

Parents' 411

THE OFFICE OF STUDENT RETENTION



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MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
THE OFFICE OF STUDENT RETENTION

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GREETINGS FROM THE RETENTION STAFF

This academic year we are proud to welcome the twelfth President of Morgan State University, Dr. David Wilson. Dr. Wilson is a transformational leader. He looks forward to the challenge and excitement of leading Morgan to yet a higher level of excellence. Speaking to parents and incoming freshmen attending the 2010



new President and his new vision for Morgan State University.

Our staff, Dr. Tiffany Beth McMillan, Director, Ms. Sarah D. Adams, Retention Specialist, Dr. Denicia Fowler, Retention Specialist, Ms. Diane Wise, Administrative Assistant, and the retention specialists in each of the schools and colleges continue to strive

to provide 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!

ACCESS Orientation Program, Dr. Wilson said that he wanted to see the Class of 2014 "have the highest graduation rate in Morgan's history." Our new President brings a new vision "Growing the Future, Leading

the World", a vision that will inspire higher expectations to motivate new and current students and their parents. Morgan will produce the next wave of world-class innovators and leaders. **In this issue, we will highlight our**

to provide 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!

GROWING THE FUTURE, LEADING THE WORLD



Dr. David Wilson became the 12th President of Morgan State University on July 1, 2010. Before joining us at Morgan, he was Chancellor of the

University of Wisconsin Colleges and the University of Wisconsin-Extension. He has a bachelor's degree (the first in his family to receive one) and a master's degree from Tuskegee University; he earned a master's degree and a doctorate from Harvard University.

In an interview before arriving at Morgan, Dr. Wilson said that the student experience is his No. 1 priority and always has been. "I will do a lot of walking around. I might audit a course. I've done that before," he relates. "I want to have a number of chats with the stu-

dents. An effective president must evaluate the needs of the students. And that can't happen in a vacuum." Dr. Wilson also planned to make himself available to students via Twitter and Facebook, to give them as many options as possible for communication.

Since arriving at Morgan, Dr. Wilson has been true to his words. He and his staff have been "walking the campus", greeting students and staff. He has already had a town hall meeting with students where they had the opportunity to voice personally their concerns and hopes to our new President. And, yes, he is on Facebook and Twitter.

Our incoming president says he expects that not everyone will agree with his plans. And, that's healthy and OK. "I've gained a lot of tolerance for push-back. I've come to understand that good

ideas are not vested in just one, two or three people. **It's OK to disagree, because at the end of the discussion, we want the best ideas.**"

Again, Dr. Wilson has already demonstrated his willingness to listen and gather ideas from many stakeholders. One of the first major goals he has articulated is that he wants to see the Class of 2014 "have the highest graduation rate in Morgan's history." To that end, he and his Cabinet met with Dr. Tiffany McMillan, Director, Office of Student Retention and her staff to be briefed on the history of retention efforts here at Morgan, the results of these efforts, and recommendations to increase our future retention of Morgan State University students to graduation. He has started the discussion which will produce the best ideas.

Continued from page 1

Dr. Wilson is one of 11 persons appointed to President Barack Obama's Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities on Feb. 26, 2010. It's a prestigious and important position, not only because the 2011 presidential budget calls for \$98 million in new money for HBCUs and some \$850 million more over the next 10 years. As a member of this board, Dr. Wilson will have input into the allocation of these funds, as well as input into the ongoing conversation over whether HBCUs are still necessary. Dr. Wilson feels that serving the HBCU

community is his true destiny.

Our new President is a leader who will be moving us into a new era. "Growing the Future, Leading the World" is his vision. We are all looking forward to even greater achievements at Morgan State University under his leadership.

"I've always tried to create an atmosphere where I work so people don't see what they do as a job. It's a calling." – Dr. David Wilson

Excerpts of the above article taken from Morgan Magazine Volume 1 2010)



article written by Adrienne Gibbs, Ebony magazine Senior Editor and guest writer for Morgan Magazine.

