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Tip^{of} the Week

Meet with your institution's alumni office to discuss ways to communicate about successful personal finance and loan repayment strategies for new grads. Call TG at (800) 338-4752 for ideas and other resources.

Federal updates

Congress passes 5-year spending plan

Late last week, Congress narrowly passed a 5-year, \$14 trillion budget resolution, establishing boundaries for the amount of money that Congress may spend during each of the next five fiscal years. The budget resolution includes \$2.56 trillion for FY06.

FY06 budget proposal

While the resolution is nonbinding and does not mandate how the congressional committees are to meet the directives contained in it, the resolution is intended to serve as a road map for the coming years and to set general guidelines and total spending limits for programs subject to annual appropriations. The FY06 budget resolution includes funding to:

- Retain the Federal Perkins Loan Program;
- Resolve the \$4.3 billion Pell Grant Program shortfall; and
- Increase ED's discretionary funding levels to allow for a \$100 increase to the maximum Pell grant award, raising it to \$4,150 for FY06.

Additionally, the budget resolution directs Congress to cut approximately \$7 billion from the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP) and Federal Direct Loan Program (FDLP) or find comparable savings through the reauthorization of the

Higher Education Act. The \$7 billion savings would be applied to reduce the federal deficit.

Budget reconciliation directives

The 5-year spending plan also includes provisions for Congress to achieve *budget reconciliation* — a process by which Congress sets gross savings goals in an effort to reduce the federal deficit (see *Shoptalk Online* Edition [297](#)). The targeted savings goals can only be met through:

- Raising taxes, or
- Making cuts in mandatory federal programs (e.g., Medicare, Social Security, and the FFELP/FDLP)

The House and Senate committees with control over the federal student aid programs were instructed to reduce spending in entitlement programs over the next five years. The House Education and the Workforce Committee are to reduce spending by \$12.65 billion while the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee are to cut spending by \$13.65 billion. The mandated program cuts include the presumed \$7 billion in cuts to the FFELP and FDLP, while the remaining amount would come from other programs under the purview of the committees.

More information

For more information and to keep up with the latest legislative news, visit TG's *Legislative Report* on *TG Online* at www.tgslc.org/lege_report/index.cfm.

TG updates

AdvanTG Web enhancements now available

TG has updated AdvanTG Web™ with exciting new features. Many of these improvements are based on feedback from our customers.

The new features, which were implemented on May 1, include:

- Enhancements to TG Loans By Web™ (LBW),
- A new Master Promissory Note (MPN) tracking report,
- More flexible change transaction reporting,
- Simplified editing for your Electronic School Report (ESR) and Integrated Default Assistant (IDA) letters, and
- Improved efficiencies to the AdvanTG Web message board.

A series of new features in TG Loans By Web

LBW allows schools to automatically send e-mails to students and parents that notify them when their loan certification has been posted and direct them to the LBW Web site to complete their loan award. LBW now offers schools the ability to send reminder e-mails — at intervals of one to 30 days — to students and parents who have not yet completed their LBW certification. Schools also can customize the text of each message that is sent, as well as create separate messages for students, parents, and school-certified or borrower-initiated processing flows.

Another new feature to the LBW automated e-mail process is the 'E-mail Notification Report' available through the 'Application/Loan' tab in the Reporting section of LBW. This report tracks e-mail notification receipts for students and parents. The report alerts you to students and parents who did not receive an e-mail notification, and who may require another means of notification to complete the LBW award.

Additionally, LBW schools now can control how often existing borrowers who have already completed their initial entrance counseling session through *Mapping Your Future* must repeat online entrance counseling through the *Mapping Your Future* Web site. Schools can set a query range from one day to seven years. If the borrower has not completed online entrance counseling in *Mapping Your Future* within that date range, he or she will be required to complete entrance counseling requirements.

The new LBW electronic signature, or "e-sign" process, offers students and parents the flexibility to electronically sign an MPN prior to guarantee — even through the borrower-initiated flow. Also new in the e-sign process is the display of the lender name and guarantee date on the e-sign reprint screen to help students and borrowers through the e-sign process.

Lastly, you will no longer have to re-certify a loan because the student declined or reduced the award amount in LBW. Two LBW features have been added to address this specific issue. First, a pop-up box asking the borrower to affirm his or her change appears when a student or parent tries to reduce the school-certified amount. Second, schools now have the ability to re-post a declined LBW certification by going to the List Application screen in AdvanTG Web, selecting the declined application, and clicking the 'Save' button. This will re-post the certification in LBW for the student or parent to complete and accept.

