Greetings from Erin...

Happy December! The fall semester is drawing to a close and final exams begin in just a few short days. Soon you will be packing up your gear and leaving Aggieland for a month of well-deserved time off. Make the most of the break by spending quality time with your friends and family, giving back to your community through volunteer efforts, and paying forward any good will that comes your way. The Regents’ Scholars staff wishes you the best of luck with finals. Please be safe in your journeys and have a wonderful holiday season.

Thanks and Gig ‘em!

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Continuing Student Scholarship Application is Up!

https://scholarships.tamu.edu

Deadline February 1, 2012

Below is a listing of all the dept/colleges that participate with our one application:

- Scholarships & Financial Aid
- College of Agriculture & Life Sciences
  - Department of Agricultural Economics
  - Department of Entomology
  - Department of Wildlife & Fisheries Sciences
- College of Education & Human Development
- College of Engineering
  - Department of Aerospace Engineering
  - Department of Chemical Engineering
  - Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering
  - Department of Engineering Technology & Industrial Distribution
  - Department of Mechanical Engineering
  - Engineering Study Abroad
- College of Geosciences
- College of Science
- Mays Business School
- Department of Biomedical Sciences
- Department of English
- International Student Services
- Study Abroad Programs Office
- Texas A&M Foundation

FAFSA/TASFA Renewal Workshops

In order for your student to continue receiving financial aid, including the Regents’ Scholarship, during the 2012-2013 academic year, they must complete the Renewal Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA becomes available on January 1, 2012. The Scholarships & Financial Aid Office encourages students to submit the FAFSA form by March 1, 2012 to receive priority in awarding. To expedite the process, we encourage you to file your tax return as early as possible.

In order to complete the FAFSA, your student will need:

- Student and parent social security numbers
- W-2 Forms & any other records of money earned for both the student and parents
- Student’s 2011 federal income tax return
- Parents’ 2011 federal income tax return
- If filing electronically, PIN for both the student and the parents

In order to expedite this process for the student, Scholarships & Financial Aid will be hosting several Renewal FAFSA/TASFA workshops for Regents’ Scholars during the Spring semester. Please encourage your students to attend these workshops if they need assistance filing their FAFSA. These events are scheduled for:

- February 15, 2012 9:30AM-10:30AM
- February 16, 2012 11:00AM-12:00PM
- February 17, 2012 12:30PM-1:30PM
- February 18, 2012 2:00PM-3:00PM

Registration is required. To register, students should visit http://financialaid.tamu.edu/workshops.

Have you ever Googled yourself, just to see what would come up? Well, you might not be the only one.

A few months ago I read an article about how a Live Journal blog kept one student from being admitted to Reed College in Portland. I looked a little further into it, and found out that over the past year articles about Facebook and MySpace profiles affecting students’ ability to graduate and find jobs after high school have popped up in the Washington Post, U.S. News, and the New York Times. In fact, supervisors often Google potential employees before hiring!

Protecting Yourself

With potential employers and colleges able to gain access to MySpace, Facebook, personal blogs, and lots of other information online, you need to rethink the “anonymity” of the internet. Here are a couple ideas that may help you protect your privacy online:

1. **Limit Access.** Facebook and MySpace both offer options that limit who can view your profile; they also have options that allow people to view only the portions of your profile that you specify. Most blogs have this option, too.

2. **Google Yourself.** Seriously. Run a Google search on your name, and see what comes up. Try the other popular search engines, too. If there is anything questionable, try to get it taken down!

3. **Guard Your Words.** If you have something to say that could possibly taken the wrong way by a potential boss or admissions officer (or anything that is too personal for them to know), you’re better off NOT posting it in a public place.

Instead, keep personal comments safer by writing them in more private correspondence like emails or IMs. And if someone else leaves a questionable comment on your page, better make it private or delete it just to be safe.

Oh, and if you don’t like your current job or boss, you might want to leave that tidbit out of your profile. Just in case.

