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Tip of the Week

If you’re traveling to Austin for the TG Conference next week, remember to visit the fourth floor mezzanine. You can subscribe to our publications or learn more about TG’s solutions and tools in the Cyber Café. While you’re there, you can check your e-mail and grab a light snack.

We hope to see you there!

TG updates

TG Conference keynote to offer an artful vision for the “Kaleidoscope of Dreams”

Motivational speaker and artist Erik Wahl will set the tone for this year’s TG Conference, “Kaleidoscope of Dreams,” with his keynote presentation “The Art of Vision” during the conference’s opening session at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, April 21.

TG chose the Kaleidoscope theme for this year’s conference to spotlight the new and fresh ways that schools, lenders, and TG are doing things, and to showcase the unique and ever-changing financial aid industry. Wahl’s inspirational presentation provides the perfect backdrop for the wealth of new information to be discovered through TG’s Kaleidoscope.

In "The Art of Vision," Wahl uses his knowledge of vision and art to create a dynamic and entertaining program, which will explore ways to make your organization more creative, more productive, and ultimately more effective. Wahl will inspire participants to build a new vision for their organizations by utilizing unconventional wisdom, creativity, and imagination.

Wahl holds a bachelor's degree in business communication from the University of San Diego, where he also studied art. After working for eight years as a partner in a corporate firm and practicing art in his free time, Wahl founded his consulting firm, The Wahl Group, which specializes in motivating organizations to be creative by personifying vision in art.

TG's annual conference and related events will be held Tuesday, April 20 through Friday, April 23 at the Austin Marriott at the Capitol. Find out more and register to attend by visiting www.tgslc.org/tgconference.

Federal updates

Current special allowance rates: quarter ending March 31, 2004

The following rates apply for the quarter ending March 31, 2004:

- The average of the bond equivalent rates of the 91-day Treasury bills auctioned during the quarter ending March 31, 2004, is 0.93 percent.
- The average of the bond equivalent rates of the quotes of the three-month commercial paper (financial) rates in effect for each of the days in the quarter ending March 31, 2004, is 1.05 percent.

The FFELP special allowance rates for the most recent quarter are available at www.tgslc.org/pdf/SA040504.pdf.

Questions

For questions about special allowance rates, contact TG customer assistance at (800) 845-6267 or send an e-mail message to cust.assist@tgslc.org.

Closed school corner

Listed below are newly reported school closures from the Postsecondary Educational Participants System (PEPS) and the March 2004 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
02336902	Alpha Beauty School 653 N. Church St. Spartanburg, SC 29301	N/A	3/31/1995
00241200	Mary Holmes College Highway 50 West West Point, MS 39773	N/A	5/1/2003
00158013	Mercer University – Grady Hospital 80 Butler St. SE Atlanta, GA 30303-3050	N/A	12/12/1998

Trends and issues

Spanish-language financial aid awareness materials from TG help prepare new generations for college

TG has long recognized the importance of providing college and financial aid knowledge to all potential college students. Because we are based in Texas, a state with one of the largest Hispanic populations, TG offers a range of useful resources to make sure both English- and Spanish-speaking families and students have access to college and financial aid information.

The challenge

Raising Hispanics' awareness of college and financial aid opportunities is becoming more important than ever. TG's annual *State of Student Aid in Texas* report predicts that the state's Hispanic population could grow from 32 percent in 2000 to 52.5 percent in 2040, making Texas a Hispanic-majority state.

But while the population of Hispanics is growing across the nation, Hispanics are the least likely to complete a high school diploma or a bachelor's degree, according to the report. In fact, only 9 percent of Hispanics in Texas aged 25 and older held a bachelor's degree in 2002. California was the only largely-Hispanic state that had fewer Hispanics with a bachelor's degree (8 percent).

In addition, a study completed this year by the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute (TRPI) at the University of Southern California, reported that a lack of financial aid awareness is creating a barrier between Hispanics and college. The study concluded that a major reason Hispanics do not choose to attend college is because they believe they cannot afford it, and are unaware of the financial aid resources available to help them pay for their education.

The TRPI study, which was commissioned by the Sallie Mae Fund, surveyed more than 1,200 parents of 18- to 24-year-olds and young adults aged 18 to 24 in Hispanic population centers throughout the country to determine their level of financial aid awareness, and to understand how that information affects their decisions about attending college. Some of the things the study found were that:

- More than half of Hispanic parents and 43 percent of Hispanic young adults could not name a single source of financial aid.
- Two-thirds of Hispanic parents did not receive any financial aid information before their children left high school.
- 75 percent of Hispanic young adults not in college said they would have been more likely to attend college if they had received better information about financial aid.
- More than half of Hispanic parents would prefer to learn about financial aid in Spanish, while more than 60 percent of Hispanic young adults prefer English.

How TG rises to the challenge

TG is committed to helping you provide all of your families and students with the college and financial aid information they need to help them make informed decisions about financing a college education. To meet this goal, TG offers a variety of college and financial aid resources that target students as early as middle school, their families, and their educators.

