



LOSFA LOOP

October 2014 Edition

Volume 7-10

From the Desk of the Executive Director



“There are two great days in a person’s life - the day we are born and the day we discover why.”

William Barclay

Dr. Sujuan Boutté I came across this quote the other day and it has been first and foremost in my thoughts as we approach the school year and continue the work we do with the students we serve. Barclay’s observation is as profound as the challenge it presents to those of us who work with students. We are entrusted with malleable minds and hearts full of the promise that opportunity brings.

In the college access world our goal is to help each student discover their ‘why’: that talent or attribute which allows them to do something better than anyone else. Our mission is to help them target that talent towards a career choice which in turn leads to the college choice that provides the best fit for them. It is with that goal and mission in mind that we anticipate the start of Louisiana College Application Month.

We couldn’t be more excited about the expansion of last year’s College Application Week to this year’s College Application Month. We’ve grown from 25 high schools last year to 56 high schools this year. We’ve grown from a week of assistance to a month of assistance. Regardless of the length of time or the number of schools, the message is still the same: College Application Month is all about connecting students to opportunities.

We’re not talking about just any opportunity though. Even though we know that college is any education

beyond high school, we want to encourage students to discover themselves before they decide to discover a school. In other words we don’t just want them to apply to college; we want them to apply to a college that is the best match and fit for them.

Enter the LOSFA 5-Point Match: our go-to method for helping students to discover their ‘why’.

LOSFA’S 5 Point Match



Aptitude, Skills, Interest Match

What’s your Career Path? How much education do you need to get there?

Academic Match

Which programs are you eligible for?

Cost of Choice Match

Which program results in completion with the best income to loan debt ratio?

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Social and Emotional Match

Which environment works best for you now? Online versus seat time? Large campus, Urban Setting, Small Campus, Rural/Suburban Setting? Weekday, Weeknight or Weekend Class Schedule?

Retention Match

Which program has the greatest success rate with retaining students like you?

Why do we do what we do?

It's their choice, it's their future. You can count on us to help!

Best-
S.

October is Louisiana College Application Month

October has been proclaimed "Louisiana College Application Month" by both Governor Bobby Jindal and the Louisiana Board of Regents.

Louisiana College Application Month is coordinated by the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) and Louisiana GEAR UP in partnership with the University of Louisiana System, Louisiana Board of Regents, Louisiana Education Loan Authority (LELA), Council of Student Body Presidents (COSBP), Louisiana Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (LACRAO), Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU), the Louisiana Technical College System (LCTCS), the Lafayette GEAR UP program, and Louisiana TRIO programs.

Louisiana College Application Month is being held at 56 high schools across the state throughout the month of October. As part of the American College Application Campaign (ACAC) initiative, Louisiana College Application Month seeks to increase the number of students who are applying to college early in their senior year with a focus on first-generation and low-income students as well as students who may not otherwise apply to college.

According to Louisiana State University Associate Vice Chancellor of Enrollment Management, Dr. David D. Kurpius, applying before November of the high school senior year:

- Increases your opportunity to get the on-campus housing you desire
- Increases your opportunities for high-performing student programs
- Increases your chances for admission to the Honors College
- Increases your opportunities to be considered for discipline (major) specific (institutional) scholarships
- Increases the assistance you will get from the university to help you enroll
- Increases your opportunities to participate in pre-college programs

LOSFA Executive Director, Dr. Sujuan Boutté, added, "Applying early also increases your chances of being accepted to your first choice school; increases your

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October is Louisiana College Application Month *continued*

likelihood of being able to apply and be accepted to summer bridge programs that allow you to get a head start at the institution; and increases your ability to plan in advance for any fees associated with enrollment-which occur before scholarships, grants and loans are disbursed.”

During Louisiana College Application Month, students at participating high schools will be assisted as they complete college applications during the school day with the goal of each participating student submitting at least one college application. During Louisiana College Application Month, students may apply to any of Louisiana’s 10 community and technical colleges, 10 independent colleges, and 18 public universities.

