

August 2005

for school administrators on issues affecting the financial aid community

access update

Our Mission . . .

to provide education financing to the broadest range of eligible students, positively influence education financing practices, and provide services valued by students and schools.

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Federal Stafford Loan
Lender Code: 808851

If you have questions regarding this or any other publication provided by Access Group, call 800-227-2151, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET.

To subscribe to an electronic version of this newsletter, send your name and your school's name to accessupdate@accessgroup.org.

Conference 2005: Get Ready to Register

Watch your mailbox for registration materials for Access Group's 2005 Graduate and Professional Financial Aid Conference. You won't want to miss this year's exciting program of informative concurrent sessions and thought-provoking guest speakers! You'll find all the information you'll need, as well as instructions for registering, at accessgroup.org/conf2005.

We are again offering an Early Bird discount option, which offers substantial savings. To take advantage of this option you must **register online and — new this year — payment must be received by September 15.**

For answers to your questions about the conference, visit accessgroup.org/conf2005, e-mail questions to conf2005@accessgroup.org, or call your Account Executive at 800-227-2151. We look forward to seeing you in Nevada!



Access Group 2005 Graduate and Professional Financial Aid Conference
November 17 – 20
Hyatt Regency Lake Las Vegas
Henderson, Nevada

Labor Day Closing

Access Group offices will be closed on Labor Day, Monday, September 5. As usual, our Voice Response System will be in service, as will eAccess, Account Access, and Loan OnLine at our Web site.

Also in this issue:

- Consolidation Challenge
- Consolidation Corner
- School Services Spotlight
- At Your Service: 2005 Quick Reference Guide

The Consolidation Challenge: Helping Borrowers Get the Lowest Interest Rate

In anticipation of the rush to consolidate before July 1, Access Group created a customer-friendly plan that made applying as easy as possible for graduating and in-school students alike.

- Our **Rate Lock Promise** allowed borrowers to lock in the interest rate in effect when we first received their consolidation pre-application or application
- The **“Pre-App”** streamlined the application process for graduating students
- **Special forms created for in-school borrowers** made it easy for them to place their loans in repayment status
- A toll-free **consolidation hot line** was put in place to field calls
- **Our employees volunteered** extra time to help process pre-applications received from thousands of borrowers
- **Follow-up communication** was sent to inform borrowers of the status of their applications

Throughout Access Group’s consolidation effort, we kept you, our school customers, informed in the “Consolidation Corner” of *Access Update*:

- **May issue:** the “tools” available (Rate Lock Promise, Pre-App, calculators)
- **June issue:** how the new Stafford interest rates will affect consolidation; what it means in dollars and cents
- **July issue:** the communication in-school borrowers can expect to receive from us
- **August issue:** adding new loans to an existing Federal Consolidation Loan

We thank you and your staff for your support of our effort to help borrowers lock in lower interest rates for their Federal Consolidation Loans.

Consolidation Corner

Adding New Loans to a Federal Consolidation Loan

Are your students asking how they can add new loans to a Federal Consolidation Loan? Here are the facts:

Borrowers are permitted to add eligible, fully disbursed federal loans to their consolidation loan up to 180 days from the date the consolidation loan was made. (This date appears in the borrower’s repayment disclosure statement.)

Access Group offers the following information for students who are considering this option:

- When additional loans are added, federal regulations require that we recalculate the weighted average interest rate, including the additional loan at its current rate. If the borrower consolidated before July 1, 2005, and adds any additional federal loans to the consolidation loan, the interest rate of the consolidation loan would increase.
- Borrowers should also be aware that they will lose the grace period on the new loans being added to the consolidation

loan. Repayment will begin immediately upon separation from school or if the borrower drops below half-time status.

Also, if you have “in-school” borrowers who want to add additional loans to their consolidation loan, they must first request that those additional loans be placed in repayment status.

To add loans, borrowers can visit FederalConsolidation.Org/forms to download the Additional Loan Listing Sheet and the Early Repayment Request Form, complete the forms, and fax them back as instructed before the 180-day expiration deadline.

If you have any questions about consolidation, please contact your Account Executive at 800-227-2151, Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET.



Tom Ramaecker

School Services Spotlight

Behind every great man, there's a great woman ... who recommends her husband for a job she was originally recruited to fill. That's what happened in 1997 when Tom Ramaecker's wife Cindi was approached by Access Group to join the School Services team. At the time, Tom was the Associate Director of Financial Aid at Creighton University in

Omaha, Nebraska, and an Access Group customer. Cindi was already in the industry (although with a focus on undergraduate loan programs), but told Access Group that Tom was the better candidate for the job.

