

From the Desk of the Executive Director



Melanie Amrhein

World War I, known at the time as “The Great War”, officially ended when the Treaty of Versailles was signed on June 28, 1919, in the Palace of Versailles outside the town of Versailles, France. However, fighting ceased seven months earlier when an armistice or temporary cessation of hostilities, between the Allied nations and Germany went into effect on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. For that reason, November 11, 1918, is generally regarded as the end of “the war to end all wars.” Veterans Day continues to be observed on November 11, regardless of what day of the week on which it falls.

The observance of Veterans Day on November 11 not only preserves the historical significance of the date, but helps focus attention on the important purpose of Veterans Day: A celebration to honor America’s veterans for their patriotism, love of country, and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good. As we continue to see conflicts that involve our military, I hope everyone takes the opportunity to thank a veteran this month and offers up blessings and thanksgiving to these special men and women on their special day.

November is certainly full of special days this year. In addition to Veteran’s Day, don’t forget to VOTE on Tuesday November 6. It is our most precious right and should be exercised by everyone! In Louisiana, we will have 9 Constitutional Amendments to consider, so do your homework before getting to the polls. To assist in that, the Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana has written an unbiased description of each and it can be accessed at http://www.parlouisiana.org/s3web/1002087/docs/2012_guide_to_constitutional_amendments.pdf.

LOSFA continues to pursue its mission of being Louisiana’s First Choice in College Access and will be engaging in a 5-year strategic planning session this month to focus on “Where We Grow From Here”. This plan will cover the period of 2014-15 through 2018-19. Sounds incredibly far away, but really is just around the corner. It is an exciting and daunting venture to try to visualize the future, but we must predict, plan and prepare to continue and expand on the critical college access services that are needed statewide. Our goal is to be visionary, even in times of darkness. I trust our results will demonstrate that.

Fall has fallen (finally)! Don’t you love the cooler and low humidity air we have this time of year? As we approach Thanksgiving 2012, I wish everyone in the financial aid community a bountiful harvest, loving families and fewer headaches! I hope your students are thankful for the work you do (I believe they are, even if they don’t express it well) and your bosses understand and appreciate your valuable service to your institution.

Melanie

Course Code assigned to AP Human Geography

On October 29, 2012, the Department of Education assigned a new course code to AP Human Geography. This was done to avoid confusion with any other Geography course code now in use, particularly AP World History. The new course code for AP Human Geography (220310) is included in the attached revised Supplement A. Note that AP Human Geography cannot be used to satisfy the social sciences requirements of the TOPS Core Curriculum. While there were no changes to the main STS Q&A document, we are including both documents here for your convenience of keeping the Q&A and Supplement together.

In this edition. . .

<i>Go Grant program updates/ Trailblazer Camp follow up</i>	2
<i>STS Training Workshops</i>	3
<i>Professional School Counselor Workshops</i>	4
<i>LOSFA Social Media</i>	5

Go Grant Fall 2012 Program Update

Go Grant billing is underway for Fall 2012 and today, **NOVEMBER 1**, is the billing deadline. Fall billing error corrections should be submitted no later than November 16.

In an effort to assist schools that are implementing the Banner system, the GO Grant billing deadline has been extended to **Wednesday, NOVEMBER 14, 2012** for those schools. The deadline for billing error corrections will be extended to Wednesday, November 28.

Student Financial Aid Bulletin S2012-04, GO Grant Allocations for 2012-2013, was released to schools in June. In addition to the allocations, the bulletin includes all 2012-2013 billing and error correction deadlines.

As of October 25, \$8,183,514 of the \$26,164,721 GO Grant academic year funds have been paid to 27 of the 61 schools that received a GO Grant allocation.



If GO Grant funds remain after the March 24, 2013 billing deadline, the unused funds will be reallocated to schools with additional need.

Should you have questions or require assistance with GO Grant, please contact Erica Hughes at 225-219-7707 or Erica.Hughes@la.gov.

Trailblazer Camp attendees value experience

We all know that teenagers value their summer break. They look forward to spending their time with friends away from school doing what they want to do, which is why the following statement from a Livonia High School senior is slightly shocking.

"Taking part in the 2012 Trailblazer Camp was the best part of my summer," wrote Paige Vaughn in an essay about her time at the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) annual financial aid summer information session.

Each year, juniors who are college bound, academically outstanding, effective public speakers and leaders among their peers are nominated by administrators to represent their school at LOSFA's Trailblazers Camp. Selected nominees attend a three-day training workshop on a college campus presented by financial aid professionals. During the camp, Trailblazers are given information about post-secondary educational opportunities, the college admissions process and about how to obtain financial assistance.

"Within those three days I learned so much, made friends for a lifetime, and experienced college life," wrote Vaughn who was one of 156 students selected to attend one of the two sessions of the 2012 Trailblazer camp.

"The most important thing I learned at Trailblazer Camp was that there are no excuses for being unable to pay for college."

Vaughn was not the only Trailblazer who left the camp with a better understanding of the many opportunities available for students to pay for their education.

"I was not aware of how many programs LOSFA administered," wrote Jessica Ferrier of Montgomery High School. "The only program I was aware of before Trailblazer Camp was the TOPS program. LOSFA administers not only the TOPS program, but many more such as the START Saving Program, TOPS Tech Early Start Program, College Knowledge, Go Grant, Rockefeller State Wildlife Scholarships and many more."

