

access update

for school administrators on issues affecting the financial aid community

February 2005

Register Today for Our Spring 2005 Workshops

Once again, it's time for Access Group's annual Financial Aid Workshops, which take place in March at various locations across the country. (See schedule on page 2.) At the 22 workshops, Access Group staff will review the details of our 2005-2006 loan programs and services, as well as present a special segment on identity theft.

Whether your school is new to our loan programs or a long-time participant, you and your staff are invited to attend a workshop in your area. These free workshops are held from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. and include a continental breakfast and lunch.

To register:

- **Go to** accessgroup.org/workshops **or**
- **Call** your Account Executive at 800-227-2151.

Please register at least two weeks before the date of your selected workshop. In response, we will send you a confirmation letter, directions to the site, and parking information.



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"Graduates, faculty, parents, creditors . . ."

Although we look forward to greeting workshop participants as planned, workshops may need to be rescheduled due to weather conditions. If so, we will notify participants as quickly as possible. You can also call 800-227-2151, ext. 4015, the day before your workshop to confirm the latest scheduling.

We hope you can take the time to join us for a day of information, discussion — and a little fun!

Watch for more information to come.

Feature presentation at Access Group's 2005 workshops

Guarding Your Credit and Your Identity

Strategies for Protecting Yourself Against Identity Theft

Identity theft is a growing problem for consumers, including students, with an estimated 10 million victims a year. What can you and your students do to protect yourselves from this crime? In this interactive session, you will:

- Learn how to read and understand a credit report.
- Find out what steps you can take to protect your personal information.
- Hear about consumer protection measures that can help make you credit-safe.

You'll also receive helpful handouts, answers to questions — and maybe even a prize!

Come prepared to learn and to have fun.



William Bennett

School Services Spotlight

William Bennett, Access Group's External Account Executive for the MASFAA region, is a man of many interests and talents. He's a scientist participating in pioneering research on heart transplants. He's a former NASFAA president who has been active in financial aid since 1972, and he's that pillar-of-the-community gentleman who serves as the backbone of a host of fraternal, social, and church groups.

The "real" William Bennett is all of this and more. He left his first field of scientific research to teach high school science, and then moved into high school administration. Eventually (that is, 32 years ago!), he was asked to create the financial aid department at Cleveland State University, where he worked until joining the ranks of Access Group in 1996.

"We're very fortunate to have William," says David Lynch, Director of Sales and School Services, "not only for his work ethic, but simply for his presence. He has earned so much respect across the country that we count on him to represent Access Group to the financial aid community at national conferences through the year."

William's orientation is all about service. He feels privileged to have served as president of financial aid associations at national, regional, and state levels. Although he doesn't work directly with students as he did in the "old days," William still feels that he serves students, just more indirectly. Today, in fact, he's happy to know he is helping an even broader range of students. His favorite part of his job is providing customer service to the many financial aid professionals in his region.

It's true in his personal life as well. In his "down" time, you'll find William serving in various leadership roles in his community. "I think you need to try to be kind to all, and help as many people as you can along the way," he says. He does occasionally take time for himself and his wife Sarah. They enjoy traveling, particularly to warm islands, and they plan to celebrate their approaching golden anniversary on one of them.

Access Group's 2005 Spring Workshop Locations

EASFAA2 Access Group, Inc.	March 1	Wilmington, DE
EASFAA3 Quinnipiac University	March 4	Hamden, CT
EASFAA2 American University	March 7	Washington, DC
MASFAA2 Thomas M. Cooley Law School	March 8	Lansing, MI
SASFAA2 Barry University	March 8	Miami Shores, FL
MASFAA2 The Ohio State University	March 9	Columbus, OH
SASFAA2 Barry University	March 9	Orlando, FL
MASFAA2 Myers University	March 10	Cleveland, OH
SASFAA2 Emory University, Houston Mill House	March 10	Atlanta, GA
EASFAA1 Fordham University	March 11	New York, NY
SASFAA1 Regent University	March 14	Virginia Beach, VA
SASFAA1 University of Richmond	March 15	Richmond, VA
SWASFAA Texas Southern University	March 15	Houston, TX
WASFAA1 University of San Diego	March 22	San Diego, CA
SWASFAA Tulane University	March 22	New Orleans, LA
EASFAA2 St. John's University	March 22	Jamaica, NY
WASFAA1 Southwestern University	March 23	Los Angeles, CA
MASFAA1 Northwestern University	March 23	Chicago, IL
EASFAA1 Cornell University	March 24	Ithaca, NY
WASFAA2 Samuel Merritt College	March 24	Oakland, CA
SASFAA1 Vanderbilt University	March 24	Nashville, TN
EASFAA3 Tufts University	March 31	Boston, MA