RETENTION: A UNIVERSITY-WIDE MISSION

The Office of Student Retention (OSR) staff are advisors, teachers, coaches and sometimes "cheerleaders" providing needed words of support and encouragement. As Dr. McMillan says "...we do everything that we can to ensure student success and achievement". OSR helps to ensure improvement in student retention and increased persistence to graduation by focusing on academic success and achievement through early intervention and systematic tracking of all undergraduate students.

Our staff works with all of the University's academic and administrative programs to support and increase student success from matriculation to graduation. The OSR sponsors and coordinates various campus-wide programs and collaborates with the eight academic units of the university: the College of Liberal Arts; School of Engineering; School of Computer, Mathematical and Natural Sciences; School of Business and Management; School of Education and Urban Studies; School of Architecture and Planning; School of Community Health and Policy; and, School of Social Work. The Schools' retention programs are coordinated centrally to ensure that campus-wide goals are met. But, beyond that, each school develops unique retention strategies. The School of Engineering's programs and strategies that support our new vision are described in this issue.

PREPARING THE CLASS OF 2014 FOR ENGINEERING

Our new President expects the Class of 2014 to have the highest retention rate in the history of our University. Several of the School of Engineering's retention programs focus on incoming freshmen recognizing that the first year experience is critical to retaining a student until graduation.

The School of Engineering first welcomes the Class of 2014 during



Student, Orientation, Advising, and Registration (SOAR). Later, freshmen are involved in a series of programs to help them transition to college and to engineering. **Freshman Weekend, Engineering Assembly, and Fast Track to Achievement engage students with the Dean, faculty, and upperclassmen and introduce them to the student support team in the School of Engineering.** These programs occur during the first month of the semester to be maximally effective in reaching out to freshmen and giving them information that will help them establish a good academic foundation and connectivity to the engineering community.

At the **Engineering Assembly**, freshmen meet the Dean, Associate

Dean, faculty, and support staff. The Dean of Engineering administers the freshman oath and the students receive their School of Engineering freshman lapel pin. They witness the awarding of certificates to upperclassmen for high academic achievement and are addressed by the engineering student organization presidents who stress the importance of involvement and development of leadership skills.



Fast Track to Achievement celebrated its 13th anniversary this year. This program, facilitated by a minimum of 24 trained student leaders, is part of the Introduction to Engineering course (ORIE 104). Freshmen rotate through



three workshops: Mastering Mathematics, Planning to Graduate, and Making it in Engineering and learn about the first-year experiences from successful, still matriculating, upperclassmen. Freshmen also hear from a Morgan engineering alumnus or alumna who speak to the importance of building a strong foundation in the freshman year and about how Morgan prepared them

THE MORGAN LEGACY

The closing ceremony of the ACCESS Orientation Program for first-time freshmen is special and unique. The ceremony is derived from an African rite of passage. At the end of the ceremony, students affirm that **"they are now a Morgan State University Man; they are now a Morgan State University Woman."** They have learned what is expected of them as a Morgan State University student. They have learned that they have a legacy, a tradition of excellence to uphold. Attending a HBCU (Historically Black College/ University) is an experience that can change a student's life. As one freshman affirmed at the ceremony, the Orientation and his enrollment at Morgan had given him "hope" (for his future.)

DID YOU KNOW?

According to the findings of the College Board's 2010 report

(referred to in FINANCIAL AID IS THE KEY!):

- The median college graduates' full-time salary is \$55,700, compared to \$33,800 for high school graduates.
- 8% of high school graduates, 25 and older, rely on food stamps, compared to slightly more than 1% of people with a college degree.
- Also, very interesting: Between 1998 and 2008, the smoking rate dropped among adults with college degrees from 14% to 9%. For high school graduates, the decrease was from 29% to 27%.

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Morgan State University

Retention Staff – Spring, 2011

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IMPORTANT 2011 SPRING SEMESTER DATES!!!

