



THE LION'S ROAR

The monthly newsletter for Penn State Berks



Important Dates

February 19 - March 20

Starfish Mid-semester Progress Reporting period¹

March 1

- Penn State Berks Scholarship Application Opens²
- Summer Course Enrollment Continues³

March 2

Residence Halls CLOSE for Spring Break at 12:00pm⁴

March 4 - March 8 | Spring Break - No Classes

March 10

Residence Halls RE-OPEN at 11:00am

March 20

Campus-wide Academic Advising Meetings

March 22

Installment Payment Plan (IPP) payment due⁵

LOOKING AHEAD | April 5

Late Drop Deadline at 11:59pm (for full semester courses)

¹Instructors can raise kudos (for areas of excellence) and flags (for areas of concern) on issues related to your academic progress, which will send messages to your Penn State email. Emails are sent from notices@starfishsolutions.com. View Starfish template messages: [Messages | Starfish Info \(psu.edu\)](#)

² Learn more about scholarships at Penn State Berks at [Scholarships & Awards | Penn State Berks \(psu.edu\)](#)

³ Summer Session provides students with the opportunity to enroll in courses at any Penn State Campus. Options around the start date, end date, and length of courses exist. Learn more: [Summer Courses | Summer Session \(psu.edu\)](#)

⁴ All residential students (unless approved for and have accepted a Break Contract) must vacate the residence halls by this time. Belongings can remain in the dorms. Note, Housing & Residence Life enters all rooms over break for Health & Safety inspections. Policy Violations found in rooms will be referred to Student Conduct. Learn more about the Community Standards and Policies at <https://berks.psu.edu/office-residence-life-1>

⁵ If you enroll in the Installment Payment Plan (IPP) by the first payment (1/22), your second, third, and fourth installments are due on the 22nd of the three subsequent months. Learn more: [Payment Options | Office of the Bursar \(psu.edu\)](#)

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FINANCIAL AID:

NAVIGATING THE NEW FAFSA

Penn State Berks invites you to demystify the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at our upcoming presentation:

Monday, March 11

12:15 - :15 pm | Perkins Auditorium

Why should YOU attend?

- **Empower Yourself:** In today's challenging financial landscape, taking control of your financial aid journey is crucial.
- **Navigate with Confidence:** Discover strategies to tackle the FAFSA application process and important deadlines.

Unable to Attend? Access these free FAFSA resources from Federal Student Aid

- Pro Tips for the 2024-25 FAFSA: [Pro Tips for the 2024-25 FAFSA® Form | Federal Student Aid](#)
- Resources on the FAFSA: <https://studentaid.gov/resources>
- Webinar Recordings: <https://studentaid.gov/resources#webinars>

ACADEMIC ADVISING SPOTLIGHT: FALL COURSE ENROLLMENT



CAMPUS-WIDE ACADEMIC ADVISING MEETINGS

will be held on March 20 from 12:15-1:15pm in various locations. Advising Meetings are designed to help students learn more about majors, opportunities (scholarships, travel, etc.), and course scheduling information. Locations vary by major. See the full list [here](#).

SCHEDULING FALL CLASSES: Check your LionPATH Student "Home Base" (i.e., your dashboard) for an Enrollment Appointment date and to review the schedule of courses. Remember, enrollment dates vary by student.

- Priority Registration begins March 13
- Regular Registration begins March 20

IMPORTANT!

Sophomores should have their change of major and change of campus (if applicable), completed prior to scheduling Fall classes! Registration-related Holds for the Spring 2024 semester should be resolved prior to the assigned enrollment date to prevent issues when scheduling courses.

CONSIDERING A CHANGE: LINK UP THINKING OF A CAMPUS CHANGE?

There are various reasons why a student might decide to transition to a different Penn State campus. Typically, if a student applies for a major that is not offered at the student's current location, the student will be required to select an approved location during the entrance to major process. To learn more about the Change of Campus process, click [here](#).

FINANCIAL AID & CAMPUS CHANGE

If you are thinking about completing your degree at another Penn State campus and would like to discuss how your aid might be impacted, schedule a meeting with Financial Aid to discuss!

LINK UP EVENT

Link UP is a day-long visit program for first- and second-year students at any of Penn State's undergraduate campuses who are considering a campus change. Second-year students who have been approved for a campus change in LionPATH are also invited to attend.

