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Tip^{of} the Week

Looking for the new federal addenda? Trying to locate the revised Plain Language Disclosure? TG has all of the common FFELP forms in portable document format (PDF) for your downloading convenience. You'll find the PDFs at www.tgslc.org/forms/index.cfm.

Federal updates

Reauthorization DCL: First Flyover

Last week's *Shoptalk Online* reported ED's release of *Dear Colleague Letter* (DCL) GEN-08-12/FP-08-10, which provides a summary of most of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA) provisions that amended and reauthorized the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA). The HEOA's changes were extensive, and this 219-page DCL, which may be accessed as a PDF document on the Information for

Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) Web site at <http://ifap.ed.gov/dpcletters/GEN0812FP0810.html>, reflects its broad impact. While the DCL is largely a summary of the provisions in the HEOA, it does offer some details of interest to the financial aid community, which we will highlight in this and upcoming editions of *Shoptalk Online*.

Although many readers may have already become familiar with the various provisions included in the HEOA, we encourage affected parties to review the DCL's summaries alongside the HEOA text to ensure a complete understanding of the requirements and their respective effective dates. To facilitate this review, TG provides convenient, searchable HEA compilations that integrate the HEOA changes on its Web site at <http://www.tgslc.org/policy/hea.cfm>.

Keep in mind that for many of the provisions, ED will conduct negotiated rulemaking sessions to provide clarification and interpretation of the law. And in some cases, ED must implement operational changes before parties may comply.

In the order of effective date, this article presents selected provisions that affect Title IV student loan programs that have been or will become effective by July 1, 2009.

Effective August 14, 2008

- **Unsubsidized Stafford loans for a dependent student who lacks parental support** (See DCL GEN-08-12, pages 79-80, and HEA Sec. 479(a).)

The HEOA authorizes a financial aid administrator (FAA) to offer an unsubsidized Stafford loan under the FFELP or the Federal Direct Loan Program (FDLP) to a dependent student, if the FAA verifies that the parent(s) has ceased financial support and refuses to file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). An FAA may exercise this authority beginning with a loan for any loan period that begins on or after August 14, 2008, or that includes that date.

Under this provision, not to be confused with a dependency override, the dependent student must establish his eligibility for Title IV assistance by completing and submitting a FAFSA. The FAA must also verify that the parent(s) has ended financial support and refuses to complete the FAFSA. Self-certification from the dependent student is not sufficient, but in most instances, a signed and dated statement from one of the student's parents is sufficient if it specifically states that the parent(s):

- has stopped providing financial support to the student, including the date when the financial support stopped;
- will not provide financial support in the future; and
- refuses to complete the parental section of a FAFSA.

The parent is not required to provide a reason for ending financial support and refusing to complete the FAFSA. Note that financial support includes not only the

parent's payment of educational costs, but also providing other cash and non-cash support to the student such as room and/or board.

If an FAA approves the student's request, the dependent student will be eligible to receive an unsubsidized loan, but no other Title IV assistance. In addition, the student's parent(s) will not be eligible to apply for a PLUS loan on the student's behalf.

The maximum annual unsubsidized loan amount that a dependent student may receive under the new authority is the "base" annual loan limit for the student's grade level plus the additional unsubsidized amount of \$2,000 that was added to the annual loan limits for dependent students by the Ensuring Continued Access to Student Loans Act of 2008 (ECASLA) — not the higher additional unsubsidized amounts (\$6,000 or \$7,000 depending on grade level) that are available to independent undergraduate students and dependent students whose parents are willing but unable to borrow under the PLUS Loan Program.

If the FAA decides not to award the student an unsubsidized loan, the student must obtain the required parental information and signatures, and submit a corrected FAFSA, before any Title IV aid can be awarded. The FAA's decision cannot be appealed to ED.

DCL GEN-08-12, pages 8-810, provides more details on processing a FAFSA that contains only dependent student data for the remainder of the 2008-09 award year and the upcoming 2009-10 processing year. It also offers specific instructions for schools participating in the FDLP.

- **The Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) as it applies to FFELP and FDLP borrowers, and FFELP Special Allowance Payment (SAP) calculations on affected loans** (See DCL GEN-08-12, page 120, and HEA Sec. 428(d) and 438(g).)

