

In this issue:

Federal updates	1
ED releases paper and electronic versions of Perkins MPN	1
Closed school corner.....	2
TG updates	2
Happier trails to you... as you help prospective students.....	2
Trends and issues	3
MYF records impressive increases in Online Counseling	3
JobGusher® hosts back-to-school and professional job fairs	4
A day in the life	5
A day in the life of TG’s customer services and strategic partnerships	5
This, that, and the other	8

Federal updates

ED releases paper and electronic versions of Perkins MPN

Federal Perkins loan borrowers will soon be able to obtain multiple Perkins loans for multiple loan periods under one promissory note, a convenience enjoyed by Stafford loan borrowers since 1999 and PLUS loan borrowers since last month. ED recently released the Perkins Master Promissory Note (Perkins MPN) and the electronic version of the Perkins MPN (Perkins eMPN) for schools to utilize in the new academic year. The Perkins MPN may be used for award years beginning on or after July 1, 2003, and must be used for all new loans made on or after November 1, 2004.

Dear Colleague Letters (DCLs) CB-03-11 and CB-03-13 announced the availability of both versions of the Perkins MPN. To access these DCLs, visit the Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) website at www.ifap.ed.gov. According to CB-03-11, ED will soon release another DCL outlining the procedures for the use of the Perkins MPN. *Shoptalk Online* will keep you informed when that guidance is available.

Closed school corner

Following is a list of newly reported school closures from the Postsecondary Educational Participants System (PEPS) and from the July 2003 Closed School Monthly Report supplied by the Department of Education:

Newly reported closures

OPE School ID	School Name and Address	Unofficial Closure Date	ED's Official Closure Date
02245700	Palm Beach Beauty School 4645 Gun Club Rd. West Palm Beach, FL 33406	N/A	10/27/1997
01021000*	Prospect Hall School of Business 2620 Hollywood Blvd. Hollywood, FL 33020-4807	N/A	06/13/2003

* According to a state official, arrangements were made for students to transfer to Florida Metropolitan University and Keiser College in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

TG updates

Happier trails to you... as you help prospective students

Do you know how to fold a 12-foot tablecloth without letting it touch the ground? Can you scale a staircase while balancing a tabletop display and a two-wheeled cart? Do you know how to open 15 cardboard boxes using only a mailbox key and sheer willpower?

If you answered an enthusiastic yes to any of these questions, then you're probably an expert at handling the challenges of financial aid fairs and college planning conferences!

As you hit the trail this fall, remember to take along the latest TG resources for families and students. All of these materials are available in English and Spanish.

Preparing students through early awareness

Adventures In Education (www.AIE.org) is a helpful, free Web site that provides information about college selection, financial aid, and career resources. Available for middle school, high school, and college students, as well as for parents, counselors, and educators, AIE offers English and Spanish information that can help all audiences.

To inform students and families about the free site, TG offers free posters, brochures, and bookmarks for you to distribute at college and career planning events.

The Great College Mystery and *Facing Your Future*, two colorful brochures that provide early education



on debt management and college financing for middle school and high school students, are now available for distribution. Both publications are produced by TG and the Council for the Management of Educational Finance.

For those who prefer to seek personal assistance, TG has posters and bookmarks available that inform students and families about the Texas Financial Aid Information Center (TFAIC). The TFAIC provides a toll-free call center for families and students, and is staffed by TG's customer assistance team. Callers can phone the Center to get answers to questions about the college admissions and financial aid processes.

Educating future borrowers

To prepare students who are approaching their final year of high school, TG offers two publications that can give them a head start on personal finance and student financial aid awareness.

Your Future — A guide to financing higher education is a booklet that features information about careers, higher education, financial aid, financial responsibility, the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP), and much more.

FFELP: Federal Family Education Loan Program is a brochure that offers an overview of the FFELP, including information about subsidized Federal Stafford Loans, unsubsidized Federal Stafford Loans, and Federal PLUS (parent) Loans.

Order your supplies today

To order your supplies of these helpful materials, visit *TG Online* at www.tgslc.org/forms/forms.cfm and *Adventures In Education (AIE)* at www.aie.org/tools/. Please indicate separate quantities for English and Spanish materials.

And best of luck with this year's financial aid and college planning events!

Trends and issues

MYF records impressive increases in Online Counseling

Nearly 41,000 students completed their student loan counseling on *Mapping Your Future* (MYF) last week. This is an increase of more than 5,000 students over the previous week. Since early July, more than 200,000 students have completed their counseling on MYF.

