



# LOSFA LOOP

May 2010 Edition

Volume 3-5

## From the Desk of the Executive Director

Since April was National Financial Literacy Month it was only appropriate that our FLY (Financial Literacy for You) Team was given the opportunity to present at the LASAP (Louisiana Association of Student Assistance Programs) Conference. LASAP's membership includes Louisiana TRiO professionals, alumni, and associates, as well as institutional members. Although LOSFA has always had a presence at the LASAP Conference, it is my hope that the recent national mandate towards financial literacy combined with our increased efforts to raise financial awareness within the state will lead to an even more stalwart partnership between LOSFA and the Louisiana TRiO Programs.

Speaking of partnerships, LOSFA recently partnered with the Louisiana State Firemen's Association (LSFA) in order to positively impact the community. The majority of the people in the State of Louisiana are served by volunteer fire and EMS workers. Proof exists that the number of volunteers are not sufficient to meet the needs. This puts almost all communities served by volunteers at risk, and shortage of responding volunteers also puts the volunteers themselves at risk. In order to address this problem the Louisiana State Firemen's Association has developed the Safer Tuition Reimbursement Grant Program for eligible applicants willing to serve as certified members of a volunteer fire department. The program provides tuition reimbursement of up to \$8,000 for a two year degree and up to \$16,000 for a four year degree for eligible applicants who sign up to serve as volunteer firemen in the State of Louisiana after graduation.



*LOSFA Executive Director Melanie Amhrein, with Gov. Bobby Jindal's proclamation of College Goal Sunday.*

You may have already seen the television commercial about this important program featuring such prominent figures as Governor Jindal, Director of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emer-

*Continued on Page 6*

### ***In this edition. . .***

<b><i>Trailblazer Update</i></b>	<b><i>2</i></b>
<b><i>Legislative Update</i></b>	<b><i>3</i></b>
<b><i>TOPS Award Cycle</i></b>	<b><i>4</i></b>
<b><i>ESPN Internship</i></b>	<b><i>5</i></b>
<b><i>Taste of LOSFA Fundraiser</i></b>	<b><i>7</i></b>

## Trailblazer Camp 2010

Trailblazer Camp has been scheduled for July 11-13 in Natchitoches at Northwestern State University and July 18-20 in Thibodaux at Nicholls State University. To help students and counselors, LOSFA is providing the answers to some commonly asked questions in the *Loop*.

### **Counselors**

**Is it too late to nominate a student for Trailblazers?** No. Please go to the online nomination page at: <http://www.osfa.la.gov/trailblazersnomination>

### **Students**

**Can I switch camps?** Yes. Just circle the camp you will attend & mail your paperwork back to our office via the address provided on the forms.

**Can I fax my Trailblazer paperwork to you?** No. We need the original signatures on the forms we mailed you. Please mail them back to us.

**I don't have health insurance. Can I attend Trailblazer Camp?** No. You must have health insurance (or purchase temporary insurance through your high school) to attend the Trailblazer Camp.

**I just received my paperwork, but won't have it mailed to you by April 9. Is that ok?** Yes. Please mail it to us ASAP.

## Stay in touch

Keep up with all the latest news on TOPS, Trailblazer Camp, START and other financial aid news with LOSFA on Facebook and Flickr. Photos of last year's Trailblazer Camps are now posted and students can check back after this year's camp to find pics of themselves and their friends.



LOSFA's new facebook fan page: <http://www.facebook.com/LOSFA>

See photos of LOSFA outreach efforts on LOSFA's new Flickr page:  
[www.Flickr.com/LOSFA](http://www.Flickr.com/LOSFA)



**LOUISIANA STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE COMMISSION  
REGULAR SESSION 2010  
BILLS AFFECTING ROLE, SCOPE, OR MISSION  
As of April 21, 2010**

HOUSE BILLS				
	No.	Author	Subject And Summary	Status
1.	HB 490	Harrison	<b>TOPS:</b> Caps TOPS awards at \$1,600 per semester for academic years 2011-12 through 2015-16. Stipends for Performance and Honors awards are continued.	Assigned to House Education
2.	HB 905	Harrison	<b>TOPS:</b> Beginning with students graduating in 2015, the cumulative GPA requirement increases from 2.50 to 3.00 for the Opportunity Award; from 3.00 to 3.25 for the Performance Award; and from 3.00 to 3.50 for the Honors Award.	Assigned to House Education
3.	HB 994	Harrison	<b>TOPS:</b> Beginning with students who first qualify for TOPS during the 2011-2012 award year, students must agree to repay his/her award if during the first two years of the award, the student fails to make steady academic progress or maintain full time standing.	Assigned to House Education
4.	HB 1000	Waddell	<b>TOPS:</b> Adds OPH students to those who can use their award at proprietary and cosmetology schools.	Assigned to House Education
5.	HB 1029	Hoffman	<b>TOPS:</b> to do away with Free Enterprise as a separate course (to be included in civics). It would change the TOPS and TOPS Tech cores to read: (ix) Coursework in Civics and Free Enterprise (one unit combined) as provided in R.S. 274.1 or Civics (one unit, nonpublic).	Assigned to House Education
6.	HB 1399	Downs	<b>TOPS:</b> Beginning with students graduating in 2013-14 the cumulative GPA requirement increases from 2.50 to 2.75 for the Opportunity Award.	Assigned to House Education

