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Tip^{of} the Week

Spanish versions of deferment forms are now available for downloading and ordering on *TG Online* at www.tgslc.org/forms/frms_def.cfm.

TG updates

TG announces Fall 2005 Lender and Servicer Training Webinar

Join your colleagues on Friday, Sept. 16, 2005, from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. CDT for an afternoon of online training and support specifically geared to student loan lending and servicer professionals.

For the first time, TG will be hosting its Lender and Servicer Training program via webinar. You don't even have to leave your office to join this Web-based training event, so don't miss this excellent opportunity to get up to speed on the products and services that a growing number of your schools are using.

To register and view the agenda for TG's Lender and Servicer Training Webinar, visit *TG Online* at www.tgslc.org/training/lender/.

Interested customers who cannot participate in the online event will be able to join the training via telephone for an audio-only version. Handouts from the training will be available for download on *TG Online*. You also can attend the training in person at the TG Campus in Round Rock, Texas.

Learn more

For more information on the TG Lender and Servicer Training Webinar, send an e-mail message to lenderrequests@tgsic.org

Meet Ken Garcia, business integration team coordinator

When schools and lenders begin using TG's electronic products, they get more than just great software for application and loan processing — they get an entire team of specialized staff for training and support. The business integration team provides training in person and over the phone, software implementation, and contract support. That's just another way that customers benefit from TG's comprehensive business services.

Working mostly behind the scenes, Ken Garcia plays an important role in the work of TG's business integration team. He trains customers on-site as well as monitors the team's workload, providing extra help whenever it's needed. Because Ken has worked at TG for more than 10 years, he has a thorough understanding of the student loan industry and a strong feel for what schools and lenders look for in a business partner.



"In building relationships with my customers, I try to exceed their expectations each time they contact me," Ken said. *Shoptalk Online* asked Ken a few questions to learn more about how he ensures excellence in customer care.

Shoptalk Online: Describe your work as the business integration team coordinator.

Ken: As coordinator for the business integration team, I help my teammates in all aspects of their work. Once a school or lender decides to use a TG product — like AdvanTG Web™ or TG Loans By Web™ — our team lays the groundwork for getting the customer on board.

The business integration team handles the business contracts and agreements; we go on site to answer technical questions that customers may have; and we conduct testing to ensure that an institution's records are processed correctly and that all lines of communication are working. Additionally, we set up a profile of the customer in our databases and systems, so that TG can communicate with the customer, and we provide customer training on TG's various software products. I assist in all these functions and make sure that customers can begin processing with TG according to the timeframe they prefer.

It's all very much a team effort. Our guiding principle is "What's best for the customer." Once a school partners with TG, we as a team look at how to integrate

its systems with TG's products and services. As part of that effort, we suggest ways to make the best use of our products, given the customer's business requirements.

Shoptalk Online: How do you provide great customer care?

Ken: Generally speaking, a customer wants a quality product, caring service, flexibility, and prompt problem resolution. I take a personal interest in my customers, and make every effort to provide a positive experience for them. It's important for customers to know that you recognize their needs are important. If you don't have the answer right away, let them know you will find the answer and get back to them — and then get back to them. If the answer isn't quite what they wanted or anticipated, you can often provide alternative options. Customers appreciate it when you show them that you did everything you could to help them.

Shoptalk Online: What motivates you in your work?

Ken: I enjoy learning new business processes and developing tracking tools that allow us to do a better job. I'm lucky because my job lets me do all that, which means I can be creative in the way I help customers. I enjoy helping customers use our products and services in ways that benefit them the most. It makes me feel we have made a difference for our school and lender partners and that we have made their jobs a little easier.

Skill builders: How to lead like Santa Claus

Only four months left till Christmas time. While you may not be ready to start thinking about the holidays just yet, right about now Santa and his team of elves are busy preparing for that one season when the workshop must sort through volumes of requests, package, and deliver products to their customers in just 24 hours.

Sound familiar?

Learning how Santa Claus manages his workshop year-round in order to meet the high demands of a single season is a valuable tool for any manager, but is especially relevant to those in the financial aid office. Most of you are probably too busy in the middle of peak season to give much thought to Christmas and Santa Claus, but you may be surprised to learn that the financial aid office has a lot in common with Santa's workshop.

"Looking at Santa Claus as a team leader who has to get his products done and delivered in a short period of time directly correlates to what we have to do in the financial aid industry and the financial aid office," said Tom Sharp, TG assistant vice president for corporate learning. "We do a lot of hard work 11 and a half months out of the year to make sure the financial aid process runs smoothly."

