

### 10 Steps to Financial Fitness

Visit  
<http://www.mappingyourfuture.org/>  
to learn how to:

- *Understand the student loan process.*
- Repay your student loan, and know your options if you run into trouble.
- Manage Your Finances and take a simple test to see if your financial situation is getting out of control.
- Follow simple steps that will teach you how to balance your checkbook online.
- Keep your "wants" under control by establishing a budget and sticking to it.
- Build a savings plan, and make your money grow through investments.
- Use your credit cards wisely to establish a solid credit rating, and avoid financial problems.
- Request a credit report, and understand its key elements
- Clean up your credit and avoid bankruptcy.

## File Your FAFSA for 2012-13 (You Must Complete the Form Every Year)

### Priority Application Deadlines:

- **Incoming Undergraduates-** February 15<sup>th</sup>
- **Continuing Students -** May 1<sup>st</sup>

Officials in the Office of Federal Student Aid and the Internal Revenue Service have worked together to develop a process to simplify the steps that families must take each year to complete the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid ("FAFSA")**

Federal Student Aid staff have redesigned the "FAFSA on the Web" site to simplify the application process for applicants. Learn more about completing the FAFSA at  
<http://www.loyno.edu/financialaid/completing-fafsa>

### New for 2012-2013

The "IRS Data Retrieval" process for the 2012-2013 academic year should be available *starting on February 1, 2012*

- Electronically filed tax return information will be available online from the IRS site in 1-2 weeks after the return has been filed,
  - Data from paper tax returns will be available in 6-8 weeks.
- This process will be available for families filing their initial FAFSA applications. Families who file their initial FAFSA with "estimated income" can go use this process to update their original FAFSA data once their tax forms have been completed.

The benefit (to families) of utilizing the IRS Data Retrieval Process is that it will greatly simplify and expedite the verification process. You will no longer have to submit complete copies of your federal tax returns to our office before we can finalize your federal aid eligibility

Learn more at <http://www.loyno.edu/financialaid/irs-data-retrieval-process>





## Financial Aid Awareness Month

The purpose of **Financial Aid Awareness Month (FAAM)** is to inform and educate students and their families that college is attainable and that there are numerous sources of financial aid options available.

February is the key time to begin the application process for the upcoming school year in order to be considered for all aid programs offered at state and federal levels.

Students must annually complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid ("FAFSA") in order to apply for all federal, state and institutional "need-based" aid programs.

For more information on completing the FAFSA, go to:

<http://www.loyno.edu/financialaid/completing-fafsa> .

## Looking for Financial Aid?

### Don't Get Hooked by Misleading Offers

This is the time of year when many families start to receive direct mail solicitations from companies that offer to find financial aid opportunities for students.

### How Do You Know Which Offers are "Scams" and Should Be Avoided?

Any organization that charges you a fee to complete the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* ("FAFSA") should be closely examined. You can complete the FAFSA online at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>. This is the official Department of Education site for completing the FAFSA . You can receive free help in completing the FAFSA through the online site or through the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid

Any organization that charges you a fee for processing a scholarship application and tells you that the "scholarship is guaranteed or you will get your money back" should be closely examined. No one can guarantee that you will receive a scholarship before it has been awarded.

Any organization that tells you that you that they need your credit card information to "hold" your scholarship.

For additional information, visit the **Federal Trade Commission's dedicated page on Scholarship Scams** at <http://www.ftc.gov/scholarshipscams>

## Outside Scholarship Information Sent to Loyola

We maintain a list of "outside scholarship" opportunities on our web site. You can utilize this list as a starting point in your search for additional resources. Begin your research at <http://www.loyno.edu/financialaid/outside-scholarship-programs>



## What Is A 1098-T Statement ?

The Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 allows a tax credit to be claimed for out-of-pocket payments made to Loyola University New Orleans for the tax year for tuition and certain fees. The IRS requires that we provide the 1098-T statement to you for your use in completing IRS Form 8863. A detailed listing of charges, payments, grants and scholarships is available at our website through your LORA account at <http://www.loyno.edu/lora/>. We recommend that you refer to that information to assist in determining the amount of credit which may be claimed on your behalf. This information must not be construed as tax advice. The amounts and calculations used to determine the credit are the decision of the taxpayer after consideration of relevant IRS regulations, Form 8863, and, perhaps, the advice of a tax consultant.

