing a lease many months prior to moving into an apartment. Here are other thoughts for consideration.

Lease Start and End Dates Matter: Is your student graduating next year? 2019 commencement dates are listed as May 10-12, 2019. Students should be sure to read the fine print and consider their personal situation in regards to a lease such as, what is the last day on the lease regarding graduation for those graduating in May? 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. If interested, students can apply, pay their deposit and choose their room/roommate online now: http://bit.ly/2zPWOyl.

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 304-293-4897 for an appointment: http://bit.ly/2APfkq8.

Residence Hall Options: Limited spaces do exist for upperclassmen who wish to remain in the residence halls next year and are available now. If interested, students should log on now to apply, pay their deposit and choose their room/roommate online: http://bit.ly/2zPWOyl.

Consider University Apartments: With four 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: http://bit.ly/2yPoXbU.

Off-Campus Housing Fair: Over 1000 students attended the 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: Saturday, January 20, noon to 3 p.m., ERC Blue and Gold Rooms: http://bit.ly/2A9CwTR.

**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 spring and summer registration, withdrawing from the fall semester, finals prep and final grades, academic probation and the Mid-Year Academy.

Registering for Spring 2018 – Your student should be registered for spring 2018 courses. 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: http://bit.ly/2ipMGYA. 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.

**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 Bruni, the student success director, at 304-293-5804. The last day to withdraw from this semester is Monday, December 4.

**Preparing for Final Exams** – Final examinations are scheduled at different times than the original class meeting time 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 2017 Final Exam Schedule at [http://bit.ly/2emu6Ly](http://bit.ly/2emu6Ly) for details. Finals week begins December 7. Looking for some downtime or puppy stress-relief time before finals? All three therapy dogs – Vivian, Brando and Lucas – will be at the Mountainlair, Monday December 4, from 4-6 p.m. in the Shenandoah Room. The student organization Mountaineer Tutoring Network has organized this relaxing event.

**Fall 2017 Final Grades** – Final grades for the fall 2017 term will be posted to the WVU transcript on Wednesday, December 19 at noon. Your student may view their final grades by logging on to DegreeWorks or STAR to access their unofficial transcript through the WVU Portal: [http://bit.ly/2fbdrLr](http://bit.ly/2fbdrLr). 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 by mail and e-mail 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 7, 2018, 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 2018 term are subject to academic suspension.

**Summer 2018** – Have you begun to discuss with your student their prospects for summer 2018? 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. [http://bit.ly/2zMSDFH](http://bit.ly/2zMSDFH)
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: [http://bit.ly/2zO8Sm6](http://bit.ly/2zO8Sm6), copayments: [http://bit.ly/2AXzY8j](http://bit.ly/2AXzY8j), deductible: [http://bit.ly/2mCchzl](http://bit.ly/2mCchzl), and coinsurance: [http://bit.ly/2AP2HLF](http://bit.ly/2AP2HLF). 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 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 [http://bit.ly/2zKrx2m](http://bit.ly/2zKrx2m) 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 2017 student health insurance waiver, your student may request enrollment in the WVU Aetna plan effective January 1, 2018, by completing the Spring Enrollment Form [http://bit.ly/2zcMUD6](http://bit.ly/2zcMUD6) by December 31, 2017. 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.

Bookstore Updates

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


- Black Friday (11/24-11/27): 25% off drinkware, select gifts and accessories, blankets/hats, buy-one-get-one at 50% off!

- Cyber Monday (11/27): 30% off Nike, sweats, outerwear and cold weather accessories.

Rental Returns Due by December 13 – Please remind your students to bring back their fall 2017 rental titles to the bookstore they originally rented them from by December 13. (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 4-December 13. 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 textbooks as soon as they register for the spring term? More on online registration integration here: http://bit.ly/2jAnmjc. You can see a video on the topic here: http://bit.ly/2hzGrxC.

Caps and Gowns – Available in store through the morning of Commencement (December 15, 2017) at all locations. We have plenty of stock available for everyone. Pre-ordered caps and gowns will be available for pickup starting December 4.

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 at http://bit.ly/1lRRzze. The WVU Bookstores are proud to give $1.5 million each year to WVU in non-athletic student scholarships.

Sorry, discounts cannot be combined.

CAMPUS REMINDERS

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 online no later than December 8: http://bit.ly/2jEqb2Y. 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 4. Any other updates for Commencement will be posted here (http://bit.ly/2AProrx), including commencement speakers and last-minute updates.

Technology Reminders

Information Technology Services has issued a reminder for students regarding resetting log-in passwords. Please make sure students who will be taking classes during the new winter session December 14-January 4 reset their WVU Login password beforehand. Many passwords will
expire during the winter break, so they can change it in advance to avoid any disruption: http://bit.ly/2hGEzqy.

**Careers: Thanksgiving A Good time to “Talk Turkey” About Summer Plans**

While there is value in letting your student get some shuteye, there are important things to do. Now is the time to check on their progress toward finding a summer internship or full-time job. So, before the tryptophan kicks in, use these handy conversation starters to help your student make the most out of their break:

1. It’s a great time to refresh their resume and update their LinkedIn profile. Think of family, classmates, teachers and professors who might open a few doors.

2. Have your student be prepared to tell family and friends exactly what job/internship they are looking for so they can help. They may know someone to connect them with, or may even know of open positions.

3. A couple days off means the chance to reach out to a family member or friend who works in their desired field. As a parent, you can be a great resource to help your student connect and network.

If your student’s career planning isn’t quite where you’d like it to be — fear not! You have a much longer break coming up in just one month. Our career development specialists are an excellent resource for your student during this process. Encourage them to make an appointment. For more information on how Career Services can help prepare your student for a career, visit: http://bit.ly/1oGa9zh.

**Health Science Student Activity Center now open**

Is your student a Health Science major or have class at the Health Science Center and is looking for a place to hang out, decompress and study between classes? The new HSC Student Activity Center is open for their use and the ribbon cutting ceremony will be held after break: http://bit.ly/2j3oYOu.

/Katie Gallagher and Lisa Hanselman

Office of Parent Relations

West Virginia University