The SCRA, which limits the interest rate on a borrower's loan to 6.0 percent during the borrower's active duty military service, applies to FFELP and FDLP loans for borrowers in military service as of August 14, 2008. Note, however, that the SCRA interest rate limit does not apply to a PLUS loan endorser unless that individual is also performing eligible military service. In order to receive this benefit, the borrower must contact the loan holder in writing to request the interest rate adjustment and provide a copy of military orders. For this purpose, the term "in writing" may include a borrower's e-mail request and the term "copy of the borrower's military orders" may include a scanned copy of the orders attached to that e-mail request. Borrowers serving before the effective date may not receive a refund of the interest paid in excess of the SCRA 6.0 percent limit before August 14, 2008.

For any FFELP loan that is first disbursed on or after July 1, 2008, and is subject to the SCRA 6.0 percent interest rate limit, the applicable interest rate used in

calculating the lender's SAP is the SCRA determined rate. ED will issue separate operational guidance on HEOA-related SAP changes.

- **Loan rehabilitation: eligibility, consumer credit reporting, and financial and economic literacy information** (See DCL GEN-08-12, pages 121-122, and HEA Sec. 428F(a)(1)(A) and (a)(5), and 428F(c).)

Eligibility — For any defaulted loan that is rehabilitated on or after August 14, 2008, a borrower may rehabilitate that loan only once. This limitation applies when a borrower redefaults after the rehabilitated loan is returned to normal repayment status. However, if a borrower redefaults on a rehabilitated loan, he may still rehabilitate other defaulted loans.

Consumer credit reporting after FFELP loan rehabilitation — Once the guarantor sells a rehabilitated loan to an eligible FFELP holder, the guarantor must request any consumer reporting agency to which the default was reported to remove the record from the borrower's credit history. This applies to all loan rehabilitation sales to eligible lenders that take place on or after August 14, 2008, and to all prior holders of the rehabilitated defaulted loan.

Financial and economic literacy information for rehabilitated borrowers — A guarantor must provide financial and economic education materials to each borrower who successfully rehabilitates a defaulted loan on or after August 14, 2008. Guarantors should also make the same materials generally available to all other borrowers who have previously rehabilitated their loans. ED will provide comparable materials to FDLP borrowers.

Effective October 1, 2008

- **No interest accrual on loans to eligible military borrowers** (See DCL GEN-08-12, page 138, and HEA Sec. 455, 428C(a)(3)(B)(i)(V), and 428C(b)(5).)

For an eligible military borrower, interest will not accrue on an FDLP loan, or any portion of an FDLP Consolidation loan, first disbursed on or after October 1, 2008, for a period of not more than 60 months. For this purpose, an eligible military borrower is one who is:

- (1) serving on active duty during a war or other military operation or national emergency; or (2) performing qualifying National Guard duty during a war or other military operation or national emergency; and
- serving in an area of hostilities in which service qualifies for special pay under section 310 of title 37, U.S.C.

This benefit applies to any eligible military borrower whose service includes or begins on or after August 14, 2008. A FFELP borrower may take advantage of the no interest accrual benefit by consolidating into the FDLP either FFELP loans that were first disbursed on or after October 1, 2008, or a Federal Consolidation

Loan that repaid FFELP or FDLP loans first disbursed on or after October 1, 2008.

For an FDLP borrower who also qualifies for the military service deferment, the borrower's deferment period and 60-month period of no interest accrual run concurrently.

Effective July 1, 2009

- **Competitive loan auction pilot program for FFELP parent PLUS loans**
(See DCL GEN-08-12. pages 75-76 and 188, and HEA Sec. 499.)

Through the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007 (CCRAA), Congress directed ED to undertake a pilot program to establish a mechanism for an auction of the rights to originate FFELP PLUS loans to new parent borrowers. Although ED plans to provide additional information in an upcoming *Federal Register* notice, this DCL offers some new details to the financial aid community.

Under the pilot program, ED may enforce an eligible lender's winning bid if it fails to enter into the agreement with ED, as required, or if it fails to comply with the terms of the agreement. ED may sanction the lender by assessing a penalty for any eligible PLUS loans that the lender fails to originate in accordance with the agreement, in the amount of the additional costs incurred by ED in obtaining another eligible lender to originate the PLUS loans, including the amount of any increase in special allowance payments made by ED. To collect such penalties, ED will reduce the amount of any payments otherwise due to the lender by the amount of the penalty or by requesting that any other federal agency reduce the amount of any payments due to the lender from that agency. ED may prohibit the bidding of such lender in other auctions under HEA Sec. 499, and limit, suspend, or terminate the lender's participation in the FFELP. ED may also take any other enforcement action authorized under HEA Part B.

