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

Campus has been abuzz with fantastic energy this term! Students have been engaged in debates and riveting discussion about the national election. Defying reported trends of declining voting among young people, ASPSU (Portland State’s student government) partnered with other student governments across the state to register nearly 50,000 college students to vote in this fall’s election. Additionally, “Portland State of Mind” — a series of music events, speakers, seminars, and athletic events — provided students, faculty, staff and community members with opportunities to interact with the university, the city and one another. Events included a mayoral debate, “The Body Beautiful” exhibit at the Portland Art Museum, and the Vikings football game against Idaho State.

This edition of The PSU Family includes valuable information for you and your PSU student as you prepare for the end of fall term. We have highlighted important deadlines, such as those coming up for Financial Aid and Housing. You’ll also read about:

- Caitlan Spencer, one of our amazing students participating in the upcoming production of Othello;
- James Ofsink, Assistant Director of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships;
- New and exciting changes to the expanded University Honors program;
- PSU volleyball team’s success at the Big Sky Conference;
- President Wim Wiewel receiving the U.S. Green Building Council’s sustainability award.

Please don’t hesitate to contact the Office of the Dean of Student Life if you have ideas, suggestions or questions about the newsletter. We are always happy to assist you and your student with his or her educational goals at Portland State. Thank you for your interest and commitment to your student’s success at PSU.

Sincerely,

Michele Toppe, Dean of Student Life

From the Desk of the Dean

Resource Spotlight:
PSU’s Urban Honors Experience

Honors at PSU isn’t your typical or traditional program. As one of the only Urban Honors programs in the country, PSU’s Urban Honors uses the city of Portland as a living laboratory, stage and archive for introducing students to an engaged and challenging educational experience.

PSU’s Urban Honors program has been transforming and expanding over the past two years — the enrollment numbers alone have increased by over 130%. Just this fall, a new program curriculum was introduced which offers new courses on The Global City, Urban Culture, Urban Society and Urban Ecology. Upper division seminars have expanded to include more faculty from across the entire campus to provide students with a truly interdisciplinary experience. Even with all of these changes and expansions, the program continues to maintain a focus on small classes that allows students and faculty opportunities to not only have a direct learning experience but also get to know one another better.

Of course, the students are the best part of the program. They come from around the country, across the world, and of course right here in Oregon, bringing with them a wealth of experience and ideas.

Amber Smith, a freshman on the Urban Honors floor, housed in the Stephen Eplar Hall, and one of the new Sustainability Scholars, spent the past year in Turkey starting a recycling program at a metropolitan high school. She is currently focused on preparing for a career in international development.

Tavi Gupta started in Honors last year as a returning student with three children. Tavi is immersed in the study of the Holocaust and will be serving on the Student Research Advisory Committee for the University for 2012-13.

And that’s Urban Honors! Students and faculty involved with this program are out in the city everyday, interning, researching, writing and also playing.

Stephen Eplar Hall, built in 2003, houses students admitted to the Honors program.
Meet Caitlan Spencer. Caitlan is in her senior year and studying Theatre Arts and English. She is also a student ambassador, orientation leader, and a member of TASO, the Theatre Arts Student Organization. And she was still able to squeeze in a few minutes to chat with us about her experiences as a PSU student!

Q: Where are you from and why did you choose to study at PSU?
I am from Phoenix, AZ and I chose to come to PSU because it was a university in an urban setting. I also really enjoyed the faculty that I met in the theatre department on Freshman Preview when I was a senior in high school.

Q: What can we look forward to in the upcoming production of Othello in which you play Emilia?
You should look forward to a very driven production, focusing on the destruction of reputation and the relationships between characters. The cast is very talented and extremely committed. This production will be beautifully directed by Devon Allen, an equity actor as well as professor in the Theatre Department. Her productions are very high caliber productions because of her professionalism and complete passion for the theatre. Look forward to much love and hate as well as many moments with sword fighting! The full spectrum of emotions can be found on the Lincoln Hall stage this week!

Q: How do you balance the demands of theatre with the demands of your academics?
It is hard to balance life as a PSU student and work on productions, but it is completely doable! I balance these two important things by buying a PSU planner in the beginning of the term and staying organized. I also use the writing center to help with many of my papers which I sometimes write in between acting out scenes during rehearsal times. Another campus resource I use during these long hour days is the Starbucks in Smith Union — caffeine does wonders in college!

Q: What are your plans for the future?
My plans for the future are to teach Theatre and English at the high school and possibly at the college level. I also have a great affinity for documentary theatre and would love to create, produce, and perform my own documentary theatre in the future. In a perfect world, I would teach and create theatre for the rest of my life.