With 13 years of experience at Creighton, Tom was ready for a change, so he went on a Halloween day interview at Access Group, and officially joined the company in January 1998. Before joining Access Group as an External Account Executive serving the RMAFAA and MASFAA regions, he had never traveled outside of Nebraska; now, there are few states he hasn't visited. "I was so used

to just getting in my car and driving to the same office every day," says Tom. "It was quite a change to get on a plane and travel all over the country, but now I wouldn't have it any other way."

What people may not know about Tom Ramaecker is that he and his wife are avid collectors of Department 56 village pieces — miniature Christmas-inspired houses.

They have over 100 pieces and display them year round. "They're too expensive to tuck away for 11 months out of the year," says Tom. "And we just really like them very much."

Tom and Cindi reside in Omaha, not far from Tom's hometown of Tremont, and they are the proud owners of "the best-looking lawn and largest backyard grill in the neighborhood." In their free time, you'll find them on the road, taking trips with their nieces, nephews, and young cousins, exposing them to travel, culture, and new experiences.

"If I were to choose three words to describe Tom, I'd say he's committed, dedicated, and caring; he's committed to the relationships he builds with customers, dedicated to the mission and values of Access Group, and caring for all those with whom he works," says Bill Rodgers, Senior External Account Executive at Access Group.

Borrower Education

WiseBorrowerSM Curriculum: Put It To Work!

Do your students need more information about borrowing and managing student loans? Access Group's WiseBorrower Curriculum may be just the resource you're looking for. Here are some ways you can put the Curriculum to work:

- Incorporate one, two, or all of the tutorials into your entrance or exit counseling program. The online format allows your students to complete the tutorials on their own, in your office, or on any campus computer with access to the Internet. The tutorials include a Certificate of Completion in PDF that your students can print and turn in as part of their entrance or exit counseling requirements.
- Explore the WiseBorrower Curriculum as an addition to your overall debt management efforts. Besides the Credit Series, the Curriculum offers the Budget Series and a tutorial on Federal Consolidation Loans.

- Add a link to the Curriculum from your Web site to make it easier for your students to access the Curriculum. For instructions in linking to the WiseBorrower Curriculum, visit the Debt Management page in the "Resources for School Administrators" section at accessgroup.org.
- Direct alumni to the Curriculum, which they can use as a personal finance tool.

Coming Soon! Our new WiseBorrower Calendar for 2005-2006 will arrive in your office in September. Watch for it in your mailbox.

At Your Service: Our 2005 Quick Reference Guide

To assist you during the busy loan processing season, the Access Group Quick Reference Guide is available in print and on our Web site.

The Paper Version

Printed copies have been sent to your school. If you would like more copies, you can order them at accessgroup.org/materials.

The Online Version

Each section of the online Guide is presented as a PDF file, with section titles and page numbers corresponding to those in the paper version of the guide. The contents of each section are also listed to make it easy to find the information you need.

The sections by title are:

- Contact Information & Important Dates
- Access Group Federal Stafford Loans
- Access Group Private Student Loans
- Application & Electronic Processing
- Disbursements
- eAccess – Online Services

To view or print a copy of the guide, visit accessgroup.org/education_pr/referenceguide. Or, you can access the guide from the Loan Program News page (accessgroup.org/education_pr/loaninfo.htm). In either case, you will have to log in.

3-Month LIBOR for Third Quarter 2005

The current index effective for July, August, and September 2005 is **3.338%**.

The interest rate charged on a borrower's private loan from Access Group will equal this index rate plus the percentage spread applicable to the loan.

Reminder: The effective 3-month LIBOR rate is always available in the "Loan Terms" section of accessgroup.org. Also on our Web site is information about LIBOR, which includes a 10-year comparative history of LIBOR, Prime, and T-bill rates. And our Interest Rate Comparison Calculator also helps students determine the lowest interest rate when comparing rates based on different indexes. Try it for yourself at accessgroup.org/calculators/rate.htm.

Federal Stafford Loan Interest Rates

Federal Stafford Loans borrowed on or after July 1, 1998, will have the following rates in effect from July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006:

- In school, grace, deferment:
91-day T-bill (3.00%)
+ 1.7% = 4.70%
- In repayment, forbearance:
91-day T-bill (3.00%)
+ 2.3% = 5.30%
- Maximum rate = 8.25%