Greetings from Portland State University. I hope the fall has been a good one for you and your family.

With finals week less than a month away, campus has been abuzz with activity. This edition of the PSU Family newsletter includes valuable information for you and your PSU student as you prepare for the end of fall term. We have highlighted important Housing deadlines and some exciting new services and opportunities. You will read about:

- Two new campus tours focused on sustainability
- Student Health & Counseling’s opening of the Mind Spa
- Jea Alford, an MFA student and 1st place recipient of the Arlene Schnitzer Visual Arts Prize
- A new major grant from the National Institutes of Health
- Staff member Ethan Sperry, Director of Choral Activities

If you have suggestions or article ideas, please email these to family@pdx.edu.

Your comments and feedback will provide us with direction for future PSU Family articles and contribute towards our ultimate goal for this newsletter—to be an opportunity for a dialogue between members of the PSU extended community. Further, the Office of the Dean of Student Life staff are available to assist your student achieving their educational goals. You can reach us by calling 503-725-4422 or emailing askdosl@pdx.edu.

All the best,

Michele Toppe, Dean of Student Life

RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT
Relax and Rejuvenate at SHAC

Opening November 3, the Mind Spa at the Center for Student Health & Counseling (SHAC), is a space on campus for student’s to relax and rejuvenate at no charge. Students can engage in light therapy, meditation, yoga, biofeedback, or enjoy the massage chair. The Mind Spa is open to all PSU students, however reservations are required. Visit pdx.edu/shac/mind-spa for more information. Other services offered at SHAC to help students de-stress are acupuncture, individual and group counseling, Let’s Talk (a drop-in counseling program around campus), along with general health and wellness options. Any PSU student taking five credits (no matter what type of insurance they carry) can use SHAC’s medical, counseling, and dental clinic services. Visit pdx.edu/shac for more information.
STUDENT SPOTLIGHT
Jea Alford

We are pleased to introduce you to Jea Alford. Jea is a graduate student enrolled in the Master of Fine Arts, Contemporary Art Studio Practice program in the College of the Arts. Already, she has received recognition for her work as the first place winner of the Arlene Schnitzer Visual Arts Prize.

Where are you from and why did you choose to study at PSU?
I originally grew up outside of Oregon City, and after living various other places for several years I wanted to come home to Portland to attend graduate school.

You recently received the 1st place Arlene Schnitzer Visual Arts Prize—congratulations! Will you please discuss the submission that won this for you?
Thank you! In my application to the Arlene Schnitzer Visual Arts Prize I submitted images of work which are representative of my artistic practice, including photos of my installation at the Portland Building earlier this year, and videos of live performance pieces in which I paint straw gold, and serve drinks to gallery guests. The work I exhibited in the Arlene Schnitzer Visual Arts Prize show as a prize-winner was a two channel video installation, in addition to two sculptural necklace pieces constructed from apple cores. My artistic practice focuses largely on examining the constructions of value, worth, wealth, labor and work.

What are your plans for the future?
This is a good question! I am applying to several artist residency programs for the year after I graduate, and I would eventually like to teach art at the college level.

What advice would you like to share with families who are supporting new students?
When I was a new student, away from home for the first time, my favorite thing was receiving care packages from my parents. For me it’s often such small signs of love and support that help carry me through the demands of being a student. I can’t articulate how invaluable the emotional support of my parents and being able to eat a home-cooked meal now are in supporting me in my academic endeavors.

What is your favorite Fall/Winter activity in Portland?
Eating pho, playing in the rain, and hunkering down to get some good work done in the studio.

PSU ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
Free Career Webinars Through the Psu Alumni Association

November is National Career Development Month. Check out our weekly webinar November lineup and encourage your student to take part!

The Pathfinder: How to Choose or Change Your Career to Enjoy Success
November 12, 2014, 5:00 pm (PST)

Fire Me – I Beg You!
November 19, 2014, 5:00 pm (PST)

Career Match: Connecting Who You Are with What You’ll Love To Do
November 26, 2014, 5:00 pm (PST)

Sign-up now and start to customize your free career plan with the PSU alumni career community and free webinars.
alumnicareerservices.org/pdx/Events.aspx#tabs1
**CAMPUS SPOTLIGHT**

**PSU Launches Guided Sustainability Tours and Cultural Walking Tour Map**

Because it requires knowledge from every field, sustainability at Portland State is not based in any single department. Instead, this philosophy spans the university to unite creative thinkers from across campus and throughout our community. PSU is offering two new opportunities to experience sustainability in action on our campus.