ED and the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with other agencies, are required to conduct an evaluation of the pilot program and determine the extent of federal savings compared to federal costs that would have incurred in operating the program in the absence of the auction. ED and the Treasury must also submit preliminary, interim, and final reports to Congress by September 1, 2010, September 1, 2012, and September 1, 2013, respectively.

More information

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

Closed school corner

The following table provides a list of newly reported school closures and error corrections from the Postsecondary Educational Participants System (PEPS) and from the January 2008 *Closed School Monthly Report* supplied by ED. Schools listed

are those with which TG has done business or to which TG has otherwise provided services. Newly reported closures

OPE School ID	School Name and Address	Unofficial Closure Date	ED's Official Closure Date
03010615	Golf Academy of America – Kaneohe 46-001 Kamehameha Highway Kaneohe, HI 96744-3724	N/A	12/12/08

TG updates

Join the dialogue: TG to host lender workshop in Austin

TG offers a strong set of application and loan products to its lender customers as well as a commitment to investing in more products that offer efficiency and cost-effectiveness. TG's upcoming Austin lender workshop provides a great opportunity for learning more about each of these benefits.

TG will hold its 2009 Lender Workshop on February 12 at the Marriott Courtyard across from the Austin Convention Center in Austin, Texas. TG invites interested lenders and servicers to attend the one-day workshop, which is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. and end at 3 p.m., CST. There is no charge for attending the event.

The workshop offers a series of short discussions on a variety of topics, including the financial challenges in today's market, TG's business profile, its focus on helping lenders and schools through effective service and potential cost-cutting, and TG's newest financial literacy products.

"TG works to enhance the service of our lender associates in any way we can, and the lender workshop offers an opportunity for showing how we can do that," said Kevin Harris, TG director of lender relationships. "Financial literacy is a growing area of concern for all those working in the industry. We have launched several exciting and innovative tools to help educate students about their financial obligations."

TG recently unveiled a series of new financial literacy tools designed to help teach students the principles of money management. TG also expanded its academic and financial skills workshop program, Positive+Balance™, to offer sessions on building effective campus financial literacy initiatives.

To learn more

Lenders and servicers can find out more about the workshop agenda as well as register for the program by going online to www.tgslc.org/training/lender/index.cfm, or by calling (800) 252-9743, ext. 4507.

Set your training sights on 2009 TG Annual Training Conference

Planning your spring training? Looking for a conference that sheds light on a changing financial aid industry and that offers a firm grasp of policy and regulations? Consider the 2009 TG Annual Training Conference. For the last 17 years, TG's conference has presented a well-designed menu of workshops on industry and regulatory topics that earns consistently high marks from participants.



This year's event will be held at the Renaissance Hotel in Austin, Texas, from April 22-24. The 2009 conference theme, "Stepping Up for Students — The Rhythm of FFELP," focuses on the energy and momentum of the financial aid industry — the "rhythm of the FFELP" — which propels so many students on their way to school. TG recognizes the contribution that financial aid professionals at schools from across

the country make to the success of that 'rhythm.'

Conference information

To help you plan for attendance at TG's conference, read through this short information summary on particular expenses.

- **Hotel accommodations**

All conference activities will be held at the Renaissance Hotel in northwest Austin.

Online Reservations and Rates

Single/Double Rate — \$174.00/223.00

Triple/Quad Rate — \$243.00/\$263.00

Govt. Single/Double Rate — \$85.00/\$140.00

Rates are valid through March 31, 2009.

- **Registration fee**

The 2009 early conference registration fee is an affordable \$50 per person for all attendees, including higher education participants as well as attendees representing lending institutions. After March 20, 2009, the registration fee will be \$75 per person.

- **Sponsorship note**

TG does not solicit or accept sponsorship donations from the student lending community for this training event.

Offer your training suggestions

Your input about potential session topics and speakers is important to TG. Feel free to include your suggestions when you register. If you prefer to speak with someone directly, contact Judith Cunningham at (800) 252-9743, ext. 2905, or send an e-mail message to judith.cunningham@tgslc.org.