January 24 - Classes Begin

March 1 - DEADLINE FOR FINANCIAL AID FOR FALL 2011 (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 14-19 - Mid-Semester Exams

March 21-26 - Spring Break

March 28-April 15 - ADVISEMENT DAYS (Students must meet with academic advisors to review progress and prepare FALL 2011 course schedule) EARLY REGISTRATION FOR FALL 2011 SEMESTER

April 7 - Honors Convocation (Recognizes student outstanding academic achievement)

April 8 - Last Day to Drop Undergraduate Classes

April 25 - 30 - Final Exams for Prospective May 2011 Graduates

May 1 - Application Deadline for Fall 2011 Admission

May 9-June 28 - Registration for FALL 2011 Semester Resumes

May 12-20 - Final Exams for Non-graduates

May 21 - COMMENCEMENT

MAY 24 - SPRING 2011 SEMESTER ENDS

SUMMER 2011 SESSION DATES

SUMMER SESSION I

April 21-May 4 - Early Registration for Continuing Students (Sessions I and II)

May 2-4 - Registration for Summer 2011 Sessions I and II

May 24 - CLASSES BEGIN FOR SUMMER SESSION I

June 29 - SUMMER SESSION I ENDS

SUMMER SESSION II

June 16-17 - Registration for Summer Session II

June 30 - Classes Begin for Summer Session II

August 8 - SUMMER SESSION II ENDS

ATTENTION!! PARENTS MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!

The 2011 ACCESS Orientation Program for first-time freshmen enrolling for the Fall 2011 semester will be held in July and August 2011. All first-time freshmen are required to attend the 4-day ACCESS Orientation Program. Look for Program dates and other specific information about the Orientation to be sent to freshmen admitted for Fall 2011 beginning in May.



2010 ACCESS Orientation Peer Mentors

for his or her career. This is helpful in assuring freshmen that they made the right choice in enrolling in Morgan's School of Engineering.



Our newest program is **Freshman Weekend**. Established in 2005, Freshman Weekend (officially known as the Student Engagement, Empowerment, and Leadership Retreat) engages the Dean, faculty, alumni and nearly 50 upperclassmen with new first-time freshmen over two days. The overall goal of Freshman Weekend is to introduce freshmen to the School of Engineering faculty, support staff, alumni, student leaders, and each other to promote connection to and involvement in the engineering community; introduce them to support services; and identify non-academic challenges that ultimately may affect their performance. It is desired that this introductory weekend of experiences make freshmen aware of resources available that, if utilized, will retain them in the School of Engineering. Freshman Weekend is facilitated for two days.

On the first day, activities include a welcome and reception with department faculty, alumni and students; an alumni workshop to warn students that there are non-academic stressors that affect performance; a colorful student leader skit on the Morgan freshman experience; **and the #1 ranked "DeLoatch Motivator," where the Dean of Engineering gets freshmen excited about the opportunities in engineering and helps them understand how valuable their contribution will be to society if they work hard and earn their engineering degree.**

On the second day, experiences at the Genesee Valley Outdoor Learning Center focus on teamwork through a variety of challenging outdoor activities. The day ends with an engineering competition where teams of students com-

pete for first, second, and third place medals for constructing the highest straw tower that can support two tennis balls. Seventy first-time freshmen, ages 17 to 46 years-old, participated in Freshman Weekend 2010. The program received high ratings and positive comments from the freshmen and many positive comments about what they learned and experienced while having fun. They felt it was a great experience (94%) and that it should continue (97%). Freshman Weekend "allows engineering freshmen to try engineering activities in a non-academic environment and it is a great way for freshmen to meet each other and upperclassmen." Most freshmen felt their experience with their student leader was "great - got to know them" (92%) and that their student leader was "someone they would feel comfortable going to for guidance and advice" (97%). Many described student leaders as "helpful, informative, and know a lot about how to manage an engineering major." Genesee Valley was picked as one of the "most memorable" experiences because it exposes freshmen to teamwork, helps them network with upperclassmen, was hands-on, and fun.