Students will learn about the change-of-campus experience, connect with their intended academic college, and begin to develop an understanding of what they need to know to make a successful transition. Link UP takes place in person at the University Park campus on April 6, 2024.

Preview the agenda and register for the program at <https://changeofcampus.psu.edu/linkup>
Registration will close on March 27.

UPCOMING ADVISING EVENTS

- **Let's Talk About Ways to Raise My Grade Point Average** | Friday, March 15 from 12:15-1:15pm via Zoom <https://psu.zoom.us/j/96999973533>
- **Campus-wide Advising Meetings** | Wednesday, March 20 from 12:15-1:15pm in various locations
- **Hands-on Change of Major and Change of Campus Workshop** | Monday, March 25 from 12:15-1:15pm in 205 Gaige



MAXIMIZE YOUR SUCCESS: TUTORING SERVICES FREE OF CHARGE!



Learning Center (161 Franco)

- Professional and peer tutoring in math.
- Peer tutors in chemistry, biology, and more.
- Support with study skills, time management, test anxiety, and more.

Open for Peer Tutoring by Appointment

Monday–Thursday 9:00am–7:00pm | Friday 9:00am–1pm

Walk-In Hours Dr. Ryan Hassler, Faculty Math Tutor

Monday Noon to 3:00pm | Friday 10:00am – 1:00pm

Writing Center (141 Franco)

- Peer tutors to help with a paper, speech, resume, or other written material.
- Available in-person or via Zoom

Open for Peer Tutoring

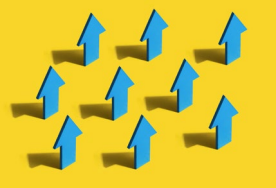
Monday–Friday 10:00am – 6:30pm

Math Peers & Profs (222 Luerssen)

- Tutoring sessions available for Math 4, 21, 22, 26, 34, 41, and Stat 100 with Math faculty and teaching assistants.
- Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:15-1:15pm.
- No appointment is necessary!

Embedded Classroom Learning Assistants (LAs) Office Hours

- Check with your individual LA.



BOUNCING BACK: STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING YOUR GPA

It can be hard to believe, but your GPA does not define your worth or potential. What matters most is your dedication to growth and improvement. If you are feeling the weight of a declining GPA, you're not alone. College can be a challenging journey and setbacks are a natural part of the experience.

Low grades may have you:

- Wondering if you have what it takes to be here...
- Grappling with whether to tell your supporters or try to do this alone...
- Finding yourself avoiding classes ...
- Putting off starting assignments ...
- Noticing new sleep patterns such as oversleeping, not sleeping enough, and/or staying in your room.

However, with determination and the right strategies, you can turn things around and set yourself on the path to academic success.

Reflect and Assess:

The first step in overcoming a declining GPA is to take a moment to reflect on what might have contributed to the situation. Were you overwhelmed by a heavy course load? Did personal issues affect your focus? By identifying the root causes, you can develop a plan to address them effectively.

Seek Support:

Remember, you're not in this alone. Reach out to your professors, academic advisers, and/or campus support services for support and guidance. They can offer valuable resources and the motivation you need to help improve your grades. You may want to reach out to your advisor or Sue Costa, Academic Recovery Specialist, to see if there are any policies, such as Grade Forgiveness (for repeated courses) that could help repair your GPA. You can also discuss whether to drop one or more courses (please check with Financial Aid before doing so).

Set Realistic Goals:

Effective time management is crucial for academic success. Create a realistic study schedule, prioritize your assignments, and break down larger tasks into manageable chunks. Utilize tools like planners or productivity apps to stay organized and focused. Celebrate your progress along the way, no matter how small. Every step forward is a step closer to your academic goals.

Improve Study Habits:

Evaluate your study habits and experiment with different techniques to find what works best for you. Active studying, spaced repetition, and group study sessions are all strategies worth exploring. Remember, consistency is key.

Take Care of Yourself:

Don't underestimate the importance of self-care. Make sure to get enough sleep, eat healthily, exercise regularly, and take breaks when needed. A healthy body and mind are essential for optimal academic performance.

Stay Positive:

Maintain a positive mindset throughout your journey. Acknowledge that setbacks are a natural part of the learning process and focus on the lessons you can learn from them. Believe in your ability to improve and stay committed to your academic journey.

