

## From the Desk of the Executive Director



Melanie Amrhein

Happy New Year! If you are reading this, that means the Mayans got it wrong and we are still here to celebrate the beginning of 2013. Even though 2012 ended in tragedy with the loss of 26 young lives at a Connecticut school, we hope that changes will bring about some positive outcomes to protect our citizens from future senseless violence. As with all new years, we begin with hope and determination that this will be a good - no, a great year. As we return to our jobs now, we do so with plans for success and dreams of achievement for ourselves, our staffs and the students/families we serve. It is certain that daunting challenges await us, but the optimism that comes with a new year hopefully will last longer than January and some of our resolutions may actually become reality (mine is to finally clean off the top of my desk!) We owe it to ourselves to believe that we can make a difference.

LOSFA eagerly looks forward to what's in store for 2013. We are already working on new material for our Financial Literacy for You (FLY) team and preparing for College Goal Sunday (February 24). In addition, we are very excited about expanding services through our Louisiana Connect College Access Portal. The account activation over the last few months has eclipsed that of other states using the same platform by 5 times, and we are hopeful that by February, we will have the majority of our public high school students with

activated accounts. We announced the TOPS Tracker deployment in Louisiana Connect last month and believe that it will be a primary driver for student usage. We continue to urge and encourage our postsecondary partners to utilize Louisiana Connect to message students via Student Recruit to amp up your recruiting efforts. We have recently teamed up with the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council to pair up Louisiana Connect with Louisiana Star Jobs ([www.laworks.net](http://www.laworks.net)) to reach middle and high school students at all levels of achievement to prepare for and engage in great Louisiana jobs and careers. As the year progresses we will be engaged in other new initiatives with Board of Regents, LA GEAR UP and Louisiana Workforce Commission so stay tuned, there's lot's to come!

Now let me see if I can find the top of my desk!

- Melanie



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## February 24 is College Goal Sunday in Louisiana

Louisiana's sixth annual College Goal Sunday will be held on February 24, 2013, from 2-4 p.m. at thirteen locations around the state. The purpose of College Goal Sunday is to provide students and their families with free professional assistance in completing the primary student financial aid form, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Completing the FAFSA is the first step to take in order to receive most forms of federal student aid including Pell grants, low-interest federal student loans and to participate in the federal Work Study program. In addition, several state student financial aid programs, including the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) scholarship program and the Louisiana Go Grant need-based aid program, require completion of the FAFSA in order to qualify and access funds.

College Goal Sunday is a national program designed to help students navigate the paperwork barriers that stand between them and the money they need to attend college. Completing the form correctly with detailed income, tax and other information can be a difficult task. On College Goal Sunday, financial aid professionals from Louisiana colleges and universities will be on hand to provide free line-by-line assistance.

As an added bonus for participants, education scholarship funds have been donated to further aid in the funding of a student's education. Louisiana College Goal Sunday participants can submit their names for a drawing that will award one such scholarship per location.

Anyone, from a soon-to-be high school graduate to a returning adult student, who is planning to attend any post secondary institution that participates in the Federal Title IV Aid programs during the 2013-2014 academic year can benefit from attendance. This includes public, private, technical, community, proprietary and career colleges.

Pre-registration for the event is encouraged to ensure that each site has the resources needed to assist all participants. To do so, log on to <http://www.osfa.la.gov/CollegeGoalSunday.shtml>, anytime after January 18, 2013. The Web site will also provide detailed information including specific records and documentation that participants will need to bring to the event.

College Goal Sunday Louisiana is sponsored by the Louisiana Association of Financial Aid Administrators (LASFAA) and the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) with assistance from the Louisiana Gear-Up and Trio programs and the Louisiana Department of Education.

For more information, visit [www.osfa.la.gov](http://www.osfa.la.gov) or contact the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance at (225) 219-1012 or (800) 259-5626 or by e-mail at [custserv@la.us](mailto:custserv@la.us).