To register

Visit *TG Online* at www.tgslc.org/tgconference/register.cfm to register and to find out more about the 2009 TG Annual Training Conference.

Product training: TG to offer webinars on Integrated Default Assistant™

TG's Integrated Default Assistant™ (IDA™) offers schools and lenders a versatile tool for tracking and managing their TG cohort default rate. Using IDA, customers can access reports, pre-formatted letters, and a comprehensive database of borrower information as they monitor their institution's cohort default rate for TG loans. IDA is designed to provide special support for schools working with students at risk for default.

TG is presenting two webinars for schools to learn how to best use IDA in managing their cohort default rate (CDR). During these trainings, participants will find out how to calculate the CDR, determine which students are included in the calculation, and learn how to integrate IDA into existing default management strategies.

Webinar times

- Wednesday, January 21, 2 p.m. – 3 p.m., CST
- Thursday, January 22, 10 a.m. – 11 a.m., CST

To register

Listen in and ask questions by registering to attend the webinars at <http://tgslc.na4.acrobat.com/f79913243>. Please note that on first logging into TG's webinar tool users will be asked to create a password that can then be used for all future TG webinars.

For help

If you have any questions regarding the upcoming webinars, please contact Lisa Felder, external product training coordinator, at lisa.felder@tgslc.org. If you need technical assistance with TG's products, please contact the TG product support team at (800) 332-1455, or send an e-mail to product.support@tgslc.org.

TG's "Building a Successful Financial Literacy Program" webinar available for free download

Many schools are considering financial literacy initiatives that ground students in the basics of money management. TG recently presented a webinar, "Building a Successful Financial Literacy Program," which offered a variety of strategies for developing campus financial literacy efforts.

Representatives from two higher-learning institutions shared their financial literacy expertise during the event, including Jimmie Wilder, associate director of financial aid at San Francisco State University; Diana Chow, supervisor of university loans and collections at San Francisco State University; and William Spiers, director of financial aid at Tallahassee Community College.

Webinar participants also learned about TG's growing assortment of financial literacy products and services, including the new Positive+Balance CommunitySM, a Web site for educators seeking reliable financial literacy solutions and support.

"More than ever, students need strong financial literacy skills to succeed, especially during times of economic challenge," said Margie Harvey, TG's financial literacy program manager. "Judging from the interest in the webinar and the Positive+Balance Community, many schools have made educating their students about finances a priority. Part of TG's mission is to provide support to help these schools with their financial literacy efforts."

To access the webinar

The entire webinar can now be viewed online in the Positive+Balance Community. To access the webinar and other free financial literacy resources, visit www.PositiveBalance.org. New users will have to register with the Web site in order to access information. Registration is free.

TG and Council hold successful "School Dialogue on Student Debt Management"

Helping student borrowers in times of economic change is a priority for everyone working in financial aid. TG and the Council for the Management of Educational Finance recognize the special role that schools play in that endeavor, especially as it relates to managing higher education debt. To help, TG and the Council recently offered a webinar on debt management tools and tips that brought together schools from varying sectors of the financial aid community.

The "School Dialogue on Student Debt Management" webinar, the second in a series of dialogues co-sponsored by the Council and TG, gave schools an opportunity to learn more about TG's default prevention tools, initiatives, and research data concerning the impact of the new cohort default rate calculation.

Offering help in times of change

Council member Robert Sheridan, executive director of student financial aid at the University of Houston–Downtown, opened the dialogue with an overview of challenges that schools face as they help students repay student loans. He focused in particular on the importance of fostering collaborative relationships to overcome some of these challenges.

TG's senior research analyst Matt Steiner followed with a presentation that detailed increasing default and delinquency rates over two, three, and seven years. To help manage such a rise in default, TG representatives — including Shelia Dunlap, TG's assistant vice president of default prevention, and default aversion consultants Joe Braxton and Rett Anderton — provided an overview of TG's initiatives in default prevention. They offered a look at a wide range of default prevention tools available to schools.

