

# Parents' 411

THE OFFICE OF STUDENT RETENTION



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MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
THE OFFICE OF STUDENT RETENTION

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## THE JOURNEY TO GRADUATION

Earning a college degree is indeed a prize! It represents years of hard work (sometimes 3 years, sometimes 4 years, sometimes 5 or more) and commitment.

That hard work and commitment, however, will change your daughter's or son's life forever. It is well documented that individuals with a bachelor's degree earn more than high school graduates. In March 2005, the U.S. Census Bureau released statistics which reinforced the value of a college education: "...workers 18 and over with a bachelor's degree earn an average of \$51,206 a year, while those with a high school diploma earn \$27,915. " Multiply those earnings over one's lifetime and the results are quite dramatic.

According to U.S. Census data, college graduates earn \$500,000 more than non-graduates over their lifetimes, have more career options, and are less likely to be unemployed.

Not only will a bachelor's degree contribute to increasing your son's or daughter's career earnings and improving his/her quality of life, it will help prepare him/her to be a better parent and citizen of our global community. **The rewards from earning the prize are well worth the hard work and challenges. So, what is the path that your student must take to assure that the destination of graduation is reached??**

The journey begins during the first year. Students should find out what the University graduation requirements are as early in their college program as possible. They are expected to know and satisfy all relevant degree requirements published in

the Morgan State University Catalog, including **General Education requirements that all students must complete successfully regardless of their majors** (See "Can't Graduate Without It"), **college/school requirements, and requirements in their major.** Your son or daughter has been assigned an academic advisor to assist and guide them as they make course selections, decide on a major, and familiarize themselves with the University's academic policies. The advisor may be a faculty member, a chairperson and/or a retention specialist. Ultimately, however, he/she will be held accountable for knowing and meeting all requirements necessary to be graduated.

The journey continues through the sophomore and junior years as students complete their general education courses, pass the Speech and Writing Proficiency Examinations, and move forward with the course work for their chosen majors. By the time students have earned 80 or more credits, they should be assessing where they are on the road to graduation. They should be asking questions such as: **How can I improve my GPA (grade point average) if it is less than a "B"? The higher the GPA, the greater likelihood that finances will not be an issue as students move toward graduation. Good grades are a must – not an option! (See "No Finances! No Degree!") What requirements still must be completed in order to graduate? Will I meet the family target date for graduation? Have I forgotten anything?** It is extremely important as the journey nears an end that students continue to consult with

their professors and advisors. It is a highly stressful and challenging time, and important deadlines can be missed.

So, now your son or daughter is a senior. It is time to take the Senior-Level Comprehensive Examination, a

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### GREETINGS FROM THE RETENTION STAFF



By the time the 2006 Fall semester ends, Morgan State University seniors will be almost totally focused on being graduated, embarking on their chosen careers and/or attending graduate school. These seniors have overcome many hurdles and faced many challenges, but they kept their eyes on the prize. They persisted to graduation. Do you and your son or daughter know all the steps that will lead to a degree in his/her chosen field without unnecessary or unplanned detours? This issue will focus on the road to graduation, including how to maintain necessary, ongoing financial support.

Our staff, Dr. Tiffany Beth McMillan, Director, Sarah D. Adams, Retention Specialist, Dr. Denicia Fowler, Retention Specialist, Diane Wise, Administrative Assistant, and the retention specialists in each of the schools and colleges are committed to providing you with the information that you need to support and assist your student from matriculation to graduation. As always, we look forward to receiving your comments and suggestions!

comprehensive examination in their major field of study. Finally, they have satisfied all degree requirements and it is time to formally apply for graduation. The Application for Graduation is filed with the Dean of the college\school, e.g. School of Business and Management, in which the student’s major is located. Students who wish to participate in the May commencement must file an application in October of the year prior to graduation. Students who wish to receive their diploma in December must file an Application in May of the year of graduation. (Note: Alas, there are various fees associated with the graduation ceremony.)

It’s Done!!! You have seen your son or daughter receive the coveted bachelor’s degree...the prize. Now, it is up to her or him to take advantage of the many opportunities that will open up to them and continue to make you proud!

THE WORLD AWAITS ....YOUR DAUGHTER....YOUR SON

Graduating from college is one of the greatest achievements your daughter or son will accomplish in their lifetime. Life after college will present new challenges and new opportunities. Your student should carefully consider the many possible choices. Many students know that they are going to graduate school, or that they are going to teach, or join a major corporation or government agency, or start their own business. Many more are still searching and considering. Encourage them to think beyond the traditional after college employment. Encourage them to think about experiences that will broaden them intellectually and socially, experiences which will contribute to their understanding of the global community, and how their skills and knowledge can best be used.....whether in education, medicine, business, or fashion.

Below are a few possibilities for you to consider and, perhaps, discuss with your college senior.

AMERICORPS

Americorps is a network of local, state, and national service programs that connects more than 70,000 Americans each year in intensive service to meet America’s critical needs in education, public safety, health and the environment. Americorps volunteers serve for ten months to a year, depending on their assignments, in nonprofits, public agencies, and community organizations. Americorps members address critical needs in communities throughout America, including

- Tutoring and mentoring disadvantaged youth
- Fighting illiteracy
- Improving health services
- Building affordable housing
- Teaching computer skills
- Helping communities to respond to disasters

Full-time members\volunteers who complete their service earn a Segal Americorps Education Award to pay for college, graduate school or to pay back qualified student loans. Members who serve part-time receive a partial Award. Some Americorps members may also receive a modest living allowance during their term of service. Findings of a longitudinal study of Americorps members indicated that alumni are more connected to their communities and demonstrated the positive impacts of national service on members’ civic engagement, education, employment and life skills.