Above all, embrace the challenge, stay resilient, and keep moving forward. You've got this!

NEED A LITTLE INSPIRATION?

Attend the Advising Student Presentation, Let's Talk About Ways to Raise My Grade Point Average on Friday, March 15 from 12:15-1:15pm via Zoom <https://psu.zoom.us/j/96999973533>

If you are feeling overwhelmed and would like help in sorting it out, please reach out to the Counseling Center at <https://berks.psu.edu/student-life/current-students/health-and-wellness-center/counseling-services>



DID YOU KNOW? 24/7 HOUR KITCHEN ACCESS FOR RAMADAN

Penn State Berks is thrilled to announce extended kitchen access for residential students during the upcoming Ramadan season. From March 10 to April 9, students residing on campus will have round-the-clock access to kitchen facilities, ensuring they can observe their religious traditions comfortably.



This initiative aims to create a supportive environment where students observing Ramadan can prepare meals and break their fast at their convenience. It's not just about providing access; it's about fostering a sense of community and understanding.

In line with our commitment to fostering a respectful and inclusive community, we would like to remind all students of the following kitchen etiquette, which should be observed:

Maintain Cleanliness: Please clean up after yourself promptly to ensure a clean and hygienic environment for all users.

Respect Others' Space: Be mindful of others' needs for kitchen space and equipment. Clean and return communal kitchenware promptly after each use.

Be Considerate of Others' Needs: Whether it's during Ramadan or any other time, respect your peers' religious and dietary practices.

Minimize Waste: Let's work together to reduce food waste by using resources responsibly and storing leftovers properly.

Communicate Effectively: Should you have any concerns or issues related to kitchen access or etiquette, do not hesitate to reach out for assistance. Contact the Housing team via email at HousingBK@psu.edu or the ResLife team via email at BerksResLife@psu.edu



Check your PSU email!

Starting in week 3 and then again in week 7 of each semester, instructors are prompted to use Starfish to comment on student progress in their class.

Instructor feedback will come from notices@starfishsolutions.com. **DO NOT DELETE THESE EMAILS - THEY ARE NOT SPAM.**

COUNSELING CORNER: IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH CRAFTING?

Do you know that creative activities are linked to positive psychological functioning?

It's true! Research has found that engaging in crafting or artwork can increase dopamine release, improve overall sense of well-being, reduce anxiety, and lower stress hormones like cortisol. Crafting has been prescribed since the dawn of occupational therapy in the late 19th century, with basketry and pottery being used to relieve anxiety and physical ailments in soldiers during World War I.

The effort, multi-sensory engagement, and repetitive actions make activities like drawing, coloring, painting, knitting, and other crafts well-suited for self-care. They help to improve mood and lower stress, as well as provide the meditative quality of focus and attention that's essential for mindfulness.

When a social component is added, crafting with others in a group setting can also help to reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness, as well as improve one's sense of belonging and connection.

WANNA GIVE IT A TRY?

Join Counseling Services for one of their Craft & Chat sessions this Spring semester! All crafts are welcome! You can bring your craft or use the supplies provided.

Dates: March 11th & 28th | April 8th & 25th

Location: Penn State Room, Perkins (Room 114)

Time: 4:00-5:00pm



I received a flag, now what?

- Discuss the feedback with your instructor.
- Schedule tutoring sessions as necessary
- Meet with your academic adviser to determine a plan of action should you fail or need to drop the course.
- Explore new ways of learning such as:
 - Reading/reviewing the material more often
 - Completing practice problems
 - Making/taking practice tests
 - Joining/creating a study group
 - Speaking the material aloud
 - Switching up note-taking habits (e.g., using pen and paper versus computer).

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT



UNLOCKING FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES WITH CAREER SERVICES

The Career Services Office is a full-service resource for students and alumni of Penn State Berks. The office provides online career resources, counseling, and assistance in all facets of career planning and development. Contact Career Services to schedule a one-on-one meeting and start your opportunity search, review your resume, and prepare for interviews.

Career Services

010 Perkins Student Center | 610-396-6368

UPCOMING CAREER FAIR & NETWORKING EVENTS

March 20 | Resume Writing & Know Your Career Office
from 12:15-1:15pm in Perkins 003

April 8 | Business Etiquette Dinner
from 5:00-6:00pm in Perkins 007 (MPR 1)
Learn more about Business Dining Etiquette, how to dress for success, and more! Space is limited so sign up [HERE](#) as soon as possible!