TG's Speakers Bureau training session, *The Leadership Secrets of Santa Claus*, is a tool that financial aid officers at all levels can use to help their "workshops" achieve

great things by giving team members clear goals, solid accountabilities, ongoing feedback, coaching, and recognition.

What would Santa do?

The Leadership Secrets of Santa Claus is based on a book published by Performance Systems Corporation. The training session draws parallels between Santa's workshop in December and the financial aid office's "Christmastime" in August by focusing on various leadership traits with a North Pole twist, such as building a wonderful workshop, sharing the milk and cookies, finding out who's naughty and nice, and of course, being good for goodness sake. These traits help Santa's workshop succeed and can help any financial aid office do the same.

"Like Santa, we have to believe that what we do adds value to the lives of the people we serve," Tom said. "Instead of presents under the tree on Christmas morning, our outcome is providing students with the financial means to attend college and our reward is seeing those students graduate. We are all part of the workshops that make that happen."

Discover through this entertaining training session how Santa meets his leadership challenges and learn how he and his team of elves and reindeer get big things done in their workshop all year long.

Learn more

To schedule a training event or to find out more about *The Leadership Secrets of Santa Claus*, contact TG Speakers Bureau at (800) 252-9743, ext. 4650, or send an e-mail message to customer.services@tgslc.org. You may also visit the TG Speakers Bureau Web page on *TG Online* at www.tgslc.org/speakers/index.cfm.

Question of the week

Q: Does the 30-day delayed disbursement rule apply to first-time PLUS loan borrowers?

A: No. According to federal regulations, "A school may not release the first installment of a Stafford loan for endorsement to a student who is enrolled in the first year of an undergraduate program of study and who has not previously received a Stafford, SLS, Direct Subsidized, or Direct Unsubsidized loan until 30 days after the first day of the student's program of study" [34 CFR 682.604(c)(5)]. Therefore, the regulation applies only to first-year, undergraduate Stafford loan borrowers who are borrowing for the first time.

Do you have a question?

If you have a question that needs an answer, feel free to Ask TG™. To submit a question to Ask TG™, go to <http://tgslc.custhelp.com>.

Trends and issues

The “in-school” consolidation aftermath: Lender reporting of underlying loan statuses

Shoptalk Online continues its series on the implications of the in-school consolidation rush that occurred earlier this summer. This week’s article concerns the reporting of loan statuses when processing a Consolidation loan.

“In-school” consolidation offers an unusual situation for reporting loan statuses, particularly when one of the borrower’s underlying loan holders is his or her consolidating lender. The reason is that in order for a borrower to consolidate while still in school, he or she must request that each lender of the borrower’s underlying loans permit the borrower to waive his or her grace period and enter repayment early. If the lender(s) approves the borrower’s request(s), the consolidating lender processes the Consolidation loan. So what should the underlying loans’ statuses be throughout this process?

Ideal world

In an ideal world, the underlying loan holder (that is also the consolidating lender) would be able to place the borrower’s underlying loans in repayment status without an out-of-school date; process the Consolidation loan; and then, as the payoff amounts are processed, convert each of the underlying loans to paid-in-full (by consolidation) status. The lender would then place the Consolidation loan in an in-school deferment status as the borrower continues with his or her education.

However, TG understands that when it comes to reporting loan statuses for in-school consolidation purposes, many lenders’ systems may not be able to report an underlying loan in repayment status; the lender’s system expects an out-of-school date, but the borrower is still attending school.

Workaround

One workaround that TG suggests is that the consolidating lender (that holds some or all of the borrower’s underlying loans) report the underlying loans in an in-school status until the Consolidation loan is processed. Then, the underlying loans should be reported as paid-in-full by consolidation with a “date entered repayment” that aligns with the date that the borrower requested that his or her loan enter repayment. The consolidating lender should then place the Consolidation loan in an in-school deferment status as the borrower continues with his or her education. Note: TG will be running a future article in this “in-school’ consolidation aftermath” series concerning the date that the borrower entered repayment and the effect that this date has on the cohort default rate period into which the borrower is placed.

Side effect for schools

One side effect of this workaround that schools should be aware of is that since the Consolidation loan will be reported to TG (and subsequently loaded to the National

Student Loan Data System [NSLDS]) before the underlying loans are reported as paid in full, the NSLDS Aggregate Loan Information chart may cause a borrower's Stafford aggregate loan limit to be overstated—the underlying loans will continue to show in an in-school status even though the Consolidation loan exists, so a school may inadvertently double count some or all of the borrower's Stafford loans.