SENATE BILLS				
	NO.	AUTHOR	SUBJECT AND SUMMARY	Status
1.	SB 86	Gautreaux	<b>TOPS:</b> Beginning with the 2010-11 academic year, caps TOPS at 90% of what would have been paid for 2010-11. Stipends for Performance and Honors awards are continued.	Deferred by Senate Education
2.	SB 182	Gautreaux, Adley Marionneaux, Murray, Riser and 7 Reps.	<b>TOPS:</b> Beginning with the 2010-11 academic year, the National Guard book payment will increase from \$150 per semester to \$300 per semester and the National Guard stipends will increase from \$200 to \$400 per semester for the Performance Award and from \$400 to \$800 per semester for the Honors Award. Senate Ed Amendment adds TOPS Tech eligible students and deletes "not more than" so the law will read "pay on behalf of such student a sum of three hundred dollars per semester and deletes "actual" so that the law will read "to be applied to the cost of books and instructional materials."	Reported Favorably by Senate Education
3.	SB 486	Nevers	<b>TOPS Tech:</b> Provides that beginning with the 2010-2011 school year a silver level score on the assessments of the ACT WorkKeys system may be used as an alternative to the requirement to earn a composite score of 17 on the ACT.	Passed Senate. Assigned to House Education
4.	SB 505	L. Jackson	<b>GO Grant:</b> Establishes the program in statute and provides the basic eligibility criteria. The Board of Regents is responsible for establishing criteria for initial and continuing eligibility, the method for determining the award amount and other program criteria not included in the statute. The Commission is responsible for administering the program and promulgating rules to implement the statute.	Assigned to Senate Education

## TOPS awarding begins in June

It may be hard to wait, but graduating seniors who want to check on the status of their TOPS awards need to be patient.

Although students generally graduate in May, LOSFA cannot begin determining eligibility for TOPS until it has received all necessary information from schools, FAFSA and ACT. To help the award process run smoothly, students need to make certain they have filed the FAFSA and have had their ACT scores sent to LOSFA.

The third week in June is the deadline for current year grades to be submitted to the LA Department of Education.

LOSFA plans to begin determining eligibility for TOPS in early June. Weekly processing jobs run each Thursday and letters to newly eligible and ineligible students are then mailed.

Students who have questions concerning their TOPS eligibility can check their status via the TOPS Portal at <https://osfantweb.osfa.state.la.us/TOPSPort.nsf> or they may contact LOSFA customer service representatives for assistance at 1-800-259-5626, ext.1012, or 922-1012 (from within the 225 area code only), or via Email at [custserv@osfa.la.gov](mailto:custserv@osfa.la.gov).

### REMEMBER!!

If you are a graduating senior, the deadline to apply for TOPS funding for the 2010-2011 Academic Year is:

**JULY 1, 2010**

Your application must be filed by that date or you will not be eligible for funding until the 2011-2012 Academic Year (if you file between July 2, 2010 and July 1, 2011).

Questions? Call 800-259-5626, ext. 1012 or email [custserv@osfa.la.gov](mailto:custserv@osfa.la.gov)



Got something to say about TOPS?

Join the conversation at LOSFA's blog: <http://www.louisianatopsprogram.com>

## Cristiana Boutte earns ESPN internship

Deputy Executive Director's daughter beats out 10,000 applicants for job

LOSFA's Deputy Executive Director Dr. Sujuan Boutte has reason to be proud of her daughter. The LSU Junior recently earned an internship with ESPN, beating out a nationwide pool of applicants.

"For us as parents, this is like a dream come true," Boutte said. "We have always been committed to teaching both of our kids the value of work ethic and using that work ethic along with their natural talents to position themselves to succeed. So when your child gets an opportunity like this that is a direct result of the hard work they've put in and the type of young adult they've become, it's truly the most rewarding experience a parent can have. In other words: we are extremely proud of Cristiana."

Below is a Q&A with Cristiana Boutte about her experience.

**LL: What process did you have to go through to get the internship? How tough was the competition? Do you know how many people applied for the job?**

**CB:** I had to apply online for the position of Sports Marketing intern in January. A couple of weeks later, I received a call from Joe Franco who is the Manager of University & Diversity Recruiting and Relations for ESPN. He told me that I was being considered, but that there were 10,000 other people that applied for the same job. I was really excited and he said that I may or may not hear back from them, but to be honored that I received a call. They were interested in me, if not for the summer, then for future employment.