“The University of Louisiana System (UL) is excited to partner with LOSFA and Louisiana GEAR UP on this initiative. All nine of our universities are participating in Louisiana College Application Month, and our goal is to have a representative at every single event this October. Our system is the largest in the state, enrolling almost 89,000 students and producing over 16,500 degrees every year. Yet, we are strategically ramping up efforts to enroll and graduate students to meet projected growths in middle and high skill jobs over the next several years,” said UL System President Dr. Sandra K. Woodley.

In part, the Governor’s Proclamation reads, “Whereas the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) in collaboration with other state agencies, higher education institutions and college access programs are working together to connect learners with opportunities for greater access, persistence and demonstrable success across the state; and whereas, all Louisiana high school seniors may participate in this

initiative, thereby receiving assistance from trained school staff and volunteers in completing a college application; now, therefore, I, Bobby Jindal, Governor of the State of Louisiana, do hereby proclaim October 2014 as LOUISIANA COLLEGE APPLICATION MONTH in the State of Louisiana.”



According to the United States Department of Education, young adults with postsecondary credentials earn more than those

with just a high school diploma or its equivalent. College is defined as any education beyond high school. “Thus, Dr. Boutté added, “there are many college paths ranging from certificates and credentials to four-year degrees; all of which can be paid for with various LOSFA awards. Whether you start with TOPS Tech Early Start in high school and earn up to 24 hours of college credit in a top-demand occupation; TOPS Tech to earn a two-year degree; or TOPS to enroll in and complete a four-year degree: It’s your choice, it’s your future, and you can count on LOSFA to help.”

In 2013, the LOSFA-administered Louisiana GEAR UP program, in conjunction with the Lafayette GEAR UP program, conducted a Louisiana College Application Week pilot program. The pilot program was conducted in 25 Louisiana GEAR UP and Lafayette GEAR UP high schools and helped 1,049 students complete at least one college application. Due to the success of the Louisiana College Application Week pilot, LOSFA has expanded this initiative from one week to the entire month of October and is inviting all interested Louisiana high schools to participate.

To join the discussion about Louisiana College Application Month on Twitter, follow #ApplyToCollege.

Feedback from students attending recent LOSFA programs

Last month high school seniors, including those from the 2014-15 LA GEAR UP class, attended College Kickoff events at their schools and Area Leadership Programs at designated sites, while rising seniors who will graduate from high school in 2015 attended LOSFA Trailblazer camps at Northwestern State and Nicholls State universities during the summer of 2014. Feedback from both the Trailblazers and the GEAR UP students has been both positive and encouraging.

Members of LOSFA's 2014 Trailblazer class have begun their senior year at their respective high schools. They have also begun sharing the financial aid and college access information they learned at Trailblazer Camp to their peers. Here are what some of them are saying:

"Trailblazer camp was a real big eye opener. It made me realize that my time was here and that I am a senior in high school ready for graduation. Not only did it make me realize that I was actually a senior but also that senior year, graduating, and going to college is a long process.

"The most important information I got from Trailblazer camp was information about financial aid. I know what financial aid I want to obtain, such as, scholarships and grants. I also learned the financial aid I want to try to avoid, such as, loans. Getting financial aid won't be hard, if you do your research. That is why it is best to start early before it is too late.

"The train doesn't stop when you get to college. TOPS is something that you have to maintain throughout your college experience. We learned at Trailblazer Camp to not "BLOW YOUR TOPS!" It is too important. You have to maintain your required GPA and fill out the FAFSA every year. The higher your ACT score the better because the more money you get.

"All the information I received, I get to go back and share it with my class of 2015. This is the most important part. That is getting everyone aware of all the free money and also the long process of senior year. I think there are a lot of seniors that do not realize this but at least I can be the one to help and be a leader at my school. Thank you Trailblazer Camp for this wonderful experience and giving me so much helpful information."

**-Isis Harris
Rayville High School**

"Trailblazer Camp was one of the best experiences of my life. I met so many new friends, and I learned so much information that I needed to know. Before I went, I was dreading going because I thought that it would be boring but thankfully it wasn't.

"At Trailblazer Camp, I learned information about LOSFA, TOPS, scholarships, tuition, and FAFSA. This information was helpful to me and my parents because I am an only child. My parents had no clue what we were going to have to do within this next year. Thankfully, after they read my (Trailblazer) binder, they had a better understanding of what we had to complete.

