



LOSFA LOOP

March 2012 Edition

Volume 5-3

From the Desk of the Executive Director

I want to extend congratulations to my financial aid colleagues in the Louisiana Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (LASFAA), including several members of my staff, for another successful College Goal Sunday event. The completion of the FAFSA can seem like an insurmountable obstacle for the family of a first generation student so the assistance that we provide is invaluable. For that reason alone, College Goal Sunday is one of my favorite annual events. I look forward to working collectively in order to sustain this valuable service to our students long after the initial funding source is depleted.

In addition to College Goal Sunday, another valuable service to our students is the Louisiana Connect portal. I am especially excited about the launching of the Individual Graduation Plan (IGP) as a component of this all-encompassing college access and career planning resource. When you consider the fact that students can develop and maintain their IGP, track their progress towards eligibility for the TOPS scholarship as well as get recruited by colleges and potential employers in one portal, then Louisiana Connect is not just the First Choice for College Access, but it's truly Louisiana's ONLY Choice for College Access and Career Planning.

"March Madness" takes on a different context for us as the 2012 Legislative Session begins on March 13. We are already vetting several pieces of legislation regarding TOPS and it promises to be an interesting session for everyone involved in higher education. We'll be keeping score, but no one will know the outcome until the final buzzer on June 4th.

I look forward to seeing several of you at our LASFAC Advisory Committee meeting this month and even more of you at the LASFAA Spring Conference in Alexandria on March 8th.

--Melanie

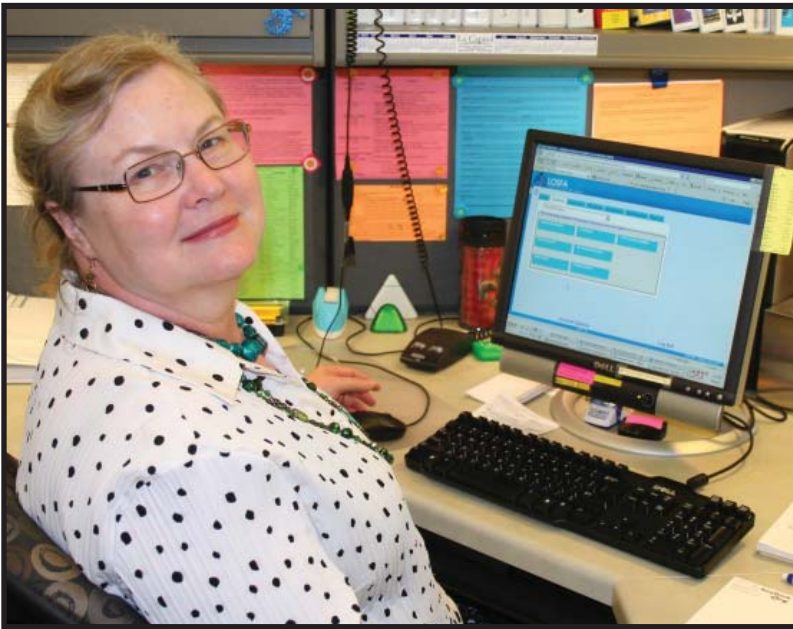
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Tenth Call-In Night a Success

Families from across the state took advantage of LOSFA's tenth annual "Financial Aid Call-In Night" on Monday, February 6, 2012, utilizing special nighttime hours to get answers to their higher education financial aid questions.

Additionally, LOSFA took questions online, allowing students and parents to submit questions and get answers via Facebook.



Between callers and online questioners, 92 people took advantage of the additional hours.

LOSFA staffers, including Kate Herke, pictured at left, stayed late, answering questions about all forms of state and federal student financial assistance, including the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS), need based grants, student loans, and the Student Tuition Assistance and Revenue Trust (START) Program – Louisiana's 529 college saving plan.

They also provided on-the-spot advice and assistance for completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid – also known as the FAFSA – which is the convenient

single application for most state and federal student aid programs.

LOSFA's normal call-in hours for student financial assistance information are 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The annual "Financial Aid Call-In Night", from 6 p.m. until 9 p.m., is designed to assist callers who are unable to call during regular business hours. The event is always held during the month of February, as part of National Financial Aid Awareness Month.

Where we'll be

March 3

Louisiana School for Math, Science and the Arts, Natchitoches, 9:00 a.m., FLY presentation

March 6

Renew Accelerated High School, New Orleans, 5 p.m., General Financial Aid presentation

March 15

Mandeville High School, Mandeville, 7 p.m., FAFSA presentation

March 24

Baby Grand, Woman's Hospital, Baton Rouge, 8:30 a.m., START information

College Goal Sunday



Deandre Cosby, winner of the College Goal Sunday Scholarship awarded by Baton Rouge Community College, is pictured with Ashley Herbert, Miss Black Louisiana 2012, and LOSFA's Justin Marshall. Herbert is a TOPS recipient who graduated with a MA in Public Administration from LSU in December 2011.

