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

Summer jobs are important to many continuing students. Help them line up their next position with some concise advice on job-hunting and interviewing. *Adventures In Education* offers an assortment of tips and checklists at [Hwww.aie.org/AIEmail/Issues/20080512/index.cfmH](http://www.aie.org/AIEmail/Issues/20080512/index.cfmH).

## Federal updates

### ED issues new professional judgment guidance

On the heels of a *Dear Colleague Letter* (DCL) about professional judgment released just a few weeks ago (see *Shoptalk Online* edition [499](#)), ED has published

a new DCL that focuses on students and families experiencing unemployment. The DCL discusses the steps the federal government is taking to ensure that affected individuals are aware of higher education opportunities and options for financing that education; as well as how the financial aid office can facilitate those individuals' access to financial aid.

DCL GEN-09-05, published on May 8, notes that, "Many recently unemployed individuals do not know that they may now be eligible for Federal Pell Grants and other need-based student aid. Most do not know of [their] ability to adjust financial aid eligibility based on their special circumstances." To address this concern, the U.S. Department of Labor is working with each state to send letters to all recipients of unemployment insurance benefits to encourage them to consider enrolling in postsecondary education and applying for financial aid.

### **What can schools do?**

ED states that schools may use the letter from the state unemployment agency, or other evidence that a student is receiving unemployment benefits, to document that the student's income earned from work is zero for the purposes of adjusting data items on the student's FAFSA. Additionally, under this DCL, unemployment benefits can be treated as zero for income purposes. The DCL also encourages schools to consider unemployment benefits received by other family members and examine the totality of the family's economic situation.

An unemployed individual will be able to present the letter from the state unemployment agency to schools for 90 days from the date of issuance. Other verification of current receipt of unemployment benefits is an acceptable substitute for the letter.

### **Adjustments**

While ED will continue to monitor and enforce requirements for appropriate use of professional judgment, it recognizes that a school's use of professional judgment is likely to increase in the current economic environment. Accordingly, for the 2008-09 and 2009-10 award years, ED will make appropriate adjustments to the risk-based model it uses to select schools for program reviews. As long as the school retains in the student's records a valid letter, as described above, or other evidence of current receipt of unemployment insurance benefits from a state unemployment office, ED will consider that to be adequate documentation for the adjustment to the student's income.

### **More information**

Please read the complete text of DCL GEN-09-05 on the Information for Financial Aid Professionals Web site at <http://ifap.ed.gov/dpclletters/GEN0905.html>. In addition, the Departments of Education and Labor have established a Web site to assist those who are recently unemployed at [www.opportunity.gov](http://www.opportunity.gov).

## Guidance on new Total and Permanent Disability provision

One of the many loan-related changes enacted by last year's Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) established a separate standard for determining whether certain veterans are totally and permanently disabled for Title IV loan discharge purposes. Specifically, this change allows a FFELP, Direct, or Perkins Loan borrower to qualify for a Total and Permanent Disability (TPD) discharge if the Department of Veterans Affairs determines that he or she is unemployable due to a service-connected condition. These provisions became effective August 14, 2008, for the FFELP and Direct Loan programs, and July 1, 2008, for the Perkins Loan Program.

On May 15, ED released *Dear Colleague Letter* (DCL) GEN-09-07, which explains in detail the above changes to the Higher Education Act and provides implementation guidance to FFELP lenders and guarantors, and Perkins school lenders, on the procedures for processing total and permanent disability discharge requests for borrowers who are covered by the new statutory provisions.

The DCL also includes information about:

- Department of Veterans Affairs determinations that qualify a borrower for a service-connected disability discharge;
- Processing TPD applications for borrowers who have been determined to be unemployable due to a service-connected condition or disability;
- Availability of the application and the effective date for its use;
- Triggering date for implementation;
- Instructions for submitting the TPD requests to ED; and
- A question and answer document that provides additional information on the procedures for processing service-connected disability discharges.

### More information

The DCL is available on the Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) Web site at <http://ifap.ed.gov/dpcletters/GEN0907.html>.