Q: What advice would you like to share with families who are supporting their students to join student groups and projects going on around PSU. The amount of opportunities to create theatre, music, friendships, and communities is infinite on our campus! Find what you love to do and meet people that share those same interests and create something!

Q: What is your favorite Fall/Winter activity in Portland … besides performing in shows, of course?
My favorite Fall/Winter activity in Portland is most definitely the amazing farmer’s market on campus. I love going out every Saturday morning to get fresh food and meet interesting people from around the community. And the fall leaves are so beautiful, which is a bonus!

Caitlan Spencer and fellow Othello cast members. Othello remaining showtimes are Nov 14-17, 7:30pm. Regular tickets are $12, student, senior citizen, and PSU employee tickets are $8. For tickets contact the PSU Box Office at 503.725.3307.

One of six ecoroofs at Portland State University
Employee Spotlight:  
**James Ofsink**

James Ofsink is an Assistant Director in the Department of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships. He oversees several areas of the office including scholarships, accounting, records, and technology. We recently caught James as he biked through the Park Blocks and asked him a few questions.

Q. How did you end up at PSU and what roles have you performed?

Even before I moved to Portland in 2004 PSU was the number one place I wanted to work. Once I arrived in Portland I landed an interview for a customer service position in Admissions, Records, Registration and Financial Aid. By the end of that first interview my desire to work at PSU was really cemented. It was clear that the people here loved their connection to students and enjoyed their work. After six months I had the opportunity to coordinate the technology for the Student Financial Aid Office. After a few years I moved into my Assistant Director position, which allows me to look abstractly at even the non-technical aspects of our office. Oh, and I still make it a point to work at the counter a few hours a week, to keep in touch with the issues that students are having and to keep in touch with what motivates me.

Q. What is the most fulfilling aspect of the work you do for PSU, especially as it relates to students?

This probably sounds corny, but I really believe that education has the power to transform the world. It’s amazing to me that as a species we can use our imaginations to come up with solutions to all kinds of problems and then we can make them actually happen in the world. I ride my bike up Broadway every morning and as I come up the hill to PSU I look up and see “Let Knowledge Serve the City.” That’s not just about research happening in a lab somewhere on campus, it’s students in their Senior Capstones out in the community making this city even better. When I hear about the great work that our students do here in Portland and elsewhere in the world, it fills me up to think that in some small way I helped that happen.

Q. What is your big picture goal for Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships?

Student financial aid is complicated. There are reams of federal, state and institutional rules and we know that it can be difficult for students to navigate. The goal for our office is that students shouldn’t have to be financial aid professionals. We strive to get accurate, but simplified information to students so that they can make informed decisions about how to pay for school.

Q. What advice would you give students and families of PSU students or individuals thinking about attending PSU?

Submit your FAFSA as early as possible after January 1! There are some sources of funding that go to early applicants and once they run out they’re gone. Also, make sure to follow up on any requests from us as soon as you receive them. There are a lot of students that wait until September to turn in documents and it really delays their aid. So be organized and be early.

Q. What’s your favorite spot on campus?

Right now I’m loving bringing my lunch or a book to the 5th floor of the Rec Center. Even when it’s rainy there’s a great view of the city and some comfy chairs.

Money Matters:  
**Tips for Sustainable Gift Giving**

With the holidays approaching, you can help your students stick to their budgets and avoid stress. Encourage them to steer away from poor financial choices. Let them know that meaningful, memorable gifts come from the heart, not the wallet.

“Maybe it’s time to think about new and creative ways to … bring the same joy to the holiday season but that are more mindful,” said Jill Mosteller, PSU assistant professor of marketing, in a November 8 article in The Oregonian. Dr. Mosteller suggests making the holidays more sustainable by thinking carefully about what we want from them.

By focusing on education and putting time and energy into doing well in school, students already are giving the best gift of all. Here are some other inexpensive gifts your students could give this holiday season:

- For students who like to sing or play music, suggest a gift of a personal concert at home;
- For students who like to write, a meaningful letter, poem or short story would be treasured;
- For artistic students, suggest a photograph, drawing or other work of art;
- For students who enjoy cooking, candied nuts, bread, a special dinner or other kitchen treats are welcome;
- For students who enjoy the outdoors, a gift of a hike, walk or bike ride together is a great way to reconnect with a loved one—and healthy too! Gifts like these have an added advantage: they aren’t buried in layers of wasteful packaging.

