



## From the Desk of the Executive Director



Dr. Sujuan Boutté

"The secret of getting ahead is getting started."

**Mark Twain**

Getting starting is exactly what Louisiana College Application Month (LCAM) was all about. In

September we got students excited about the year ahead with College Kick-Offs and the launching of the Senior Game Plan. In October we moved the ball down field with on-site assistance with applying to college. By all quantitative and qualitative indications, Louisiana College Application Month was a great success!

### LCAM Stats

Our team surveyed students at each location. As of press time, we received 1,305 completed student surveys. Here's what they told us:

65% of the students surveyed as of 10/24/14 said they had not applied to college BEFORE their Louisiana Application event.

44.2% of the students surveyed as of 10/24/14 stated that their Louisiana College Application Month event influenced their decision to apply to college.

87.7% of the students surveyed as of 10/24/14 stated that they received as much one-on-one assistance that they needed to complete their college application.

8.8% of the students surveyed as of 10/24/14 stated that they believe they would not have applied for

admission to college had they not participated in LCAM.

77.4% of the students surveyed as of 10/24/14 stated that they plan to attend other college readiness activities such as College Goal Sunday and financial aid nights.

Of the students surveyed as of 10/24/14 some of the biggest challenges/obstacles they indicated they will have to face in order to go to college were:

54% said Money

43.6% said Financial Aid

25.5% said finding the right college

This type of feedback confirms that the extra effort put forth towards reaching students is worth every mile we put on our vehicles and our bodies.

### Quotes from Counselors

Our event went very well. In fact, we increased the number of seniors who applied to at least one college by November 1st by 60%!! Thank you for your help.  
*Andrea Kuhn, Counselor, Fisher Middle/High School*

I want to thank all of you for your help. All seniors were able to fill out an application for college. I could have never done this without all of your help. Except for some of the sites being blocked everything went really well. THANKS!

*Pamela Mayet, Counselor, Terrebonne High School*

***continued on page 2***

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

***LOSFA Launches Text Supporting  
Louisiana College Application Month***

***3  
4-7***

***Explorer's Club State Officers***

***8-9***

## From the Desk of the Executive Director *continued*

### Quotes from Students

"Everything was smooth going."

"I would like to know who came up with such a great idea."

"Thanks for your time and helping us become one step closer to college."

"Keep event at the schools."

"It was ok and steady. No pressure was applied just encouragement."

"This experience was wonderful. I am feeling very confident about my application."

"It was help when needed and I actually got the chance to speak to the college reps."

"I was impressed. It was awesome."

"Perfect for seniors who already have plenty of senior fees to pay."

"It has made me more prepared for the future."

"Keep up the good work."

"It was an amazing experience, makes me more excited about college."

"My overall experience of this is just very good. It has influenced me to want to do better to go to college and explore."

"Before today, I didn't know how to apply for college but they helped me and now I have faith in my abilities to try and make it to college."

This type of feedback confirms that we are truly making a difference.

A huge shout-out is in order to all of our LOSFA staff and our dedicated partners for being that difference in the lives of the students we serve!

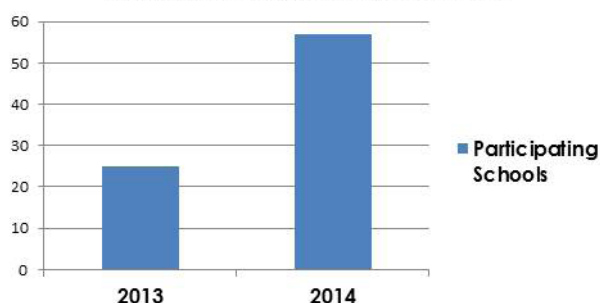
Best-  
S.

