

From the Desk of the Executive Director



Melanie Amrhein

For such a short month, February certainly is busy. Super Bowl (and super commercials), Valentine’s Day, President’s Day, and Mardi Gras are all celebrated this month, but to top it off, for those of us in this industry, it is also Financial Aid Awareness Month. Hats off to all of you who work with students every day to ensure their dreams of a college education or credential are made possible. It’s appropriate that Financial Aid Awareness is observed in the same month as Valentine’s Day since it takes a lot of heart to do what you do. LOSFA will be at the “heart” of two special initiatives this month that are noteworthy – LOSFA’s Annual Call In/Chat night will be from 6:00 to 9:00 pm on Monday, February 18th to allow parents and students to call in with their questions when they have time away from work and school, and the sixth annual College Goal Sunday event will take place across the state on Sunday, February 24. A special thanks to all of the CGS volunteers who will be on the campuses to assist with this very worthy event. We hope to have record numbers in attendance and we couldn’t do this without our volunteers.

As FAFSA processing begins to pick up this month, I want to remind the financial aid offices that because LOSFA is a Mapping Your Future sponsor, you can access and use 2013-14 verification worksheets that meet Federal Student Aid’s guidance free of charge. Information is detailed in one of the LOOP articles this month.

We are very pleased to announce the record growth that is being seen in account activation in the Louisiana Connect portal! Our public high school partners are making great strides in working with their students to activate accounts that will give students access to their Individual Graduation Plans and to the TOPS Tracker. Students are also taking advantage of all other bells and whistles available to them through Louisiana Connect, such as career inventories, college searches and comparisons, and viewing messages sent from counselors, colleges and access providers. Over the past three weeks, accounts have grown by 10,000 users and adding approximately 4,000 active accounts weekly. We now have over 50,000 users! Based on comparisons to other state portals, this activation growth has surpassed others by 5 times. Our postsecondary partners in enrollment management will also be utilizing the portal to message students about specific college opportunities through the Student Recruit function available for this year, free of charge. Stay tuned as we will continue to keep you updated.

Hope you have a great February!

Melanie

In this edition. . .

<i>College Goal Sunday</i>	2	<i>Mapping Your Future updates</i>	5
<i>Program updates</i>	3	<i>Financial Aid Call-In Night</i>	6
<i>Staff announcements</i>	4	<i>LOSFA Social Media</i>	7

February 24 is College Goal Sunday in Louisiana

Louisiana's sixth annual College Goal Sunday will be held on February 24, 2013, from 2-4 p.m. at thirteen locations around the state. The purpose of College Goal Sunday is to provide students and their families with free professional assistance in completing the primary student financial aid form, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).



Completing the FAFSA is the first step to take in order to receive most forms of federal student aid, including Pell grants and low-interest federal student loans, and to participate in the federal Work Study program. In addition, several state student financial aid programs, including the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) scholarship program and the Louisiana Go Grant need-based aid program, require completion of the FAFSA in order to qualify for funds.

College Goal Sunday is a national program designed to help students navigate the paperwork barriers that stand between them and the money they need to attend college. Completing the form correctly with detailed income, tax and other information can be a difficult task. On College Goal Sunday, financial aid professionals from Louisiana colleges and universities will be on hand to provide free line-by-line assistance.

As an added bonus for participants, education scholarship funds have been donated to further aid in the funding of a student's education. Louisiana College Goal Sunday participants can submit their names for a drawing that will award one \$500.00 scholarship per location.

Anyone, from a soon-to-be high school graduate to a returning adult student, who is planning to attend any post secondary institution that participates in the Federal Title IV Aid programs during the 2013-2014 academic year can benefit from attendance. This includes public, private, technical, community, proprietary and career colleges.

Pre-registration for the event is encouraged to ensure that each site has the resources needed to assist all participants. To do so, log on to <http://www.osfa.la.gov/CollegeGoalSunday.shtml>. The website will also provide detailed information on the specific records and documentation that participants will need to bring to the event.

