



NEWSLETTER

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Achieve a Higher Standard... with HEAG!

Message from Milton

Happy New Year to all. As we all know, the new year also brings the new processing year. Good luck to you all for the coming processing year. With HEAG's focus on compliance, we appreciate the opportunity to assist you with your compliance needs and our role as a partner with you in your efforts to maintain an effective relationship with the Department of Education.

~ Milton Kerstein, President

HEAG CONSULTANT SPOTLIGHT

Name: Judy Henderson
Current Position:
Financial Aid Consultant
At HEAG for:
3 ½ years, since summer 2012



This quarter's employee spotlight is **Judy Henderson**....

Tell us a little about yourself....I am originally from Dominican Republic where I grew up with my family; currently my hometown is Franklin, MA. During the summer breaks I worked and visited family in the US. I love the diversity of the American Culture and

could see myself setting roots here. I moved to Boston in 1999 and began working for the Admissions department of a proprietary school and soon decided that Financial Aid was the best fit for me. I really enjoy counseling students and parents with navigating the challenges they face during the College process and helping them to be active participants in the process.

What do you enjoy most about your current position at HEAG? I enjoy change and working for HEAG allows me to experience the aid process at

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HEAG - A LOOK BACK AT 2015 AND WHAT'S TO COME FOR 2016

2015 proved to be another successful year for the Higher Education Assistance Group, Inc. We continued to support a number of financial aid offices around the country with all their Title IV needs, including interim processing support, systems upgrades and assessing and maintaining regulatory compliance. In order to serve all of our clients successfully, we increased our staff with senior consultants and systems analysts.

In addition to supporting our schools, HEAG was also busy serving as a resource for financial aid administrators by providing you with the latest industry news via our newsletter, blog, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn accounts. We also enjoyed meeting many of you at the various state, regional and national conferences which we attended and/or exhibited. We were proud to be a part of the American Association of Community Colleges in San Antonio, TX; NASFAA Leadership Expo in Washington,

DC; NASFAA Annual Conference in New Orleans, LA; NYSFAAA Annual Conference in Buffalo, NY; NJASFAA Fall Conference in Atlantic City, NJ; and, PASFAA Conference in Bedford, PA.



So what's on tap for HEAG in 2016? Up first, we will be holding our annual consultant training event on January 20, 2016. With the assistance from a training officer from the Department of Education, we will be providing our consultant staff with training and support they need to be successful in the field. We are working to finalize our conference attendance/exhibition schedule, so make sure to check back in with us via our blog and social media sites for more updates. We look forward to a chance to connect with you in-person at an upcoming conference.

NEW PERKINS LOAN BILL PASSED BY CONGRESS

In danger without any action from Congress, a tentative deal to extend the Perkins Loan Program through September 30, 2017 has been passed and then signed by the President on December 18, 2015, saving the program for another two years. Named for exactly what it is, the Federal Perkins Loan Program Extension Act of 2015 is now law, but not without some controversy in the way financial aid professionals will be handling the program going forward.



Changes include eliminating the Perkins for new graduate students beginning in the 2016–17 award year, forcing undergraduate students to exhaust their Direct (Stafford) Loan eligibility before being allowed to utilize the Perkins Loan Program, and possibly ending the program altogether in September 2017 without another Act of Congress. Schools will also be responsible for notifying all recipients that the program is ending in 2017.

So while it was an olive branch extended to the aid community, what will fill the funding gap for the fall 2017 semester and beyond? Will students struggling to finance their education all be forced into higher-interest-rate private loans that require a credit check? NASFAA has come out with its own statement regarding the passage of the bill: “While NASFAA is appreciative of the bipartisan effort to keep the program alive, we have expressed concern about the programmatic changes, particularly limitation of graduate student eligibility and the impact of the mandated packaging order on students and the slippery slope of a precedent that such provision would establish.”

How the new stipulations affect the way students are awarded and the funding levels schools have built up over the years remains to be seen. Will colleges be able to spend their entire allocation, now that they are hamstrung by the new Direct Loan rules? It will likely depend on a school's cost of attendance, as it will be more difficult for a community college to award Perkins going forward than it may be for a more expensive, private school. At the end of the day, 539,000 students and their financial aid packages, along with \$1.2 billion in funding, was, and in a way still is, at stake.

Sources:

<http://chronicle.com/article/Perkins-Loan-Program-Would/234626>

http://www.nasfaa.org/news-item/6986/Bipartisan_Senate_Deal_Would_Extend_Perkins_for_Two_Years_with_Major_Programmatic_Changes

HEAG Consultant Spotlight

FROM PAGE 1

institutions with different cultures. I like the challenges every new role presents. I love the opportunity to provide some relief to an institution's aid staff and also work with experienced colleagues.