These three engagement activities follow participation in the ACCESS Orientation, PACE or the Foundation of Mathematics On-Line program (pre-freshman engineering summer programs), and Student Orientation, Advising, and Registration and occur within the first month of classes. The overall goal is to give freshmen resource information quickly enough to be utilized and have impact. During the remainder of the academic year, there is an array of tutoring, mentoring, volunteer, and professional development programs and an Engineering Student Services Center (MEB 229) that support students throughout their undergraduate career in engineering. **If your Morgan engineering major needs assistance, they may call Myra Curtis (443-885-4210), or John Wheatland (443-885-3864) who will be happy to serve them.**



A TRUE MORGAN MAN SPEAKS



Mr. Michael James and Mr. Ke'Shawn Forbes

"Growing the Future, Leading the World!" President Wilson says it best. My name is Ke'Shawn Forbes, a recent graduate from the School of Social Work's Masters degree program. **I would like you to travel with me as I take you on a Morgan State University journey like none other.** Upon entering this University, I was unaware what to expect especially since I left a fast-paced environment for a city that was foreign to me. Being born in Brooklyn, New York and growing up in the Jamaican culture, an adaptive spirit was embedded in me. I soon had to exhibit that spirit in Baltimore, Maryland.

In the fall of 2005, I remember sitting in Harper-Tubman House residence hall with my mother and a housing assignment coordinator. I can still hear those words, "Are you sure this is where you want to go, because I cannot afford another year" my mother said. I looked at her and said, "**I promise you will not have to pay another dollar.**" **We both walked by faith and not by sight, and I looked at this as an opportunity to prove to my mother that her investment in me would pay off.**

My freshman year I met a man named Mr. Michael C. James, and he would change my Morgan experience forever. It was in my freshman orientation class when I met this highly respected gentleman. He was a guest speaker whom I was able to relate to on so many different levels. After the class, I just had to meet him one-on-one. I told him my situation, and I remember him saying, "If you listen and do your part, then you will succeed; but just don't give me the bullcrap." Through him, I ended up meeting the Director of the Honors Program and received grants and scholarships to pay for tuition and fees. This was not just given to me; I had earned it by earning and maintaining a good GPA. This was awesome because I was already a Resident Assistant for the Office of Residence Life which covered my room & board fees. **By my sophomore year, I had already accomplished what I promised my mother that day in the Harper-Tubman House.**

Later I learned that Mr. James was part of the Retention team. I observed how he functioned with students and I knew that I wanted that opportunity to be a part of the Retention family. **I have always possessed a passion for empowering my peers so that they can succeed in college.** Retention was already what I practiced without the title and salary, so I knew this is what I wanted to pursue in the near future. Through Mr. James, I was heavily influenced by what the Office of Student Retention (OST) team does. I made sure I assisted my peers in any way possible to help ensure that they did not become a retention statistic.

I remember when I was elected Mr. Morgan State University for the 2008-2009 academic school year, students informed me that it inspired them to do great things at Morgan. This was a form of retention that was

disguised as an accomplishment. This made me feel great to know that my achievement inspired someone to work harder at bringing out his/her full potential. After graduating in 2009, I was selected as a Peer Mentor for the ACCESS Orientation Program by Ms. Sarah Adams, the Program Coordinator. During this time, I was observed by Dr. Tiffany McMillan, Director of Student Retention. She noticed my behavior, professionalism, and potential to one day be a part of her team.

Working with the ACCESS Orientation Program was overall a huge success. Watching and assisting incoming freshman get acclimated to a new environment and system was rewarding beyond measure. Furthermore, it hit home for me because I did not have this opportunity when I entered Morgan. I was glad to be a part of the reason why incoming students' early experience was a positive one which would help greatly in how they matriculate through their collegiate career.

Now that I am the Retention Coordinator for the School of Social Work, I have the opportunity to function in a capacity I've observed for years. It is truly like a dream come true. My experiences as a former Peer Mentor and now as a Retention Coordinator working for the Office of Student Retention, serve as symbols for the students who are being groomed to become leaders from this distinguished University and eventually the world. **To repeat Dr. Wilson's coined phrase "Growing the Future, Leading the World!" a phrase I use to fertilize student minds.**

*Ke'Shawn Forbes
Retention Specialist
Bachelor of Social Work Degree 2009
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Morgan State University*

FINANCIAL AID IS THE KEY!