Louisiana College Goal Sunday is sponsored by the Louisiana Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (LASFAA) and the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) with assistance from the Louisiana Gear-Up and Trio programs and the Louisiana Department of Education. Funding for Louisiana College Goal Sunday is provided by the College Access Challenge Grant and a grant from USA Funds.

For more information, visit www.osfa.la.gov or contact the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance at (225) 219-1012 or (800) 259-5626, or by e-mail at custserv@la.gov.

2013 College Goal Sunday site locations:

Baton Rouge Community College

Bienvenue Student Center
Cafeteria
Baton Rouge, LA 70806

Bossier Parish Community College

Building D, Room 215
Bossier City, LA 71111

Delgado Community College - West Bank Campus

Building 1, Room 130
New Orleans, LA 70122

Dillard University

DUICEF HALL, Room 106
New Orleans, LA 70122

Fletcher Technical Community College

Main Campus (1407 Hwy. 311)
Room 104
Schriever, LA 70395

Louisiana Delta Community College

Monroe Campus - 7500
Millhaven Road
Louisiana Purchase Building,
Third floor
Room 310
Monroe, LA 71201

Louisiana State University-Alexandria

Brumfield Caffey Ballroom
First Floor Student Center
Alexandria, LA 71302

Lutcher High School

Auditorium
Lutcher, LA 70071

Southeastern Louisiana University

Fayard Hall - Main Lobby
Hammond, LA 70402

Southern University

P.B.S. Pinchback Engineering Building
High Tech Room #123
Robert E. Smith Drive
Baton Rouge, LA 70813

SOWELA Technical Community College

Arts and Humanities Bldg.
First Floor Multi-Purpose Room
Lake Charles, LA 70616

Xavier University

University Center McCaffrey
Ballroom on Drexel Dr.
New Orleans, LA 70125

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Moody Hall, Room 103
Lafayette, LA 70504

Jump\$tart Coalition to Participate in College Goal Sunday

Representatives of the Louisiana Jump\$tart Coalition For Personal Financial Literacy will be present at the College Goal Sunday event being held on Sunday, February 24, from 2:00 until 4:00 p.m. at the Baton Rouge Community College site.

Jump\$tart representatives will be available to consult with parents and students on a variety of subjects including: budget sheet preparation; tips on avoiding predatory lending offers; avoiding credit card debt; and suggestions for parent/student discussions about money matters.

Also, each attendee will receive a free "College Game Plan for Your Financial Future Playbook" from Jump\$tart that will help

students "set up a winning financial future!" Information will also be available on scholarship opportunities, financial and school resources for parents and students, and money planning tips.

"We are extremely pleased to have the Louisiana Jump\$tart Coalition provide these value-added services for the College Goal Sunday attendees at our Baton Rouge Community College venue," said LOSFA Executive Director, Melanie Amrhein. "Their participation is intended to be a pilot for expanded participation by their organization at additional College Goal Sunday sites in future years," she concluded.

Go Grant 2013-14 Award Year Framework Approved

The Louisiana Board of Regents has approved the Go Grant Framework for the 2013-14 award year. Under the framework, institutions will have the ability to structure the award to best fit the needs of their student populations, while making the best use of scarce state financial aid dollars.

To be eligible for a Louisiana Go Grant, a student must be a resident of Louisiana who is receiving a Federal Pell Grant and is enrolled in an eligible Louisiana institution on at least a halftime basis. Other eligibility requirements include filing a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and having remaining financial need after deducting Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) and all federal/state/institutional grant or scholarship aid ("gift aid") from student's Cost of Attendance (COA). The amount of the Go Grant cannot cause the gift aid to the student to exceed 60% of the student's need.

Students who meet the requirements receive funds based upon need, with a minimum annual award of \$300 and a maximum annual award of \$3,000 for the 2013-2014 academic year. As long as the student continues receiving Federal Pell Grant aid, there is no maximum lifetime award amount associated with Louisiana Go Grant. Awards are available during the fall and spring semesters/

quarters and will not be paid for summer sessions, quarters or terms.

