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Tip^{of} the Week

Working on your plan to lower student default? One excellent tool is TG's *Student Loan Default Literature Review*. This resource covers many factors that may play a role in defaults. Download a copy today at www.tgslc.org/pdf/default_lit_review.pdf

Federal updates

Closed school corner

Following is a list of newly reported school closures from the Postsecondary Educational Participants System (PEPS) and from the February 2005 *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
00622800	Methodist Medical Center of Illinois School of Nursing 221 North East Glen Oak Ave. Peoria, IL 61636-0002	N/A	5/15/2004

TG updates

Register today for golf tourney, 4K run during TG Conference

"Breakthrough! Higher expectations in higher education" is less than a month away — have you registered and arranged your travel for the 2005 TG Conference yet? Event registration is at an all-time high!

The conference, which will be held in Austin April 11-13, offers you an opportunity to gain expertise, trade ideas and stories with old and new friends, and be recognized for your accomplishments. At the end of each day, you can experience some of the sights and sounds of Austin.

For those attending, here are two opportunities to get some exercise while catching up with colleagues and friends.

Save your space on the green

Reservations are still being accepted for the annual TG Conference Golf Tournament. Participants will form their own four-person teams, and the tournament will be a four-person scramble, best-ball format. The cost to participate is \$40, and includes green fees and cart rental. Star Ranch Golf Club, the tournament's venue, does not permit outside beverages or coolers inside the club. Collared shirts and soft spike or tennis shoes are required.

Registration for the golf tournament is available by visiting the TG Conference registration page at www.tgslc.org/tgconference/index.cfm. For more information on the golf tournament, contact Hal Frazier at (800) 252-9743, ext. 4909, or send an e-mail message to hal.frazier@tgslc.org.

Join us for a bright and early morning jog

Those into walking and running can start their Tuesday in a healthy way in the very first TG Conference Financial Aid 4K. Proceeds from the event will benefit Breakthrough Austin, a local non-profit organization that serves as part of a successful national education program that provides a path to college for high-potential, low-income students and promotes careers in education.

Breakthrough Austin recognizes the importance of building skills and confidence early in life and makes a six-year commitment to each of its students beginning in the 6th grade.



The program includes rigorous academic summer sessions, Saturday classes, ongoing mentoring, and college-prep activities. Breakthrough also addresses the teacher shortage by inspiring high school and college students – through hands-on

mentoring – to pursue careers in professional teaching. More information on this organization is available at www.breakthroughaustin.org.

Participants in the Financial Aid 4K will meet in the lobby of the Hilton Austin at 6 a.m., where participants will pay a \$10 registration fee and receive an official T-shirt. Those attending will then walk to the Town Lake Hike and Bike Trail. From the designated start/finish spot, each participant will choose their pace — walk, jog, or run the 2.5-mile scenic loop.

Registration for the Financial Aid 4K is available by visiting the TG Conference Web page at www.tgslc.org/tgconference/index.cfm. For more information on the Financial Aid 4K, contact Judith Cunningham at (800) 252-9743, ext. 2905, or send an e-mail message to judith.cunningham@tgslc.org.

This Thursday: TG's free RT4 telephone conference

TG's telephone conference on the return of Title IV funds, "RT4 Basics and Beyond," will be held this Thursday, March 17, from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. (CT).

TG is hosting the teleconference to help new and seasoned financial aid officers demystify the RT4 calculation and to empower them with some suggestions on how to improve the RT4 process within their offices. Conference topics include:

- General principles of the RT4 process.
- The elements of an RT4 calculation.
- Recommendations on how to avoid some of the more common RT4 findings in a program review.

A brief question-and-answer session will follow the presentation. Questions may be submitted in advance of the event to sheila.casey@tgslc.org. The telephone conference is free of charge and open to participants from any institution.

To register

To register and get further details, contact Premiere Teleconferencing at (800) 289-0579 and reference confirmation number 7746253.