Since financial aid is critical to the retention of approximately 95% of students enrolled at Morgan State University, understanding the financial aid process is critical. Most Morgan students will have to understand how to obtain and maintain their financial resources from matriculation to graduation. Failure to follow directions and meet deadlines can result in students being denied funding for a semester or more. Consequently, we include up-to-date information about the process in each issue of the **Parents' 411** newsletter. In the current economic downturn, it is especially critical that parents, as well as students, are aware of financial aid possibilities and how to apply for them.

The keys to success can be summed up in three words, "EARLY! EARLY! EARLY!"

Students submitting their applications at the latest possible date for award, submitting incomplete information, or even submitting their application during the registration period or after, cause many of the seemingly overwhelming problems and long lines at the Financial Aid Office.

What can you do? First, parents should be aware of the deadlines for submitting the "Free Application for Federal Student Aid" (FAFSA) and work with the student to ensure that the application and required documentation are submitted as early as possible. Most student financial aid is determined from FAFSA. Applying is a rather simple process that can be done on-line. **Secondly,** provide any documentation needed from you, such as copies of income tax returns, as quickly as possible. File your income taxes early. (Many students' applications are not processed in a timely manner, even though they were submitted early, because required documents are missing.) And, **foremost,** follow up with your student! Better yet, complete the FAFSA together. Much of the information students need to complete the process must be provided by you. **Beginning January 30, 2011, parents/students can click a box in the**

on-line FAFSA form to have their financial information imported directly from the IRS to the FAFSA, eliminating the need for verification of financial information.

Your daughter or son bears the responsibility for keeping the aid once it is awarded. Regardless of filing deadlines and documentation, students must maintain **satisfactory academic progress (SAP)** to continue receiving aid and to persist to graduation. This means they are required to maintain a minimum 2.0 cumulative grade point average (GPA) and minimum number of earned credits.

They must pay attention to meeting financial aid deadlines and providing accurate documentation every year, not just the first year.

You can file FAFSA as early as January 1, 2011. The FAFSA can be completed and submitted on-line by going to www.fafsa.ed.gov. Again, remember, if your child's application is filed **early** with the required, accurate documentation, it will be processed more quickly. And, the award letter indicating all of the aid for which the student qualifies will be received early. This affords time for the family to make arrangements to tap other resources because the aid awarded usually does not meet 100% of the student's need.

FAFSA should be filed by March 1 of each year, especially for Maryland students. Filing by that date enables Maryland residents to receive Educational Assistance Grants from the Maryland Higher Education Commission for up to \$3000. Applicants filing after that date are not eligible to receive this award. So, for Maryland residents, your child's financial aid award may be \$3000 less than it could have been if it had been filed between January 1 and March 1. **We recommend that students file their FAFSA no later than mid-February.**

According to a College Board report, "Education Pays: The Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society" (based on 2008 data) issued September 2010,

the value of a college degree is growing.

The report indicated that workers with a college degree earn much more and are less likely to be unemployed. Financing a college degree is an investment with a significant payoff.

It is extremely important that students and parents understand how to finance college so they can reap the future benefits.

Always remember if you have questions or need additional information.....

HELP IS JUST A CLICK AWAY

It would be impossible to tell you everything you need to know about financing your child's college education in this newsletter. In this electronic age, however, all you would possibly want to know about the availability of financial aid at Morgan, scholarships, and funding from other sources is accessible on the Internet.

Listed below are a few sites that will provide you with useful information.

www.morgan.edu

Our site provides detailed information about the financial aid process. Click on Financial Aid on Morgan's home page.

www.fafsa.ed.gov

This site provides complete, detailed information about FAFSA. Students can also complete the application on this site. It is preferred for students to complete the FAFSA on-line since it only takes about 3-5 days to get to MSU. Hard copies of the FAFSA take 6-8 weeks to be processed and sent to MSU. Please be sure that Morgan's school code (002083) is included on the form.

<http://www.mhec.state.md.us/financialAid/index.asp>

This site provides information about financial aid from the State of Maryland.

MSU WebSIS

This site provides students access to check their financial award status and to register for courses.

Of course, you can always call the Financial Aid Office on (443) 885-3170.