What makes HEAG unique or special compared to your work experiences elsewhere? The range of services HEAG offers allows institutions to operate without disruption and to maintain compliance with the constantly changing Federal Regulations. On a personal level, working for HEAG gives me the opportunity to network with many aid professionals and build long lasting relationships.

Before working for HEAG, what was the most unusual or interesting job you've ever had? After graduating from College, I worked for Kellwood Company one of the leading apparel manufacturers in the United States. I was the liaison for the US office and the plant located in Dominican Republic. I was responsible for the shipment and delivery of goods to the US.

When you're not consulting, what kind of other hobbies/interests do you have? I like to practice Yoga to disconnect from the daily routine and to dedicate some time to myself. I also enjoy a good movie, preferably a comedy.

IS YOUR INSTITUTION READY TO PACKAGE 2016-2017 AWARDS?

Nationwide, institutions are gearing up for the upcoming 2016-2017 awarding season. As enrollment pressures mount, so does the pressure that Financial Aid Offices are under to provide comprehensive financial aid packages to both current and prospective students. Since financial aid administrators are also simultaneously counseling students and their families, conducting file review, and following up on missing information, they can very easily struggle to keep up with the competing demands.

HEAG offers a number of services to assist institutions during this peak period:

- VERIFYSM – HEAG's premier remote verification service
- Onsite and remote assistance with file review, awarding, and loan processing
- Automation of your school-based software in a number of key areas including:
 - Auto-packaging and Tracking
 - Self-service implementation and evaluation
 - Pell and Direct Loan management
 - Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

Our consultants have experience with all financial aid management systems such as Banner, Datatel, PowerFAIDS, and Department of Education software, to name a few. Likewise, they are equipped to support your office onsite, or remotely.

Contact HEAG today at 617.928.1975 or at cking@heag.us to learn more about our services and schedule our availability.

HEAG ON FACEBOOK

HEAG shares financial aid industry news on Facebook throughout the week. Like us on Facebook to see our posts and updates.

HEAG Higher Education Assistance Group, Inc.
January 6 at 10:09am · 🌐

Learn more about how HEAG can assist schools with the compliance coordination needed to meet the requirements of HCM1 and HCM2. <http://heag.us/node/260>



Number of Colleges under Heightened Cash Monitoring Increases | The Higher Education Assistance...

The Department of Education has placed 540 colleges and universities under financial restrictions as of December 2015. The number of schools on Heightened...
HEAG.US

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HEAG Higher Education Assistance Group, Inc.
January 6 at 8:56am · Boston · 🌐

Are subsidized federal loans a potential again in the future for graduate students?
#financialaid #graduateaid #graduateschool #NASFAA

NASFAA | House Bill Would Restore Graduate Student Eligibility for Direct Subsidized Loans

Last month, Rep. Judy Chu (D-CA) introduced the...
NASFAA.ORG

HEAG Higher Education Assistance Group, Inc.
January 8 at 8:35am · 🌐

Advocacy group analyzes Obama's free tuition plan for community colleges.
#financialaid #NASFAA #AmericanActionForum #communitycollege

NASFAA | Free College Proposals Costs for Students

"Earlier this year, the president announced a \$60 billion initiative to provide two years of 'free' postsecondary training to students at community...
NASFAA.ORG

Like Comment Share

HEAG Higher Education Assistance Group, Inc.
January 7 at 6:50am · 🌐

<https://www.insidehighered.com/.../states-cry-foul-over-us-pl...>

ix (Student): Indicate which colleges you want to receive your FAFSA information.

Indicate federal school code and your housing plans for each college or school you wish to receive your FAFSA information. You can find federal school codes at www.fafsa.gov or by calling 1-800-433-3243. If you cannot obtain a code, write in the complete name, address, city and state of the information you included on your FAFSA, with the exception of the list of colleges, will be sent to each of the colleges you listed. FAFSA information, including the list of colleges, will be sent to your state student grant agency. For federal student aid purposes, that order you list your selected schools. However, the order in which you list schools may affect your eligibility for state aid. Check agency for more information. To find out how to have more colleges receive your FAFSA information, read **What is the FAFSA?** on www.fafsa.gov.