LOSFA and the Louisiana Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (LASFAA) hosted another successful College Goal Sunday statewide event on February 26, 2012. Parents and eager students across the state were able to get up-to-the-minute information and assistance completing and filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Final attendance numbers from the fourteen participating sites around the state are still being calculated.



LOSFA's Deborah Paul, far right, answers questions about TOPS at Southern University's College Goal Sunday event.



2012 Young Millionaires Poster & Video Contest



Investing in Me

Become a Millionaire!
Start saving now.

www.louisianajumpstart.org



FINANCIAL SMARTS FOR STUDENTS & ADULTS

Louisiana Jump\$Tart Coalition
for Personal Financial Literacy

Eligibility:

Poster

Elementary – 3rd through 5th Grades
Middle – 6th through 8th Grades
High School – 9th through 12th Grades

Video

High School – 9th through 12th grades

Prize Awards:

Poster

Category Winners – **\$100**

Video

1st Place – **\$500**

2nd Place – **\$300**

3rd Place – **\$100**

Sponsors:



LOUISIANA EDUCATION LEADERSHIP AUTHORITY
A DIVISION OF APEX

Deadline for Submission: Friday, March 16, 2012

Contest rules and guidelines are posted on our website - www.louisianajumpstart.org. Contest is open to Louisiana residents only.

Go Grant and Early Start Funding Update

Funding for the Louisiana Early Start Program, as currently administered by the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance, was not included in Governor Bobby Jindal's Executive Budget for the 2012-13 fiscal year that begins July 1, 2012.

Funding for TOPS Tech Early Start did remain in the Executive Budget for LOSFA. We encourage you to examine this as an alternative for eligible students.

We will notify you if anything changes as a result of the Legislative Session. Keep in mind, however, that any changes that occur would not be official until the end of the session, which will be after the end of this school year.

The 2012-2013 Executive Budget includes level funding for the Go Grant. If the budget receives final approval as it is, the Go Grant award amounts will remain the same as this year: \$1,000 per year for full-time enrollment, \$500 for half-time enrollment, and \$250 for part-time enrollment.

We do not anticipate changes to the Go Grant methodology for the 2012-13 Academic Year. Institutions should make awards according to their defined priority process. It is the general philosophy of the Board of Regents that the grant is awarded to those students with the most need. **Schools must begin preparation now for the 2013-14 Academic Year to implement Go Grant packaging that will result in an award amount that will not exceed 55% of the students' unmet need when combined with Pell and other state aid.**

The LASFAC Advisory Committee has requested LOSFA appoint a task force of financial aid officers to advise on best practices for implementation of the new methodology. Appointments to this task force will be forthcoming and announced in the next few months.

Louisiana Connect Update

- ▶ All of the academic data for all students has been loaded.
- ▶ The Individual Graduation Plan (IGP) component remains on track to go live to all counselors on or about March 1, 2012.
- ▶ LOSFA staff and Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) staff previewed the test version of the IGP on February 15th and we liked what we saw!
- ▶ The LDOE is in the process of: 1) previewing the IGP component with a small focus group of counselors and 2) providing in-depth training to Regional Graduation Coordinators on the functionality and navigation of the IGP component.
- ▶ Once the IGP is live, all counselors will have access to a user guide and a 20-minute instructional video which will be posted in the Louisiana Connect Support Center.
- ▶ Regional Graduation Coordinators will be available to provide additional support to counselors as needed.
- ▶ TalentConnect! And StudentRecruit are live and working in the system. Employers have begun building profiles.
- ▶ As of Feb. 29th, a total of 8,093 student accounts and 146 parent accounts have been activated.



STUDENTS – Opportunity is Just a Click Away!

The Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) is pleased to announce the launch of **LouisianaConnect**, a comprehensive, college & career planning resource just for you!

Create Your Louisiana Connect Account Today:

1. Go to <https://louisianaconnect.org/>
2. On the right hand side of the page you will see an area to “Create An Account”
3. Enter the following information:

Student ID (School ID number)

Student’s First Name

Student’s Last Name

High School

A screenshot of the 'CREATE AN ACCOUNT' form on the Louisiana Connect website. The form has a blue header with the title 'CREATE AN ACCOUNT'. Below the header are input fields for 'Student ID', 'First name', and 'Last name'. There is a 'High school:' label followed by a dropdown menu with 'Please Choose' selected. To the right of the dropdown are two radio buttons: 'I am a Student' (which is selected) and 'I am a Parent'. At the bottom right of the form is a yellow 'Register' button.