Promoting Yourself

The use of Facebook by college committees and employers doesn’t have to slow you down; in fact if you play your cards right, it could even be a good thing. Why waste the opportunity to promote yourself if they’re looking anyway?

Think of your social networking sites as dual-purpose; not just as a place to connect with friends, but also as a sort of virtual résumé. It’s totally fine to have appropriate personal info & photos up to share with friends, but don’t neglect to point out your strong points, and even past work experience (if you feel comfortable sharing that).

You can also use sites like Facebook, MySpace, or a personal blog as a portfolio. If you’re an artist or a writer, for example, consider posting some of your pieces for viewing (unless they’re copyrighted by someone else, like work you may have done for a previous employer). It’s an easy way to offer access to your body of work.

Adapted from http://www.survivingcollegelife.com/2008/02/14/bosses-facebook-too-keeping-your-online-persona-employable/.
Holiday Gift-Giving on a College Budget

College usually means a tight budget, and that can be especially difficult during the holidays. If you’re worried your gift list will outweigh your wallet, read on!

Buying Great Gifts for $5. If you’ve only got $5 to spend, you can still give surprisingly fun gifts—the trick is to be both thoughtful and creative. Shop the bargain section at the bookstore, scour eBay for inexpensive original art, pick up a small scented lotion at Bath & Body Works, or browse IKEA for inexpensive kitchenware, candles, and other home décor. WiseBread.com has a great list of 25 great gifts for $5 or less with ideas ranging from Star Wars key chains to photo albums.

Do it Yourself. If you have a creative streak, try making some gifts yourself! If you crochet or knit, whip up a scarf, hat, or mittens. If you paint, make small paintings for family and friends. If you enjoy writing, fill up a small journal with fun memories you have with the gift recipient. Use your talents!

Coupons and Discounts. If you’re shopping online, websites like Coupon Mountain.com, DealCatcher.com and RetailMeNot.com offer free coupon codes for great deals. You can even get a computer plug-in from RetailMeNot.com that will tell you which coupons are listed for whichever page you are visiting. Also, if you haven’t yet discovered the joys of shopping at discount stores like Ross or Marshall’s, you should head over there before the big Christmas rush hits. It’s a little like a treasure hunt, but you can find some great brands at discounted prices if you take the time to look. Finally, don’t forget that a lot of places (including online stores like Apple.com) offer student discounts!

Give the Gift of Food. Want to give something to everyone in your hallway without breaking the bank? Try gifting some cookies or sweets, such as peppermint bark. All you need is some melting chocolate (this is different from regular chocolate—you can sometimes find it in the baking aisle, or in craft stores like Michael’s), some saran wrap, a plastic bag, a microwave-safe bowl, and some candy canes. While the chocolate is melting, crush up the candy canes in the plastic bag. Pour the crushed candy cane into the melted chocolate, and mix. Spread out strips of saran wrap on a flat surface, and spread a thin layer of chocolate mixture. Let cool and harden. Break it into pieces, and wrap it up!


Cash In – How to Make Money Over Winter Break

Who else wants to earn some extra cash over winter break? Don’t let these few weeks of freedom pass you by—here are a few ways to make a buck or two over the break.

Seasonal Employment
If you can think of a company that is busy during the holiday season, you can probably bet that they take on seasonal employees (people who work only during the busiest weeks of the year). Most retail stores are hiring extra help (check your local mall), or you can check with shipping companies like UPS.

Scholarships
In her post on 5 Ways for Students to Earn Cash this Winter Break, Deborah at the Pay for College Blog recommends using this time away from school to apply for scholarships. You aren’t distracted by schoolwork, and you have time to do research on which ones in you might be eligible for (AND to research the sometimes random topics, like “Why are fire sprinklers so important?”).

Stock Photography
Kelly at Hack College suggests signing up at iStockPhoto.com and submitting your best photos as stock images. It’s an easy way to make a few bucks if you’ve got the time and talent for it.