### Student Participation

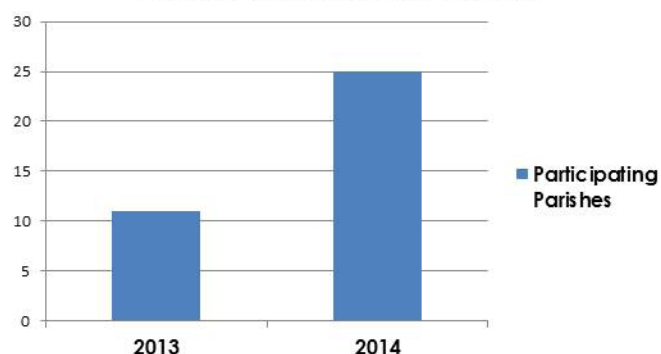
In 2013, 1,296 students participated

In 2014, 3,437 students participated

**LCAM Participating Schools**



**LCAM Participating Parishes**



## LOSFA Launches Texting Support

The Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) has begun using text messaging to convey critical college access information to more than 5,000 high school seniors and will begin sending text reminders to more than 14,000 college freshmen with tips on how to keep their TOPS awards in good standing on November 17th.

“LOSFA wants to do everything it can to increase the percentage of college freshmen TOPS recipients who persist beyond their first year in postsecondary education,” said LOSFA Executive Director Dr. Sujuan Boutté. “These students worked hard through four years of high school to earn their TOPS awards,” Boutté continued, “LOSFA wants to help them keep their TOPS awards by making sure that they understand the retention requirements and how to make up for early deficiencies within the academic year they occur.”

“Since the preferred method of communication among young people today is via text,” Boutté added, “it seems only logical that we recognize this reality and adapt our messaging accordingly.”

Any high school or college freshman not initially receiving the text reminders from LOSFA may request inclusion by Emailing their name, school name and mobile number to LOSFA at [custserv@la.gov](mailto:custserv@la.gov) with a subject line of “TEXT”.

LOSFA has always included retention information in the form of a TOPS Rights and Responsibilities document with each student’s initial TOPS eligibility letter. Those letters have historically gone out as soon as the

student’s TOPS eligibility is determined, usually in the weeks immediately preceding the beginning of the fall postsecondary semester/term. “That is a timeframe when students and their parents are deluged with information, deadlines, orientation, scheduling classes, buying books, moving into housing, and so on,” Boutté stated. “In that environment, she added, “it’s easy for the TOPS retention information to get overlooked.”

The same technology is being used to communicate important college access information to a pilot population of approximately 5,000 high school seniors. These high school seniors are receiving texts that remind them of testing registration deadlines; college application preparation assistance; Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion assistance; financial aid and college access workshops and seminars; fee payment deadlines for college applications, housing applications, orientation applications, etc.

The participating pilot high schools were chosen from those participating in LOSFA’s Louisiana GEAR UP program which services 30 schools around the state with large percentages of students who have the potential to become first generation college attendees. These schools receive intensive services from Louisiana GEAR UP and other LOSFA resources on a weekly basis throughout the year. Additional participating pilot schools are from among a pool of schools selected to receive concentrated LOSFA services throughout the year. These schools were also selected based on the number of students receiving free and reduced lunches and historically low-rates of TOPS qualifiers.

# High School Seniors Participate in Louisiana College Application Month

During the month of October, 3,437 seniors at 57 high schools in 25 parishes completed 4,066 college applications as part of Louisiana College Application Month.

When compared to a pilot College Application Week conducted in 2013, the 2014 figures represent a:

- 128% increase in the number of participating high schools
- 127% increase in the number of participating parishes
- 165% increase in the number of participating students
- 188% increase in the number of applications completed and submitted

During Louisiana College Application Month, students at participating high schools were assisted as they completed 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 had the opportunity to apply to any of Louisiana's 10 community colleges, 10 independent colleges, and 18 public universities.

Louisiana College Application Month was 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.



As part of the American College Application Campaign (ACAC) initiative, Louisiana College Application Month aims 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

*continued on page 5*



## High School Seniors Participate in Louisiana College Application Month *continued*

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

According to the United States Department of Education, young adults with a postsecondary credential or degree 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."