Since the inception of MYF's Online Student Loan Counseling (OSLC), students have completed a total of 2,248,804 counseling sessions, including:

- 1,649,919 Stafford Entrance Counseling sessions.
- 478,422 Stafford Exit Counseling sessions.
- 90,547 Perkins Entrance Counseling sessions.
- 25,888 Perkins Exit Counseling sessions.

New Online Student Loan Counseling version now available

Earlier this month, MYF released Online Student Loan Counseling Version 2.8. The new version offers enhanced counseling content, questions, and format. There have also been several updates to the schools' FAO Access Area. As with any new release, the new version requires some changes for schools familiar with the FAO Access Area.

Assistance with new features

The MYF professional staff would like to know about any issues that arise for schools as they take advantage of the features of the new version. If schools or students need any assistance with the counseling, they may contact Cathy Mueller, MYF executive director, at cathy.mueller@mapping-your-future.org.

About MYF

MYF is a collaborative public service project of the financial aid industry — bringing together the expertise of the industry to provide free college, career, financial aid, and financial literacy services for schools, students, and families nationwide. MYF is sponsored by TG and other student loan guarantors and is supported by lenders and servicers.

JobGusher[®] hosts back-to-school and professional job fairs

JobGusher.com[®] is currently hosting two online job fairs — one highlighting back-to-school positions and another for professional jobs — now through August 17th. The Back-to-School Job Fair highlights entry-level, part-time, internship, and volunteer opportunities, and the Professional Job Fair showcases full-time positions for experienced candidates.

How it works

Students and job seekers can view all participating employers and available positions by visiting www.JobGusher.com and clicking on the ticket in the upper right corner of the home page. Job seekers decide which positions to apply for, and then apply online.

After visiting the job fair, job seekers are encouraged to return to the JobGusher home page and search for other opportunities in their area.

There is no cost for job seekers to participate in the online job fair.

More information

For more information on JobGusher.com[®], visit www.JobGusher.com or contact JobGusher at 1-866-JOB-GUSH. Employers interested in listing jobs must be registered with JobGusher. For more information on participation, contact sales@jobgusher.com.

A day in the life

A day in the life of TG's customer services and strategic partnerships

with Margie Harvey, assistant vice president of strategic partnerships and new ventures, and Vickie Tanner, assistant vice president of customer services

TG's vision is to help families and students realize their educational and career dreams. In line with that vision, TG customer services (customer services), and TG strategic partnerships and new ventures (strategic partnerships) are committed to addressing the individual needs of students and customers. To focus these efforts, the customer services team serves customers in Texas, and the strategic partnerships team serves customers in markets outside of Texas. Although these teams support different geographical areas, they share a common goal: to grow partnerships with schools, lenders, servicers, and secondary markets and to sustain these partnerships in a strong and mutually beneficial relationship.

Building alliances

Consultants in customer services and strategic partnerships build alliances with potential industry partners while strengthening alliances with existing partners. Consultants often live in the region they serve so that customers can have greater access to their TG representatives. These off-site consultants stay connected with TG's central office through e-mail, conference calls, and regular visits. Using these communication lines, consultants stay in tune with new developments in the student loan industry and report on the needs of customers in their region. This arrangement enables TG to proactively address customer needs based on industry trends and direct observations from consultants in the field.

Margie Harvey, assistant vice president of strategic partnerships, explains, "We recognize that what is of concern in one part of the country may not be of concern in another. Our consultants develop an awareness of the most important national issues as well as those within a specific market and make a commitment to help provide the right solutions."

Vickie Tanner, assistant vice president of customer services, adds, "We have to stay focused on what each customer needs, while keeping in step with the industry. Financial aid offices are not all the same, so their needs require different tools based on the processes and personnel that are unique to that office. By the same token, lenders often have an operational side and a marketing side to their organization. Our consultants recognize these principles and try to find the right mix of services and tools to offer each industry partner."

Springing into action

Once TG has established a relationship with a customer, customer services and strategic partnerships form an integrated team that implements TG's dynamic tools and solutions whenever and wherever they are desired. Customer services has several units that develop, install, and support TG's products as well as help coordinate the transition into partnership with TG. The regional consultants also

work with these units to ensure a smooth transition to the TG partnership. Following is a description of each unit's responsibilities:

- The business integration team provides TG's customers with training and support during the product installation period when additional or new products are added. The team sets up each tool's profiles, tests the products for compatibility, installs the tools and provides onsite customer training.
- The product support team, which works closely with the business integration team, is available to resolve any ongoing technical issues that may come up after implementation is complete.
- School and lender consultants and the business integration and product support teams work together, helping with tools integration, training, and support.
- Product management is the newest customer services team. Product managers are responsible for coordinating the development and enhancement aspects of TG's electronic products, with each product manager maintaining and coordinating certain products. Product managers also head a team of subject matter experts from the other areas in customer focus, ensuring that different perspectives are included in the development and deployment of the product.
- The training team provides training and event coordination support for TG's customers. In addition to the many events it organizes each year, the training team plans and coordinates the annual TG conference, TG's Lender and School Advisory Board meetings, TG users group (TUG) meetings and various TG tours.

