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## Tip<sup>of</sup> the Week

Take advantage of TG's default management reports. Access them through AdvanTG Web™ or RRD. Call (800) 338-4752 to learn more.

## Federal updates

### Videoconference highlights delivery system changes

Last week, ED's Federal Student Aid (FSA) 2004-2005 Delivery System Videoconference drew large numbers of financial aid administrators and industry partners from across the country. Participants received information on a variety of topics — highlighted below — related to next year's FAFSA cycle.

#### Take a test drive

ED is putting the finishing touches on the 2004-2005 FAFSA on the Web. Industry partners, financial aid administrators, parents, and students can take a demonstration "tour" of 2004-2005 FAFSA on the Web beginning December 7, 2003.

The tour offers financial aid professionals the opportunity to get first-hand experience using FAFSA on the Web — experience that may help them anticipate and understand questions from potential aid recipients.

The FAFSA on the Web demonstration will be available beginning December 7 at <http://fafsademo.test.ed.gov>. To gain access, enter the user name **eddemo** and the password **fafsatest**.

In the mean time, ED has issued an announcement providing financial aid professionals with a preview in the form of screen shots from the 2004-2005 FAFSA on the Web. This announcement is posted online at [www.ifap.ed.gov/eannouncements/1024FOTWScreenShots.html](http://www.ifap.ed.gov/eannouncements/1024FOTWScreenShots.html).

### **What's in store for 2004**

When returning students complete the 2004-2005 FAFSA next year, they may notice some subtle yet important changes. One of the most significant changes is to step four, the parent section (questions 57-64). In addition to requiring each parent's Social Security Number (SSN) and last name, step four of the 2004-2005 FAFSA will require:

- Each parent's date of birth.
- The initial of each parent's first name.

This change helps set the stage for ED's anticipated move toward a computer matching program with the Internal Revenue System (IRS) to verify parental income information reported on the FAFSA. While no time frame for passage of legislation authorizing this matching program was given at the videoconference, it was apparent from FSA panelists that they expect the change to be forthcoming.

ED posted a September 17, 2003, announcement that contained a sample of the 2004-2005 FAFSA and Insert. You can download these documents at [www.ifap.ed.gov/fafsa/0405FAFSA080803.html](http://www.ifap.ed.gov/fafsa/0405FAFSA080803.html). These samples should be used for informational purposes only.

### **More changes ahead**

ED's Central Processing System (CPS) is making a number of processing changes for 2004-2005 as well. One significant change is that the Social Security Administration (SSA) match has been expanded to include parents. Therefore, there will be new ISIR reject codes if a parent reports an SSN on the FAFSA that doesn't match with the SSA. ED is expected to issue guidance soon on how these cases will be resolved, possibly at the upcoming Electronic Access Conferences mentioned in *Shoptalk Online* Edition 226.

CPS also has renamed the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) match. Beginning with the 2004-2005 cycle, it will be known as the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) match.

### **Play it again, ED**

If you were unable to catch the videoconference live, the Web cast is available online at [www.vodium.com/mediapod/ed/apdsu/](http://www.vodium.com/mediapod/ed/apdsu/). Handouts may be downloaded at [www.edvideo.walcoff.com/archives.html](http://www.edvideo.walcoff.com/archives.html).

## **Don't forget the Electronic Access Conferences**

ED is also offering two Electronic Access Conferences in November and December. For more information, see *Shoptalk Online* Edition 226.

As always, TG wishes all financial aid administrators and industry partners much success with the upcoming 2004-2005 processing cycle. We look forward to working with you!

## **Reauthorization watch**

Last week, TG updated its Higher Education Act reauthorization page on *TG Online* with information and links on several recent developments:

### **Bills approved**

- **International Studies in Higher Education Act**

The House of Representatives gave bipartisan approval to H.R. 3077, the International Studies in Higher Education Act. The bill, authored by Select Education Subcommittee Chairman Pete Hoekstra, builds on the international and foreign language studies programs authorized in Title VI of the Higher Education Act.

Bill text: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c108:H.R.3077>:

Press release:

<http://edworkforce.house.gov/press/press108/10oct/3077102103.htm>

- **Graduate Opportunities in Higher Education Act**

The House gave bipartisan approval by voice vote to H.R. 3076, the Graduate Opportunities in Higher Education Act. The bill, authored by Rep. Pete Hoekstra, is part of efforts to strengthen and renew graduate programs funded under Title VII of the Higher Education Act, with a focus on shortage areas, such as, math, science, and special education.

Bill text: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c108:H.R.3076>:

Press release:

<http://edworkforce.house.gov/press/press108/10oct/3076102103.htm>

### **Senate hearing**

- **Senate hearing on college access**

The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee held a hearing October 16, 2003, titled "Promoting Access to Postsecondary Education: Issues for the Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act," examining issues related to access, and the relationship between quality, efficiency, and access.

Testimony/witness list: [http://health.senate.gov/bills/029\\_bill.html](http://health.senate.gov/bills/029_bill.html)

## New bills

- **Affordability in Higher Education Act**

Republican members of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce have introduced H.R. 3311, the Affordability in Higher Education Act. The bill, introduced by Rep. Buck McKeon, seeks to address the college cost crisis by working to increase the affordability of higher education through consumer empowerment and accountability for cost increases.

