

Parent Electronic News
West Virginia University
December 15, 2016

Final Notice – Spring Bills are due this Monday, December 19. *Payment Tips* follow for those who still need to pay.

****NOTE: All University offices will be closed December 23, 26, 27 and January 2, 2017.****

With finals now complete and residence halls closed for break, we braved single degree temperatures today to send off the Mountaineer Parents Club Holiday Buses with some of the best gifts of all – your students heading home for the holidays! Tomorrow nearly 1,000 seniors will celebrate at Graduation becoming our latest group of WVU alumni. Congrats to these and all of our August and December graduates - and their parents! If you have a student graduating or not returning for the spring and wish to be removed from this listserv, see the *Housekeeping* note below for details.

December 20th, fall grades will be posted on students' STAR accounts, and we hope these add to the holiday spirit in a good way. If so, read about *Good Grades and Goals* below. If not, there are some details about the Mid-Year Academy and other *Considerations for those Struggling Academically* to help freshmen get back on track and about probation/suspension so students can plan accordingly what not to do. Also as the semester ends with bills due and grades out, we have included a reminder on the *Parent/Guest Portal* and how this can be used to view relevant information your student grants you access to including bills and grades to make your life easier with your own online log in. Other important features include the release of dates for *2017 Fall Family Weekend* as well as timely *Bookstore* and *Student Insurance Waiver* reminders among others so read on!

The University Holiday Message this year highlights some “future” Mountaineers who stopped in to help us remember to unleash our inner child this holiday season: <http://bit.ly/2hLscrH>. And with that, from our Mountaineer family to yours, Happy Holidays from WVU! In this edition:

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Fall Family Weekend 2017 Dates Announced

Mark your calendars for Fall Family Weekend 2017. The date has been set for September 22-24, 2017. You will hear lots more about it in the coming months. Mark your calendars and make your hotel reservations today!

Discounted Basketball tickets for Parents Club members

As a reminder, special ticket offers remain available to Mountaineer Parents Club members for two of WVU's Big 12 Conference men's basketball matchups, one WVU women's basketball game.

Men's Basketball: If you are bringing your student back to campus for spring term, the Mountaineer Parents Club discount is available to watch our ranked men's basketball team against TCU on Saturday, January 7 (the day residence hall reopen) at 1 p.m. and Kansas State on Saturday, Feb. 11 at Noon. Upper level sideline tickets (\$20) and upper level baseline tickets (\$17) are available. This represents a savings of \$7 per upper level sideline ticket and \$5 off each upper level baseline ticket.

A Family Day package is also available for the Mountaineers' matchup with TCU on Saturday, January 7. Parents interested in the family day package, which consists of four tickets and a voucher good for \$25 at the Coliseum concession stands for \$70 per package, should log on <http://bit.ly/1BMvB9i> and click the Men's Basketball image.

Women's Basketball: There is also a special offer available for the ranked WVU women's basketball team's nationally televised matchup with the 16th ranked Oklahoma Sooners on Sunday, Jan. 8 at 4 p.m. Tickets for the matchup of nationally-ranked teams are only \$2 each with free print-at home and mobile ticket delivery available as options to receive your tickets.

Parents Club members can take advantage of these special offers by visiting <http://bit.ly/2bR0O5I> and entering the promo code WVUPARENTS. Please note that WVU students can attend men's basketball games for free using students tickets, but will be seated in the Student Section. If you wish for your student to sit with you, you are advised to purchase a ticket for them as well. Students can, however, reserve their own tickets for free noting the following distribution dates for men's basketball: <http://bit.ly/2flrIIB> via the online student ticketing system: <http://bit.ly/2gdLBAp>.

Parents Club Question of the Month Results

We have already heard from many of you but if you haven't yet, please take a moment to answer the December Question of the Month: "Have you filed the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) form yet for the 2017 – 18 academic year" (<http://bit.ly/2hpNTwo>.)