TG to the school's rescue

To help you avoid this potential problem, TG's system breaks out the underlying loans of any Consolidation loan that TG guarantees. This feature on TG's system is not offered by all FFELP service providers, but TG wanted to retain this underlying loan information for situations like this in which the school or the lender may need to research a borrower's loan history in more detail. For schools that have access to the Real Time Access (RTA) feature of TG's AdvanTG Web™, you can view this information yourself. For those schools that do not have access to RTA, you can contact TG loan guarantee operations for assistance.

More articles in this series

To access previous articles in the "in-school' consolidation aftermath" series, visit *Shoptalk Online* Editions [318](#) and [319](#).

Questions

For questions, call TG customer assistance at (800) 845-6267, or send an e-mail message to cust.assist@tgslc.org; or call TG loan guarantee operations at (800) 446-5616, or send an e-mail message to lgo.helps@tgslc.org.

***Mapping Your Future*™ encourages schools to regularly retrieve Online Student Loan Counseling records**

Schools must maintain documentation substantiating compliance with ED loan counseling regulations, 34 CFR 682.604 (f) and (g), for each borrower. For security reasons, *Mapping Your Future's* Online Student Loan Counseling (OSLC) notification e-mails provide very limited information regarding the counseling session. However, the counseling record obtained from the Web site's secure Financial Aid Offices (FAO) Access Area provides all information collected on each student form at the conclusion of each counseling session. Therefore, *Mapping Your Future* recommends that schools retain a copy of the OSLC confirmation record in each student's file.

School financial aid staff should retrieve loan counseling data on a regular basis. Once they receive e-mail notification that a student has completed counseling on the *Mapping Your Future* Web site, it's easy to login to the FAO Access Area and retrieve the documentation:

- Use the Daily Records box in the upper right-hand corner of the *Mapping Your Future* home page to retrieve records one day at a time. To view previous dates, click and hold on the right arrow, select the date, and then click the 'Change' button.

- Use the 'Search' tab to search for a record by confirmation number, Social Security Number, or last name.
- Use the 'Reports' tab to view or print counseling records for a date range.
- Use the 'Export' tab to download counseling in an electronic format.

Another consideration regarding accessing OSLC records is ensuring that the appropriate financial aid staff members have access to the school's FAO Access Area. Each account must designate 'super user' who will be able to approve other staff members' access to the account. The 'super user' designation form is located at <http://mapping-your-future.org/faoUserRequests/actSuperUser.cfm>.

Once you establish the 'super user' on the account, other staff members can request access through the Additional User Request Form located at <http://mapping-your-future.org/faoUserRequests/actUser.cfm>. The 'super user' will receive an e-mail message requesting that he or she login to the FAO Access Area to approve the additional staff member's access.

Two basic categories of access are available: FAO Account and FAO Retrieval. FAO Account allows the staff member to customize the account and retrieve records. The FAO Retrieval access only allows the staff member to retrieve records.

If you or your staff needs assistance or training on using the FAO Access Area, contact Beth Ziehmer, *Mapping Your Future's* customer care and operations specialist, by e-mail at feedback@mapping-your-future.org or by phone at (573) 796-3730.

This, that, and the other

In the financial aid community, the name Stafford is associated with the Federal Stafford Loan Program. But do you know for whom the program is named?

Robert T. Stafford is most noted as a statesman who served the public for more than 30 years before retiring from the U.S. Senate in 1988. Stafford received his law degree from Boston University in 1938 and is a naval veteran of both World War II and the Korean War. Stafford held every major statewide office in Vermont, including governor and U. S. representative, before becoming a U. S. senator.

During his time in Congress, Stafford was an advocate of the Superfund law that was passed in response to several environmental disasters in the late 1970s. In addition, he sponsored the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, comprehensive disaster relief legislation that joined individual disaster relief directives under one law. Finally, Stafford was a strong advocate of improving higher education accessibility. As a tribute to his advocacy, in 1989 the government renamed the Guaranteed Student Loan Program the Federal Stafford Loan Program in his honor.



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Shoptalk Online is published by TG. Unless specifically noted, the policies and procedures outlined in *Shoptalk Online* apply only to loans made under the TG guarantee and not to loans underwritten by other guarantors.

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

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