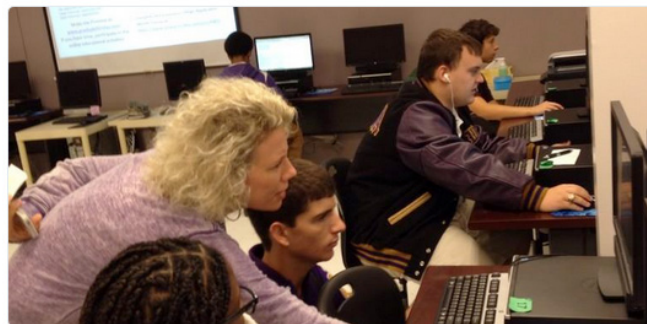
During the month-long campaign, participating students and organizations were encouraged to "tweet" about their Louisiana College Application

Week events and experiences. As a result, a total of 127 "applytocollege@LOSFA" tweets and retweets were posted in October. A few of the "tweets" are featured on this page.



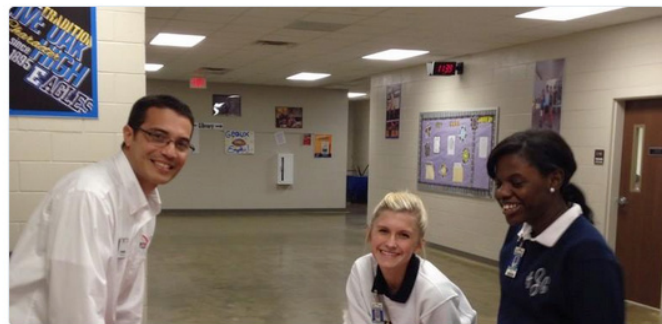
LOSFA @LOSFA · Oct 15

Wendy Rock, Senior Counselor at Hahnville HS, assisting her students with their applications. #applytocollege



LOSFA @LOSFA · Oct 22

Domingo from @MyBRCC assisting students at Live Oak High School's LCAM event. #applytocollege



LOSFA @LOSFA · Oct 22

Ms. Charlie Lewis of @LAGEARUP helping a Scotlandville Magnet senior complete her application. #applytocollege



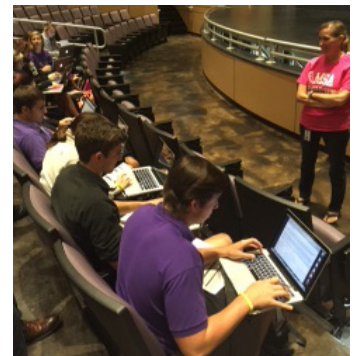
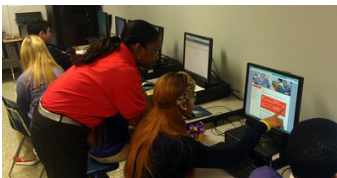
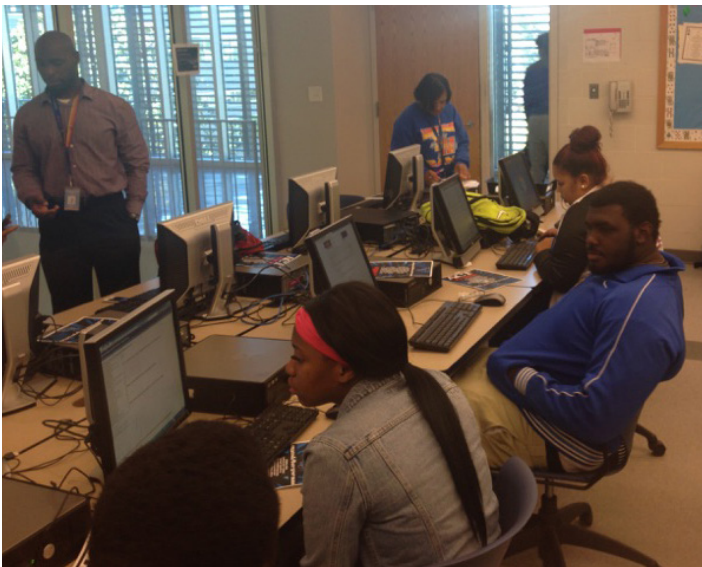
LOSFA @LOSFA · Oct 6