For those who responded to last month's question: "How much spending money do you give your students each month (including Mountie Bounty)," the results are in! As might be expected, the results ranged heavily. 20% indicated that your students are on their own entirely financially. Though many parents are surprised to hear this, a sizeable portion of our students do work student jobs and pay their own way. The next largest portion, 40%, noted they send roughly \$50-100 a month while the remaining 40% send \$150-\$200 or more. If you are currently just sending cash, you might consider Mountie Bounty as a safe alternative:

Mountie Bounty is one feature of a student's Mountaineer ID Card. This feature operates like a debit plan and allows you to put money on your student's Mountaineer Card for later use. The service is a secure way to give student's money -- which can be added to the card at any time at WVU or from home. There are no setup fees, and no minimum balances are required. The card is swiped, the account number on the card's magnetic stripe is read and the purchase amount is deducted from the balance in a pre-paid account. Balances are carried forward each year, but be sure to check the debit regulations for details. Mountie Bounty is accepted at both on and off campus locations. For more information and a list of area establishments that accept Mountie Bounty, follow this link <http://bit.ly/2f2LKXR>.

Payment Tips

If your student still hasn't paid their spring bill, the rush is on! Bills must be paid or students enrolled in a monthly payment plan by Monday, December 19. Let's face it. Paying bills isn't typically fun and waiting until close to the deadline can mean longer wait times. That said, when you call or log on we went to provide you with the best experience we can. Here are a few helpful hints from our frontline staff at the Mountaineer HUB to help you through the process in the most expeditious and friendly way possible:

1. If your student hasn't registered for spring, now is the time to do it. Spring bills will not be correct until they have finalized their registration. Check with your student and have them talk to advisor as soon as possible to assure they are fully registered.
2. Paying online is the quickest and easiest for either you or your student:

Students

- a. Log in to WVU Portal: <http://bit.ly/1m8XLtH>.
- b. Click "Pay Your Bill" under MIX Email
- c. Select "Spring 2017", click "Submit"
- d. Scroll to bottom for "Pay Now"

Parents

- a. Log into Parent/Guest Portal, if granted access by your student:
<http://bit.ly/119XiAm>.
 - b. Click tab for your student's name.
 - c. Click link for Electronic Bill/Make Payment.
 - d. Select "Spring 2017", click "Submit"
 - e. Scroll to bottom for "Pay Now"
 - f. If necessary, you can also do a "print screen" from this page if a printed copy of the bill is needed for Smart 529 plans.
3. Though credit card transactions do have a processing fee, you can pay online with an e-check with no processing fee: <http://bit.ly/22NHrQ3>.
 4. You can enroll in a payment plan to spread the payment out of several months:
<http://bit.ly/1ObxwPJ>.
 5. At peak times (this means now until Monday!) the online systems may run slower than normal. Try logging on early or late in the day.
 6. Phone lines will be busy for the next few days so if you need to call in, please be patient with reps! We are doing our best to service everyone as quickly and efficiently as possible!
 7. 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 assure we are discussing matters with the appropriate person as designated by your student.
 8. If they have not yet, have them set up this Parent/Guest Portal access and at the same time a Parent/Guest Passphrase for you for your own easy online and call-in access:
<http://bit.ly/119XiAm>. (This takes three steps: 1. Designate who gets access, 2. What access each person gets, 3. Set a unique passphrase for you to use when calling in on their behalf.)
 9. If not returning for spring term, students should be sure to withdraw from any classes to avoid tuition and fee charges. Students should also notify Dining and Housing if they are not returning to void charges: <http://bit.ly/2h5zdjj>

The Mountaineer Hub will be open during the Winter Recess from 8:15 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. on December 16-22 and on December 28-30. NOTE: All University offices will be closed December 23, 26, 27 and January 2, 2017.