**Guided Sustainability Tours**

Twice a month, special campus tours highlight how PSU is a living laboratory for practicing sustainability, extending outside the classroom and across our beautiful 50-acre urban campus. Tours include a visit to the busiest transit hub in Portland, LEED-certified buildings, Electric Avenue, a public garden that doubles as a research lab, cycle tracks, and rooftop gardens. Along the way, the tour discusses how PSU reuses energy, water, and waste on site, provides a range of transportation options, and ensures a rich diversity of habitat and open space.

PSU is working hard to inspire sustainability innovation in higher education, our city, our region, and even the world. Join a [Sustainability Tour](#) with our ambassador, Juan Rueda Callejas, and learn more. You can also read an [interview with Juan here](#).

**Cultural Sustainability Walking Tour Map**

At PSU, we believe that environmental and social resilience go hand in hand. Student staff and volunteers at the Sustainability Leadership Center have published a Cultural Sustainability Walking Tour of campus. The map recognizes the diversity of PSU’s community and shares valuable resources that can help students, staff, and faculty thrive at PSU!

The tour map features many campus resource centers, cultural centers, and other spaces that support accessibility and strengthen cultural diversity. Also featured on the map are locations of family friendly study areas, gender neutral bathrooms, wheelchair accessible entrances, and transit lines.

Maps can be picked up in person at the [Viking Info Center](#) or seen online at our student sustainability page: [pdx.edu/sustainability/students](#).

**THE SCHOOL OF THEATER & FILM**

The School of Theater and Film invites you to Caryl Churchill’s Far Away

**Direction:** Devon Allen  
**Scenic & Lighting Design:** Daniel Meeker  
**Costume Design:** Alison Heryer  
**Preview:** Thursday, November 13, at 7:30 pm  
**Performs:** Friday–Sunday, November 14–16 (Friday and Saturday at 7:30 pm, Sunday at 2:00 pm); Wednesday–Saturday, November 19–22 at 7:30 pm in Lincoln Performance Hall  
**Tickets available at the PSU Box Office** or 503-725-3307  
**Advance tickets for PSU Students are $6!**
MONEY MATTERS
If you and your family are borrowing a federal student loan for the first time, here is what to expect once your loan begins to disburse. Here’s how it works

• Once the Financial Aid Office processes your federal loan, the disbursement is sent to the PSU Student Accounts Office for the payment to be applied to your bill. Any remaining funds after the balance is paid are sent to you through the refund preference you selected when you activated your PSU student ID card.

• If you are a parent borrowing a federal parent PLUS loan, the refund can be either sent to your student, or you can request that any remaining funds after your student’s bill is paid to be sent to you. Your PLUS loan refund preference is selected during the application process either online at studentloans.gov or on the paper PLUS loan application. If you would like to update your refund preference on your PLUS loan, contact the Financial Aid Office.

After the first disbursement of your federal loan has been made, your loan is assigned to one of the federal student loan servicing agencies and a welcome letter is mailed to you. You can view which servicer you have been assigned by logging into studentloans.gov the week after the first disbursement of your loan has been made.

Once you are assigned a federal loan servicer, any subsequent federal loans will also be assigned to this same servicing agency and will be included in your federal student loan portfolio.

Get to know your federal student loan servicer!
Your servicer will automatically set up an online account for you once they receive your loan but you’ll need to activate it at your servicer’s website. It’s important to do this so you can monitor your loan status, track your overall borrowing and be prepared to enter repayment when you graduate.

As you progress through the school year, the PSU Registration Office reports your enrollment several times each term to the U.S. Department of Education’s National Student Loan Data System which sends your enrollment information to your servicer.

• If you are a student borrowing a Stafford loan, your servicer will automatically place your loan into In School Deferment. This means you are not required to enter repayment on your loan until after your grace period which is 6 months after you separate from school.

• If you are a parent borrowing a PLUS loan, you have the option to defer your parent PLUS loan payment while your student is enrolled or, you can begin repayment 60 days after the loan has fully disbursed. There is no grace period on a federal parent PLUS loan so it’s important to communicate your deferment or repayment preference to your servicer.

Plan for the future!
Make finances a priority by developing a budget. Borrow only what you need and, if you find that you’ve borrowed too much, you can bring it back! You, or your parent can return all or a portion of your loan funds to the PSU Cashier’s Office within 14 days of disbursement. If it has been more than 2 weeks after your loan has disbursed, you can return the funds directly to your servicer. There is no penalty for repaying your loans early. Pay what you can, when you can while you’re in school to reduce your overall student loan debt.

At the end of each school year, it’s a great idea to do a student loan checkup to keep track of your loan portfolio and your overall student loan debt. The best way to do this is to log into the U.S. Department of Education’s federal student loan site at studentloans.gov and complete Financial Awareness Counseling.