Trends and issues

TG produces animation to promote financial aid awareness among middle school students

To encourage middle school students to explore financial aid as a necessary and important component of pursuing a higher education, TG, along with the Council for the Management of Educational Finance, has released an online animated feature titled *The Great College Mystery*. Available for viewing on *Adventures In Education* (www.AIE.org), TG's education awareness Web site, this resource can serve as the

first step in encouraging middle school students to consider pursuing a higher education.

Initiative begins as brochure for students

In 2002, TG and the 12 Plus Committee of the Council for the Management of Educational Finance (Council) jointly developed an awareness brochure aimed at middle school students called *The Great College Mystery*. The publication is an informative and entertaining guide that educates middle school students about their financial aid options, and provides them with useful tips on how to prepare for college.

The Council and TG created the brochure for students who traditionally might not consider pursuing a higher education due to a lack of money. "For many students, paying for college is a mystery," said Vickie Murillo, TG's director of national sales and the coordinator of the project. "The brochure informs students at an early age that financial aid is available for them to go to college."

Murillo wrote the copy for the brochure under the guidance of the 12 Plus Committee members, including Larry Burt of the University of Texas at Austin, Ed Apodaca of the University of Houston, Terry Bazan of Austin Community College, and Emily Yeager of Citigroup. It was then the task of Keith Dotson, TG's creative director, to transform the text into a reader-friendly brochure. They decided that the best approach was to present the information in a format similar to that of a comic book.

Creativity to engage the audience

Dotson produced the original illustrations and overall design, which is characterized by bold, colorful graphics. *The Great College Mystery* also features a cast of teenage cartoon characters called the "e-Kids" – "e" is for education – and a character named Dr. Ed that relates the information to the intended audience. The e-Kids ask common questions many students have regarding financial aid, and Dr. Ed, a "college authority," answers them.



Producing a lively animation

After the completion of the brochure, TG began work on an online companion to the brochure in the form of an animation. The animation, which can be found on the AIE Web site, features the same information as the brochure, but it comes alive with motion, sound effects, and voice work. "We wanted to create something that resembles the informative, yet fun, media that kids are familiar with from watching educational children's programming," said Dotson.

Popularity of the initiative

To date, 44,679 of *The Great College Mystery* brochures have been ordered and distributed. TG anticipates that the animation will likewise reach countless more students.

To view *The Great College Mystery*, visit www.AIE.org and click on the link to the "middle school" page. You can also order copies of the printed version of the publication by visiting tgorder.tgslc.org/acb/stores/3/product1.asp?SID=3&Product_ID=70.

Legislative update

The March 15 issue of TG's *Legislative Report* includes a congressional update detailing FY 2006 Budget Resolutions adopted by the House and Senate Budget Committees that will be combined into a single document which will be the "blueprint" that the House and Senate Appropriations Committees will use in setting specific spending levels for federal programs within the 13 individual appropriations bills. Also included is a Texas legislative update on proposed appropriations for higher education programs for FY 2006-07, summaries of higher education/student financial aid related bills pre-filed for consideration before the next session, and the status of TG's Sunset Advisory Commission Review. This report is available in its entirety on *TG Online* at www.tgslc.org/lege_report/index.cfm.

This, that, and the other

This month, approximately 35,000 students are participating in alternative spring break programs that emphasize good works over good times. The programs match U.S. students with community service projects across North and Central America.

Under the programs, students volunteer to spend their spring breaks working on short-term projects addressing poverty, hunger, homelessness, literacy, and the environment. The commitment often extends beyond the spring break week; many students attend planning and training sessions to prepare for their trips.

The alternative spring break movement began with loosely organized, student-driven initiatives at Vanderbilt University and the University of Pennsylvania. Over the last 15 years, alternative spring break programs have spread to hundreds of public and private campuses nationwide. Many of the programs are affiliated with Break Away, a national nonprofit that trains, supports, and connects campuses with community-based service organizations. For more on alternative spring breaks, visit Break Away's Web site at www.alternativebreaks.org.



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

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