### College Goal Sunday site locations:

<b>Louisiana State University-Alexandria</b> Brumfield Caffey Ballroom First Floor Student Center Alexandria, LA 71302	<b>SOWELA Technical Community College</b> Location TBD
<b>Baton Rouge Community College</b> Location TBD	<b>Lutcher High School</b> Auditorium Lutcher, LA 70071
<b>Southern University</b> Location TBD	<b>Louisiana Delta Community College</b> Monroe Campus - 7500 Millhaven Road Louisiana Purchase Building, third floor Room 310 Monroe, LA 71201
<b>Bossier Parish Community College</b> Building D, Room 215 Bossier City, LA 71111	<b>Delgado Community College - West Bank Campus</b> Location TBD
<b>Southeastern Louisiana University</b> Fayard Hall - Main Lobby Hammond, LA 70402	<b>Dillard University</b> DUICEF HALL, Room 106 New Orleans, LA 70122
<b>Fletcher Technical Community College</b> Main Campus (1407 Hwy. 311) Room 104 Schriever, LA 70395	<b>Xavier University</b> University Center McCaffrey Ballroom on Drexel Dr. New Orleans, LA 70125
<b>University of Louisiana at Lafayette</b> Moody Hall, Room 103 Lafayette, LA 70504	

## Go Grant Billing Update

All Fall Go Grant billing deadlines have passed and the Fall Go Grant billing process is complete. No additional Fall billings will be accepted without approval from the Board of Regents.

As of mid December, Go Grant payments total \$11,750,362 leaving a Go Grant program balance of \$14,414,359 for Winter and Spring awards.

Schools may begin billing for Spring 2013 after the conclusion of the 14th class day at semester schools (10th class day at term schools).

### Spring billing deadlines:

**March 24 – Billing Deadline**

**April 11 – Billing Correction Deadline**

As always, if a billing deadline falls on a weekend (or holiday), the deadline is the next business day. For 2013, the Go Grant billing deadline will be Monday, March 25.



After the conclusion of the spring billing deadline, unused funds will be reallocated. Reallocations will be made to institutions to award students enrolled in the fall and continued to spring or enrolled in the spring who were eligible for but did not receive a Go Grant because the institution used its full annual allocation.

Should you have questions or need assistance with Go Grant, contact Erica Hughes at 225-219-7707 or [Erica.Hughes@la.gov](mailto:Erica.Hughes@la.gov).

## TOPS Tech Early Start Program Update

Due to the elimination of the Louisiana Early Start Program, enrollment in TOPS Tech Early Start increased significantly during Fall 2012. For academic year 2011-2012, TOPS Tech Early Start payments totaling \$86,000 were made to 12 schools on behalf of 428 students. During Fall 2012 alone, payments totaling \$483,350 have been made to 24 schools for enrollment of 2,697 students.

Students attending a Louisiana Public high school who wish to concurrently enroll in a vocational course of study leading to an industry-based certification may qualify to participate in the TOPS Tech Early Start program.

TOPS Tech Early Start provides up to \$600 per academic year for eligible 11th or 12th grade students to enroll for up to six credit hours per semester at a Public college in a vocational course of study leading to an industry-based certification in a Top Demand Occupation.

The qualifying Top Demand Occupations are defined by the Board of Regents and consist of 27 different occupation areas including Horticulture, Data Processing, Culinary Arts, Plumbing, Practical Nursing and Hospitality Administration. Historically, the top three most enrolled areas are Practical Nursing, Business Operations, and Precision Metal Working. Visit LOSFA's website at [www.osfa.la.gov](http://www.osfa.la.gov) for a complete list of qualifying Top Demand Occupations.

Listed below are the student initial eligibility and renewal requirements:

### Initial Eligibility Requirements:

- Be in "Good Standing" as an 11th or 12th grade student in a Louisiana Public high school. ("Good Standing" is defined by the student's high school)
- Achieve a cumulative GPA of 2.00 on a 4.00 scale (on all courses attempted)
- Score at least a 15 on the English and mathematics subsection of the ACT Plan Assessment
- Must have an approved 5-Year Education and Career Plan

### Renewal Requirements:

- Remain in "Good Standing" as an 11th or 12th grade student as verified by the high school
- Maintain 2.00 on a 4.00 scale on all high school courses attempted
- Remain in "Good Standing" as determined and verified by the public college attended
- Achieve a college cumulative GPA of 2.50 on a 4.00 scale by the end of the spring term; maintain steady academic progress at the end of all other terms (2.00 cumulative GPA)

Should you have questions or need assistance with TOPS Tech Early Start, contact Caleshia Clark at 225-219-7708 or [Caleshia.Clark@la.gov](mailto:Caleshia.Clark@la.gov).

## LOSFA's Social Media Sites



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



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



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



[www.Flickr.com/LOSFA](http://www.Flickr.com/LOSFA)



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 LOSFA LOOP, please  
contact Gus Wales at [Gus.Wales@la.gov](mailto:Gus.Wales@la.gov).