



From the Desk of the Executive Director



"Ask yourself if what you are doing today gets you closer to where you want to be tomorrow."

Sheldon Lewis

Dr. Sujuan Boutté Although the words of Sheldon Lewis are powerful at any stage of life they are exponentially significant for the students and families we work with in the field of college access and success. We express these thoughts to students in many different ways and it is especially gratifying when we witness their preparation, perseverance and grit pay off.

We were fortunate enough to witness a phenomenal pay off for two of our statewide LA GEAR UP officers. We are proud to announce that Mr. Oscar McClain and Mr. Darius Spurlock were both selected to participate in the First Lady's Beating the Odds Summit which is a part of the White House Reach Higher Initiative.

The Beating the Odds Summit will bring together college-bound, high school graduates from the class of 2015 from all over the country to the White House for a celebratory event with the First Lady. The summit will be open to 150 students who will engage in resource-rich panels and discussions related to better preparation for their academic journeys ahead.

Some potential topics include how to get academic support in college, how to form strong networks at school, and how to attain a sense of "career fluency"

to figure out opportunities for the future. The Summit will celebrate students while introducing them to some basic tools they will need to succeed at the next level. The event provides our attendees with the opportunity to make new friends and contacts with whom they will network beyond the event itself. We are excited for both of these young adults and proud of the accomplishments which have led them to this point.

They will be accompanied by Ms. Timenee Thomas. Ms. Thomas was our inaugural GEAR UP Alumni Leadership Academy participant. She currently serves as GUALA Coach for Mr. Spurlock. The energy and commitment Ms. Thomas brings to LOSFA is evident in the success of the GEAR UP Statewide Officer program she initiated and coordinated this year along with the pioneering work she has performed to develop our students into the leaders of the future.

Here is what our participants had to say about the opportunity:

"I believe life is like a stream and often times a stream has a chance to take a different route. Sometimes that different route may lead to a beautiful waterfall. This is my chance to take a different route, in hope to find a beautiful waterfall. This is an amazing opportunity that I can't pass up!" – Darius D. Spurlock

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"Being able to travel to DC for the 'Beating the Odds' Summit with First Lady Michelle Obama is a once in a lifetime opportunity. I never thought I would have the chance to meet her while she's in the White House. Hearing about the opportunity made me ecstatic and I knew that I could not pass up a dream such as this. I cannot wait to attend the summit because I know that there is something great within that could benefit me for future references. Thanks for the opportunity, First Lady Michelle Obama." – Oscar L. McClain

"It has been a pleasure to work with and continue working with students like Darius and Oscar and see them grow into young professionals. Being granted the opportunity to attend the First Lady's Beating the Odds Summit only solidifies the passion that I have for wanting students to succeed. It is an honor to be able to share this with our First Lady and continue LOSFA's mission of promoting and providing college access." – Timenee Thomas

Calculation of TOPS Cumulative Grade Point Average for Opportunity, Performance and Honors Award Recipients

Beginning with the 2015-16 academic year (Fall 2015), all grades reported for TOPS Opportunity, Performance, and Honors recipients, whether academic or technical, will be combined to result in the TOPS Cumulative Grade Point Average (Opportunity, Performance, Honors). For students with only academic program grades or only skill, occupational or technical program grades, combining all grades reported will not result in a change in the cumulative GPA. For students who have both academic grades and skill, occupational or technical program grades, combining all grades will likely result in a change in the cumulative GPA.

If combining all grades causes a student's TOPS Award to be suspended at the end of the spring semester of 2016, and the suspension is due solely to the combination of academic and technical grades, the student will remain eligible for an additional semester (for the fall semester of 2016). If the student does not achieve the required cumulative GPA for his award by the end of the fall semester of 2016, his award will be suspended, and he must achieve the required TOPS Cum GPA within 24 months from the date of the suspension. This additional semester does not apply to students who were first-time, full-time for the fall 2015

semester or later or who were suspended for the fall 2015 semester.

Unless the student's award is canceled for failure to meet the initial, full-time or continuous enrollment requirements or the 24 hour requirement, the student's cumulative GPA at the conclusion of the 2014-15 academic year will be noted by a Term designated as **9C2015**. This new status will be located on the TOPS Grade Information screen on the TOPS Student Tab on the Award System on both the School and Student Accounts. The 9C2015 grade record will be used by LOSFA to determine whether the combination of grades is the sole reason a student's award would be suspended beginning in the 2015-2016 academic year.