## Reminder: Public comments due on proposed TILA regulations

Last March, the Federal Reserve Board (Board) published proposed amendments to Regulation Z, which implements the Truth in Lending Act, or TILA (see *Shoptalk Online* edition [497](#)). The amendments will implement certain provisions of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 related to private education loans. Public comments on the rules must be submitted by May 26, 2009.

TG encourages our school and lender customers and their legal counsel to review the proposed rules, and the included model forms and samples. As described

previously in *Shoptalk Online* edition [503](#), these proposed regulations will affect the treatment of private education loans in a variety of areas, including:

- Prohibiting the use of a covered educational institution's name, logo, mascot, or other words or symbols readily identified with the educational institution on marketing materials;
- Providing the consumer 30 days after a private education loan application is approved to decide whether to accept the loan offered;
- Ensuring the consumer the right to cancel the loan for up to three business days after consummation; and
- Setting disclosure requirements.

### **More information**

You may access the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking at <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-5561.pdf>.

## **ED releases new ECASLA Electronic Announcements**

Last week, ED published a series of new announcements (E-ANN) on the Ensuring Continued Access to Student Loans Act (ECASLA):

- E-ANN #60 announces the implementation of an Asset-Backed Commercial Paper (ABCP) Conduit Program that will help ensure the continued availability of FFELP loans to students and parents for the 2009-10 academic year.
- E-ANN #61 provides an amended and restated Put agreement between ED and The Bank of New York Mellon as Conduit Administrator and Eligible Lender Trustee and Straight-A Funding, LLC, dated January 19, 2009, including Exhibits.
- E-ANN #62 includes revised funding request submission instructions for several documents that must be submitted under ED's Loan Purchase Participation Program and the table load procedures applicable to the Loan Schedule and Custodial Certification data file. The changes to those documents will go into effect on June 14, 2009. Through June 13, 2009, participants must continue to use the existing Loan Schedule described in Electronic Announcement #53 and adhere to the guidance as defined in Electronic Announcements #20 and #53.

### **More information**

The complete announcements, and all previous ECASLA guidance issued by ED, are available at [www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov/ffelp](http://www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov/ffelp).

## No consensus for Neg Reg Team V

Last week, *Shoptalk Online* reported that Team I (general and lender loan issues) and Team II (school-based loan issues) negotiators for this year's round of Negotiated Rulemaking (Neg Reg) ended with both teams reaching consensus (see edition [503](#)). In contrast, Team V, the General and Non-Loan Programmatic Issues team concluded its third and final meeting last week without reaching consensus. Negotiators could not reach complete agreement on some issues, including student eligibility for year-round Pell grants as well as the school's reporting of job placement rates within its consumer information. A lack of consensus means that ED is able to draft proposed regulations as it deems appropriate.

Team V considered a wide array of issues, including, among other things:

- TEACH Grant extenuating circumstances
- Conforming the FWS rules to the cash management rules
- 90/10 rule (non-Title IV revenue requirement)
- Fire safety standards
- Missing person procedures
- Hate crime reporting
- Emergency response and evacuation procedures
- Students with intellectual disabilities
- Readmission for servicemembers
- Teach-out requirements and procedures
- GAP: program activities, allotment, matching, statutory and regulatory relief, and estimated financial assistance

### What's next?

ED will issue a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) in the *Federal Register* sometime this summer, which will provide an opportunity for public comment. The final regulations, to be issued no later than November 1, 2009, are expected to have implementation dates of no later than July 1, 2010.

### More information

Please visit ED's "Higher Education Opportunity Act-2008" Web page at [www.ed.gov/policy/highered/leg/hea08/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/policy/highered/leg/hea08/index.html) for more information, including issue papers, and ED's most-recently posted proposed language.

## TG updates

### **TG sessions for NASFAA National Conference 2009 focus on financial literacy and college access**

This year's National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrator (NASFAA) annual conference is set in Texas' River City — San Antonio, so named for the San Antonio River which runs through the city's center. Financial aid professionals from around the country will gather in San Antonio from July 12-15 to hear seminars on a variety of financial aid issues, including regulatory developments and ongoing changes in the industry.