FEDERAL SCHOOL CODE	OR	NAME OF COLLEGE ADDRESS AND CITY	STATE	HOUSING PLANS
<input type="text"/>	OR	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 103. b on campus with parent <input type="checkbox"/> off campus
<input type="text"/>	OR	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 103. d on campus with parent <input type="checkbox"/> off campus
<input type="text"/>	OR	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 103. f on campus with parent <input type="checkbox"/> off campus
<input type="text"/>	OR	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 103. h on campus with parent <input type="checkbox"/> off campus

States cry foul over U.S. plan to curtail access to FAFSA student data | Inside Higher Ed

States worry that a Department of Education plan to curtail their access to data from the federal student aid form will cause headaches for state aid awards.
INSIDEHIGHED.COM

HEAG Higher Education Assistance Group, Inc.
5 mins · 🌐

<http://heag.us/node/261>



Twitter Weekly Recap 1/3/16 - 1/9/16 | The Higher Education Assistance Group, Inc. ~ Higher...

HEAG shares financial aid news and stories on Twitter throughout the week at @HEAG_INC. Here...
HEAG.US

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HEAG Higher Education Assistance Group, Inc.
1 hr · Wellesley · 🌐

<http://www.law360.com/.../8th-circ-widened-fca-college-tells-...>



8th Circ. Widened FCA, College Tells High Court In \$33M Row - Law360

A for-profit college has repeated its call for the U.S. Supreme Court to reverse an Eighth Circuit...
LAW360.COM

FOLLOW US ON



2015 HIGHLIGHTS

Thank you for your interest and support throughout the year. Here are some of our highlights from 2015.

Blog Posts (click links to view content)

- [College Board Statistics on Community Colleges for 2015](#)
- [Maintaining Compliance in Non-Standard and Non-Term Program Environments](#)
- [Takeaways From College Board's Annual Report](#)
- [HEAG's Takeaways from NYSFAAA 2015](#)
- [Department of Education Holding Institutions Accountable For Not Filing Gainful Employment Disclosures](#)
- [When the Feds Audit the Feds](#)
- [The Struggles of a Small School \(need to add from Fall newsletter\)](#)
- [Are You In Compliance with Gainful Employment?](#)

- [Surviving Peak Period | While Keeping Your Sanity Intact](#)
- [Heightened Cash Monitoring](#)
- [Highlights from NASFAA 2015](#)
- [Amount of High School Graduates Entering College on the Rise](#)
- ["Middle-Class Scholarships" – Are They the Wave of the Future?](#)

News About HEAG (click links to view content)

- [Karyn Wright-Moore Appointed Education Committee Chair, National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc. Bergen/Passaic, NJ Chapter](#)
- [HEAG Adds Compliance and Technical Specialist Kelly O'Donnell](#)
- [HEAG Consultant Spotlight: Jane Alessi Domenico](#)
- [From Our Clients: Assumption College](#)
- [HEAG Adds Systems and Technical Specialist Sara Fevig](#)

COMMUNITY COLLEGE WATCH

Financial aid administrators at community colleges across the country are facing unprecedented changes that affect all aspects of their operations. To help you stay abreast of new developments, HEAG is adding the Community College Watch as a regular post to our blog. From the prospect of free community college and FAFSA simplification to heightened cash monitoring and gainful employment compliance requirement, we will be tracking the issues affecting you in 2016. Here is a snapshot of our first Community College Watch post. We welcome your feedback and suggestions on additional resources to include.

America's College Promise—Free Community College

- White House Fact Sheet 1/9/2015
FACT SHEET: White House Unveils America's College Promise Proposal: Tuition-Free Community College for Responsible Students
Read More: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/01/09/fact-sheet-white-house-unveils-america-s-college-promise-proposal-tuition>
- American Association of Community Colleges 7/8/2015 Summary on the Current Status of America's College Promise
Read More: <http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Advocacy/Pages/acpa2015.aspx>
- America's College Promise Act Legislation to Make Higher Education More Accessible and Affordable
Read More: <http://www.baldwin.senate.gov/download/?id=fc3f3419-6930-4d54-8507-81c71ba3f88d&download=1>

Free Community College Initiatives

- Missouri A+ Scholarship Program
Read More: <http://dhe.mo.gov/ppc/grants/aplusscholarship.php>
- The Tennessee Promise
Read More: <http://tennesseepromise.gov>
- The Oregon Promise
Read More: <http://www.oregonstudentaid.gov/oregon-promise.aspx>
- Minnesota
Read More: https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/text.php?number=SF0005&session=ls89&version=latest&session_number=0&session_year=2015
- Chicago, IL
Read More: <http://www.ccc.edu/departments/Pages/chicago-star-scholarship.aspx>
- National Conference of State Legislatures—Free Community College: State Action
Read More: <http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/free-community-college.aspx>