Student Insurance waiver

Tomorrow, December 16, 2016, is the deadline to opt out of the student health insurance plan for the spring term! Please note, if your student has an approved waiver on file for Fall 2016, they have opted out of the Aetna plan for the entire 2016-2017 academic year and do not need to complete the Spring waiver. Did your student miss the insurance waiver deadline for the Fall semester, or will your student be a new student beginning in the Spring of 2017? If your student does not have an approved student insurance waiver on file for the 2016-2017 academic year and already has adequate health insurance, then you may opt-out of the Aetna student health insurance plan for the spring term by completing the online student health insurance waiver application when it opens. **Eligible students who do not have an approved waiver on file for the 2016-2017 academic year by the December 16th deadline will be automatically enrolled in the Aetna student health insurance plan at a cost of \$791 per semester, assessed to the student account.** Visit the Student Insurance Office website at <http://bit.ly/119XdfW> to complete the waiver application or for additional information about the student health insurance requirement and the Aetna student health insurance plan. Contact the WVU Student Insurance Office at sio@mail.wvu.edu or 304-293-6815 with questions.

December Bookstore Updates

- *Last minute Holiday shopping?* - submit your order through <http://bit.ly/1SQRqfD> by 12/19 to have it delivered in time for Christmas!
- *Rental Books Returns Past due* – Fall rentals were due back to the store they were originally rented from by 12/14. If your son or daughter has forgotten, please email the Bookstore at sm583@bncollege.com for directions on how to resolve this matter.
- *Graduation Cap & Gowns* for graduates can be purchased as full sets for Bachelors, Masters, PhD, or in individual pieces through 12/16 (Commencement Day)
- ****Spring Semester textbooks - Financial Aid option****- Students can submit their order online until Dec. 27th (at 11:59 p.m.) Click <http://bit.ly/2gQbLc0>, and follow directions under "Registration Integration." The first step is for your son or daughter to log onto STAR <http://bit.ly/2hzeYOp>. To prevent delays or cancellation of the order, students need to use their nine-digit WVU ID (beginning with 80 or 70) and enter their student name exactly as it appears on STAR when they create their account. If you have any questions, please contact us. We are happy to help! FAQ about financial aid - bookreserve@mail.wvu.edu, Questions about your book order(s) - wvubookseller@gmail.com.

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, & more, sign up at <http://bit.ly/2f2JT55>. Shop with confidence and trust as the WVU Bookstores are proud to give \$1.5 million each year to West Virginia University in the form of non-athletic student scholarships.* Sorry, discounts cannot be combined.

ACADEMICS AND FINAL GRADES

Good Grades and Goals!

With finals now complete, it is important to know that faculty will be finalizing and entering grades over the next few days. Grades should be officially posted by next Tuesday, December 20 for students to review through their MIX/STAR Accounts. Parents, read the section below for info about the Parent/Guest Portal parent access, if granted. For those who did well, here are some continued goals to shoot for and considerations as they look ahead!

Dean's and President's Lists - For those who achieved high grades we will release the online Dean's and President's lists in the early spring of the year (January/February.) Dean's Lists highlight undergraduate students who earned a 3.5 grade point average or higher and the President's List recognizes undergraduate students who achieved a perfect 4.0 grade point average for the term. In addition to obtaining the needed 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: <http://bit.ly/29wxWRp>.

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 with a 3.4 and higher: <http://bit.ly/2dtB6av>. These can be good goals for students to work toward to help students to stay focused and on track – and a nice addition to a transcript and diploma at the end!

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 often help students get back on track, get ahead or perhaps provide time to focus solely on a difficult class: <http://bit.ly/1yHNGni>.
- Education/Study Abroad options might be worth considering to broaden your plan of study. WVU offers opportunities that take place over spring break, in the summer or over a fall/spring term: <http://bit.ly/2hATb6C>.
- If graduate school is in your future, Undergraduate Research opportunities are also something students may consider over the upcoming semesters or summer to enhance that resume: <http://bit.ly/2hLrb2S>.
- Adventure Trips are offered through the Outdoor Rec Center including weekend getaways throughout the spring and spring break and summer options with some offering class credit. These provide both domestic programs: <http://bit.ly/2ckdgNO> and Adventure International opportunities: <http://bit.ly/2hzdHXE>.