Institutions must have a written packaging policy for Go Grant Awards that provides semester, quarter or term award amounts that are equal to the annual maximum amount at the institution divided by the number of semesters, quarters or terms during the academic year, excluding summer sessions, quarter and terms. The packaging policies must also include bases for any institutionally set maximum award amount that is less than the authorized maximum amount established in the framework, priority for students who are 25 or over, award amounts for less than full-time students, procedures for identification of transfer and re-entering students that ensure such students receive awards on the same basis as continuing students, and award eligibility criteria.

To view the complete framework for the 2013-14 Go Grant award year visit <http://www.osfa.la.gov/MainSitePDFs/S2013-01.pdf>.

Requests for Proposals Issued for LA GEAR UP

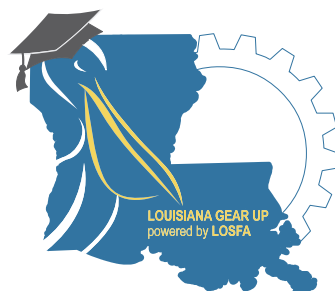
The Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance has issued two requests for proposals (RFPs) for Louisiana GEAR UP (LA GEAR UP) summer programming.

The first is for 2013 Summer Transition Programs (STPs) which will be one-week College Readiness and ACT prep programs for rising 11th and 12th grade students in LA GEAR UP schools. The programs will be held on college campuses around the state.

An informational meeting was held on January 22, 2013, in the Oliver Pollock Room of the Galvez Building. The meeting was attended by representatives from five Louisiana universities: University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Louisiana Tech University, Nicholls State University, McNeese State University, and Southeastern Louisiana University.

Both RFPs can be accessed at www.lagearup.com.

The second is the RFP seeking a contractor to provide statewide logistical support for STPs. The intent is to promote efficiency and economies of scale resulting in an increase in the number of students served during the summer of 2013.



John R. Justice Student Loan Repayment Program Update

LOSFA is accepting applications for the John R. Justice Student Loan Repayment Program, which provides for the payment of eligible educational loans for state and federal public defenders and state prosecutors employed in Louisiana who agree to remain employed as public defenders and prosecutors for at least three years.

Last year, seven public defenders were awarded \$9,308 each and 13 prosecutors were awarded \$5,012 each.

This year, due to decreased funding, the number of available awards is reduced to six for public defenders

with a proposed award amount of \$5,000 and 12 for prosecutors with a proposed award amount of \$2,500. Actual award amounts will be finalized at the March 11 meeting of the Louisiana Student Financial Assistance Commission (LASFAC). Below is a table showing how those awards will be distributed.

The application is now available and the deadline to apply is April 30, 2013. To check eligibility requirements or to apply, visit <http://www.osfa.la.gov/> and click on the LOSFA Programs button. The John R. Justice program is listed there. There is no paper application for the award; the online application is the only accepted application.

How Funds will be Awarded and Disbursed in 2013

Circuit	Public Defenders	Assistant District Attorneys
First Circuit	1	2
Second Circuit	1	2
Third Circuit	1	2
Fourth Circuit	2	4
Fifth Circuit	1	2
Total Awards	6	12
Proposed Annual Award Amounts	\$5,000	\$2,500

Shannon Domingue Named Assistant Director of Louisiana GEAR UP

Shannon Domingue has been named Assistant Director of Louisiana's Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (LA GEAR UP).

Domingue has been a member of the LA GEAR UP staff for the past five years, serving first as a Program Coordinator and later as an Administrative Technician. He has experience working with participating schools and districts in various areas, including budget management, communications, and program development & management.

Domingue has also been responsible for the operation of the Rewards for Success scholarship program and the Make a Difference grant application and grant making process for LA GEAR UP.