Staying up to date on your student loans will help you become financially fit and prepare you to tackle repayment successfully once you graduate. If you would like more information about strategies for financial success, protecting your identity or counseling about your federal student loan portfolio, contact the Financial Aid Office.
Staff Spotlight
Ethan Sperry, DMA, Director of Choral Activities

Born in New York City, Ethan Sperry began studying conducting at the age of eight, cello at the age of twelve, and singing at the age of eighteen. He has earned a bachelor's degree in Philosophy from Harvard College and Masters and Doctoral degrees in Choral Conducting from the University of Southern California.

You began studying music at a very young age. What sparked your interest in music? It sounds like this is a talent that definitely runs in the family...

My father is a professional musician and my mother was a sculptor. However, my parents worked very hard to see what sparked my interest rather than forcing me into activities that they wanted me to pursue. I asked for piano lessons at the age of 6. I attended my first orchestra concert at the Aspen Music Festival (where my dad was teaching) when I was 8 years old. Apparently I was completely fascinated with what the conductor was doing and asked for conducting lessons. My parents arranged to have one of the conducting students at the Festival come and give me lessons and I started learning all the beat patterns, the names of all the instruments in the orchestra and where they sit on stage. I've literally never looked back.

How did you end up at Portland State University?
I heard the Portland State Chamber Choir perform at Carnegie Hall in 2003 as part of the National Conference of the American Choral Director's Association. It remains in my memory as one of the best choral performances I have ever heard. At the time I was teaching at Miami University in Ohio, but we were hoping to either move to the East Coast where my family is or to the Northwest where my wife's family is. I added PSU to my list of aspirational jobs.

What is the most fulfilling aspect of the work you do for PSU, especially as it relates to students?
Working with the Chamber Choir. The 40 students in that group put their entire heart and soul into making music. They come with a focus and passion for what they do that is extremely rare in an individual, let alone an entire group. But I feel like we all feed on each other's energy and find the right balance of pushing and supporting one another.

You started as a Physics major at Harvard, before switching to music. Pursuing a passion in the arts can be intimidating—what would your advice be to students who want to pursue a career in the arts? Any advice for anxious parents who would prefer their student study something with more clearly defined job prospects?
I don't think anyone should pursue a career as a full-time performing artist unless they literally have no other choice. In my experience it takes that level of passion and commitment to succeed. However I think there are far more jobs in the Arts than people realize, especially teaching and working with children. These jobs often pay better and are far more sustainable than being a performer, and they do not keep people from performing in addition. The happiest performers I know (and I include myself on this list) are the ones who are not counting on their performance revenue as their primary source of income. This frees us up to pursue the kinds of performance projects we find meaningful even if not always lucrative.

Are there any music, theater or art events taking place at Portland State University that you are particularly excited about this year?
Tons! Jordi Savall, one of the finest viol players and early music specialists in the world is coming to Portland next February. The Oregon Symphony is performing Dvorak's Slavonic Dances which are some of my favorites and rarely get played in their entirety. I would go here anything Cappella Romana does, but I'm particularly excited about their Darkness into Light concert in May. And if I can be selfish, the Portland State choirs are presenting the Portland premieres of two major choral works: The Lovers by Samuel Barber which are amazing settings of some very risqué poetry of Pablo Neruda and The Little Match Girl Passion by David Lang which won the Pulitzer Prize in 2011 and reframes Hans-Christian Anderson's famous children's story as a haunting tale about child poverty.
University Housing & Residence Life
Housing Updates, Reminders & Deadlines

2015–16 Housing Contracts will be available in mid-November
Current residents can participate in Room Selection, and pick their individual unit! University Housing & Residence Life offers many unit types in ten buildings, including studio units, 1-bedroom units, and sleeper units. Unit priority is given to students who sign up early, so please encourage your student to complete their contract as soon as possible.

What University Success has to offer your student
University Success is a residential academic support space located in 207 of Ondine residence hall and caters to the need of the student. We offer a variety of services including free writing support, academic and career advising, counseling, free computer and printing access, and a safe and quiet studying space plus more. Our hours are Sunday from 5:00 pm–10:00 pm and Monday–Thursday 2:00 pm–10:00 pm.

Two academic incentive programs your student is able to participate in if they live with us in Housing & Residence Life are the 3.0 Club and Study Bucks. The 3.0 Club is a way for your student to set an academic goal of a 3.0 or higher their Fall term at PSU. Upon signing up for the club your student will receive a monthly academic success newsletter, academic tips and other resources. Maintaining a 3.0 gets your student special club prizes and recognition. 75% of our residents who signed up for the program last year achieved a 3.0 or higher. Your student is able to sign up for the 3.0 Club with their Resident Assistant, Learning Community Assistant or at University Success. Click here to sign up.