April 24 | Graduate School Workshop
from 12:15-1:15pm in Perkins 003



FINANCIAL AID FOCUS: FASFA APPLICATION CHANGES



FAFSA APPLICATION 2024-2025

- The 2024-2025 FAFSA application has undergone significant changes.
 - For the latest news on FAFSA availability visit <https://studentaid.gov/announcements-events/december-fafsa>.
 - To learn how to fill out the FAFSA form, visit <https://studentaid.gov/apply-for-aid/fafsa/filling-out>
- **IMPORTANT:** Students completing the 2024-2025 FAFSA form should be using the following:
 - Pennsylvania State University (The)
 - SCHOOL TYPE: PUBLIC, PRIMARILY 4-YEAR
 - Federal School Code: 003329

HOLDS AND TO DO LIST ITEMS

- Check for any To Do List items or Holds related to Financial Aid in your LionPATH account. Click on the link to understand if it requires action or offers information only.
- **Note:** Financial Aid To Do list items and Holds won't stop students from scheduling courses. If you cannot schedule classes, another Hold, like an [academic registration hold](#), might be the cause. Review the Hold or To Do List details to determine your next steps. For assistance with Financial Aid-related To Do List items or Holds, contact the Financial Aid office.

ACADEMIC ADVISING SPOTLIGHT: ACADEMIC INSIGHT



CHANGE OF MAJOR & CHANGE OF CAMPUS

It may be time for you to change your major, and if applicable, change your campus. This process should be completed prior to scheduling your courses for the Fall semester.

Are you a fourth-semester student who is eligible to change your major?

- Use the "Update Academics" function in LionPATH to change your major

Do you need to complete your degree at a campus other than Berks?

- Use the "Update Campus" function in LionPATH to change your campus.

If you have questions about either process, contact your assigned academic adviser or stop by the academic advising center office at 160 Franco between 9:00am-4:00pm from Monday to Friday to meet with an academic adviser.

IMPORTANT: If you are thinking about completing your degree at another Penn State campus and would like to discuss how your aid might be impacted, schedule a meeting with Financial Aid to discuss!



CULTIVATE YOUR POTENTIAL: CAMPUS LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Orientation Leaders (OLs) represent a significant leadership opportunity at Penn State Berks. OLs are often a new student's first introduction to the campus. They assist new students with their transition during Welcome Weekend events!

Requirements: Students do NOT need to enroll in a class to be qualified to serve as an OL.

Spring 2024: Students must complete the OL application. Students selected as OLs will be expected to participate in an evening training during the Spring semester.

Fall 2024: Students must be available the week before Fall classes for training and to assist during Welcome Weekend events. OLs are expected to attend one Welcome Week **and** one Community Weekend event.



If you have any questions about the process or how you can get involved, contact Lily Sánchez at LQS5108@psu.edu or Dereka Bauscher at DZB5915@psu.edu. Scan the QR code or [click here](#) for the 2024 Orientation Leader application beginning Jan 15.

SUMMER COURSE ENROLLMENT

On Feb 2, summer course registration opens and is available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Current spring 2024 students can schedule classes at any Penn State campus! Stay on track toward degree completion by speaking with your academic adviser **before** enrolling!

Summer Sessions:

Summer I: May 13 - June 21

Summer II: June 26 - August 7

Learn more: [Summer Courses](#) | [Summer Session \(psu.edu\)](#)

IMPORTANT!

- Most summer courses are accelerated, covering about 15 weeks of content in 6-7 weeks.
- You can expect the pace of the course to be quick, with some classes meeting more frequently or for longer periods.
- On-campus housing is not available for those taking summer courses at the Berks campus.
- Contact Financial Aid to determine if you might be eligible for aid.
- If you decide to take classes at a non-Penn State location over the summer, make sure the credits will transfer back to Penn State! Use the [Transfer Credit Tool](#) to confirm.

This newsletter is made possible by the joint efforts of the Student Success & Retention Committee, DUS Academic Advising Center, and the Office of Admissions & Enrollment Management.