Examples:

1. Student earns 12 hours in an academic program at the end of the fall 2014 semester with a 1.00 GPA and his TOPS award is suspended. The student enrolls in a technical program for the spring 2015 semester and earns 12 hours with a GPA of 2.50. The student's TOPS award will be paid for the fall 2015 semester. The student enrolls in a technical program for the fall 2015 and spring 2016 semesters and each semester

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Calculation of TOPS Cumulative Grade Point Average for Opportunity, Performance and Honors Award Recipients (*continued*)

earns 12 hours with a 2.50 GPA. Student's cumulative GPA, including all 48 academic and technical hours, is 2.12.

Generally, the student's TOPS award would be suspended; however, since the sole reason that the student's award would be suspended is the inclusion of the academic grades from the fall 2014 semester, the student's TOPS award will be paid for one additional semester (fall 2016) and he will have that semester to meet the minimum requirement or his TOPS award will be suspended for the spring 2017 semester.

2. A student enrolls for the first time as a full-time student in an academic program for the fall 2015 semester and earns 12 hours with a 1.50 GPA and his TOPS award is suspended. The student enrolls in a technical program for the spring 2016 semester and

earns 12 hours with a cumulative GPA of 2.25. The student's TOPS award will be suspended for the fall 2016 semester.

Since the student was first-time, full-time for the fall 2015 semester and the suspension was not caused by combining grades earned previous to the 2015-2016 academic year, the additional semester does not apply.

3. The student earns 12 hours in an academic program at the end of the fall 2014 semester with a 1.50 GPA and his TOPS award is suspended. The student enrolls in a technical program for the spring 2015 semester and earns 12 hours with a 2.25 GPA.

The student's TOPS award is suspended for the fall 2015 semester. Since the student's award was suspended for the fall 2015 semester, the additional semester does not apply.

All TOPS Award Status Notifications Will Now Be Delivered Via Email

Effective immediately, the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) will no longer mail notifications of award eligibility, suspension or cancellation. All notifications will now be delivered via email through the Louisiana Award System.

Louisiana Award System accounts may be activated by going to https://www.osfa.la.gov/AwardSystem/faces/jsf/student/new_student.jspx and following the instructions. Once the account is created, it is vital that the student regularly update his or her email contact information as all future updates to award status will be sent to the Email address provided in the Louisiana Award System.

High school students (once they have filed their FAFSA after January 1 of their senior year and LOSFA has received a valid ACT score) will be able to create an account and use their Louisiana Award System account to track their progress toward TOPS eligibility determination and monitor the integrity of their supplemental information, including ACT data.

Postsecondary students will be able to use their Louisiana Award System account to monitor their eligibility status for various scholarships and grants, check their schools' grade reporting, and determine the status of any exception requests they have submitted.

2015-16 Trailblazer Leadership Program

As announced during our 2014 Professional School Counselor Webinars, after 21 years LOSFA's Trailblazer program is getting a facelift with a new look, feel and attitude!

The new and improved Trailblazer program will now feature a series of single-day leadership conferences to be held throughout the year.

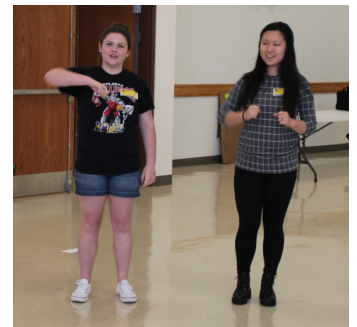
The new format will incorporate the financial aid and college access training the Trailblazer program has provided for two decades with the leadership and mentoring skills training originally developed for LA GEAR UP Explorers Club participants. In addition, the new Trailblazer program will allow students who excel to earn one of five \$1,000.00 scholarships.

Trailblazers will be expected to share college access, financial aid, and financial literacy information learned through participation in events with LOSFA staff, and assisting with school-based activities.

The first organizational Trailblazer Leadership Conferences of the 2015-16 school year were held on May 31st at Louisiana State University in Alexandria for Trailblazers from the northern part of the state and on June 6th at Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond for students in South Louisiana. A second round of conferences will be held on July 18th and 25th at Northwestern State University in Natchitoches and Southern University in Baton Rouge respectively with a goal of exposing Trailblazers to as many college campuses as possible during the year.



2015-16 Trailblazer Leadership Program *(continued)*



GO Grant Allocations for 2015-2016

The Board of Regents has approved \$26,429,098 for GO Grant Awards for the 2015-2016 award year. Institutions have been allocated an amount based on the same methodology used for 2014-2015.

The Board of Regent's GO Grant Framework is outlined in Student Financial Aid Bulletin S2013-01 dated January 29, 2013 which can be found on LOSFA's website at www.osfa.la.gov/MainSitePDFs/S2013-01.pdf.