Academic Coaching is a way for your student to gain expert guidance and resources during their first year at PSU. We provide one on one sessions with professional or peer mentors, help students gain academic support and connections, learn more about talents and more. Our program is free and offered to any first year student living in University Housing and Residence Life. This past year our coaches in the program averaged a GPA of 3.33 Fall term, 3.23 Winter term and 3.21 Spring term. Students can sign up here to sign up for Academic Coaching.

In partnership with Advising and Career Services, the Explorer’s Club is offered to any student. The club is aimed to students who are undecided about their major and/or career path. Participation in the club includes weekly emails with information and support from our PSU academic and career advisers and monthly events to learn more about career exploration and degrees at PSU. If your student is interested they can sign up here. Please tell your student to utilize our services and academic incentives if they are having a difficult time connecting to the classroom, need academic support or are looking for a way to connect to their new home.

We are located in Ondine 207. If you have any questions at all please contact University Success at usuccess@pdx.edu or 503-725-9890. Let your student be our priority.

Research Spotlight
Enhancing Cross-disciplinary Infrastructure Training at Oregon (EXITO)
Portland State University and Oregon Health & Science University are pleased to announce a $24 million research and training grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to serve as a center of innovation for creating research career pathways for underrepresented and diverse students. The initiative will support undergraduates in a broad range of disciplines, including biomedical, behavioral, social, or clinical research and other health sciences. The funding will support students of Hispanic, African American, American Indian, Alaskan Native, and Pacific Islander heritage as well as students with disabilities, histories of foster care or economic disadvantage.

“We’re looking at an incoming freshman class that’s 42 percent students of color,” said Wim Wiewel, president of PSU. “Never before has there been such a robust program to create opportunities for underrepresented students to pursue degrees in health sciences.”

The money will fund PSU’s new Enhancing Cross-disciplinary Infrastructure Training at Oregon (EXITO) program. Students accepted to the program will receive scholarships, stipends, mentoring, summer seminars, paid job experience engaging in hands-on research, and dedicated academic and financial aid advising.

For more information on this grant and the benefit to students, click here.
FINANCIAL AID & SCHOLARSHIPS
2015 – 2016 PSU Scholarship Application

The PSU undergraduate and graduate scholarship applications for the 2015-2016 academic year are now available through the online application portal at pdx.edu/scholarships. Current and prospective degree-seeking students are encouraged to begin applying for scholarships. PSU awards hundreds of scholarships each year based on a variety of criteria, including financial need; scholastic achievement; participation in school activities; community service; and degree, education and career objectives.

For the 2015 – 2016 year, both undergraduate and graduate scholarship applications are due on Sunday, February 1, 2015. Students applying to be University Studies Peer Mentors must submit their applications by January 16, 2015. Scholarships are normally awarded at the end of the winter term for the following academic year. Scholarship award notifications are sent out in late March for undergraduate students and by late May for graduate students.

In addition, the Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships is hosting scholarship workshops and cordially invites all current and prospective students to attend. Below are the details of the workshops:

Thursday, November 13, 2014 - Location: SMSU 238, Time: 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Wednesday, November 19, 2014 - Location: SMSU 238, Time: 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm

The workshops will cover some helpful tips on the application process, how to increase your chances of being selected, and what mistakes to avoid. If you have questions, please contact our office at scholarships@pdx.edu, 503-725-3461 or visit us in Neuberger Lobby between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm.

SERVICE SPOTLIGHT
Assistance With Grad School Decisions Offered by Advising and Career Services

Your student may be asking you the following questions: Should I go to graduate school? Do I need an advanced degree? How much does graduate school cost? How do I learn about programs and degrees? When should I apply?

If your students’ aspirations, passion for a specific field, or career they are planning for requires advanced study, Advising and Career Services (ACS) staff can help with this process. Graduate school is a big commitment! Students should gather information about schools and programs and they need to be clear about their goals. Some professions require an advanced degree, i.e. law and medicine, while others may require on-site training and relevant work experience. Working in the field for some time may help determine their next steps and provide valuable information and knowledge about the field. Making an informed decision about pursuing a graduate or professional degree requires in-depth self-analysis, research of programs and schools, and a plan of action. Advising & Career Services offers workshops and resources to help demystify the process of applying to graduate school by offering a series of information sessions and one-on-one consultations.

Graduate school application deadlines are approaching fast, and November is Graduate Fair season. Browse this list of graduate school focused events we have going on this fall term!