

for school administrators on issues affecting the financial aid community

# accessupdate



## Access Group Introduces Cutting-Edge Online Security Measure

Coming in late May, Access Group will take the next step in protecting personal information for our customers with the introduction of "Assured Login." With this new security measure and login process, borrowers and school administrators alike will have greater security when logging on to our Web site.

A borrower logging on to our Web site to visit My Account or a school administrator logging on to use eAccess services will find that Assured Login is quick and easy.

The user registers by answering five "challenge questions" that will be used to positively identify the user when he/she logs on.

At the same time, a digital snapshot of the user's computer, including operating system, IP address, location, and other information, is stored for that user. When the user returns to our site, the system identifies the computer as the one used during registration, so the user only has to enter his/her user ID and password.

If the user logs on from a different computer than the one stored in our system for him/her, one or more of the five challenge questions will be posed to verify the user's identity. The number of questions posed depends on how different the user's computer profile is from the one we have on file.

With Assured Login, Access Group delivers advanced security to our customers and brings to student lending the same advanced certificate-based privacy that is becoming the standard in online banking.

Questions? Please contact your account executive for more information about this new process. You'll also hear more about greater log-in security in our special May technology issue.

## Access Group Launches Online Application Enhancement

Access Group recently released an enhancement to our online loan application that will help your office clarify which loan – a private or a Graduate PLUS – should be certified for a student who has been approved for both loan types.

To clarify the borrower's intention and the loan to be certified, we've added an extra half step to the application process.

Borrowers are asked to choose between the Grad PLUS loan and the private loan, or they can still choose both.

The choices are:

- Continue with both loans,
- Cancel the Federal PLUS Loan and continue with other loans, or
- Cancel the private loan and continue with other loans.

If the borrower chooses to cancel one of the loans, you only have to certify the other. If the borrower chooses both Grad PLUS and private loans, you can discuss the choice with the borrower, if needed.

This enhancement to our application process is intended as an interim solution for your office, but we'll be monitoring its progress to determine how we can best meet your needs for the long term.

**NEWSWORTHY!**



**For 2007-2008, Access Group will continue to buy down the 1% Federal Default Fee for all of our Stafford and PLUS Loan borrowers in cases where the federal loan guarantor does not pay this fee. And we will continue to pay the full 1.5% origination fee on Stafford Loans.**

**Coming in May!**

**Special technology issue featuring Access Group's 2007 – 2008 enhancements!**

## Stafford Loan Update for 2007-2008

The Higher Education Reconciliation Act of 2005 (HERA) mandated several changes for Federal Stafford Loans first disbursed on or after July 1, 2007.

- **Reduction of the loan origination fee from 2% to 1.5%**  
For 2007-2008, Access Group will continue to pay this fee, as we have for the past five years, saving our borrowers more than \$130 million.
- **New loan limits for some groups of Stafford loan borrowers**  
By now you should have received a handy reference chart detailing the new annual loan limits effective for Federal Stafford Loans and Federal Direct Loans first disbursed on or after July 1, 2007.

**Access Group has also fulfilled requirements for Stafford lenders as mandated by HERA.** For example, Access Group will supply Stafford borrowers with the revised HERA addendum and the revised Plain Language Disclosure. Both documents state the revised terms of the Stafford loan MPN, incorporating the changes mandated by the HERA legislation. What's important for students to know is that these documents are an addendum to their MPN promissory note, and as such, constitute part of the contract they have signed.

For more details about federal loan changes resulting from the HERA 2005 legislation, refer to DCL GEN 06-02.

### Need Access News

The Need Access Counselor User Manual has been revised for 2007-2008 and is on its way to your office!

## Your School Services Team Welcomes New Members



We are very proud to introduce **Sandy Brown**, Access Group's new director of external sales, who brings to our organization the strength of her experience in student lending.

A New York native educated at SUNY Binghamton, Sandy began her career in financial aid in 1994 at Washington College. She has been in the student loan industry for 10 years, serving most recently as director of the North Atlantic region for EDFUND.

In her career, she has had extensive involvement and leadership roles with professional organizations, such as EASFAA and the DE-DC-MD Association for Student Financial Aid Administrators.

### Welcome to Access Group, Sandy!

Access Group also welcomes **Sheryl Reinschmidt**, a new addition to our team of external account executives serving the WASFAA region. Sheryl joins JoAnn Trusiani in serving the southern California schools. While JoAnn will continue serving schools in the San Diego and Orange county areas, Sheryl will focus her energies on serving schools in Los Angeles and the Inland Empire, and the state of Nevada.

Sheryl is a financial aid professional who was most recently the director of financial aid at the American Film Institute (AFI) Conservatory. She was also assistant director of financial aid at Harvey Mudd College and was a financial aid counselor at her alma mater, Occidental College.

Sheryl holds a master's degree in enrollment management and, as a resident of Los Angeles, enjoys Dodger games and Disneyland.

Access Group is pleased to introduce two new internal account executives who have completed their training and are ready to serve you:

- **Jennifer Sirianni** is now an internal account executive serving schools in the EASFAA region (New England states and part of New York). A financial aid professional, Jennifer's most recent position was assistant director of financial aid at Duquesne University.
- **Khansa Burbage** is the new internal account executive for schools in the SASFAA region. Previously a client services professional at JP Morgan Private Bank, she brings to Access Group 10 years of experience in the financial services industry.

