Spring Forward….

FOCUS ON FINANCIAL AID

It is FAFSA time. Although many families completed the FAFSA/financial aid documents last year, you need to be aware that it is an annual process that must be refilled every year that your student is in college. Although the deadline is June 1st, most families try to have all the necessary forms filed during March. That often means filing your 2013 tax return before the April 15th deadline so that you have the applicable figures to complete the FAFSA.

Financial aid programs, including TOPS and Perkins loans, have academic indexes or benchmarks that students must achieve and maintain in order to remain qualified. These requirements are referred to as Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) and students who fail to achieve the minimum standards for Grade Point Average (GPA) and completion of classes could lose their eligibility for all types of federal and state aid. Listed below are the SAP requirements.

For more information check the UL Office of Financial Aid website or see: http://financialaid.louisiana.edu/content/contact-us

Completion Rate
Students must complete at least 67% of all registered hours with a 2.0 semester GPA, regardless of whether or not financial aid was received. Grades of W, F, FN, FS, WX, WM, U or I are not considered adequate grades for completion.

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It’s Festival Time!

After what turned out to be a truly chilly Louisiana winter, it’s time to shake off the winter blues and join the fun of festival season. It’s hard to choose among all the options! The season is already underway.

First, the UL College of Arts is presenting their annual Festival of the Arts. Partnering with the Acadiana Center for the Arts and Art Tech Fusion 14, this three-week festival is underway and includes activities and presentations of both visual and performing arts. Highlights include, The Cherry Orchard, a play by Anton Checkov and the Johann Strauss opera, Die Fledermaus, as well as a fashion show, design workshops and even a crawfish boil. For the full schedule see: http://arts.louisiana.edu/2014/02/05/festival-of-the-arts-schedule-2014/

The City of Lafayette is home to a world-famous international festival, the Festival International de Louisiane. In its 28th year, the festival will be held April 23-27 at stages throughout the city of Lafayette and will feature over 100 performances by the likes of the Funky Meters, Sierra Leone’s Refugee All-Stars, Steve Riley and the Mamou Playboys and much more! Plus there is no admission charge. It is a great event for the whole family! To plan your visit see: https://www.festivalinternational.com/site.php

Whatever your interests or culinary tastes there is sure to be a nearby festival for you! Consult the Louisiana Festival website at: http://www.louisianatravel.com/events

Set Sail for Study Abroad

Having the opportunity to study abroad can be transformative! In addition to building confidence and global competence, students who have international experience are considered to be more valuable to almost any potential employer as our world becomes more globally interconnected.

It’s not too early to discuss study abroad options with your first-year students. Although most students do not actually enroll in a study abroad program until later in their academic career, the time is now to start thinking about locations, costs and options.

Typically students enroll for 3-9 credits and live/study abroad for one semester or during the summer. UL host programs in Costa Rica, England, France, Italy and West Africa to name a few. Other programs include innovative options such as domestic “study abroad” programs, like History on the Move.

Did you know that financial aid packages, including TOPS, may be able to be applied to study abroad, making this an affordable option for many. So have your student check out study abroad interest sessions held on campus or contact the Study Abroad Office in 437 Griffin Hall or by email at studyabroad@louisiana.edu.

Bon Voyage!
Cont. from p.1—Focus on Financial Aid

Key TOPS Facts:

- By the end of the first fall and spring semesters, freshmen must have completed 24 credit hours. If 24 hours have not been completed, students must complete these hours during the summer semester to retain their eligibility. (Note that students can not use TOPS money to cover summer tuition during the first year.)

- A student who does not enroll full-time, remain continuously enrolled or does not earn 24 credits will have his/her TOPS award permanently cancelled.

- By the end of the first academic year, students must achieve a minimum GPA in order to remain TOPS eligible. (TOPS Opportunity = 2.3, TOPS Performance/Honors = 3.0) After the first year, GPA requirements are higher.

- If a student fails to meet the TOPS Performance/Honors GPA they will drop down to the TOPS Opportunity Award, if they earn the minimum GPA for that award. These students can never regain the TOPS Performance or Honors stipends.

Financial Aid Suspension

If placed on Financial Aid Suspension, students have two options:

1. Attend Without Financial Aid: Pay for tuition on your own with a minimum of six hours in fall or spring semesters or three hours in the summer term, earn 2.00 GPA and complete at least 67% of registered courses. If you have exceeded your maximum hours you cannot regain your eligibility with this option.

2. Appeal: In order to be eligible to appeal, you must be enrolled at least half-time for the semester you are appealing, have a current FAFSA and you must not have any holds that prevent course registration.

Financial Aid Appeals

You can appeal your financial aid suspension. You must:

- Be enrolled at least half-time.
- Have a FAFSA on file.

Use your online account through ULink.

- Include the circumstances that led to your inability to meet the minimum requirements and what action you plan to take to meet SAP standards. Provide supporting documents and an Academic Plan that will ensure you are able to meet SAP standards.

For more information check the UL Office of Financial Aid website or see: [http://financialaid.louisiana.edu/content/contact-us](http://financialaid.louisiana.edu/content/contact-us)

New Student Union Facility for 2014

Construction on the new University of Louisiana at Lafayette Student Union is unfolding on schedule, with work expected to be completed by the end of the year. The project involves new construction and the renovation of University bookstore, the main ballroom and Bayou Bijou theater.

Once finished, the new facility will have about 178,000 square feet, or 55,000 square feet more than the former structure.

The new two-story building will be fronted with brick arches outside the main entrance, which faces McKinley Street. It will house Canebrake Cafeteria, meeting and conference rooms, offices, a post office and a coffee shop.
UL Lafayette Students Take the Lead!

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette is helping students learn about leadership by offering a new academic minor.

The leadership minor, which will be available for the Spring 2014 semester, includes two required courses: “Leadership Communication” and “Professional Ethics,” a philosophy course. To complete the additional 12 academic hours required for the new minor, students may choose from electives in disciplines such as communication, management, educational foundations and leadership, philosophy, sociology, psychology and political science.

UL Lafayette students may choose from 90 minors. They select a minor area of concentration with help from their academic advisors. While many curriculums require a minor, some students may choose to enroll in a minor simply to learn more about an area of personal interest.

Ashley Mudd, a former Student Government Association president, helped create the 18-hour concentration in leadership, said Dr. Jordan Kellman, an associate professor of history and dean of the College of Liberal Arts. "We wanted to create an interdisciplinary program that would focus on developing well-rounded students who are able to effectively communicate," said Mudd.

Kellman said students may also select a minor to complement their career aims. "Students are more and more interested in minors as the job market becomes more competitive. They see having a minor as a leg up in the job market. It’s an important feature of their résumé and they feel it’s an advantage in a large pool of job applicants.”