"It brings me great excitement to embark on this challenging new journey as Assistant Director for Louisiana GEAR UP," Domingue said. "Over the past five years, I have worked together with staff and partners to increase access to post-secondary education to underserved populations, including working closely with the START Saving Program staff to disburse over \$1.8 million in Rewards for Success scholarships to students. I look forward to building even stronger partnerships and to building on solid foundations to lead Louisiana GEAR UP into the next chapter of its distinguished history."

As Assistant Director for Louisiana GEAR UP, Domingue will serve as operational manager of the LA GEAR UP state grant under the direction of the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) Assistant Executive Director for Programs, Dr. Sujuan Boutte, and the Project Director, LOSFA Executive Director Melanie Amrhein.



"We are very fortunate to have someone with Shannon's enthusiasm, knowledge and experience to lead LA GEAR UP into its next stage as the cohort advances closer towards its goal of graduation and college participation," Amrhein said. "His dedication to this program and its students was a key factor in his selection."

Domingue holds a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature and a Master's of Library & Information Science from Louisiana State University. He also completed a Post Baccalaureate Teaching Certification Program at Letourneau University in Austin, TX.

Prior to his LA GEAR UP work, Domingue taught English at White Castle High School in Iberville Parish. He also worked as a substitute teacher for two years in the Austin Independent School District.

Domingue assumed the duties of the position, which was left vacant when Sally Donlon accepted the position of Assistant Dean of the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, on January 8, 2013.

Mathilde Rivera Retires From LOSFA After 27 Years

Mathilde Rivera retired on January 9, 2013, after 27 years with LOSFA.

Rivera served as the Deputy Director of the Information Technology division at LOSFA.

"I have enjoyed my tenure here and I appreciate having the opportunity to work with each of you," she wrote in her farewell email to LOSFA's staff. "Thank you for your support during my past 27 years at LOSFA."



Mathilde Rivera (left) celebrates at her retirement party with LOSFA Executive Director Melanie Amrhein (right).



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Monday, January 28, 2013

CONTACT: Sherry Hildebrand

Communications Manager

(512) 635-3315

sherry@mappingyourfuture.org

Mapping Your Future updates 2013-14 verification worksheets

Schools wanting verification worksheets that address the latest guidance from the Department of Education can retrieve those worksheets from Mapping Your Future.

Mapping Your Future recently updated the 2013-14 verification worksheets provided to assist Member schools and schools in Sponsored states in collecting information they need from students to complete the verification process. The updates reflect the guidance, exceptions, and language recently provided by the Department of Education in the [January 18, 2013 Electronic Announcement](#).

“The verification worksheets that Mapping Your Future provides are designed to allow the schools flexibility to package the worksheets as needed, while taking into consideration the exceptions set by the Department of Education,” said Cathy Mueller, executive director for Mapping Your Future. “Mapping Your Future will continue to monitor any announcements for guidance or changes and revise the worksheets as needed.”

Schools can access these worksheets by logging into their Mapping Your Future [Access Area](#).

Since the worksheets are available as a service to Member schools and schools in Sponsored states, non-member schools are encouraged to learn more about the benefits of Membership at mappingyourfuture.org/Membership/membershippart.htm.

###

Mapping Your Future, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit organization, helping students plan better tomorrows. Based in Round Rock, Texas, Mapping Your Future has, since 1996, consistently empowered students and families with the information and services they need to accomplish their career and higher education goals, as well as manage their finances. For more information on Mapping Your Future, visit us at MappingYourFuture.org or contact us at feedback@mappingyourfuture.org.

The Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) Presents:



A Special Financial Aid Call-In Night

Monday, February 18, 2013
6-9 p.m.

For one night only...*

LOSFA staff will be available to answer all of your student financial aid questions



800-259-5626 (toll free)

219-1012 (Baton Rouge local)

Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS)
Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
Go Grant
START Saving Program
Federal Student Aid

We Hope To Hear From You!

*This service is also available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.

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.