"I learned that I should apply for every scholarship that I am eligible for. If I can get TOPS plus tons of (other) scholarship money, my whole college education may get paid for without me having to pay a penny. I didn't realize how much high school education mattered when thinking about college.

"As soon as school started, I went to my counselor, and we discussed (what) I learned. She was extremely pleased with how much I knew. When a LOSFA representative came to my school to talk to the seniors, my counselor introduced me to the representative

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Feedback from students attending recent LOSFA programs (continued)

as a Trailblazer. He looked so happy to see that I was informed and interested in what LOSFA had taught me. "I have already started applying for scholarships. I took your advice and applied to college early. I have been accepted to Nicholls State University for the fall semester of 2015. In January, I plan to fill out the FAFSA form. I look forward to continuing to use the advice you have provided me with. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to meet such amazing people and have the time of my life! I will never forget my fellow Trailblazers and the amazing experience I had in the summer of 2014."

-Michelle Domigne
Assumption High School

"Trailblazer Camp was the most interesting and informing camp I have ever been to. It taught me about more than just scholarships and financial aid but about how to communicate with others. It does not matter the race or background of an individual but the personality and how they act towards one another. The whole experience was awesome. I was happy to be surrounded by wonderful people in my age range and others willing to help inform soon-to-be college freshmen.

"With the knowledge from the camp, I have been looking into scholarships and financial aid. I informed my peers on the information about financial aid. Many have taken advantage of the opportunity. I have also been taking advantage of the wonderful opportunity and put my knowledge to work. The information has been beyond helpful."

-Brandy Naverro
Berwick High School Senior

"I attended the Trailblazer camp hosted at Nicholls State University, and I am currently a senior at South Lafourche High School. There were so many things that I would not have known without this experience. At camp I learned about many scholarship opportunities

and ways to get 'free money.' By 'free money,' I mean all the different types of financial aid available. I was so surprised to hear them all. There were scholarships, grants, employment opportunities, and even loans (although you have to pay them back). When speaking to my friends about college and one of them responds with, 'I'll just take out a loan,' I always stress how you have to pay them back, and in most cases you actually end up paying more than what you even borrowed in the first place. Being chosen as my school's Trailblazer was an honor. Thank you for the amazing opportunity!"

-Ana Merida
South Lafourche High School

"As a result of going to Trailblazer Camp over the summer, I feel I have learned many useful things that will help me in the future. What I found to be most important is learning about financial aid, TOPS, and managing my budget.

"We need to be prepared for our futures by starting to look into scholarships and financial aid, as well, to help in any way possible. TOPS is a wonderful program because I will definitely need assistance to help pay for college. I find this program also pushes young people to strive to be better and work harder to get the grades required to be eligible for TOPS."

-Taylor Delcambre
Highland Baptist Christian School

"Trailblazer camp was a wonderful experience. I learned so much information that was very important in regards to colleges. I feel like students learn this information when its too late, so I am excited to share this information with my peers.

"One major thing I learned about is FAFSA. Until Trailblazer camp, I had no idea that it would be my financial aid application as well as my TOPS application.

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Feedback from students attending recent LOSFA programs (continued)

I also was not aware of College Goal Sunday or College Application Month. I think those are great opportunities for my peers. When I returned to my school I met with one of the counselors. We plan on doing daily morning broadcasts about colleges, and also having an informational assembly for parents. I would like to add that Trailblazer Camp has introduced me to a college that I believe will suit my educational needs. I was able to learn about Nicholls as well tour the entire campus. I am excited to say that I have applied and have been accepted to Nicholls State University.”

-Joi Turner

John Ehret High School

“The trailblazer program was a very exciting experience. I was able to make new connections and learn new things. I learned amazing things about colleges and all types of financial aid. I plan on taking back everything I’ve learned to not only the seniors at my school but teachers as well.