4. Select “I’m a Student”

5. Click 

6. Complete the profile information and create a Username and Password.

Your Username must be your email address

With LouisianaConnect You Can:

- Connect with colleges and universities that are a match for you
- Learn about careers and connect with employers
- Find scholarships and other programs designed to help you succeed
- Stay Connected with Your Communication Center
- Access Your Exclusive News Feed and Event Planner
- Build Your Profile. Show Off Your Skills and Achievements
- You Can Afford a College Education...Learn How

**Opportunity is Just a Click
Away...**



PARENTS – Get involved in your child’s college and career planning!

The Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) is pleased to announce the launch of **LouisianaConnect**, a comprehensive, college & career planning web portal available to all 8th - 12th grade students in the State of Louisiana. As a parent you can create an account to help your student through the process. You will also have access to LouisianaConnect’s full range of college & career exploration tools.

Counselors will be instructing students to activate their accounts in LouisianaConnect, so please encourage your child to get going right away!

Create Your Account Today:

1. Go to <https://louisianaconnect.org/>
2. On the right hand side of the page you will see an area to “Create An Account”
3. Enter the following information:

Student ID (School ID number)

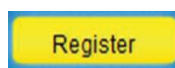
Student’s (your child) First Name

Student’s (your child) Last Name

High School

4. Select “I’m a Parent”

5. Click



6. Complete the profile info
Username and Password.

 A screenshot of the "CREATE AN ACCOUNT" form on the LouisianaConnect website. The form has a blue header and contains the following fields: "Student ID" (text input), "Child's first name" and "Child's last name" (two text inputs), "High school" (text input), and a radio button selection for "I am a Student" and "I am a Parent". Below these is a "Please Choose" dropdown menu. At the bottom, there is a link "Don't know your child's ID number? Click here" and a yellow "Register" button.

Your Username must be your email address

With LouisianaConnect You Can:

- Track student progress against important college and career planning activities
- Search for colleges, compare costs and make recommendations to students
- Search for scholarships and make recommendations to students
- View your child’s Individual Graduation Plan (IGP)
- View your child’s career plan and explore occupation profiles
- Learn about college costs, need-based aid and other financial options
- Access your personal Communication Center where you can communicate with your child and receive important messages, alerts and event invitations

**LOUISIANA STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE COMMISSION
REGULAR SESSION 2012
Legislation That Could Possibly Affect Higher Education and Financial Aid
As of February 28, 2012**

HOUSE BILLS					
	No.	Author	Subject And Summary	Recommended Position	Status
1.	HB 275	Schroder	STUDENT/TUITION: Authorizes the public postsecondary education management boards to increase tuition and mandatory fee amounts up to SREB averages in accordance with the Board of Regents Tuition and Financial Aid Policy, subject to legislative approval of such policy, and authorizes uniform imposition of tuition and mandatory fee amounts on a per-credit-hour basis.		Assigned to House Education
2.	HB 294	Harrison	STUDENT/LOANS-SCHOLARSHIP: Establishes a maximum dollar amount of \$1,600, for a TOPS award for the 2013-2014 award year through the 2017-2018 award years.		Assigned to House Education
3.	HB 299	Harrison	STUDENT/TUITION: (Constitutional Amendment) Provides that the requirement that the imposition of a new fee or increase in an existing fee requires the enactment of a law by a 2/3 vote by the legislature shall not apply to new tuition amounts or mandatory fees or increases of such by a public postsecondary education management board.		Assigned to House & Governmental Affairs

SENATE BILLS					
	NO.	AUTHOR	SUBJECT AND SUMMARY	Recommended Position	Status
1.	SB 62	Appel	EDUCATION DEPARTMENT: Re-creates the Department of Education.		Assigned to Senate Education
2.	SB 103	Nevers	POSTSECONDARY ED: Limits the number of hours required to earn a baccalaureate degree.		Assigned to Senate Education

Taking the ACT & Applying for TOPS?

Read carefully *before*
completing your
ACT Registration
form!

- TOPS processing cannot begin until LOSFA can match FAFSA data, high school academic data, and ACT score.
- This data is matched by **SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER**.
- IF YOU DO NOT INCLUDE YOUR **SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER** ON YOUR ACT REGISTRATION, YOUR TOPS PROCESSING **WILL BE DELAYED**.



For more information, contact LOSFA at 1-800-259-5626, Ext. 1012 or custserv@osfa.la.gov.

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



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



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

By Phone: 800-259-5626, Ext. 1012

By E-mail: custserv@osfa.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 LOSFA LOOP, please
contact David Roberts at droberts@osfa.la.gov.