Education Secretary Arne Duncan will deliver the keynote address on the conference's opening day. ED staff will lead various interest sessions, participate in two sessions with other NASFAA members, and answer audience questions.

#### **TG's presence — booth and session**

Join TG team members in Booth #311 to learn more about TG's many offerings for families, students, and financial aid professionals, including:

- Comprehensive default prevention tools and services;
- Financial literacy tools designed for the needs of students and financial aid professionals; and
- Valuable programs created to help promote educational access and awareness.

In addition, TG team members will present two financial aid business solutions seminars open to all conference attendees. One seminar will focus on ways that schools can develop financial literacy programs on their campuses; the other will spotlight ways to promote educational access and awareness.

Because the conference offers an opportunity for financial aid professionals to collect a great deal of useful information, TG team members have created a collection of tips for NASFAA 2009 available at [www.tgslc.org/nasfaa09](http://www.tgslc.org/nasfaa09). These tips can help both first-time attendees and conference veterans maximize their conference experience.

#### **More information**

To learn more about the conference, and to view the agenda, visit [NASFAA National Conference 2009](http://www.tgslc.org/nasfaa09). Find out more about TG's regulatory training offered through the TG Speakers Bureau by reviewing the online training catalog at [www.tgslc.org/speakers/basics.cfm](http://www.tgslc.org/speakers/basics.cfm).

## Provide your feedback as TG redesigns *Adventures In Education* (AIE™)

TG offers comprehensive information about college and career planning through its award-winning Web site, *Adventures In Education* (AIE™). AIE offers students and families a variety of great resources to prepare and pay for college as well as tools for mastering basic skills of financial literacy, planning for a career, and more.



AIE, available at [www.AIE.org](http://www.AIE.org), is slated for a redesign of content and look. TG's AIE design team is reviewing the current site with an eye to enhance services for students, families, and others who use the site. To improve the site, the team wants to hear from schools and all other prospective users.

### Take the survey

Please take a few moments to complete this short survey about AIE available at [www.zoomerang.com/Survey/survey.zgi?p=WEB2295R4MS4CA](http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/survey.zgi?p=WEB2295R4MS4CA). Your feedback will help make the site an even stronger resource for students and families.

### To learn more about AIE

To explore the entire site, visit AIE at [www.AIE.org](http://www.AIE.org). If you need more information about the site, contact TG's communications team at [communications@tgslc.org](mailto:communications@tgslc.org).

## Join TG at upcoming Student Success Symposia

TG offers a series of workshops for community colleges, independent colleges, and public universities interested in improving student persistence and success. These workshops, or Student Success Symposia, will focus on a variety of enrollment factors, such as the state of institutions within the given sectors and ways to create a culture of engagement.

The symposium for independent colleges and universities will be held May 21-22 in Austin, Texas. The agenda for the event covers topics important to independent schools, including:

- **Leveraging access in a world of uncertainty:** This session will focus on the state of educational finance and the current threats to student funding and access. The presenter will examine challenges to future enrollment in higher education within the context of demographic changes and the related impact on enrollment, performance, and persistence.
- **Leveraging access in a world of uncertainty — From theory to practice:** Participants will apply their knowledge to issues identified in the first session. During open discussion, they will generate solutions useful for meeting institutional challenges.
- **The dawn of a new era — Implications for your students and campus:** This session will provide an insightful summary of the many issues affecting

campuses today. Discussion will focus on finding opportunities with change and modifying the status quo to benefit students.

- **Creating a culture of engagement and persistence — Case studies in connecting the campus for student and institutional success:** This session will examine how two campuses crafted an approach to retaining students based on industry experience and statistical research.

### Upcoming symposium

The third in the symposia series considers the challenges and issues that 4-Year public universities face. This workshop will be held in San Antonio, Texas from June 4-5. Watch for registration details in an upcoming issue of *Shoptalk Online*.