Vickie states, "Team members in customer services and strategic partnerships 'wear many hats' and take on many challenges. But most of all, they take pride in making our customers happy."

All of TG's consultants work to grow new partnerships and provide assistance to existing partners. The consultants listen to the needs of the customer and then provide solutions that attempt to meet the customer's immediate and long-term needs. This might entail providing solutions that work with a customer's existing products or it might entail suggesting new products. The consultants also may work with a school's other business partners to coordinate and streamline any changes that the school adopts.

At association conferences, besides being available at TG's booth or display, the consultants play an active role as members in their associations. Putting in extra effort and time helps the team to stay involved and aware of the issues important to the association and to the market it serves.

Margie explains, "Consultants try to know what the needs are for schools and students in a particular market, and then they try to make sure they have the right information to support the people in those areas."

Maximizing resources and talent

Customer services and strategic partnerships work closely with other TG teams. TG's communications team provides help with the development of artwork and booth displays for conferences, and helps with the planning and coordination of TG's annual conference. Also, TG's information technology team provides the product support unit with assistance in resolving customers' technical issues.

Margie explains why the TG team environment is so important. "We have reps in the field who are there for their customers, and we have the ability to answer unique concerns and offer solutions that are not one-size-fits-all," she says. "We try to meet the customer's needs, not make the customer change to fit what we do — and along with that comes the support of the entire organization."

Looking forward

Customer services is now launching TG's premier student loan processing product, AdvanTG Web™. As of July 31, 2003, TG has launched AdvanTG Web at over 110 schools in Texas, at 8 schools in 7 states from New York to Florida to California and at 10 Texas and national lenders/servicers. Vickie states, "AdvanTG Web has taken student loan processing to the next level, and word of its success is spreading fast. We are pleased to be busy keeping pace with the growing demand for this new product."

Experiencing growth

Considering the short time that TG has had a national presence, strategic partnerships has grown rapidly, from one team member at its inception in 1999 to the 16 team members it has currently. National volume has increased ten-fold in that short time and continues to grow phenomenally. Margie explains, "We are eager to help our customers, and we hope that they recognize how important they are to us."

Customer Services has 39 team members, with plans to add several additional staff in fiscal year 2004.

Supporting the process

By providing their industry partners with excellent service, these TG teams help to ensure that TG's partners disburse and deliver financial aid in the most efficient manner possible, benefiting our ultimate common customers — students. The work doesn't stop there. Because the financial aid industry is dynamic, TG constantly monitors new issues on the forefront of the student loan industry — and higher education in general — while developing new products and services to further its partners' success.

Vickie says, "I'm very proud that our most recent customer service rating is the highest ever. We are ready and willing to provide great customer service and take satisfaction in making our customers' lives a little easier. It's a rewarding position to be in."

More information

Find out more about these dynamic teams by calling (800) 252-9743. You can also contact each team by e-mail at either customer.services@tgslc.org or tgnational@tgslc.org.

This, that, and the other

Distance education trends and issues continue to be critical for student financial aid professionals. One valuable resource on this topic was recently released by the United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA), a non-profit association formed in 1987 that promotes the development and application of distance learning for education and training.

Entitled *Electronic Learning Communities: Issues and Practices*, this book includes fourteen chapters of best practices related to the field of distance education. Interested parties may order the book directly from the USDLA through a form available at www.usdla.org/html/bestPractices.

As a valuable companion resource for training your financial aid staff on the topic, consider requesting copies of the *TG Connection* issue entitled "Clicks and mortarboards: Trends and issues affecting distance education and financial aid." This free publication offers a practical approach to distance education and its impact on the student financial aid office. Request your copies by sending your name, school name, mailing address, and number of copies to communications@tgslc.org.



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Shoptalk Online is published by TG. Unless specifically noted, the policies and procedures outlined in *Shoptalk Online* apply only to loans made under the TG guarantee and not to loans underwritten by other guarantors.

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