Following their intensive three-day training at camp, Trailblazers are asked to return to their high school and teach other post-secondary education bound students what they learned. Trailblazers meet with their schools' professional school counselors and administrators to devise a plan for how best to educate their fellow students on financial aid opportunities.

"Thanks to Trailblazers, my peers and I are most definitely going to be on the right track to college success," wrote Ferrier.

What Trailblazers are saying about Louisiana Connect

In addition to information on financial aid services provided by LOSFA, the 2012 class of Trailblazers was also exposed to hands-on training in the Louisiana Connect College Access and Career Planning portal (www.louisianaconnect.org). This online resource provides tools to students and their parents to help them research potential schools and their costs as well as financial aid options.

"During Trailblazer Camp, I learned...the maximum benefit of a really good Web site," said Juan Eduardo Rubio from Rapides High School. "This Web site is www.louisianaconnect.org, LOSFA's most recent idea to help students and parents find information about colleges."

Rubio added that Louisiana Connect provides "a broad set of information in a single Web site which is amazing. Every teen, at some point of his/her life feels lost when trying to find a college, or even worse, how to pay for it. However, LOSFA is aware of that and for that reason Louisiana Connect was created. It has the purpose of helping teens find the right college for them, teaching them how to pay for it, and bringing them great opportunities," he concluded.

"The Louisiana Connect portal helps students with choosing a college that the student feels right about applying to and lets the student know how much that college will cost," said Passion Leach from Peabody Magnet High School.

"Louisiana Connect is a great Web site that can aid you into the future," said Janee Dixon of Carencro High School.

"Another thing I learned about at Trailblazer Camp was the Louisiana Connect portal," said Paige Vaughn of Livonia High school. "This portal helps you track what you've done in high school and helps you plan for the future," she added.

STS Workshops scheduled for November

Representatives from LOSFA's Public Information and Communications staff will hold workshops for non-public school administrators who use the Student Transcript System (STS). These workshops are open to anyone who uses STS or supervises someone who uses STS, and anyone who would find it useful to know how STS works.

This year's workshops will take place on **Tuesday, November 27, through Friday, November 30** at the Louisiana Technology Park in Baton Rouge, located at 7117 Florida Boulevard (in the Bon Carre Mall).

During the four days, there will be six separate workshops with training ranging from beginner to advanced. Below are descriptions of the three different types of workshops as well as a schedule of when each will be held.

Beginners/Intermediate Classes: appropriate for beginners and for intermediate users who want or need a refresher. These are less detailed than the all-day classes, and do not allow time for much practice or for much discussion between groups from different schools.

All-day Classes: appropriate for beginners, for users unsure of their expertise, and for users who are familiar with STS on an everyday basis, but not experienced beyond basics, as well as users who want or need a refresher. Includes practice with one's own school's data.

Advanced Classes: appropriate for intermediate and advanced users. Includes instruction (primarily about non-standard situations), practice, and discussion, with emphasis on solutions one school uses that may be useful to other schools.

Tuesday, November 27:

Beginners/Intermediate session - 8:20 am until 12:50 pm

Advanced session from 1:45 pm until 5:00 pm

Wednesday, November 28:

All-day session - 8:20 am until 5:00 pm

Thursday, November 29:

Beginners/Intermediate session - 8:20 am until 12:10 pm

Advanced session - 1:15 pm until 4:30 pm

Friday, November 30:

All-day session - 8:20 am until 4:30 pm

All participants **MUST** already have a login to STS when they arrive at the workshop. If your login is new, please test it before arriving so that class time is not used if there is a problem with your login.

For more information and to register, visit the workshop registration page at <http://www.osfa.la.gov/STSworkshop>.

Professional School Counselor Workshops 2012

LOSFA completed its annual Professional School Counselor Workshops in October. The workshops were attended by 849 representatives from high schools, middle schools, universities, and college access programs across the state of Louisiana. Workshops were held in Alexandria, Baton Rouge, Bossier City, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Mandeville, Monroe and New Orleans.

"We are extremely thankful for the hundreds of dedicated counselors who attend our workshops annually," Gus Wales, Public Information and Communications Director, said. "It is truly a pleasure to work with them throughout the year to provide their students with the most accurate and up-to-date college/career access and financial aid information available. The students of Louisiana are fortunate to have such a committed group of counselors in their corner."

Attendees were given a preview of new features recently added to the Louisiana Connect Portal. Counselors were also updated on all LOSFA programs, including TOPS, the Louisiana Go Grant and the TOPS Tech Early Start program along with announcement of dates for upcoming LOSFA events and outreach activities.



Professional School Counselors check in prior to a workshop on Southern University's campus in Baton Rouge.



LOSFA's Public Information Director Gus Wales welcomes Professional School Counselors to the 2012 workshop in Baton Rouge.



LOSFA Public Information and Communications Supervisor Jerri Mack addresses Professional School Counselors in attendance at the 2012 workshop in Baton Rouge.



A group of Professional School Counselors listen as LOSFA's staff presents new information on financial aid programs and previews new features of the Louisiana Connect portal.

LOSFA's Social Media Sites



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



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



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



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

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 Gus Wales at Gus.Wales@la.gov.