And if you’re still stumped for present ideas, the Portland State Spirit Store is pleased to offer a 10% discount to parents and students now through Friday, December 21, 2012. All you have to do is mention this code at the start of your checkout: FAMILY NEWSLETTER. The Spirit Store offers PSU athletic clothing, water bottles, key chains, and various other great stocking stuffers. It is located on the first floor of Smith Memorial Student Union, and open Monday-Thursday 9:00am-5:00pm, Friday 9:00am-3:00pm, and Saturday 10:00am-2:00pm.

Campus Update:  
**Guest Wi-Fi at PSU**

The Office of Information Technology is pleased to announce that visitors to PSU can now get guest Wi-Fi access without having to contact the Helpdesk. This new service is especially useful for visiting parents of students and other academic guests who want to access the Internet while on campus. Guests at PSU can conveniently use this new service at any time by signing up for PSU Guest Wi-Fi access at [www.pdx.edu/ait/guest](http://www.pdx.edu/ait/guest).

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Helpdesk at 503-725-4357, email help@pdx.edu or stop by SMSU 18.

Portland State University
University Housing & Residence:

Fall is in full swing!

Here are some reminders about University Housing & Residence Life.

Please keep in mind some important dates coming up:
- November 14th, 2012 Last Day to accept Room Transfer Requests
- November 21st, 2012 Victor’s closes after lunch for Thanksgiving
- November 25th, 2012 Victor’s re-opens for Dinner
- November 27, 2012 Last day to finish Room Transfer Moves
- December 7th, 2012 Meal Plan Change Deadline for Winter Term

Blumel Renovations

Blumel renovations are well underway to have the building ready for residents by Spring 2013. This upgrade will include replacing the roof, fixing the problem of water leaks in the units, installation of a new fire alarm system, and installing better heating controls and energy efficient lighting in the rooms. Four units will have ADA compliant roll-in showers installed. Also look for new kitchen cabinets and counter, flooring, and painting. If students are interested in hearing more information, they may stop by the Housing office or send an email to housing@pdx.edu stating they would like to be placed on the Blumel Interest List. Look forward to more information in Winter Term.

PSU Email Switch

University Housing & Residence Life is exclusively using @pdx.edu emails for our communications. Many students have other accounts on file with us, and we will no longer be using those emails, because the @pdx.edu email is the official communication standard for Portland State University.

Residence Hall Association

RHA is the Residence Hall Association within University Housing. It is the governing body that represents resident students of Portland State University. This group works to provide involvement and leadership opportunities and programming, including the community garden (near Stephen Epler). RHA is supported and sponsored by the student activity and housing fees that all housing residents pay. For more information, email rha@pdx.edu, or visit Montgomery 104.

Montgomery Resident Services Desk
(503) 725-4385

The Resident Services Desk, located at SW 10th and Montgomery (across from Starbucks), provides assistance to residents with checking in and out, packages, lock-outs and lock changes. During the academic year, the Resident Services Desk is open 7 days a week, 9am-midnight. During University Closures, holidays, and breaks, the Resident Services Desk operated on limited hours.

Have a maintenance issue? Submit a work order online at www.pdx.edu/housing and click on Maintenance to get to the Work Order Portal. [DP1]

For all questions and comments, please visit or call the University Housing and Residence Life Student Services Office, located in Broadway 210. We can be reached at (503) 725-4375 and by email at housing@pdx.edu.

Campus Spotlight:

Women’s Viking Volleyball Team

The Portland State Women’s Viking volleyball team has bump, set, and spiked their way to currently being second place in the Big Sky Conference with a conference record of 15-3. To achieve this high ranking, the team scored several amazing triumphs including defeating the defending Big Sky Regular Season and Tournament Champion Northern Colorado as well as two wins over rival (friendly, of course) team Eastern Washington during The Dam Cup.

The team’s dedication and hard work, in both athletics and academics, has been recognized many times over. Senior Megan Ellis and Junior Gryn Schlatter were both acknowledged as players of the week. Sophomore Kasimira Clark leads the conference in digs and aces. Further, the team maven, senior Dominika Kristinikova, has been a starter since her freshman year. Equally impressive are the high academic achievements served by this team — nine players have been honored on the 2011 Big Sky Fall All-Academic list.

On Friday, November 17th, the Vikings take on Idaho State — currently holding 1st place in the Big Sky Conference — at the Stott Center. The winner of this game may end up earning the title of Big Sky Conference Champion. Tickets may be purchased by called 1.888.VIK.TIKS ($8 adults, $6 youth, free for PSU students). Come and cheer on the Vikings to victory!