CAMPUS RESOURCE LIST

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

GENERAL

24/7 Penn State Crisis Line can be used in consultation for those at PSU to support someone who is experiencing a crisis or for yourself. You can reach the Crisis Line by:

- Calling 1-877-229-6400
- Texting "LIONS" to 741741

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention offers resources and tips on how to support a friend -- or get help yourself.

- Check it out at <https://seizetheawkward.org/>

Berks County Crisis Line can be used by residents of Berk County to assist children, adolescents and adults experiencing varying levels of crisis.

- Call the line at 610-379-2007

Counseling Services are available to all Penn State Berks students for FREE.

- Learn more at <https://berks.psu.edu/counseling-services>

Life Hack Kits are free step-by-step wellness packages designed to help navigate and demystify the perplexing parts of being human.

- Learn more at <https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/wellness-services/life-hacks>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is free and confidential support for any person in distress, providing prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones.

- Call the line by dialing 988 or calling 800-273-8255

Online Mental Health Screenings are free and anonymous for several areas of mental health, including depression, anxiety, academic distress, eating concerns, frustration level, family stress, and alcohol use.

- Begin screening at <https://tinyurl.com/CAPSScreening>

Red Folder at Penn State is a guide to help faculty, staff, student leaders, and others who interact with students to recognize, respond effectively to, and refer Penn State students in distress.

- Review resources specific to Penn State Berks at <https://redfolder.psu.edu/campus-resources/>

Safe Berks Campus Advocate provides support for survivors of domestic and sexual violence as well as offers Prevention and Awareness Programming.

- **Campus Contact:** LaTisha Baker
- **Email:** LaTishaB@safeberks.org
- **Office:** 311 Gaige
- **Phone:** 484-651-9745 (call or text)

WellTrack Boost is a tool designed to help understand the activities associated with changes in mood and motivation, as well as to identify patterns in daily activities and how they are associated with changes in emotional states.

- Get FREE PSU access at <https://psu.welltrack.com/>

Nittany Corner FOOD PANTRY [in the Cohen Lounge located in Thun Library]

The Nittany Corner food pantry was funded and established by the Penn State Berks class of 2017 to address issues of hunger and support students' success while pursuing their education at Penn State Berks. Pantry items are FREE to Penn State Berks students!

Academic Advising [160 Franco] - Questions about **course scheduling, degree progress, changing your major, or advising policies** contact your assigned academic adviser (listed in LionPATH). You can also reach out to Academic Advising for support.

Email: bkadvisingcenter@psu.edu | **Phone:** 610-396-6280

BIAS Incident REPORT FORM - To report concerns regarding bias, intolerance, discrimination, harassment, and/or incivility, use the form found [here](#)

Bursar [125 Franco] - Questions about your **bill or payment options**. **Email:** bkbursar@psu.edu | **Phone:** 610-396-6040

CARE Report Form - To express concern for a student experiencing distress of an academic, health, safety, or financial nature, use the form found [here](#)

Financial Aid [014 Perkins] - Questions about your **aid, holds, or to-do list items**

Email: BerksFinAid@psu.edu | **Phone:** 610-396-6070

Housing & Food Services [106 Perkins]

- Questions about ID Cards or Residence Hall and Housing Contracts email HousingBK@psu.edu
- Questions about meal plans and food services, including reporting food allergies, email absfoodservicebk@psu.edu

International Student Services [311A Gaige]

- Questions about international student-related programs and events **email** nar165@psu.edu
- Questions about maintaining immigration status, internships, employment, enrollment requirements, and visa-related regulations **email** dcs5845@psu.edu
- **Phone:** 610-396-6105

Thun Library - A place to study, access course materials, a lounge with vending machines, or support with technology.

- Webpage: <https://libraries.psu.edu/berks>
- Access their full calendar [here](#).
- Course Reserves (free access to textbooks) can be used in the library for 2-hour intervals. [Check here](#)

Tutoring

- **Learning Center:** Schedule a **math or science** tutoring session [here](#).
- **Writing Center:** Schedule a tutor for help with a **paper, speech, resume, or other written material** [here](#).
- **Peers and Profs:** Need help with Math 4, 21, 22, 26, 34, 41, & Stat 110, attend help sessions on Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:15-1:15 pm in Luerssen 222. No appointment is necessary!

Veteran Benefits [125 Franco]

Questions about **VA certifications**, contact the Registrar's Office
Email: BKVeterans@psu.edu | **Phone:** 610-396-6085