For a list of "Frequently Asked Questions" About the 1098 Form, visit the Office of Student Finance's web site at <http://finance.loyno.edu/student-finance/tax-credit-and-1098-t>

## Federal Tax Credits for Educational Expenses

Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) , textbook and other course material expenses incurred in 2011 that are not covered by scholarship or grant aid may be counted towards the newly created tax credit called the **American Opportunity Tax Credit** on that year's tax return.

According to the IRS, the new credit temporarily replaces and expands the previous Hope Credit for tax years 2009 and 2010, making the American Opportunity Tax Credit available to a broader range of taxpayers, including many with higher incomes **and those who owe no tax.**

It also:

- Adds required **course materials** to the list of **qualifying expenses**
- Allows the credit to be claimed for the first **four** post-secondary education years instead of **two**

Many of those eligible will qualify for the maximum annual credit of **\$2,500** per student, which is more than \$700 higher than the old Hope Credit, and, **for the first time**, will provide a partial refund of up to **\$1,000.**

For more information, go to

<http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=213044,00.html>



## College Goal Sunday

**February 26, 2012  
2-4 pm Central Time**

College Goal Sunday is a FREE event designed to help college bound students and their families with the financial aid application process.

Financial Aid professionals will be on hand to help complete the necessary paperwork (Free Application for Federal Student Aid—FAFSA) to get the funding needed to go to college with a particular focus on helping low-income, first-generation college student families.

Louisiana families can find more information at <http://www.osfa.la.gov/CollegeGoalSunday.shtml>

Families outside of Louisiana can find more information at <http://www.collegegoalsundayu.sa.org/> .

## Changes to Federal Student Aid Programs Effective July 1, 2012

On December 23, 2011, President Obama signed into law the **Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2012** (Public Law 112-74). The new law significantly impacts the Federal student aid programs authorized under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA). Here are some of the major changes:

- **Auto-Zero EFC Income Threshold** – the law amended HEA section 479(c) to reduce the income threshold for an automatic zero expected family contribution (EFC) from \$30,000 to \$23,000 for the 2012-2013 award year for both dependent and independent students.
- **Maximum EFC to Receive a Pell Grant** - Public Law 112-74 amended HEA section 401(b)(4) to change the minimum Federal Pell Grant award calculation. This change in the calculation of the minimum award amount results in 4995 being the maximum EFC enabling a student to be eligible to receive a 2012-2013 Federal Pell Grant.
- **Grace Period Interest Subsidy** - Public Law 112-74 amended HEA section 428(a)(3)(A)(i)(I) to temporarily eliminate the interest subsidy provided on Direct Subsidized Loans during the six month grace period provided to students when they are no longer enrolled on at least a half-time basis. **This change will be effective for new Direct Stafford Loans for which the first disbursement is made on or after July 1, 2012, and before July 1, 2014**
- **Federal Pell Grant Duration of Eligibility** - Public Law 112-74 amended HEA section 401(c)(5) to reduce the duration of a student's eligibility to receive a Federal Pell Grant from 18 semesters (or its equivalent) to 12 semesters (or its equivalent). **This provision applies to all Federal Pell Grant eligible students** effective with the 2012-13 award year. The calculation of the duration of a student's eligibility will include all years of the student's receipt of Federal Pell Grant funding. This change in the duration of students' Federal Pell Grant eligibility is not limited only to students who received their first Federal Pell Grant on or after the 2008-2009 award year, as the HEA previously provided when the duration of eligibility was 18 semesters.

We will be posting additional information, as it becomes available at <http://www.loyno.edu/financialaid/federal-student-loan-changes-2012-2013>



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UNIVERSITY  
NEW ORLEANS**

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### Important Web Sites

#### Office/Program

#### Web Address

Student Finance Office	<a href="http://finance.loyno.edu/student-finance">http://finance.loyno.edu/student-finance</a>
Bursar's Office	<a href="http://finance.loyno.edu/bursar">http://finance.loyno.edu/bursar</a>
Career Development	<a href="http://studentaffairs.loyno.edu/careers">http://studentaffairs.loyno.edu/careers</a>
Dining Services	<a href="http://sdxcampusservices.com/loyno/">http://sdxcampusservices.com/loyno/</a>
Residence Life	<a href="http://studentaffairs.loyno.edu/residential-life">http://studentaffairs.loyno.edu/residential-life</a>
TOPS Scholarships	<a href="http://www.osfa.state.la.us/">http://www.osfa.state.la.us/</a>
Federal Student Aid	<a href="http://studentaid.ed.gov/">http://studentaid.ed.gov/</a>
National Student Loan Data System	<a href="http://www.nsls.ed.gov/nsls_SA/">http://www.nsls.ed.gov/nsls_SA/</a>