The webinar also provided an opportunity for participants to exchange ideas and best practices. Council member Melet Leafgreen, assistant director of student loan programs at Texas Christian University, opened the discussion which featured the following topics:

- The impact of the new cohort default rate calculation on a school's default rate;
- The need for administrators to update default prevention strategies and assess training needs for administrators;
- Educating borrowers on proper money management with a particular focus on financial literacy tools; and
- Using various methods to determine why students withdraw from school, including coordinated campus efforts, partnerships with servicers and guarantors, and research.

The Council will conclude its series of school workshops with a third dialogue on debt management to be held April 21 in Austin. Watch for details in upcoming issues of *Shoptalk Online*.

To access webinar materials

Presentations and handouts from the webinar are available for download at www.tgslc.org/council/dialogue/index.cfm. Links to materials are located in the right column.

About the Council

The Council works to minimize student loan defaults by providing the higher education community with innovative leadership, activities, and services that improve the understanding and management of personal and education finance by students and families. For over 10 years, the Council and TG have worked together

to address some of the most important issues affecting students' ability to successfully repay their student loans.

To learn more about the initiatives of the Council, visit *TG Online* at www.tgslc.org/council. You can also contact TG's director of educational finance initiatives Maria Luna-Torres at (800) 252-9743, ext. 4632, or send an e-mail message to maria.luna-torres@tgslc.org.

TG closed on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

TG will be closed next Monday, January 19, in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. TG will resume normal business hours on Tuesday, January 20.

Trends and issues

Policy potpourri

Q.: Many students now prefer to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) through the FAFSA on the Web (FOTW) system, instead of completing a paper FAFSA. In answering student and parent questions about FOTW, it would be helpful for our financial aid staff to become familiar with the system. Is it possible to access FOTW for demo or training purposes?

A.: Yes, you can use ED's FAFSA on the Web demonstration to train financial aid staff or to show students how to use the online application. Go to <http://fafsademo.test.ed.gov>, and type in "eddemo" for the user name and "fafsatest" for the password.

Do you have a question?

If you have a question that needs an answer, feel free to *Ask TG™*. *Ask TG* is TG's online query tool for borrowers, schools, and lenders. It includes a database of frequently asked questions about financial aid, student loan processing, and TG's products and services. To submit a question to *Ask TG*, visit tgslc.custhelp.com.

Common Manual

Common Manual updates

On December 18, 2008, guarantor representatives who serve on the *Common Manual* Governing Board approved several changes to the *Common Manual*. Details on these changes and a newly updated *Integrated Common Manual* incorporating the changes are available online at www.tgslc.org/policy/integrated_online_manual.cfm.

The nation's guarantors provide the following summaries to inform schools, lenders, and servicers of the latest *Common Manual* policy changes. These changes will appear in the manual's next annual update. These changes will also be incorporated into the *Integrated Common Manual*. The *Integrated Common Manual* is available on several guarantor websites, and it is also available on *Common Manual's* Web site at www.commonmanual.org. Please carefully note the effective date of each policy change.

Economic Hardship Deferment Eligibility

The *Common Manual* has been revised to clarify that non-taxable income such as child support, life insurance proceeds, and gifts and bequests that are not included in the computation of the adjusted gross income (AGI) should not to be treated as income for purposes of determining eligibility for an economic hardship deferment.

Affected Sections:	11.4.A Eligibility Criteria - Economic Hardship
Effective Date:	Economic hardship deferment eligibility determinations made on or after July 1, 2009, unless implemented earlier by the guarantor.
Basis:	§682.210(s)(6)(x); IRS 1040 Instructions 2007
Policy Information:	1003/Batch 154
Guarantor Comments:	None.

Notification of Check Availability

The *Common Manual* has been revised to comply with the regulatory changes published in the *Federal Register* dated November 1, 2007, that relate to delivering loan funds to a borrower when a student does not pick up a check issued by a school. Revised language provides that if the student does not pick up the check within 21 days of the school's notice that the check is available, the school must immediately mail the check to the borrower, initiate an electronic funds transfer (EFT) of those funds to the borrower's bank account, or return the funds to the lender.

Affected Sections:	8.7.H Delivery Methods
Effective Date:	Checks issued for direct payment by the school on or after July 1, 2008, unless implemented earlier by the school on or after November 1, 2007.
Basis:	§668.164(c)(1)(ii)(B)
Policy Information:	1067/Batch 154
Guarantor Comments:	None.