Thank you, Ponchatoula High, for participating in LCAM! Congrats on completing your applications! #applytocollege



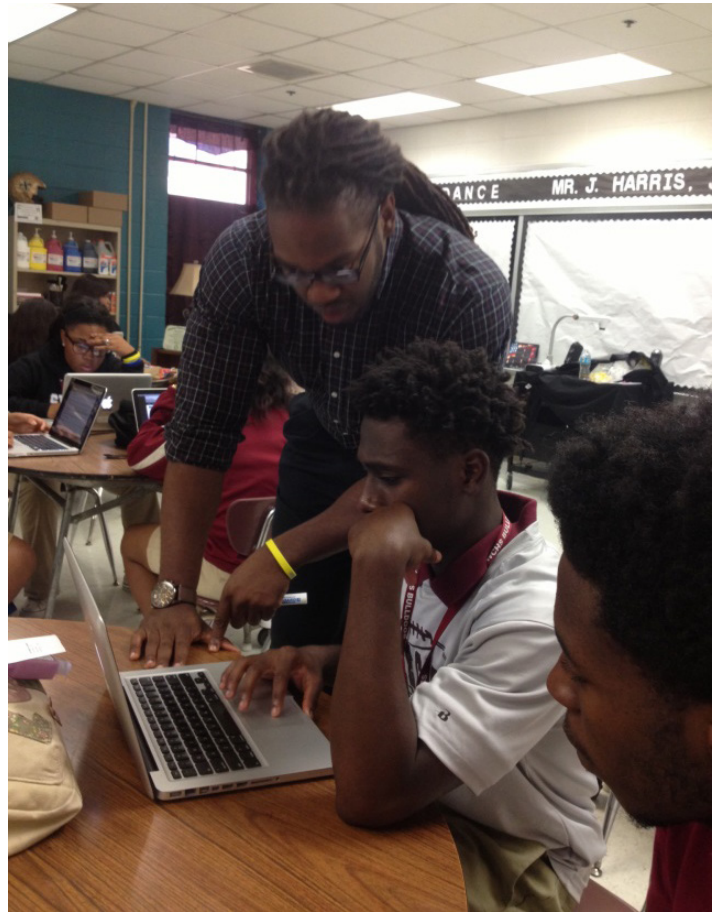


## Louisiana College Application Month





## Louisiana College Application Month





## Newly Elected 2014-15 LA GEAR UP Explorers' Club State Officers



Congratulations to the newly-elected LA GEAR UP Explorers' Club State Officers! Students assumed state leadership roles when they gathered at regional Explorers' Club Area Leadership Programs (ALPs) hosted

at SUBR, Grambling, and LSUA in September 2014.

The officer team will assume additional responsibilities and time commitments. Outside of local club functions, officers will work toward fulfilling the goals of the peer leadership academic-year club to promote a college-going culture.