Convenience of an MPN tracking report

The new MPN tracking report provides a concise, effective method of viewing whether a loan has a valid MPN. Schools now have the ability to view the lender status of a PLUS or Stafford MPN. This report includes all loans in AdvanTG Web, including those not guaranteed by TG.

Flexibility with Change Transaction Reports

AdvanTG Web offers two new options for generating Change Transaction reports. The first option allows schools to generate change transaction reports by 'loan type.' Reports that offer the new loan type option include:

- Change Transaction Detail Report
- Change Transaction Receive Report
- Change Transaction Response Summary
- Check Register (for schools)
- Pending/Non EFT Cancellation Report (for lenders)

The loan type selection will help you to manage and reconcile the change transaction processes by isolating FFELP and alternative loan transactions, and by providing additional reporting flexibility. For example, you could generate a change transaction report for alternative loans only to help reconcile the return of funds through TG's Central Disbursing Agent process.

The second reporting option now available for change transaction reports is the "Non TG" checkbox. This option provides a quick and easy way to isolate transactions that were submitted for processing to another guarantor and is useful for customers who process with multiple service providers.

Optimization of Application Information Report

The Application Information Report has been refined so that the borrower's first name, last name, and Social Security Number are displayed on the header of the report. The report also will not display subsections when there is no data within that subsection. For example, the reference section will not display when there is no reference data on the application.

Flexibility of Print Note feature

The 'Print Note' feature in AdvanTG Web now has the capability to print Stafford and PLUS Master Promissory Notes regardless of guarantor. This also is true for common PLUS promissory notes, which may need to be printed for archive or historical review purposes. In addition, notes guaranteed through another guarantor are printed without the TG logo.

Enhancements to Message Board

AdvanTG Web now will determine if you have previously viewed a particular message and prevent that same message from auto-displaying on your next login. This eliminates the inconvenience of viewing the same message repeatedly when logging in to AdvanTG Web. The message will still be viewable through the 'Message Board' link or tab under the 'Application/Loans' and 'Reporting' menus.

In addition, TG now can post messages to specific audiences on the Message Board instead of distributing them to all AdvanTG users. This means that only messages

directly applicable to your institution will be displayed when logging in to AdvanTG Web, or when viewing them through the 'Message Board' links.

New editing tools for IDA and ESR letters

Editing your IDA and ESR letter templates now is much easier. Schools can make formatting changes to templates in a more intuitive and user-friendly manner by using options similar to word processing program editing toolbars. Whether you are inserting your school logo or printing on letterhead, you can do so in a couple of simple, easy steps.

The new editing tool enables you to:

- Use your own letterhead or upload your logo;
- Modify left and right margins more easily;
- Upload logos from within the template;
- Use basic editing buttons, including bullets;
- Add additional lines in the letter template more easily; and,
- Preview your letters prior to printing.

To improve navigation, the 'Manage Letter Templates' link also has been added to the 'IDA Reporting' tab.

Relocation of AdvanTG Web Security Form

This security form is now available only within TG's AdvanTG Web Institution Administration screen.

More information

To learn more about any of these enhancements, please contact your TG school consultant, national account representative, or TG's product support team at (800) 332-1455, or by e-mail at product.support@tgslc.org.

TG names Jay Rhodes as new national account representative



Jay Rhodes is the newest addition to TG's national sales team. Rhodes is looking forward to providing unsurpassed customer service to TG's customers in Illinois and Missouri.

Rhodes joins TG with 11 years of experience in the student financial aid community. Prior to joining TG, Jay worked as the loan default manager at Harris-Stowe State College in St. Louis, Mo., where he played an integral role in lowering the school's cohort default rate by more than 60 percent. He also managed a \$20 million student loan portfolio at St. Louis

Community Credit Union. In addition, Jay has been an active member in MASFAA and MASFAP.

“Jay has a rich background in higher education and student financial aid, as well as in the geographical area he will serve, which will allow him to build solid relationships with TG’s new and potential customers,” said Margie Harvey, assistant vice president of strategic partnerships.

Rhodes can be reached at (800) 252-9743, ext. 2514, or by e-mail at jay.rhodes@tgslc.org.

This, that, and the other

A recent *Washington Post* article looks at how the U.S.’s focus on counter-terrorism is changing the way courses like politics, computer networking, medicine, and firefighting are being taught and has spawned a whole new major — homeland security — at many schools. These schools are catering to students majoring in this new field by revamping curricula and research as they try to keep pace with the changes brought on by the 2001 terrorist attacks and take advantage of a large pool of homeland security money, the article reports. The federal government has spent more than \$12 billion for homeland security research and development over the past four budget years. To read the article, visit www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/04/29/AR2005042901344.html. Free site registration is required.



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