“The Trailblazer program taught me many things that will benefit me and others at my high school. During my experience I was taught the importance of budgeting to stay out of debt. I also learned that you should apply to more than one college. To share my experience with others, I have been talking to my friends about all the information I have learned constantly. I have been telling my friends about the FAFSA and how they can get help if they need to complete it. I also inform them of all the requirements they must have to earn TOPS and how important it is to apply for scholarships. As a trailblazer leader I tell my friends how important it is for my friends to make sure they read the requirements you must meet to get the full scholarships. Not only have I been talking to my friends about my experiences at the Trailblazer camp but I have been talking to my teachers as well. Many were not aware of some of the changes and new things that have come across for future college students.

“Trailblazer camp has been extremely beneficial and I know it will not only benefit me but others as well. The things I have learned will help me throughout my entire life and I will continue spreading my knowledge to others so they can benefit as well. I have enjoyed my experience and will always remember my time at Trailblazer camp.”

-Chastity Boyance

Port Barre High School

“Trailblazer Camp was an exciting and unforgettable experience. I learned a lot of information about college admissions and graduate information. The helpful people at LOSFA informed me about financial aid and free money that is available to seniors across Louisiana. The LOSFA people informed about numerous tips that we may use when applying for college, paying for college, and staying in college.

“Since starting my senior year in high school, the information from Trailblazer Camp has been really helpful. With the information, I was able to apply for some colleges and make sure I had all necessary classes for graduation to receive TOPS. I have also been able to sit and talk with my counselor after completing Trailblazer Camp 2014. We learned a lot of information that we will be able to share with our entire school. Thank you so much again for this great opportunity.”

-Zakkirra Smith

Madison High School

Below are some of the comments we have received from LA GEAR UP students who participated in College Kickoff and Area Leadership Programs (ALPS) Events (see full stories on page 8 and 9) held during the month of September:

“The College Kick-Off conference this week was so well put together...It gave a lot of information about what

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Feedback from students attending recent LOSFA programs (continued)

schools are looking for, how we should carry ourselves when we walk into the admissions office, and so much more...The La Gear Up program to me is actually one of the best programs a high school student could be a part of. It helps students understand more about college and helps them get a head start."

-Bastrop High school Student

"The College Kickoff was great. I learned a lot of things about college. I learned about financial aid. I also learned about how to apply for colleges as well. The staff is also incredible. They let us as students know they are always there to help us. I had a great experience at the College Kickoff, and I wish I could attend it again one day."

-Jeanerette High School Student

"The College Kickoff was an awesome experience. Lots of activities helped teach students about college readiness. The staff kept the students attentive. The activities helped teach us about scholarships, ACT, and many other things to get us ready for college. I would definitely recommend something like this to future students."

-Jeanerette High School Student

"LA GEAR UP is the best thing the State of Louisiana has implemented for our schools."

-Marksville High School Student

"LA GEAR UP has provided more opportunities than any other club has for my future."

-Florien High School Student

"I know what it means to be borrowing on a budget... one of the things that troubles high school students

is money...we can help students learn about all of the scholarships and aid that is out there."

-Negreet High School Student

"My LA GEAR UP experience has been great being in the program for six years; I have learned great leadership skills, met wonderful role models, and plus LA GEAR UP helped me decide on what college I want to attend. I visited the campus of Louisiana Tech meeting some of the teachers, coaches and administrators. Overall LA GEAR UP changed my life in a huge way this year because I was stuck between the Armed Forces and college by counselors who told me before I do anything I should try college. They said that it's going to be the best time of my life and I am ready."

-West St. John High School Student

"LA GEAR UP has made me open up to new things and new people. It also helped me develop better people skills. The College Kick-Off was a lot of fun. I am better prepared for my future."