Press release and bill summary:

<http://edworkforce.house.gov/press/press108/10oct/affordability101603.htm>

- **Higher Education Loan Plan Act of 2003**

The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee has introduced S. 1742, the Higher Education Loan Plan Act of 2003. The bill, introduced by Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, would establish a variable interest rate for future student loans by tying the loan rates to the bond equivalent for 91-day Treasury bills. These variable interest rates would automatically refinance loans every 91 days. The legislation would also cap the loans at 7.75 percent.

Bill text: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c108:S.1742>:

Press release: <http://campbell.senate.gov/press-item.cfm?id=213464>

To stay current with the latest developments in the reauthorization process, visit TG's Higher Education Act reauthorization page on *TG Online* at [www.tgslc.org/reauth/index.cfm](http://www.tgslc.org/reauth/index.cfm).

## TG updates

### Fall TUG conference to be held November 7

Mark your calendars now for the Fall 2003 TG Users Group (TUG) Conference. The conference will be held in Austin on Thursday, November 7, 2003, in the Joe C. Thompson Conference Center Bass Lecture Hall on the University of Texas campus.

TUG conferences offer schools and lenders the opportunity to share ideas with colleagues and provide input to TG. An agenda is available online at [www.tgslc.org/tug/agen\\_20031107.cfm](http://www.tgslc.org/tug/agen_20031107.cfm).

### TUG elections

Fall is the time when TUG board members complete their terms. TG will acknowledge the service and contributions of current board members at the conference, and attendees will elect new board members for the coming year.

### Registration and nominations

Conference registration forms and hotel information — along with a TG product survey and board member nomination forms — were distributed through the TUG

listserv last week. The registration form and hotel information are also available online at [www.tgslc.org/tug/tug\\_register.cfm](http://www.tgslc.org/tug/tug_register.cfm). If you will be spending the night in Austin, be sure to book your room by November 1 to receive the state rate.

If you did not receive the survey and nomination forms last week or have any questions about the conference, please contact Sheila Casey at (800) 252-9743, ext. 4576, or send an e-mail to [sheila.casey@tgslc.org](mailto:sheila.casey@tgslc.org).

The TG team looks forward to seeing you in Austin next month!

## **TG schedules holiday closings**

The holiday season is just around the corner, and the spring semester will be here before we know it. Here's a list of the days TG offices will be closed:

- Tuesday, November 11, Veterans Day
- Thursday and Friday, November 27 and 28, Thanksgiving
- Thursday and Friday, December 25 and 26, Christmas
- Thursday, January 1, New Year's Day

## **Trends and issues**

### **TG cosponsors chat event on loan consolidation**

Many borrowers are considering student loan consolidation as interest rates have dropped to their lowest levels in the history of the FFELP. To help these borrowers weigh the pros and cons of consolidation, *Mapping Your Future*, a public service Web site sponsored by TG and other student loan guarantors, is offering a live chat event online at 6 p.m. CDT on November 4, 2003.

The chat is designed to help students and parents interested in consolidation make informed decisions. This chat provides a unique opportunity for participants to receive answers to specific loan consolidation and financial aid questions from financial aid and career experts from all over the country.

#### **Topics**

During the loan consolidation chat event, borrowers and their families will learn more about:

- Advantages and disadvantages of loan consolidation
- How to determine if loan consolidation is a good option
- Eligibility requirements
- Steps to apply for loan consolidation

- Other resources of information

### **Joining in**

Anyone with Internet access can join in on the chat by visiting [mapping-your-future.org](http://mapping-your-future.org). On the evening of the chat event, visitors should go to [mapping-your-future.org](http://mapping-your-future.org) and select the chat session. Simple instructions will explain how to join.

### **Coming attractions**

Other chat topics for the coming months include:

- December 9, 2003 Evening Chat - Student loan forgiveness, cancellation, and discharge
- January 13, 2004 Daytime Chat for high school seniors and college students - FAFSA, financial aid, and careers
- March 9, 2004 Evening Chat for adult students - FAFSA, financial aid, and careers
- April 6, 2004 Daytime Chat - Student loan default prevention
- May 11, 2004 Evening Chat - Student loan forgiveness, cancellation, and discharge

### **This, that, and the other**

*The Atlantic Monthly* explores the American college admissions system in a series of articles in its November 2003 issue. Articles include:

- "The New College Chaos" – Applications are increasing as student information becomes less reliable
- "What Makes a College Good?" – A new survey aims to measure how well schools actually educate their students
- "The Selectivity Illusion" – Under scrutiny, "the neat hierarchy of selectivity begins to fall apart"

Also included are articles on the hidden benefits of late enrollment decisions and the issue of bias on the SAT. All of the articles, part of what the magazine bills as its first annual college admissions survey, are available both on newsstands and online at [www.theatlantic.com/issues/2003/11/admissions.htm](http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/2003/11/admissions.htm).



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