



## From the Desk of the Executive Director



Dr. Sujuan Boutté

“There will be very few occasions when you are absolutely certain about anything. You will consistently be called upon to make decisions with limited information. That being the case, your goal should not be to eliminate uncertainty. Instead, you must develop the art of being clear in the face of uncertainty.” ~ *Andy Stanley*

I feel pretty confident that most of us can identify with Stanley’s thoughts. Policy makers have questions, parents have questions and most importantly students have questions. Providing clarity in the midst of all the uncertainty is and will be a team effort. We are committed to keeping students, parents and families informed but most of all we are committed to keeping students, parents and families encouraged.

A consistent message based upon the information we currently have available is key. Therefore, we are sharing the message we are providing with you so that you may share it with others.

### **What can parents and students do right now?**

- File the FAFSA or Renewal FAFSA
- Continue to study and position yourself to obtain eligibility or maintain eligibility
- Follow the legislative process and LOSFA on Social Media for the latest information and updates

### **What is the situation with TOPS right now?**

- TOPS is a nearly \$300 million a year program, fully funded.
- Right now, approximately \$110 million in funding is proposed for TOPS next year. That is made up of \$60.2 million in tobacco settlement funding and an additional \$50 million in funding the governor is proposing.
- That leaves TOPS roughly \$187 million short of its full funding next year.
- It is uncertain at this point whether the remaining \$187 million shortage of TOPS funding will be restored. Until then, it is important that all students seeking TOPS awards do everything they can to be ready to accept TOPS funds.

### **How many students will be funded for the 2016-17 academic year?**

- The number of students who will receive TOPS Awards next year will not be determined until eligibility is determined and elimination provisions are implemented, based on the dollars appropriated. Funding is contingent upon appropriation.
- Currently, when there is a budget shortage, TOPS awards are eliminated beginning with students who earn lower ACT scores (and inside each ACT score band, beginning with the students who have the highest expected family contribution, in \$1000 increments, through those with the lowest expected family contribution) and moving up through each ACT score band until the funding level has been reached.

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- The numbers we are reporting that show 17,297 students with ACT scores of 25 and the lowest Expected Family Contribution (EFC) levels and those with ACT scores of 26 and above receiving TOPS is only an ESTIMATE based upon current recipients at this time. The actual number of total students eligible for TOPS next year remains a moving target as more 2016 high school graduates with higher ACT scores become eligible and other existing higher ACT-scoring TOPS recipients leave the system, etc. So, funding for awards remains contingent on how much the legislature appropriates to TOPS at the time that the state budget is passed and actually funded.
- Also, Governor Edwards is supporting legislation currently being considered that would spread TOPS dollars so that, when cuts are made, all qualified recipients would receive some TOPS tuition support. The current law requires cuts to be made in an “all or nothing” fashion, eliminating awards completely for students with lower ACT scores.
- Call 800-259-5626 or Email [custserv@la.gov](mailto:custserv@la.gov) for assistance.
- Approximately 10 days after you have filed your FAFSA, create a Louisiana Award System Account at [https://www.osfa.la.gov/AwardSystem/faces/jsf/student/new\\_student.jspx](https://www.osfa.la.gov/AwardSystem/faces/jsf/student/new_student.jspx). You must enter a phone number and an email address in order to receive important notifications.
- Get latest LOSFA updates via Twitter, Facebook and <http://www.osfa.la.gov/>
- Study hard to raise your GPA.
- Legislators are working hard to secure additional funding.

### ***Are there any other scholarships, grants or loans available?***

### ***What do students/parents need to do in the meantime?***

- File the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) immediately. You may access the FAFSA at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov)
- **The deadline to file a FAFSA or Renewal FAFSA to be considered for funding in the 2016-2017 academic year is July 1, 2016. This includes first-time and continuing students.**
- By completing and filing the FAFSA, you will be considered for the following:
  - Federal Pell Grants
  - Federal Work Study opportunities
  - Low-interest federal student loans
  - TOPS
  - Louisiana Go Grant
  - Institution-based scholarships and grants
- Go to <http://www.osfa.la.gov/index.jsp?SRC=/scholseach.htm>, click on “Scholarship Searches” near the bottom of the menu on the left side of the homepage. Click on any of the links listed and follow the instructions to search hundreds of private scholarships.
- Check to see if your parents’ employers, various churches, civic and/or social organizations offer academic scholarships.



**Families receive assistance filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) during Louisiana College Goal Sunday. LOSFA encourages all Louisiana students to complete the FAFSA or Renewal FAFSA before July 1, 2016.**

## Meet LOSFA's Newest Employees

LOSFA's three newest employees, Tyana Daquano and Brandi Morrison in the Public Information and Communications division and Joanna Brumfield in the Scholarships and Grants division.

Mrs. Brumfield is actually returning home to LOSFA as she was employed in the Loan Division from 1997 until early 2012. "I'm happy to be back," she said. "LOSFA will always hold a special place in my heart because it is home for me, so my decision to return was very easy," she continued. "I love helping people, so my current position as a Student Financial Aid Specialist in the Special Programs section of the Scholarship and Grant division allows me that opportunity," she concluded. Joanna and her husband Vincent have two sons, Israel and Isaac Brumfield.

LOSFA Public Information Officer Brandi Morrison is a University of New Orleans graduate with a BA in Drama/Communications. Prior to joining LOSFA, Brandi gained extensive experience in customer service, non-profit income development and volunteer management. She will put those skills to use for LOSFA by creating and strengthening cooperative partnerships with postsecondary institutions, community and faith based organizations and the business sector to promote and support LOSFA events and initiatives.