The following apply during the 2015-2016 academic year:

1. The annual allocation will be used for fall, winter, and spring semesters/terms, with no plans to fund summer awards.
2. Due to legislative reporting requirements, it is necessary to continue the fall billing deadline of November 1, 2015 (fall billing corrections deadline, November 16) and a winter billing deadline of January 17, 2016 (winter billing corrections deadline, February 1). The fall and winter deadlines will also allow LOSFA and Board of Regents to better estimate funding availability for subsequent semesters/terms.
3. Late billings for fall, winter and spring semesters/terms will require approval. Approval is not guaranteed.
4. The spring billing deadline is March 24, 2016, (spring billing corrections deadline, April 11).
5. Unused funds will be reallocated after the spring billing

2015-2016 Go Grant Allocations			
School	2015-2016 Allocation	School	2015-2016 Allocation
LSU-BR	\$ 2,044,865.00	North Central Campus	*
LSU-A	\$ 295,072.00	Northeast Campus	*
LSUHSC-NO	\$ 131,989.00	Ruston Campus	*
LSUHSC-S	\$ 15,872.00	Tallulah Campus	*
LSU-E	\$ 269,334.00	Northshore TCC	\$ 35,969.00
LSU-S	\$ 904,667.00	Florida Parishes Campus	*
LSU SYSTEM SUB-TOTAL	\$ 3,661,799.00	Slidell Campus	*
Southern-BR	\$ 1,247,141.00	Sullivan Campus	*
Southern-NO	\$ 263,763.00	Hammond Campus	*
Southern-S	\$ 213,164.00	Northwest Louisiana TC	
SU SYSTEM SUB-TOTAL	\$ 1,724,068.00	Mansfield Campus	\$ 10,452.00
Nicholls	\$ 1,004,174.00	Natchitoches Campus	\$ 6,431.00
Grambling	\$ 985,553.00	Northwest Campus	\$ 31,406.00
Louisiana Tech	\$ 1,080,137.00	Sabine Valley Campus	\$ 3,032.00
McNeese	\$ 1,438,102.00	Shreveport-Bossier Campus	\$ 38,927.00
University of LA-Monroe	\$ 1,618,381.00	Nunez CC	\$ 57,550.00
Northwestern	\$ 1,530,814.00	River Parishes CC	\$ 55,211.00
Southeastern	\$ 2,847,763.00	Ascension Campus	*
University of LA-Lafayette	\$ 2,351,323.00	South Central TC	
University of New Orleans	\$ 1,139,975.00	Lafourche Campus	\$ 9,648.00
UL SYSTEM SUB-TOTAL	\$ 13,996,222.00	Reserve Campus	\$ 22,650.00
Baton Rouge CC	\$ 621,670.00	Young Memorial Campus	\$ 20,094.00
Baton Rouge Campus	*	South Louisiana CC	\$ 390,810.00
Folkles Campus	*	Acadian Campus	*
Jumonville Campus	*	Charles B. Coreil Campus	*
West Side Campus	*	Evangeline Campus	*
Bossier Parish CC	\$ 253,755.00	Gulf Area Campus	*
Central Louisiana TCC	\$ 63,293.00	Lafayette Campus	*
Alexandria Campus	*	Teche Campus	*
Avoyelles Campus	*	T. H. Harris Campus	*
Huey P. Long Campus	*	Sowela TCC	\$ 221,240.00
Lamar Salter Campus	*	Morgan Smith Campus	*
Oakdale Campus	*	LCTC SYSTEM SUB-TOTAL	\$ 4,672,938.00
Shelby Jackson Campus	*	Centenary	\$ 135,334.00
Delgado CC	\$ 2,494,617.00	Dillard	\$ 295,198.00
Jefferson Campus	*	Louisiana College	\$ 217,346.00
West Jefferson Campus	*	Loyola	\$ 301,316.00
Sidney Collier Campus	*	Our Lady Holy Cross	\$ 59,052.00
L. E. Fletcher CC	\$ 89,482.00	Our Lady Of Lake	\$ 305,294.00
Louisiana Delta CC	\$ 246,701.00	Tulane	\$ 355,822.00
Bastrop Campus	*	Xavier	\$ 704,709.00
Delta-Ouachita Campus	*	INDEPENDENTS' SUB-TOTAL	\$ 2,374,071.00
		Total	\$ 26,429,098.00

* Go Grant funding for these schools are included in the funding listed for the main campus.

deadline. Reallocations should be used 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 had used its full annual allocation.

6. In the event of a reallocation of unused funds, the school(s) receiving the reallocated funding will be provided with a deadline to expend the reallocated dollars.

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

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

Web Address: www.osfa.la.gov

For submissions, opinions, or comments for the LOSFA LOOP,
please contact Gus Wales at Gus.Wales@la.gov.