



## NEWS RELEASE

### For Immediate Release

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**Financial Aid Awareness Month helps students explore college financing options**  
Lela offers scholarships and encourages students to apply for assistance during February

BATON ROUGE— The Louisiana Education Loan Authority (Lela) is launching a statewide campaign during February to provide information to parents and students about options available to finance their college education and to inform them that now is the time to apply. As part of Financial Aid Awareness Month (FAAM), Lela is also conducting a “Cash for College” scholarship contest that encourages students to use their creativity to focus on their higher education.

“The key to lining up financial assistance for college is to start the process early,” said Joni Leggio, Assistant Vice President of Lela, Louisiana’s nonprofit student loan provider. “Lela is joining with Gov. Bobby Jindal and others to spread the word during February about all of the financial aid programs that are available for college in Louisiana.”

Leggio points out that a first step in the financial aid process should be completing the U.S. Department of Education’s Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The new FAFSA for the 2010/2011 academic year became available on Jan. 1. Most universities recommend completing the FAFSA by March 1 to be considered for all financial aid. This would apply to students entering college this fall.

Part of Lela’s outreach includes its newly designed website, [askLela.org](http://askLela.org), a one-stop resource for information regarding a wide range of issues that college freshmen and their parents face. Lela is also using its [GoFAAM.com](http://GoFAAM.com) website and Internet avenues such as Facebook to spread the word. [GoFAAM.com](http://GoFAAM.com) includes information regarding

dates and times of financial aid workshops being held around the state and details of Lela's scholarship contests.

Jindal officially proclaimed February as Financial Aid Awareness Month saying "there is a growing need to provide financial aid information throughout the state of Louisiana...". He also emphasized in his resolution that "education access plays a critical role in providing for a better tomorrow for our Louisiana citizens."

"The FASFA application is required for federal financial assistance and as part of the process of obtaining one of Louisiana's TOPS scholarships," said Leggio. "Our websites have links to the application, which may be obtained at [fafsa.ed.gov](http://fafsa.ed.gov) as well as many other important sites."

Students who visit [GoFAAM.com](http://GoFAAM.com) will also be presented with different ways to earn scholarships. Lela will award \$6,000 in scholarships in February. One way is Lela's annual "Cash for College – What's Your Story" contest, where high school seniors write and submit their story to Lela about why they want to go to college including their unique journey as they prepare. Three students will be selected to receive \$1,000 scholarships each for writing the best story. Six \$500 scholarships will be awarded through drawings from financial aid workshop attendees and students who register at [GoFAAM.com](http://GoFAAM.com) in February and March.

All Louisiana high school seniors are eligible for Lela's contest and are encouraged to submit an entry. For a complete list of contest rules and guidelines, visit [www.GoFAAM.com](http://www.GoFAAM.com).

Interested persons can also learn more about student loans and other financial aid options by contacting Lela at (800) 228-4755.

Lela is a division of the Louisiana Public Facilities Authority, a nonprofit trust established to bring lower cost financing assistance and advantages to the citizens of Louisiana at no cost to the state. Lela acts as a low cost source of student loan financing for higher education. Lela has assisted over 365,000 students since 1984.

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