-Red River High School Student

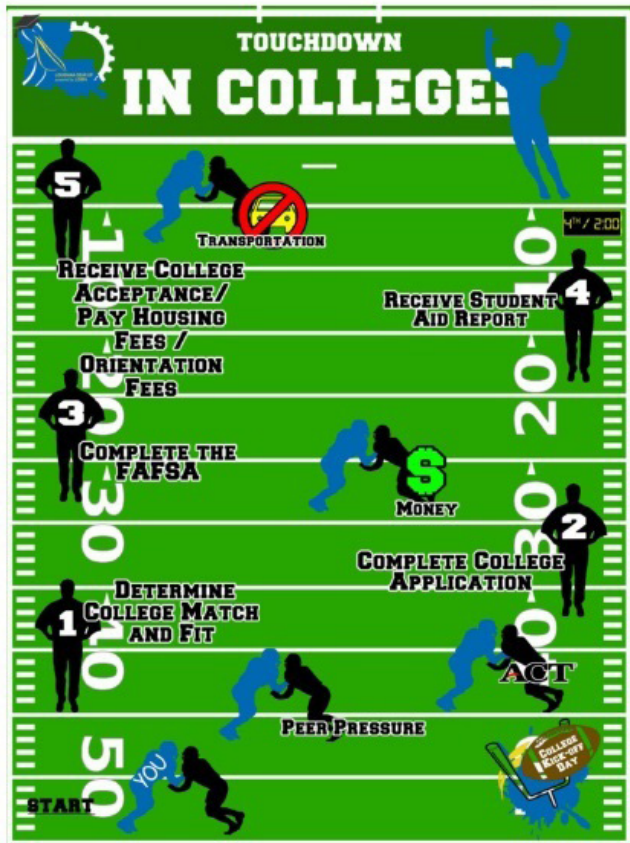
"I learned that anybody can go to college no matter where you're from."

-Westgate High School

"I am grateful for LA GEAR UP. I want to go to a college (like McNeese) that is diverse and do something different. My coordinator helps me too. The Kick-Off and ALPs (Area Leadership Programs) were good. I am glad I could come and I want to raise my ACT so I can get a lot of scholarships and grants."

-ReNew Accelerated High School Student

Game On! Touchdown in College



The no-cost extension year of the GEAR UP state grant, August 2014 through July 2015, began with College Kick-Off events that included every one of the 30 LA GEAR UP schools via either district-wide or individual school events. Attendance was phenomenal with 2,450 high school seniors in attendance. Check out the Tweets at lagearup.com.

Seniors were presented with an “I’m going to college wrist band” and a senior game plan focused on defensive and offensive moves from overcoming obstacles such as negative peer pressure to arranging for transportation to the university of choice in the fall. Game Plan simple steps include:

- Determine college match and fit
- Complete college application(s)
- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- Respond to college acceptance, and pay housing and orientation fees
- Review Student Aid Report

No punts allowed when a final field goal is required!



“Who can tell me what FAFSA stands for?” Ms. Thomas, against the stage, tosses questions. Mr. Hobbs, on the stage, tosses the t-shirts.

Students received t-shirts by answering questions about college Match & Fit and the Senior Game Plan, major emphases of the event.

Regional Area Leadership Programs



Matt Meuleners, FOCUS Training, leads an exercise in goal-setting.

On September 22, 23, and 24, 2014, 350 GEAR UP senior high school student leaders converged on the campuses of Louisiana State University in Alexandria, Southern University at Baton Rouge, and Grambling State University with the goals of maximizing the GEAR UP experience, running an effective academic year club, and planning an exciting and valuable year of student events and activities.

Facilitated by FOCUS Training, students took part in high-energy engaging workshops on club management, goal setting, action planning, and personal branding. Students also explored the campuses of host universities.



Mary Cobb Marshall, Glen Oaks High School guidance counselor, poses with Ariel Battley, a newly-elected LA GEAR UP Explorers' Club state officer. Both Ms. Marshall and Ms. Battley attended the Area Leadership Program on the campus of Southern University.



Darryle Sparks, Christopher Hobbs, Dr. Loretta Jagers, Kerrionte Broussard, and Dr. Tireka Cobb at the Grambling Area Leadership Program.