Total and Permanent Disability

The *Common Manual* currently states that a borrower must submit the total and permanent disability certification to the lender within 90 days of the date that the physician completed and certified the discharge application. If the lender receives the discharge application after this 90-day time frame, a borrower must have the physician complete a new application and the borrower must submit the application to the lender within 90 days of the physician's certification of the new discharge application.

The *Manual* is being revised to state if the borrower submits the discharge application after the 90-day time frame, the borrower must have the physician complete a new application and must submit the new application to the lender within 90 days of the physician's new certification.

Affected Sections:	13.8.G Total and Permanent Disability
Effective Date:	Total and permanent disability applications received by the lender on or after July 1, 2008.
Basis:	§682.402(c); National Council of Higher Education Loan Program's Total and Permanent Disability Q&A confirmed by the Department on March 25, 2008.
Policy Information:	1068/Batch 154
Guarantor Comments:	None.

Special Allowance and Interest Rate Reporting

Appendix A of the *Manual* has been updated to incorporate a revised version of Figure A-5, LaRS Special Allowance and Interest Rate Reporting for FFELP Loans, provided by the NCHelp Program Regulations Committee.

Affected Sections:	Figure A-5 LaRS Special Allowance and Interest Rate Reporting for FFELP Loans
Effective Date:	Loans first disbursed on or after October 1, 2007.
Basis:	Public Law No. 110-84; §682.302(b); DCL FP-07-11.
Policy Information:	1069/Batch 154
Guarantor Comments:	None.

Title IV Program Definitions

The *Common Manual* has been revised to include separate glossary definitions of the following federal student aid programs that are referenced in existing *Manual* text:

- **Federal Perkins Loan:** A low-interest, long-term loan intended for undergraduate or graduate and professional students with financial need. The Federal Perkins Loan Program is one of the campus-based programs that are administered by a school's financial aid office. For more information, see the FSA Handbook.
- **Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG):** A grant intended for undergraduate students with exceptional financial need. The FSEOG is one of the campus-based programs that are administered by a school's financial aid office. For more information, see the FSA Handbook.
- **Federal Work-Study (FWS):** An employment program intended for undergraduate or graduate and professional students with financial need that allows students to work part time to help pay for their educational costs. The FWS program is one of the campus-based programs administered by a school's financial aid office. For more information, see the FSA Handbook.

Affected Sections: 9.5.A Return Amounts for Title IV Grant and Loan Programs

Appendix G

Effective Date: Retroactive to the implementation of the *Common Manual*.

Basis: 08-09 FSA Handbook, Volume 6, p. 6-1 and 6-31.

Policy Information: 1070/Batch 154

Guarantor Comments: None.

Simplified Deferment Processing

The *Manual* has been revised to clarify that when a lender is granting a deferment using the simplified deferment processing method, the lender may base the deferment on information from an authoritative electronic database maintained or authorized by the Secretary that supports eligibility for the deferment for the same reason and same time period.

Affected Sections:	11.4.D	Simplified Deferment Processing
	11.5.D	Simplified Deferment Processing
	11.8.D	Simplified Deferment Processing
	11.9.D	Simplified Deferment Processing
	11.14.D	Simplified Deferment Processing
	11.18.D	Simplified Deferment Processing

Effective Date: Deferment requests granted by the lender on or after July 1, 2008, unless implemented earlier by the lender on or after November 1, 2007.

Basis: §682.210(s)(1)(iii).
Policy Information: 1071/Batch 154
Guarantor Comments: None.

This, that, and the other

Students are becoming more creative as lender participation levels change and funding becomes a bit scarcer. Some students have turned to peer-to-peer lending sites, such as GreenNote, which focuses exclusively on making college loans. After creating an online profile, users can court a variety of financiers, including friends, family, and perfect strangers. Another recently launched Web site, GradeFund, provides a "barter zone" where students can solicit friends, relatives, coaches, even strangers, to "sponsor" their grades. Unlike the other Web sites, GradeFund contributions are gifts, not loans, which makes the site especially attractive to cash-starved students.

Learn more about these new approaches to financing an education at www.businessweek.com/bschools/content/dec2008/bs20081230_904840.htm?chan=top+news_top+news+index+-+temp_business+schools.



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To ask questions about *Shoptalk Online*, please contact Communications at (800) 252-9743, ext. 4732, or send an e-mail message to communications@tgsic.org.

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