"Getting to meet and work with some of the high school students and parents at LOSFA events and conferences has been a wonderful experience," Brandi said. "It's a great feeling to know that you've helped them to be more prepared for college and life in general," she



**LOSFA newest staff members from left to right: Brandi Morrison, Tyana Daquano and Joanna Brumfield.**

added. Brandi also enjoys reading, outdoor activities and competition.

Mrs. Daquano joined LOSFA as a Public Information Officer. If she looks familiar, it's probably because you've been watching her as an on-air reporter and weekend anchor on WAFB-TV in Baton Rouge for the past nine years. She previously served in a similar capacity at KALB-TV in Alexandria. "This is the first job in 11 years where I'm not in front of a camera every day delivering the news," Tyana said. "It's also a little different not working with my spouse," she added. "I started covering education in my first TV job, so being hired by LOSFA is like a very organic switch," she continued. "Now we don't just give information on how to prepare for college/career and how to pay for it, we're here to make sure our students turn their dreams into reality," she concluded.

Tyana graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University. She and her husband Derron (a photographer at WAFB-TV) have one son, Jaelen, who is eleven months old.

## Jameyson and Paul Recognized

At the March meeting of the Louisiana Student Financial Assistance Commission (LASFAC) and the Louisiana Tuition Trust Authority (LATTA), LOSFA Executive Director, Dr. Sujuan Boutté recognized and awarded certificates to two staff members, Ms. Deborah Paul and Ms. Teri Jameyson, for their work on the State Combined Charitable Campaign (SCCC) for 2015. Ms. Paul commented that the work for the SCCC is part of a team effort and that besides herself and her co-chair Ms. Jameyson, Ms. Shenell Livous, Ms. Bonnie Ghassemi and Ms. Rosemary Moses helped contribute toward the creative ideas and activities of the campaign. Ms. Paul stated that the money collected goes to several non-profit organizations around the State. She also stated that the campaign has moved from just the local nine parish area to statewide. Ms. Jameyson commented that she has enjoyed working with the committee for the past three years and it has been a lot of fun. She added that a lot of good work is done with the funds that are collected. LOSFA raised more than \$9,000 in 2015.



**Left to right: Terri Jameyson, Dr. Sujuan Boutté and Deborah Paul. Jameyson and Paul were recognized for their work with State Combined Charitable Campaign.**

## Community Partnerships Lead to Student Success

One way to explain LOSFA's work is through the African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child." LOSFA has joined with Louisiana communities to provide and promote college access to students.

LOSFA's partnership with St. Helena College and Career Academy (SHCCA) as well as the Community of St. Helena has led to many students achieving their postsecondary goals.

St. Helena College Career Academy principal, Reginald Douglas, truly appreciates the partnership his school has with LOSFA.

"LOSFA has been a blessing to the students at SHCCA," Douglas said. "This school year our students'

achievement has shown great improvement. LOSFA has been an important part of this success."

LOSFA Program Coordinator Khristopher Hobbs not only works directly with this school, but also with the community of St. Helena by sitting on St. Helena's Community Advisory Board.

"St. Helena College and Career Academy is so much more than just another school," Hobbs said. "Since the first time I arrived on their campus, everyone, especially Mr. Reginald Douglas, the principal, Mrs. LaTia Brown, college and career coach, and the amazing students, treated me like I was family. The SHCCA family literally opened their doors to all LOSFA has to offer. I have had

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## Community Partnerships Lead to Student Success *(continued)*

**Left to right: Samp's Taylor, a SHCCA senior, poses with his mentor, Khristopher Hobbs. With the help of LOSFA Services and Hobbs, Taylor has been accepted into two colleges.**



the privilege to serve at many high schools, but few compare to this one! They're truly doing a lot of great things in and out of the classroom. I am thankful to be their program coordinator and look forward to what is to come."

LOSFA provides the school with a range of services including: college access events, a Louisiana college application month event, ACT Prep, FAFSA completion, campus field trips, academic tutoring, mentoring and positive behavior support.

"Because of the partnership with LOSFA, our students were able to visit several universities," Douglas said. "LOSFA also provided our seniors the opportunity to have an ACT Boot Camp. This helped our students to achieve record ACT scores."

The high school's college and career coach, LaTia Brown, said the school's partnership with LOSFA has provided their students with new opportunities.

"Partnering with LOSFA has helped inform our students about the importance of being financially responsible," Brown said. "The students at SHCCA are always well informed and motivated after participating in a LOSFA event or mentoring session. Our motto at SHCCA is 'If better is possible; good is not enough.' With the help of LOSFA, our students understand that better is possible in their post-secondary choices."

Samp's Taylor, a senior at SHCCA, is one of the many students supported by LOSFA's services. He applied to colleges during LOSFA's Louisiana College Application Month (LCAM) event and has been accepted into two of them so far.

Hobbs has served as Taylor's mentor this academic school year.

"He's someone I can count on every day," Taylor said. "My family didn't have that real college experience. A lot of times they don't know how to help. He provides me with the help that I need. He knows exactly where to go and what to do."

Taylor said LOSFA stands out among the rest in regards to supporting students throughout their journey to postsecondary success.

"I like how LOSFA does what they say they are going to do," Taylor said. "The whole staff is on the same page to help students be successful in life."

# LOSFA's Social Media Sites



<http://www.facebook.com/LOSFA>



<http://www.twitter.com/LOSFA>



<http://www.youtube.com/LOSFA1000>



<http://instagram.com/LOSFA001>



For more information, contact the  
Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance:

By Phone: 800-259-5626

By E-mail: [custserv@la.gov](mailto:custserv@la.gov)

By Mail: P.O. Box 91202, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-9202

Web Address: [www.osfa.la.gov](http://www.osfa.la.gov)

For submissions, opinions, or comments for the LOSFA LOOP,  
please contact Gus Wales at [Gus.Wales@la.gov](mailto:Gus.Wales@la.gov).