Student Quotes (ALPS)

"LA GEAR UP has encouraged me to step up and be a leader. I have also learned that there are many opportunities after high school for me and people at numerous secondary learning facilities willing to help me succeed!" **–Florien High School Student**

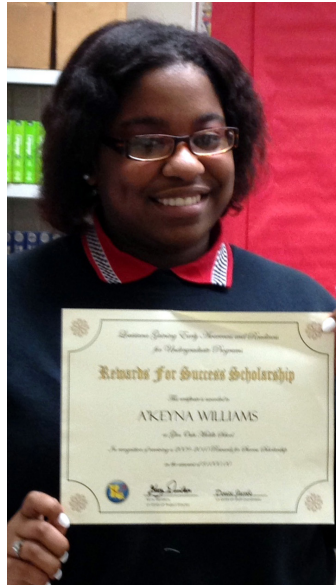
"My LA GEAR UP experience has been great being in the program for six years; I have learned great leadership skills, met wonderful role models, and plus LA GEAR UP helped me decided on what college I want to attend. I visited the campus of Louisiana Tech meeting some of the teachers, coaches and administrators. Then the opportunities to visit the parish and the gym helped me meet the students and ask them something about college and what were their adjustments. Overall LA GEAR UP changed my life in a huge way this year

because I was stuck between the Armed Forces and college. My counselors told me before I do anything I should try college. They said that it's going to be the best time of my life and I am ready." **–West St. John High School Student**

"Once I arrived on Southern University Campus for the Area Leadership Program, I was able to see what college life would be like. I saw all the students from different LA GEAR UP schools, and that made me want to step out into a more leadership role. When I chose to run for a state officer, I did not do it for recognition. I did it to inspire others to get involved and make a difference in our communities and state." **–Glen Oaks High School Student**

Other GEAR UP News: Rewards for Success

A'Keyna Williams, Glen Oaks High School senior, poses with her \$1,000 Rewards for Success scholarship certificate. The 2014-15 RFS application period is currently open through January, 2015. Scholarships will be awarded in the spring, just in time for graduation!



LOSFA Participates in Charitable Campaign

LOSFA employees are participating in the State Combined Charitable Campaign (SCCC) during the month of October. "Get in the Game and Score," is the theme for this year's campaign. This the inaugural year for the SCCC, a network of more than 70 qualified health and human service non-profit organizations located throughout the state.

To encourage giving and increase the amount of charitable donations, a variety of incentives are being offered. The most popular is Blue Jean Month, where for a \$25 contribution, employees are allowed to wear jeans to work. Other perks include a premium parking spot in the Executive Section, raffles for lunch gift certificates, gourmet cakes and cupcakes, carwashes, gift baskets, and a one night stay at a downtown hotel. Employees will also host a bake sale and ice cream social to raise funds. The culminating event will be a Halloween party complete with a costume contest.

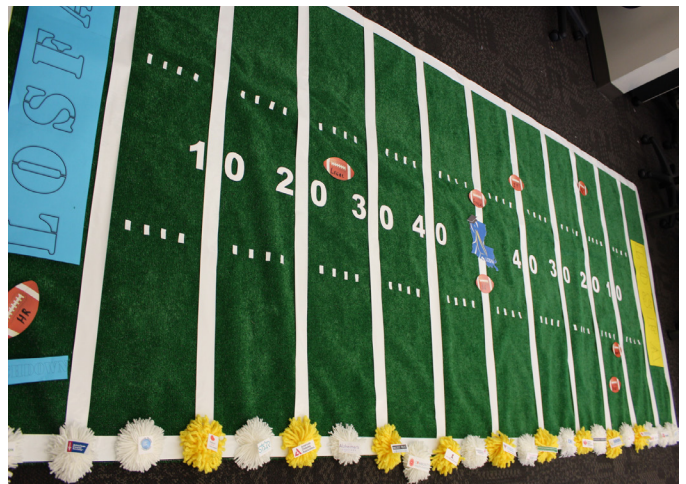
Deborah Paul, Scholarship and Grant Division, is serving as chairperson of the committee. Other committee members are Terri Jameyson, vice-chairperson, IT; Valerie Boston, PIC; Jamela Foreman, Administrative Services; Shenell Livous, Fiscal and Jerry Oubre, Audit.

Last year, LOSFA employees contributed \$6,851.52 to the United Way annual fundraising campaign.



Amber Martin, LOSFA Legal Division, receives her lunch gift certificate from the first lunch raffle from SCCC Committee Member Jerry Oubre.

LOSFA's theme for the SCCC is "Get in the Game and Score". SCCC Committee Member Terri Jameyson created a football field with markers indicating the different non-profit organizations LOSFA employees are raising money for.



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.