For further information, go to www.americorps.org

TEACH FOR AMERICA (A MEMBER OF AMERICORPS)

Teach For America is a corps of recent college graduates of all majors and cultural backgrounds who commit to two years to teach in under-resourced and rural public schools. Today in our country, there are many children growing up in low-income communities who are several grade levels behind their peers in high-income communities. Many of them will not graduate.

Disparity in educational opportunities is one of our nation’s most

pressing problems. It is also a problem that is closely aligned with the mission of Morgan State University, which reaches out to provide a higher education to those who might not be able to obtain a college degree. Your Morgan graduate might readily identify with the goals of Teach For America.

Corps members are paid by the school districts where they work; they receive the same salaries and health benefits as other beginning teachers. While beginning teacher salaries vary by district, corps members generally find they can live comfortably regardless of their placement site. In an effort to assure that qualified candidates of all economic situations are able to participate in the corps, Teach For America offers need-based transitional grants and no-interest loans to help corps members make it to their first pay checks. Packages vary in amounts based on demonstrated need.

Teach For America alumni – most of whom are still in their 20s and 30s – are at the center of the effort to realize educational opportunities for all. They are pioneering education reform initiatives and working from other sectors to marshal necessary resources and change policies. They are also running many high-performing schools in low-income communities.

For further information, go to www.teachforamerica.org

PEACE CORPS

The Peace Corps traces its roots and mission to 1950, when then Senator John F. Kennedy challenged college students to serve their country in the cause of peace by living and working in developing countries. Today’s Peace Corps volunteers work in many of the same areas as Americorps volunteers, but in foreign countries, in areas such as education, youth outreach, health and HIV/AIDS, agriculture and the environment. They also are working in emerging and essential areas such as information technology and business development.

During their service, volunteers receive a living allowance that enables



MSU Ms. Senior amd Mr. Senior, Class of 2007  
Dominique Johnnigan and Emmaus Ferdinand

STRAIGHT FROM THE STUDENTS

BY Emmaus Ferdinand  
2006-2007 Mr. Senior, MSU

A GOAL ACCOMPLISHED

Morgan State University is and has been the core of my success in my academics, my career, and my life goals. Here I have developed excellent time-management skills which set me on a path that for most would be difficult to accomplish at any University. My goal since my freshman year at Morgan State University has been to graduate within 3 years. For any student this goal would be intricate to accomplish, but Morgan State University makes it possible for any student who has the drive.

During my freshman year, I made it an obligation to join as many organizations as possible. This developed a strong network for me which made it possible for me to get significant advice from the upper class students. This put me ahead of my peers and fellow classmates, because I was not making mistakes such as choosing the wrong classes, filing late for financial aid, etc. These are mistakes that incoming freshman often make which put them behind on graduation. Instead with the network I developed, I was learning from the upper classmen’s past mistakes and making sure I did not do the same.

In my second year, I was accepted into the University’s prestigious Honors

Program, one of my greatest accomplishments. It gave me the confidence and motivation to continue to work hard and reach my goals. My network expanded because now I was surrounded with people who are goal oriented, motivated, and on the right track for graduation. Having a good support base is a key factor for any student in any University and Morgan State University is full of high achievers who make our University superior to others. Being surrounded with people with the same goals as you makes it easier for you to remain focused because the moment you begin to give up you have someone to motivate you instead of bringing you down.

The most important reason for my success at Morgan State University and in life has been one guiding principle, “If it is in writing, it shall be done”. This is something my late father always told me. If you just write down your goals on paper, you are going to accomplish them. Since my freshman year I have written down everything I want to do in my years at Morgan such as: being accepted into Morgan’s Honors program; becoming a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Incorporated; becoming Mr. Senior; being enrolled in the Deans List of 2004-2005; becoming a member of both Alpha Lambda Delta and Phi Eta Sigma Honors Society; becoming a staff writer for Morgan State Spokesman, being the host of Caribbean Riddims of WMUR Cable Radio and a member of the Marketing Society. My most ambitious, over-arching goal was to graduate in 3 years which I will accomplish in May 2007. Morgan State University has been the core and the reason for my success and it will be the core to the success of any student who attends Morgan State University as well.

CAN’T GRADUATE WITHOUT IT!

All students must successfully complete the University requirements. These requirements include:

1. Developmental courses if required by the results of the Placement Examination

2. A Freshmen orientation course
3. A core of general education courses totaling 46 credits
4. Speech Proficiency, Writing Proficiency, and Senior-level Comprehensive Examinations

Students must also complete all requirements for their chosen major as well as specific requirements for their individual colleges\schools.

THINK! THINK! THEN CHOOSE!

Students should have accurate information about the type of course work required by a given major, know if their personal interests and abilities are a good match, and understand the career implications related to that major before choosing. Declaring a major is a critical decision which generally should be made no later than the end of the student’s sophomore year.

If a student has questions about selecting a major or wishes to change their major, they should consult with their academic advisor. Changing a major and\or declaring a major after your sophomore year can result in delaying graduation.

IMPORTANT 2007 SPRING SEMESTER DATES!!!

January 23  
Classes Begin

March 1  
Deadline to file FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). FAFSA forms may be filed on-line at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Students who file FAFSA forms after March 1st may not be eligible to receive all types of financial aid.

March 12-17  
Mid-Semester Exams

March 19-24  
Spring Break

March 26 - April 14  
ADVISEMENT DAYS (Students must meet with academic advisors to review progress and prepare FALL 2007 schedule)

March 29  
Last Day to Drop Undergraduate Classes

April 30 - May 5  
Final Exams for Prospective May 2007 Graduates

April 1 -14  
Rolling Registration for FALL 2007 semester

May 11-18  
Final Exams for Non-graduates

MAY 20  
Commencement

MAY 23  
SPRING SEMESTER ENDS