A couple of weeks later, I received an email from Seth Ader, the Director of Marketing, asking if I had time for a phone interview. We talked primarily about soccer because he knew I was a fan and that the World Cup was this summer. He told me that I was the second person that they had called. He told me to contact Alexander Green, who is the Marketing Manager. That interview went great as well. Then, I had an interview with Shana Stephenson, the Marketing Coordinator. After that interview, I talked to Emeka Ofofiele who is the Director of Marketing for College Game Day. This interview was the longest of all of them. He asked



*LOSFA Deputy Executive Director Sujuan Boutte with her daughter Cristiana Boutte. Cristiana was recently chosen for an internship with ESPN.*

me about my career aspirations and what my intentions were for the job. I told him that I wanted to make a career out of this. I wanted to work hard and meet people who share my passion for sports, hopefully leading to a job at ESPN.

The interview process was pretty grueling, but it gave me great experience. Being selected out of 10,000 people is extremely humbling.

**LL: Why ESPN? How does this internship fit into your career plans? Did you expect to get the internship or were you surprised?**

**CB:** I chose ESPN because it embodies what I want to do with my career. Getting the chance to help promote sports and increase attention for specific events is something that I love to do. Down the road, I would love to become a Marketing Director for ESPN. It would be even better if I could be involved with their English Premier Soccer League. Like I told Emeka, while working at LSU Athletics I have fallen in love with the behind-the-scenes aspect of putting on a



sporting event. It would be fantastic to get a chance to work at ESPN and be surrounded with that fast-paced environment.

After the third interview, I started thinking that I had it. I figured there is no way they were taking this much time to talk to someone that they weren't interested in. After the last interview, I really felt like I had it. I really put everything out on the table, in the sense that I told him that my intention was to make this into a career, not just be there and take up space.

When I got the call I was ecstatic. I started running up and down the sidewalk. I was in my PR writing class and saw that I missed a call [from ESPN's area code], and my heart just sank. I ran out of class and tried to call the HR guy back and he didn't answer. I was literally on the verge of tears. I went back to class and saw that I got an e-mail [from Franco] but couldn't reach him. I was so worried that something had gotten misplaced or that there was a technicality that would keep me from getting the job.

Ten minutes that seemed like an eternity passed and my phone rang and the area code was New Jersey. I ran out of class again to take the call.

The caller said he was from ESPN and wanted to congratulate me on getting the internship. I called my mom and dad and told them and was just so excited. I

ran back into class and yelled that I got the job. It was one of the best days of my life.

**LL: How close are you to finishing your degree and what is it in? What are your future plans, after you've completed your degree?**

**CB:** I'm a junior here at LSU and am majoring in Public Relations and getting my minor in Business. I'm actually really excited because I have only 22 hours left until I graduate, so I will be finishing in May 2011. Hopefully, I will be working for ESPN one day. If not, I want to get my Masters in Sports Management and my MBA.

**LL: How much did your family affect your decision to try for the internship? What kind of influence and/or support have they been upon you and your career path?**

**CB:** My parents were in full support of me applying. They really helped me get through the interview process. It became really stressful having the interview process last for a month. My brother was really supportive too; he kept encouraging me to stick in there and just take the process in and enjoy it. All along my career path they have all been really supportive of me. They have helped me so much supporting me and really helped me find what I truly loved to do.

*continued from Page 1*

gency Preparedness Mark Cooper, Louisiana State Fire Marshall H "Butch" Brown, Jr., Deputy Secretary of Public Safety and Superintendent of State Police Mike Edmonson, the President of the Louisiana State Firemen's Association Mike LaBruzza and Louisiana State Representative Karen St. Germain. The commercial also directs the viewer to LOSFA for additional financial aid information. We hope that by partnering with the Louisiana State Firemen's Association to provide information on this program we can also raise the overall awareness of all financial aid programs that the student should explore. A link to the LSFA website, where details on the Safer Tuition Reimbursement Grant Program can be found, is posted to the LOSFA homepage.

It is one of LOSFA's goals to compile a scholarship and aid clearinghouse site for students to learn about many of the financial assistance programs that may

be offered through different agencies and organizations. We feel this is a good first step towards that goal.

Counselors, please note that it is not too late to nominate a student for this year's Trailblazer camps. This issue and other frequently asked questions about Trailblazers are addressed on page 2. Thank you for continuing to support the LOSFA LOOP as well as LOSFA's efforts to promote and provide college access to everyone in Louisiana.

-- Melanie

## A Taste of LOSFA

### Tasty fundraiser profits March of Dimes

LOSFA employees hosted a taste fair recently, with the proceeds going to the March of Dimes. Employees prepared their favorite recipes, and submitted them for inclusion in a cookbook, in an effort to raise money for the worthy cause.





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](mailto:custserv@osfa.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  
David Roberts at [droberts@osfa.la.gov](mailto:droberts@osfa.la.gov).