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

Now that you're planning for the fall semester, compile a calendar of important dates for students to remember regarding their financial aid. Submit it to your campus newspaper editor to be included in the publication's calendar of events.

## Federal updates

### Remaining 2005-2006 interest rates released

There are two categories of interest rates that are announced at the end of June, as mentioned in *Shoptalk Online 308*. Interest rates for older PLUS and SLS loans are based on the weekly average of the one-year constant maturity Treasury yield for the last calendar week ending on or before June 26. Interest rates for the HEAL portion of Federal Consolidation loans are based on the 91-day Treasury bill (T-bill) auctioned for the quarter ending June 30.

#### PLUS and SLS

Following are the interest rates for older PLUS and SLS loans, which are effective July 1, 2005, through June 30, 2006:

- 6.50 percent for loans first disbursed on or after October 1, 1992, but before July 1, 1998.
- 6.65 percent for loans disbursed on or after July 1, 1987, but before October 1, 1992.

## HEAL Consolidation

Following is the interest rate for the HEAL portion of Federal Consolidation loans:

- 5.94 percent for loan applications received on or after November 13, 1997, but before October 1, 1998.

## More information

To access TG's annual interest rate chart for all applicable interest rates, visit [www.tgslc.org/pdf/intratechart.pdf](http://www.tgslc.org/pdf/intratechart.pdf).

## Latest volume of the 2005-06 FSA Handbook now online

ED has released Volume 4 of the *2005-06 Federal Student Aid Handbook* (FSA Handbook). This is the fourth volume that has been released so far for the upcoming award year. The volumes that have been released now include:

- The Application and Verification Guide
- Volume 1, Student Eligibility
- Volume 4, Processing Aid and Managing FSA Funds
- Volume 5, Overawards, Overpayments, and Withdrawal Calculations

The current volumes are available on *TG Online* at [www.tgslc.org/resources/fsa\\_handbook.cfm](http://www.tgslc.org/resources/fsa_handbook.cfm). Other volumes will be posted as they are released. When all the volumes of the 2005-06 FSA Handbook have been released, TG will provide a single downloadable file encompassing all of the volumes. Watch future editions of *Shoptalk Online* for details.

## TG updates

### TG names Steve Flores as national account representative for Arizona

Steve R. Flores is the newest addition to TG's national sales team, serving as the national account representative for student financial aid professionals in Arizona.



"Steve has a great talent for troubleshooting and finding solutions for schools. Over the past five years, he's worked with a wide variety of financial aid professionals, different types and sizes of schools, and various FAMS and processes, all of which will make him a great resource for the financial aid community in the Southwest," said Margie Harvey, TG assistant vice president of strategic partnerships.

Steve began working at TG in August 2000 shortly after earning a bachelor's degree at Tarleton State University. During his time with TG, Steve has gained extensive

student loan experience and is familiar with the many different products and services TG provides to help TG customers streamline their processes.

Most recently, Steve served TG's customers as a partnership consultant on the national sales team. Prior to that, he worked with TG's business partners as a business integration consultant on TG's customer services team.

Steve began serving TG's customers in Arizona on July 1.

### **More information**

Steve can be reached at (800) 252-9743, ext. 4510, or by e-mail at [steve.flores@tgslc.org](mailto:steve.flores@tgslc.org).

## **TG Resources: Student and Parent Loan Inquiry assists borrowers with loan management**

Schools and lenders can help students manage their loans with TG's Student/Parent Loan Inquiry. Borrowers, schools, and lenders can view the current status and balance of student loans by simply logging into Student/Parent Loan Inquiry located on the For Borrowers page of *TG Online* at [www.tgslc.org](http://www.tgslc.org).

Student loan borrowers can keep track of the loans they have received, who their lenders and servicers are, the status of their loans, payments made, and more. By providing easy access to loan information, TG's Student/Parent Loan Inquiry can help borrowers make more well-informed borrowing and repayment decisions.

By including a link to Student/Parent Loan Inquiry on their Web sites, lenders and servicers can reduce the number of calls to their staff. Directions on linking to the service are provided on the "How to Link to TG's Student/Parent Loan Inquiry" page, located on *TG Online* at [www.tgslc.org/resources/icon.cfm](http://www.tgslc.org/resources/icon.cfm).

## **Skill builders: The dreaded meeting — ways to keep gatherings productive**

It's something that people sometimes dread — the notice for an upcoming meeting. Although a necessary activity in the workplace, meetings often become unpopular for a variety of reasons. They are often perceived as intrusions to the daily work flow, or as significant time wasters. Meetings may "fail" because they have no explicit purpose, or because they end up creating more challenges than they resolve.

Here are a few points to keep in mind when planning your own meetings:

### **Consider alternatives.**

Determine whether your meeting is absolutely necessary. For example, it is often possible to achieve the same results through individual visits with co-workers, through a quick e-mail or phone conversation, or using other means. If you call

meetings less frequently and only when absolutely necessary, your colleagues are more likely to attend and participate actively.

### **Set an agenda — and stick to it.**

Remember that the people you invite have other tasks to attend to, and they must consider their priorities. Issue an agenda — participants need to know the purpose of your meeting. While holding the meeting, try to keep everyone “on-topic,” and discourage participants from having extended conversations until your meeting objectives have been accomplished.

### **Make it fun and think outside the box.**

Although at times it is important for meetings to be conducted in a serious tone, this is often not the case. Consider a quick trivia question or ice breaker at the beginning of every meeting to build a connection with participants. Also, consider unconventional approaches. Ever thought about holding a meeting in a room with no chairs or places to sit? Although it sounds strange, “standing room only” meetings can be more productive because they force people to make their points quickly.

### **Document agreements and celebrate results.**

One common complaint about meetings is that they don’t produce the intended results. Often this is because no one is reminded of the duties that were assigned during the meeting. Remember to issue a short meeting wrap-up, outlining all of the assignments made, tasks to be completed, deadlines, and other information as appropriate. Your participants will appreciate the reminder, and it reinforces everyone’s expectations. Finally, don’t forget to celebrate your accomplishments — meetings don’t always have to be about tasks to be completed, but rather the successes reached!

## **Legislative update**

The June 28 issue of *TG’s Legislative Report* includes a Congressional update, including the HEA proposals to be considered in the last few weeks of the first session of the 109th Congress. Keep up with the latest developments by reading the full report on *TG Online* at [www.tgslc.org/lege\\_report/index.cfm](http://www.tgslc.org/lege_report/index.cfm).

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

The last minute rush last Thursday by borrowers to consolidate prior to the adjustment of interest rates created a significant challenge for lenders and the Department of Education. Although many industry partners anticipated the demand and prepared appropriately by extending servicing hours and increasing staffing, *CNN* reports that many financial aid veterans were still surprised by the sheer volume of calls in the final hours prior to the deadline. Read more about the rush to consolidate at

<http://www.cnn.com/2005/EDUCATION/06/30/student.loans.ap/index.html>.



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