Exit Counseling Resources from Access Group

As you plan ahead to exit counseling for your spring graduates, here's a review of online services, downloadable materials, and printed publications from Access Group:

- **Borrower profiles**

Your students can log into Account Access on our Web site, and click on "Borrower Profile" to view and print their borrower profiles. Each borrower profile contains a history of loan types, loan amounts, and estimates of the borrower's monthly payments during repayment. Borrower profiles are also available to school administrators through eAccess.

- **Online exit counseling**

You have a variety of options to create customized exit counseling sessions to help your graduating students as they prepare for managing and repaying their education loans. Remember: you must set up your preferences before your students can use this service. Set your preferences by logging on to eAccess and selecting "Online Counseling Administration" from the main menu.

- **Exit counseling bookmarks**

If you're using our online exit counseling service, order a supply of these colorful bookmarks to direct students to this feature on our Web site.

- **Helpful booklet**

"After You Graduate: A Guide to Repaying Student Loans" is an exit counseling publication from Access Group designed as an informative resource for your graduating students.

- **Online calculators** can help your students prepare budgets and estimate education loan payments.

- **Federal loan consolidation resources**

Your students can find extensive information, calculators, and an online loan application at *FederalConsolidation.Org*. We also have bookmarks to direct students to this Web site, which pair nicely with our informational brochure about the Federal Consolidation Loan Program at Access Group.

- **Debt management information**

We offer more than a dozen handouts for your use during exit counseling. Download these from the "School Administrators" section of our Web site. Select "Debt Management" for titles and descriptions.

To order printed materials, go to accessgroup.org/materials or call your Account Executive.

Borrower Education

Don't Forget Those Free Credit Reports!

Thanks to recent legislation, consumers may request free credit reports once a year from the newly established Annual Credit Report Request Service.

Free credit reports can be requested:

- Online at www.annualcreditreport.com
- By phone at 877-322-8228
- By written request mailed to:
Annual Credit Report Request Service
P.O. Box 105281
Atlanta, GA 30348-5281

Note: This service is being made available in phases, with the first phase having launched in December 2004 for the U.S. western states. The next phases will launch in March 2005 (midwestern states), June 2005 (southern states), and September 2005 (eastern states).

For more information, go to www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/pubs/credit/freereports.htm.

Holiday Closing

In observance of Presidents' Day, Access Group offices will be closed on Monday, February 21. Although our offices will be closed, our Voice Response System will be in service at 800-282-1550, as will eAccess, Account Access, and Loan OnLine at accessgroup.org.

An FYI from School Services

We've recently heard the following question from several schools: *Do students need to be making satisfactory academic progress in order to be eligible for all Access Group private loans?*

Yes. To be eligible to borrow an Access Group private loan, including the Comprehensive Access® Loan, a student must be "making satisfactory progress" according to the standards of the institution. This requirement is verified by the school administrator who certifies the loan application. The statement reads: "I hereby certify that the student named on the application is ... in good standing and is making satisfactory progress in an accredited academic program" as identified on the application.

February 2005 Meeting Calendar

Access Group staff will be on the road attending these events:

February 9 – 15	American Bar Association Mid-year Meeting	Salt Lake City, UT
February 12 – 15	American Council on Education Annual Meeting	Washington, DC
February 13 – 16	Southern Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (SASFAA) Annual Conference	Atlanta, GA

3-Month LIBOR for First Quarter 2005

The current index effective for January, February, and March 2005 is **2.410%**.

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 as indicated on the borrower's disclosure statement.

Reminder: The effective 3-month LIBOR rate is always available in the "Loan Terms" section of accessgroup.org. Also on our site is information about LIBOR for students and school administrators, including a 10-year comparative history of LIBOR, Prime, and T-bill rates.

New! Our Interest Rate Comparison Calculator helps students determine the lowest interest rate when comparing rates from different indexes. Try it for yourself at accessgroup.org/calculators.

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, 2004 to June 30, 2005:

- In school, grace, deferment: 91-day T-bill (1.07%) + 1.7% = **2.77%**
- In repayment, forbearance: 91-day T-bill (1.07%) + 2.3% = **3.37%**
- Maximum rate = 8.25%

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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302-477-4080

**Toll-free School
Services fax:**
800-449-8204

accessgroup.org
**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.

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