Both Jennifer and Khansa are looking forward to getting to know and serve the schools in their regions!

### Best wishes to Bill Rodgers on his retirement!

Those of you who have worked with Bill Rodgers during his 10 years with Access Group know that he is a true professional. We're proud of the work he has done for our customers, and we appreciate his work in training new account executives to carry on his legacy of excellence.

We are pleased to announce that **Jocelyn Allen** will be stepping in to assume Bill's role as senior account executive for the southeastern region. Jocelyn has been working with our school customers in that region since 2004.

## Advising Spring 2007 Graduates: Should They Consolidate?

Federal loan consolidation is an option that may help your students manage repayment of their federal loans, particularly if they still have Federal Stafford/Direct Loans with variable interest rates. But consolidation may not be right for borrowers who only have federal student loans with fixed interest rates. These borrowers may be able to save money on their monthly payment and in the total amount paid if they do not consolidate their fixed rate federal student loans.

There are three reasons spring graduates should weigh the benefits and costs before deciding whether or not to consolidate:

- Federal Stafford/Direct Loans first disbursed on or after July 1, 2006, have fixed interest rates. So the fixed rate structure of the Federal Consolidation Loan offers no advantage to borrowers who have these fixed rate loans.
- Many graduate/professional student borrowers will likely qualify for the Extended Repayment option on their Federal Stafford/Direct and PLUS Loans. This option provides a 25-year repayment period for borrowers who have more than \$30,000 in eligible federal student loan debt and first borrowed an eligible loan on or after October 7, 1998. Those who qualify will be able to reduce their monthly loan payments without having to consolidate.
- Access Group offers on-time payment incentives on Federal Stafford and Federal PLUS Loans that are more beneficial financially than those offered on consolidation loans.

### Coming Soon!

To help you in advising your spring 2007 graduates about loan consolidation, Access Group will offer this information for students as a PDF posted on [FederalConsolidation.Org](http://FederalConsolidation.Org) and as a printed flier that you can order at [AccessGroup.Org](http://AccessGroup.Org).

This student version, “**Should You Consolidate?**”, also includes charts showing the monthly payment and total paid estimates for several different debt levels of Stafford and PLUS loans that compare the Extended Repayment option to loan consolidation.



### Try These Tools for Wiser Borrowers

Educating students about personal finance, borrowing and managing student loan repayment is a serious responsibility at Access Group. To help you as you counsel your students, we’ve developed tools that are offered online and in print:

For all borrowers – Our WiseBorrower® Curriculum is a series of online tutorials on credit, budgets and federal loan consolidation. In addition, we offer a collection of free printed materials and publications available for order at [AccessGroup.Org](http://AccessGroup.Org).

For 2007-2008 entering student borrowers: These students can meet the entrance counseling requirement at [AccessGroup.Org](http://AccessGroup.Org) by completing sessions you customize for them. And, as a helpful supplement to your counseling sessions, we also provide an entrance counseling publication, “As You Enter Graduate School: A Guide to Managing your Student Loan Debt,” which can be ordered at our Web site.

For a complete list of Access Group borrower education services, visit [AccessGroup.Org](http://AccessGroup.Org) or see page 3 of the January 2007 issue of *Access Update*.

## 3-Month LIBOR for Second Quarter 2007

The current index effective for April, May and June 2007 is 5.348%.

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

**Reminder:** The effective 3-month LIBOR rate is always available by clicking on "Interest Rates" from the home page of [AccessGroup.Org](http://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 using the "Calculators" link from our home page.

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### Toll-free lines:

**School Services**  
800-227-2151  
800-449-8204 (fax)

**Customer Contact Center**  
800-282-1550

**[AccessGroup.Org](http://AccessGroup.Org)**  
**[FederalConsolidation.Org](http://FederalConsolidation.Org)**  
**[NeedAccess.Org](http://NeedAccess.Org)**

**Federal Stafford Loan  
and Federal PLUS Loan**  
Lender Code: 808851

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**access group**  
*The nonprofit graduate loan specialist*

# Monthly Planner



Look for Access Group staff at these springtime meetings around the country:

<b>April 19 – 20</b>	ELM 2007 Annual Member Conference	Anaheim, CA
<b>April 22 – 24</b>	American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business International Conference and Annual Meeting	Tampa, FL
<b>April 23 – 25</b>	North Carolina Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators Spring Conference	Wilmington, NC
<b>April 25 – 28</b>	National Association of Law Placement Annual Conference	Keystone, CO
<b>April 25 – 28</b>	National Association of Graduate Admissions Professionals Annual Conference	Orlando, FL
<b>April 26 – 27</b>	Student Loan Servicing Association Membership Meeting	Washington, DC
<b>May 6 – May 8</b>	Western Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators Annual Conference	Anaheim, CA
<b>May 19 – 23</b>	Virginia Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators Annual Conference	Virginia Beach, VA
<b>May 20 – 23</b>	Eastern Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators Annual Conference	Niagara Falls, NY

## Conference Planning Committee Reviewing Session Proposals

Even though Access Group's Graduate and Professional Financial Aid Conference isn't until November, the Planning Committee is already hard at work developing a high-quality educational program. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the conference, which this year will be held at The Palace Hotel in San Francisco November 15 – 18.

Reminder! You can still submit a proposal for a speaker or a session by e-mail to Melissa DiRocco at [mdirocco@accessgroup.org](mailto:mdirocco@accessgroup.org).