Florida State University
Dean of Students Department
Office of New Student & Family Programs

What's Going 'Round

November 2015

Important Dates

November 16-20: Asian American Student Union Fall Week
November 21: FSU vs. Chattanooga (Last Home Game)
November 25: Thanksgiving Break Begins (No Classes)
November 28: FSU vs. UF

For more information, visit the Registrar’s Office

Office Spotlight: International Programs

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Fall Care Packages
Florida State University offers a fantastic service through their International Programs. Students have the opportunity to study in places like Valencia, Spain, London, England, and Dresden, Germany, among many others. Courses vary per country, allowing students from all types of majors to participate in International Programs. There are 20 different programs being offered from Summer 2016-Spring 2017 in locations ranging from China to Costa Rica to Turkey.

The Florida State University approach to studying abroad carefully coordinates academics with cultural immersion. Students will have the opportunity to travel outside of the classroom to explore their surroundings. Every program begins with an on-campus orientation that includes travel, safety and location-specific information. All of the courses are taught in English by faculty members who are either Florida State on-campus faculty who have traveled to teach in that location or local experts who have been vetted and approved by the Florida State academic departments.

Studying abroad is one of those things that many students consider, but ultimately decide not to pursue. There are several scholarship options that can help ease the financial burden. More importantly, the experience pays for itself. Ask anyone who has studied abroad and they will tell you about the wonderful experience it was. Everyone says to seize the opportunity to travel when you're young, so why not do exactly that? Even better, why not study abroad with fellow Seminoles! If you're interested, more information can be found online at international.fsu.edu. Below is a message from the International Programs Director, Mr. Jim Pitts:

"Florida State University’s International Programs has been sending students abroad for almost sixty years. As we have grown, so has the need for our students to become more globally engaged.

We have joined the nationwide Generation Study Abroad campaign, which challenges universities to double their number of student studying abroad within the next 5 years. As we continue our commitment to provide high quality programs at the lowest possible prices, we have added new programs tailored to specific areas of study, as well as Spring Break Programs, designed to provide shorter, lower cost options. We are also pleased to have created several new Generation Study Abroad scholarships.

We continue to enhance partnerships with the University’s Global Pathways and Garnet and Gold Scholars programs, both of which encourage students to seek greater cultural immersion and community engagement opportunities. Participants then reflect upon and articulate their unique experiences in a manner that enhances job and graduate school applications and builds resumes."
Our outstanding faculty, extensive excursions, high quality accommodations, and dedicated support staff provide an incomparable value to our students. I challenge you to help us double the number of participants by joining over 1,700 students now taking part in our programs each year. You, too, will enjoy an educational experience with a lifetime of invaluable benefits.

Bon voyage!
Jim Pitts
Director, Florida State University International Programs

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282 Champions Way
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(850) 644-3272
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Family-To-Family Article:
Food For Thought Pantry

Written by Sheryl L. Bradley

Many families may be unaware that FSU hosts a food pantry on campus, for students in need. Retired Associate Dean of Students, Robin Leach, initiated the program which is now coordinated through the Assistant Dean of Students/Director of Case Management Services.

The Food for Thought Pantry is available to students living on or off campus and has proven to be of significant need. From January 2015 until October, the pantry has been visited over 900 times by more than 400 students. Acknowledging that it may not always be easy for students to admit their need or seek this type of assistance, the Food for Thought Pantry staff does what they can to create a welcome and inviting, but discreet, environment. While Students must present an FSU ID to gain admittance, no personal information is collected from them. Students may visit the pantry as often as needed, but due to limited stock, can only take one bag of groceries at a time.

Pantry staff notes that pastas, pasta sauces, mac & cheese, and peanut butter are among student favorites, but that they also stock items such as rice, dried beans, tuna and other canned meats, oatmeal, canned vegetables, spices, etc. Currently, the pantry is well stocked on canned vegetables, but is always in need of the other items that tend to fly off the shelves. Small serving, microwavable items are best, as those that require limited additives. (Note, pantry staff and volunteers will open boxes of pre-packaged items such as instant oatmeal to disperse as individual servings. They cannot, however, open bulk packaging of items such as rice and beans to divide into individual portions.)

Join the Conversation Today!

The FSU Family Connection program utilizes current online social media outlets to help Seminole Family Members stay connected and up-to-date with news, announcements, advice, and other items relevant to being family members of college students.

Through Twitter, you can "follow" the account @FSU_Family to receive brief updates from the Family Connection program in a Tweet announcement. Just create your own Twitter at www.twitter.com to follow us!

On Facebook, you can "Like" the FSU Family Connection Fan Page to see photos, receive news and participate in discussion commentary to stay connected with other FSU families and the FSU community. Just create your own Facebook account at www.facebook.com.

On FSU Family Connection Blog, you can read blog entries regarding the FSU family experience, which may include advice pieces, news articles, photos and reflections. No account is needed! Just click fsufamily.wordpress.com to read.
Dean of Students, Vicki Dobiyanski, recently reported that on newly obtained grant that will provide for the acquisition of a refrigeration unit and access to fresh produce, which will be a welcomed and healthy addition to the pantry’s provisions!

In the past, the FSU Food for Thought Pantry, was fortunate to partner with a local retailer for shopping bags that provided discreet packaging for students, however, the retailer was recently bought out and is no longer able to provide the bags. Dean of Students staff members are currently collecting and recycling grocery bags from home, but often fall short. As such, the pantry would also welcome donations of grocery or shopping bags.