- Once students return, many spring career fairs are planned so encourage them to plan to check these out to explore summer internships, co-op programs or long-term hire possibilities.
- GPA Calculation Planning – DegreeWorks offers help projecting what students need to meet a certain GPA with various GPA Calculation tools: <http://bit.ly/1tnqyeO>. For instance, if a student needs to have an cumulative 3.0 GPA at the end of the spring to maintain their scholarship or stay on course for Latin Honors, these tools can help them to determine how many hours and what GPA they need in an upcoming semester to reach that cumulative GPA.

Considerations for those struggling academically

As the semester ends, if final grades do not bring tidings of glad joy, we encourage you to talk with your student about his or her academic performance and their plans for the upcoming semesters. Below, we highlight information about Academic Probation and the Mid-Year Academy to help students understand their position and 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 **required** to attend the Mid-Year Academy on **Sunday, January 8th**.

Mid-Year Academy – During the Mid-Year Academy on Sunday, January 8, students placed on academic probation will meet with advisors 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 **required** for those on academic probation.

Academic Suspension – The standards used to determine a student’s eligibility for suspension are based on overall GPA in relation to credit hours attempted. Credit hours attempted include all credits included on the student’s WVU transcript (regardless of where or how completed, and including credits with grades of F). If placed on suspension, students are required to sit out for a period of a semester or more depending on the suspension terms. Students whose GPAs fall below the following requirements are eligible for suspension from the University in May: <http://bit.ly/2gGyaoL>.

What can they do now? – Before attending the Mid-Year Academy, January 8, there are a number of resources students can explore from home that can help them begin to plan for their particular circumstance:

- Check out the WVU Catalog – This offers some guidance on grades and D/F Repeat policies among others that will also be covered at the Mid-Year Academy: <http://bit.ly/1GBp3jz>.

- Major Change – If they are considering a change of major, they can review DegreeWorks to use the “What If” feature. This allows students to explore how changing a major might impact their path to graduation and what coursework it might require in relation to what they have already completed.
- GPA Calculation Planning – DegreeWorks also offers help projecting what they need to meet a certain GPA with the various GPA Calculation tools: <http://bit.ly/1tnqyeO>. For instance, if a student needs to have a certain cumulative GPA at the end of spring to maintain their scholarship or avoid suspension, these tools can help them to determine how many hours and what GPA they need in an upcoming semester to reach that cumulative GPA.
- Summer classes are posted now and can often help students get back on track, get ahead or perhaps provide time to focus solely on a difficult class: <http://bit.ly/1yHNGni>.
- 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 December 23-27 and January 2 and some staff also 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*): <http://bit.ly/1EcgSa5>. Keep in mind that students have the chance to finalize adjusting their spring schedules from now until the end of the first week of the semester (Friday, January 13) that is referred to as Add/Drop Week.
- Finally, if your student has not registered for classes, be sure your student completes course registration before the start of the new semester!

Parent/Guest Portal Reminders

The Parent/Guest Portal allows students to grant parents or guests direct online access to relevant student record information including final grades, financial aid, and student account/billing information. Access to these records is protected under the Family Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) <http://bit.ly/2ckbyfw> meaning students must grant parents and guests access directly to share access to their records or allow you to call in on their behalf. Information is only able to be shared once access is granted by a student and can be revoked by students at any time. Students who wish to grant this access should log on to their STAR account and designate what access they wish to grant to whom, the term of that access, and a FERPA pass phrase that will be used to authenticate the identity of a designee, should he or she need to call a relevant University office regarding a record. Once completed, an e-mail will be sent to the parent/guest designee with instructions to set up the guest account. For step-by-step instructions, FAQs, and tutorials, go to: <http://bit.ly/JLwcnr>. This access covers the majority of typical student service areas where parent/guest access might be needed. However, this does not cover access to areas where student interaction should be the primary means of contact, such as faculty access.

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

With Commencement and the end of the semester upon us, 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:

Reason for Leaving:

Other Comments/Farewell Messages/What their next chapter entails (employment, transferring, grad school, etc.):

/Katie Gallagher and Lisa Hanselman

Office of Parent Relations

West Virginia University