As part of the election process, state officer candidates gave speeches at the ALPs. Excerpts below provide a glimpse into how these new state officers will meet their leadership responsibilities:



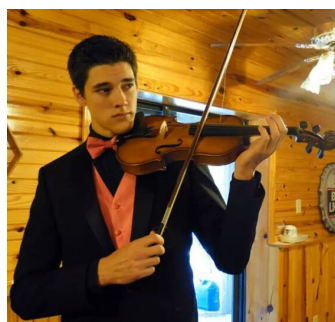
My LA GEAR experience has been outstanding because GEAR UP has prepared me to be more focused towards achieving my short and long term goals. LA GEAR UP has shaped me to increase my academic performance and preparation for college. It has also supported me to make wiser decisions

about my education options and financing. Later on,

when I graduate, I will major in Nursing, and I will have a minor in HealthCare Management with a Master's degree at Southern University and A&M College to become a Nurse Practitioner. —*Ariel Battley, Glen Oaks HS; SUBR, Nursing & Health Care Management*



I am a "straight A" student with a 4.42 GPA in the Engineering program, and I continue to strive for the best to achieve success. As a state officer, my purpose is to take all Louisiana GEAR UP schools to the next level so that we may rise and be higher than ever. I will not stop until my goal has been achieved. Let's GEAR UP, Louisiana! —*Oscar McClain, Scotlandville HS; La Tech, Chemical Engineering*



I am an active member in the Explorers' Club and varsity athletics. I lived in several different places in Louisiana and Texas as a small child because my father was in the US Army. I have five siblings. Since I can remember, I've had the urge to lead and help others. When I saw the opportunity to take a higher place of leadership in the program, I was overcome by my natural urges. I'd like to believe I have a natural charisma that supersedes most. —*Patrick Martone, Negreet HS; LSU or NSU, Industrial Engineering*

**continued on page 7**



## Newly Elected 2014-15 Explorers' Club State Officers *continued*



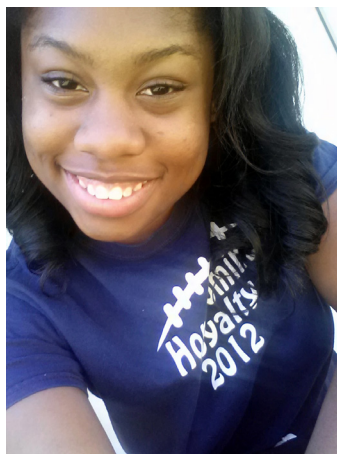
I am an honor student with a 3.8 GPA. I have built leadership skills by participating in Beta, Mu Sigma, Explorers Club, and 4-H. I enjoy helping others, so in my spare time I engage in community service activities that help out around the town of Bastrop. My goal as state officer is to help make this the best GEAR UP

year possible, not only to help benefit the students at my school, but to enhance the academic decisions leading to a postsecondary education for students at all Louisiana GEAR UP schools. I will not stop until my goal is completed, so let's get together and make this year a successful year. –*Alexicia Thomas, Bastrop HS; ULL, Pre-dental*



I am a senior representative on the Marksville HS Student Council, drum line captain in our band, and #1 on our tennis team. I also attend Louisiana State University

at Alexandria as part of a dual enrollment program to get a head start in college. My hobbies include playing basketball, tennis, piano, video games, and TV (cartoon network). I enjoy meeting new people and making new friends. I like to learn new ways to better myself and new ways to do different things. –*Dorian Campbell, Marksville HS; NSU, Music, Biology*



I have been a member of LA GEAR UP for two years. I also participate in other leadership positions; I am the captain of our high school varsity cheerleading squad and vice president of Beta Club. I'm very appreciative of being chosen to represent my school and the state as a representative, and I

am excited to prepare fellow LA GEAR UP members for college. –*Destiny Payton, Red River HS; La Tech, Computer Information Systems with a minor in Business*



State officers are working under the direction of Timenee Thomas (left), a former GEAR UP student and current LA GEAR UP program coordinator. Officers will organize the annual Explorers' Club State Conference and Leadership Summit, which will be held in the spring of 2015. The Conference is an annual event in which students

highlight the projects their clubs have engaged in throughout the school year. The 2013-14 academic-year Conference was held in the spring of 2014 in New Orleans.

## 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](mailto:custserv@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 the LOSFA LOOP,  
please contact Gus Wales at [Gus.Wales@la.gov](mailto:Gus.Wales@la.gov).