TG's college and financial aid awareness brochures, booklets, posters, and bookmarks are available to middle schools, high schools, and college financial aid offices in both English and Spanish. Families and students can find a wealth of information about choosing a career, preparing and planning for college, and learning about and applying for financial aid on TG's *Adventures In Education* Web site at www.aie.org — or on *Mapping Your Future* at www.mapping-your-future.org, a site sponsored by TG and other guarantors. Both sites make information for families and students available in both Spanish and English.

TG's educational alliances and communications teams work together to produce a number of Spanish-language resources, including:

- Public service announcements.
- A FAFSA video that instructs students and families on how to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

- A financial aid slideshow presentation for use by high school guidance counselors.

For one-on-one support, TG's customer assistance team has Spanish-speaking representatives available to help families and students of all ages. They can be reached toll-free at (800) 845-6267 or by e-mail at cust.assist@tgslc.org.

More information

For more information about the *State of Student Aid in Texas*, visit www.tgslc.org/djknow. For more information about the TRPI study, visit www.salliemaefund.org/news/news_nr206.html.

Counselors and educators can order Spanish-language financial aid awareness materials from TG's public service Web site, *Adventures In Education*, at www.aie.org/tools.

Links to a number of other Spanish-language resources on higher education and financial aid are available on *TG Online* at www.tgslc.org/spanish.

Edufacts™ — March 2004

The college experience is centered on going to class, doing homework, writing papers and taking exams. But learning can happen in many ways, and take many forms. A student's college education is influenced by the activities — academic, social, athletic and personal — in which he or she is involved. Student engagement, or the "frequency with which students participate in activities that represent effective educational practice," has been analyzed by the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research. The results are compiled in its report, the 2003 National Survey of Student Engagement. The NSSE study indicates that this type of involvement in a student's education translates into a positive undergraduate experience.

Involvement is key to improving student satisfaction in college.

According to the 2003 National Survey of Student Engagement, the majority of students who were involved in extracurricular activities said they were satisfied with their college experience. Of these students, nine out of 10 rated their college experience as "good" or "excellent."

Source: National Survey of Student Engagement 2003, Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research

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The survey polled 348,000 freshman and senior students from 437 four-year colleges and universities.

Statistics from the survey indicate that students who are more involved in activities both inside and outside the classroom reported feeling more connected with their faculty and peers. They were also more satisfied with their college experience.

- About three quarters of students said they often worked on complex research assignments, contributed to class discussion, and communicated with their instructor.
- More than half said they participated in community-based projects as part of a regular course.
- The majority of students said they were satisfied with their college experience, with nearly nine out of 10 rating their college experience as “good” or “excellent.”

Overall, students should become involved in college activities that interest them, communicate with their instructors, and get to know a variety of their peers. While many students must work while in college, this should not preclude them from engaging in enriching activities that will give them a sense of belonging and help them discover and cultivate their own interests.

TG’s public service Web site at www.AdventuresInEducation.org provides resources and information that can also help students and families prepare for the higher education experience. Included are profiles of “A Day in the Life” of several students from Texas colleges and universities. For more information about how to plan for college or how to finance higher education, visit www.AdventuresInEducation.org or call the Texas Financial Aid Information Center at (888) 311-8881.

Source: National Survey of Student Engagement 2003, Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research

Common Manual

Training brief illustrates how *Common Manual* policies move from idea to publication

A new training brief from the *Common Manual* Policy Committee traces the path of a policy proposal throughout the development process, from idea to publication. The brief, available on *TG Online* at www.tgslc.org/resources/cm_training.cfm, is the tenth in a series of training resources created to help users get the most out of the manual.

TG hopes that you are finding the training briefs useful. If you have any comments or suggestions on the briefs, please contact Michelle Anderson, TG senior policy advisor and a member of the *Common Manual* Policy Committee, at michelle.anderson@tgslc.org or (800) 252-9743, ext. 4608.

The current version of the *Integrated Common Manual* is available on *TG Online* at www.tgslc.org/resources/integrated_online_manual.cfm.

This, that, and the other

Mapping Your Future (MYF), a public service Web site sponsored by TG and other guarantors, has grown by leaps and bounds since its debut in 1996. The following statistics from MYF illustrate how popular some of its innovative features have become:

- About 38 percent of the approximately 6,500 participating Title IV schools now use one or more types of MYF Online Student Loan Counseling. MYF offers entrance and exit counseling for both Stafford and Perkins loans.
- *Mapping Your Future* responded to more than 8,500 feedback messages from families, students, schools, and other visitors last year.
- Live chat events on hot topics such as student loan forgiveness have generated more than 300 questions from student loan borrowers within the first hour.

Learn more about MYF and other innovations brought to you by TG at next week's TG conference. Look for the MYF session on Thursday at 2:45 p.m. or come up to the fourth floor mezzanine at any time for more information.



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To ask questions about *Shoptalk Online*, please contact Communications at (800) 252-9743, ext. 4732 or communications@tgsllc.org.

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