### About the symposia

TG's Student Success Symposia are designed to provide unbiased, unaffiliated training for all industry practitioners interested in improving student enrollment, retention, and graduation rates across the academic community. The views expressed by the symposia presenters are their own, not necessarily those of TG, and do not represent an endorsement of any particular program or policy.

### To learn more

To learn more about the symposia, visit [www.tgslc.org/training/symposia/index.cfm](http://www.tgslc.org/training/symposia/index.cfm).

## ***Mapping Your Future*<sup>®</sup> recognizes TG's Cindy MARRS as one recipient for 2009 Award of Excellence**

During its recent 2009 Annual Conference in Minneapolis, *Mapping Your Future* honored four volunteers with its Annual Award of Excellence, including TG's policy advisor Cindy MARRS.



MARRS provides expertise to both the Online Student Loan Counseling team and the content team of *Mapping Your Future*, reviewing material to help ensure it meets revised and new regulatory requirements. The organization cited MARRS for her outstanding research skills and dedication to enhancing *Mapping Your Future* services. She serves as a co-lead for the content team.

As a policy advisor and trainer on industry topics for TG's Speakers Bureau, MARRS responds to questions from internal and external customers. MARRS researches issues on behalf of customers and offers a practical interpretation of regulatory guidelines. MARRS finds the work gratifying, especially when she's succeeded in helping a customer.

MARRS's policy analysis has been instrumental in helping *Mapping Your Future* implement many regulatory changes, especially those of the last year. MARRS is

dedicated to *Mapping Your Future's* mission, which she believes provides an essential service to students.

### **About *Mapping Your Future***

Based in Round Rock, Texas, *Mapping Your Future* is a national collaborative, public-service organization of the financial aid industry. *Mapping Your Future* provides step-by-step instructions on career, college planning, and financial aid. In addition, the site offers financial literacy information and tools, and online customer service for schools and their students.

### **About TG's training**

TG offers a varied array of training opportunities through its Speakers Bureau. Visit [www.tgslc.org/speakers/index.cfm](http://www.tgslc.org/speakers/index.cfm) to review the complete training catalog online. Keep in mind that TG can tailor training to meet the needs of your financial aid office. To schedule a program, contact your TG regional account executive at (800) 892-1357, or send an e-mail message to [relationship.management@tgslc.org](mailto:relationship.management@tgslc.org).

## **Trends and issues**

### **Policy potpourri**

**Q.: When referencing the *Common Manual*, I am sometimes uncertain whether references to 'days' means business days or calendar days. How do I determine which is meant?**

**A.:** The *Common Manual's* convention is that 'days' always means 'calendar days,' unless the text specifically states 'business days.' This convention mirrors regulations.

### **Do you have a question?**

If you have a question, 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](http://tgslc.custhelp.com).

## **Legislative update**

President Obama's budget proposal is a guide for the congressional committees to use as they develop tax and spending legislation. The budget resolution passed by the House and Senate neither endorses nor rejects the Administration's proposed changes to the student loan programs. Instead, it leaves all of the details to the committees of jurisdiction, so long as the legislation they produce is deficit-neutral. Learn more about the latest legislative developments by reading the full report on *TG Online* at [www.tgslc.org/lege\\_report/2009/lr\\_090511.cfm](http://www.tgslc.org/lege_report/2009/lr_090511.cfm).

## This, that, and the other

A consortium of more than 200 colleges and universities now offers course materials online for free. Referred to as OpenCourseWare, these class notes and taped lectures can be watched on YouTube or downloaded for viewing. This form of teaching comes with a number of big advantages, including saving money for students and enabling prospective students to preview academic coursework.

The OpenCourseWare concept got its start in 2003 when the Massachusetts Institute of Technology placed various syllabi, course notes, and video and audio lectures online for free. MIT's initiative initially listed material for some 500 courses, and, in the first year, attracted more than four million visits. Less than a decade later, the institution has archived more than 1,800 courses and attracted more than one million visits in April 2009 alone.

Read the complete article on the trend available through *The Christian Science Monitor* Web site at

<http://features.csmonitor.com/innovation/2009/05/13/opencourseware-college-education-without-the-student-loans>.



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