In order to continue offering this invaluable service to the FSU community, the pantry is in need of donations, year-round, and welcomes the support and generosity of our FSU families. Donations to the pantry can be dropped off in person or shipped to the following address:

Dean of Students Food Pantry
University Center A, Suite 4100
282 Champions Way
Tallahassee, FL 32306

Not local to Tallahassee? There are a number of online shopping services that offer many of these items at very reasonable prices with free or significantly reduced shipping. (If shipping, call the Dean’s office at (850) 644-2428 to alert them so that they are on the lookout for the package.) Gift cards or cash donations that staff can use to purchase items locally are also welcomed. Food drives by students and/or student organizations are great community service opportunities, as well.

The generosity of the Seminole Nation is among the best and we appreciate the support of our FSU families in helping us to provide for our students in need!

FSU Grades Appeals Policy

Did you know FSU, like most universities, has a policy for grade appeals? This process allows students who feel that they have received an erroneous final course grade some recourse. This policy is designed to protect students from being awarded arbitrary, capricious, or discriminatory final grades and to ensure the integrity of the course grade. It is not however to be used to challenge grades on individual assignments.

The policy details and procedures can be found here: http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics/Grade-Appeals-System.

“Arbitrary or capricious” implies one or more of the following:

- The student has been assigned a grade on the basis of something other than his or her performance in the course; or
- The student has been assigned a grade based on something that is not a factor in the course;

Check out FSU News article about FSU being recognized by the non-profit Institute for Higher Education Policy as a top “Access Improver”!

Student Spotlights

Click on the faces of these Florida State University
her performance in the course; or
- Standards utilized in the determination of the student's grade are more exacting or demanding than those applied to other students in the course; or
- The grade is based upon standards that are significant, unannounced and unreasonable departures from those articulated in the course description distributed in the syllabus at the beginning of the course.

**Ways to help students avoid utilizing FSU's grade appeals process are:**

1. How is the overall grade is determined - preferably, one that is straightforward and easy to understand and calculate. The grading process should be outlined thoroughly in the syllabus. If there's anything unusual about the way grades are determined, that should be explained. If the student is unclear about the grade calculation - they should make time EARLY in the semester to speak to the professor about the calculation.

2. Students should understand their grades on each assignment, and how they connect to the overall course grade. This is especially true when participation or other less tangible factors (blogs) contribute significantly to the course grade, or if there's anything else that might influence the grade one way or another.

3. If your assignment and test grades are not posted timely, communicate EARLY with your instructor.

4. If your grade calculation is not "adding up" to what is calculated on Blackboard - don't wait until the end of the semester - Ask questions early.

Grade appeals are not intended to give students an opportunity to challenge the instructor's academic judgment in grading the academic work; instead, they give an opportunity for the student to challenge whether the instructor evaluated the work in accordance with the evaluation [grading] standards set forth by the instructor in the syllabus. The bar is necessarily high for grade appeals; the burden is on the student to provide evidence that the instructor deviated substantially from the grading standards in an arbitrary, capricious, or discriminatory manner.

Lastly, it is the **STUDENT'S responsibility** to fully understand the grading policy described in the instructor's syllabus. Make sure you understand it!

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**Observing Religious Holidays**

As we approach fall semester, we encourage students and families to be aware of Florida State's policy regarding absences to observe one's religious holidays. The full policy can be found at this link:

[http://fda.fsu.edu/content/download/25650/164546/file/ReligiousHolyDaysFall14.pdf](http://fda.fsu.edu/content/download/25650/164546/file/ReligiousHolyDaysFall14.pdf)

Specifically, the Florida State University policy on student observance of religious holy days provides:

Each student shall, upon notifying his or her instructor within the first two weeks of the semester, be excused from class to observe a religious work-restricted holy day of his or her faith.

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**Plan your trip to Tallahassee TODAY!**

Best known as Florida's capital city, Tallahassee shares a deep-rooted history and culture with unparalleled natural adventure and an upbeat vitality. From

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[Click here](http://fda.fsu.edu/content/download/25650/164546/file/ReligiousHolyDaysFall14.pdf) to learn about how Travis is answering the question how mankind is affecting the global carbon cycle.

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**FSU Women's Soccer**

Click [here](http://fda.fsu.edu/content/download/25650/164546/file/ReligiousHolyDaysFall14.pdf) to read about the team's third-consecutive ACC Championship! Go Noles!
While the student will be held responsible for the material covered in his or her absence, each student shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up the work missed. Instructors and University administrators shall in no way arbitrarily penalize students who are absent from academic or social activities because of religious work-restricted holy day observance.

Please encourage your student to communicate with instructors about his/her plans at the beginning of every semester.

For information on local attractions and upcoming events, please visit: [http://www.visittallahassee.com/](http://www.visittallahassee.com/)

**Family Connection Poll**

Click on the Family Connection Poll to respond to this month’s question.

This month’s question is:

The end of the semester can be an especially stressful time for students as they begin preparing for final exams and the holidays. What are some ways you show your support for your students during this time?

**Question Corner**

Click on the Family Connection Question Corner icon to ask us any questions you may have about supporting your student at FSU. You can also email us at [family@admin.fsu.edu](mailto:family@admin.fsu.edu).

**Donate to the FSU Family Fund**
AN EASY WAY TO SUPPORT STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

Display your pride in Florida State University with the purchase of an FSU license plate. Proceeds from plate sales are applied to the university’s general scholarship fund to support need and merit-based scholarships for Florida State students. Rebels for first-time buyers, as well as gift certificates and information on purchasing your FSU license plate is available online at [fsu.edu/mytag](http://fsu.edu/mytag).

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

fsu.edu/mytag