Sell Your Textbooks
Don’t let textbooks sit under your bed collecting dust—sell them during break before the new semester starts! There are a lot of sites you can use, including Amazon.com or Half.com.

Work for Parents or Neighbors
See if you can pick up work for your parents, neighbors, or your friends parents over the break—you could serve at a party, do chores around the house, spring clean, babysit, wrap gifts, do yard work, shovel snow, clean out a garage, wash cars, or house-sit.

Write for a Website or Magazine
Have an idea for an article—or even a short story from a class assignment? Try submitting to a magazine or website. Associated Content is one website that pays for articles. You can also check out a copy of The Writer’s Market from the library and submit articles or short stories to magazines.

I’ve been watching Heroes in my spare time and there has been some major flashbacking and flashforwarding to explain another way to save the world. Though saving the world is left to Hiro Nakamura and the other 9th Wonders, I have accepted the task to save my winter break. Normally, I would dive into my winter creek of bliss only to find that I need to learn how to swim first or face the threat of drowning in the pool of boredom. Goals for this winter break? Let’s visit last winter break to see what the answers are…

Winter Break 2010—Asiya sits on the couch, eating her third bag of chips while watching a re-run of Friends. She experienced the cold daylight when she went out to get the mail yesterday but since it’s Sunday, there’s no reason for her to go out. Her tan is rapidly fading and so is her spirit. Her friends went to U Paint It. They invited her through text but she didn’t go. “I’m tired” was Asiya’s excuse.

Clearly, I didn’t use my time correctly. I thought I had to spend time with my family when the fact was that they were at work and busy without me, living life. They left me a car so I would hang out with my friends; I never stepped out so I didn’t get the message. During this winter break, I too will live my life and thus spend time with my friends and sisters jumping on the trampoline, going to Santa’s Wonderland and watching new TV shows that have tons of plot twists so I have to use my brain. Netflix will attest to the new TV shows I watch with my mom, which include Gossip Girl, Mad Men, and Arrested Development while my sisters will make sure I eat healthy since they love to spoil their little sister as taste tester for new recipes. The last time I went to my sister’s house, I learned to cook as I ate. Cooking and me! A life skill I never thought I’d learn. Though it wasn’t my goal to cook, I learned anyways because I had the initiative to do things that will keep me happy. What else will make me happy? Being faster. One sure fire way to become faster is to learn to skateboard. Some of you may be wondering why I have this preoccupation to be quick on my feet. Well let’s flashback to a couple weeks ago…

Midterm day—10:00am, MSC Auction begins. Asiya spots a skateboard and smiles as a guy in a black suit grabs it and runs to the auction line. I wanna learn to ride one, she thought while looking through the USB pile. I gotta go; scantron, pencil, 10:03am. She walked out of the building smiling at the auction-goers and headed towards the Rec Center where her class was. Suddenly, she stopped. Where was her wallet… the Pavilion. She changed direction and frantically ran down Joe Route, calling her co-worker, “My wallet is with you from earlier and my class begins at 10:20 and I have a midterm today at the Rec and I waited for the auction and now I’ll be late!” 10:10, she takes two steps at a time up the stairs and enters through the “Staff Only” entrance. No breather—gotta run. 10:18, almost there. Why does running a mile take me 10 minutes? I need a bike but who would lend me their bike? I’d be late cuz I’d have to lock it up anyways. 10:19, a skateboarder whizzes by. I hate skateboarders! Unless I was one. 10:21, arrives at class. 10:26, instructor hands out midterm. It’s 10 questions, True or False. Asiya needs a skateboard, True or False?

After visiting the past, I’ve come to the conclusion that I can learn from my experiences and further, change something about myself if I apply what I’ve learned. What’s the point of knowing something important if you don’t use it? I know I want a fun winter break, to stay healthy, and to skateboard. Therefore, I will have fun, stay healthy, and skateboard. I should probably read and watch the news too…Hunger Games and Jon Stewart, here I come!
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<td>Winter Solstice</td>
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