FAFSA Simplification

- White House Report: Simplifying Student Aid: The Case for an Easier, Faster, and More Accurate FAFSA
Read More: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/cea/FAFSAReport/>
- FACT SHEET: The President's Plan for Early Financial Aid: Improving College Choice and Helping More Americans Pay for College, September 2015
Read More: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/09/14/fact-sheet-president-s-plan-early-financial-aid-improving-college-choice>
- National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) FAFSA Working Group Report, July 2015
Read More: <http://www.nasfaa.org/fafsa-report>



The Higher Education Reauthorization Act

- NASFAA Coverage of HEA Reauthorization
Read More: http://www.nasfaa.org/higher_education_act_reauthorization
- ACC Task Force Considers HEA Reauthorization
Read More: <http://www.ccdaily.com/Pages/Government/AACC-task-force-considers-HEA-reauthorization-.aspx>

College Board Statistics on Community Colleges

- 2015 Trends in Community Colleges: Enrollment, Price, Student Debt and Completion
Read More: <http://trends.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/trends-in-community-colleges-research-brief.pdf>

HEAG Blogs and Newsletters

- [College Board Statistics on Community Colleges for 2015](#)
- [Maintaining Compliance in Non-Standard and Non-Term Program Environments](#)
- [Department of Education Holding Institutions Accountable For Not Filing Gainful Employment Disclosures](#)
- [Are You In Compliance with Gainful Employment?](#)
- [Surviving Peak Period | While Keeping Your Sanity Intact](#)
- [Heightened Cash Monitoring](#)

“REPAYE” PROGRAM NOW IN EFFECT FOR STUDENTS

As of December 17, 2015, federal student loan borrowers have a new income-driven repayment plan at their disposal. REPAYE is an acronym for Revised Pay As You Earn. The program is aimed at capping student loan payments to 10% of the borrower's discretionary income. There are no income requirements and it is available to all students who have a Direct loan, regardless of when it was taken out. PLUS loans are the only exception to these requirements.

Like the other recent income-driven plans enacted, there is loan forgiveness available at the end of the repayment period. It is 20 years if all loans were utilized for undergraduate work and 25 years for those at the graduate level. The new REPAYE forgiveness is five years shorter than Income-Based Repayment (IBR) and Income-Contingent Repayment (ICR) plans for those with only undergrad studies. Another added positive with REPAYE includes picking up interest payments so loan balances don't balloon out of control which is important for those paying less per month than the interest that is accruing.

While there can be a dizzying array of payment plans of all shapes and sizes for students, this is further good news for those that have been struggling to pay ever increasing student loan debt. In the summer of 2014, President Obama issued a Presidential Memorandum, directing the Department of Education to propose

regulations to ease the burden of student loan debt by the end of 2015 and they succeeded with the newly created REPAYE option.

Spreading this information around the financial aid community is critical for it to end up in students' hands. Those students who may have problems repaying their loans are the same students who are less educated on the options that are available to them. Here at HEAG, we strive to keep you informed and updated on all of the changes happening throughout the financial aid world which in this case, could impact and possibly lower your Cohort Default Rate.

Sources:

<https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/about/announcements/repaye>

<http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-department-education-announces-availability-additional-flexible-repayment-plan-help-borrowers-manage-their-student-loan-debt>

<https://www.ifap.ed.gov/eannouncements/121715LSIAvailREPAYEandNewIDRRequest.html>

<http://blog.ed.gov/2015/12/your-federal-student-loans-just-got-easier-to-repaye/>

1-13: 2016 FSA TRAINING CONFERENCE FOR FINANCIAL AID PROFESSIONALS

Posted Date: January 13, 2016

Author: **Gabrielle Turner**, Chief Communications Officer, Federal Student Aid
Subject: 2016 FSA Training Conference for Financial Aid Professionals

We are pleased to announce that the 2016 FSA Training Conference for Financial Aid Professionals * will be held from Tuesday, November 29 to Friday, December 2, 2016 at the Georgia World Congress Center located at 285 Andrew Young international Blvd, Atlanta, Georgia. The conference will tentatively start on Tuesday at approximately 8:30 a.m. and end on Friday by 3:00 p.m.

The FSA Training Conference offers premiere hands-on, face-to-face training for financial aid professionals throughout the financial aid community.

Conference registration and lodging will open this summer. Additional information regarding the 2016 FSA Training Conference will be posted at <http://fsaconferences.ed.gov> as it becomes available.

Session recordings of the 2015 FSA Training Conference are also posted on our website at <http://fsaconferences.ed.gov>.

We look forward to your participation in 2016!

Thank you,
Conference & Outreach Services Team
Federal Student Aid

U.S. Department of Education

** The FSA Training Conference is a series of training and technical assistance programs provided by the Department of Education for higher education financial aid professionals charged with administering the Title IV student financial assistance programs on their campuses. These programs annually provide more than \$150 billion in federal grants, loans, and work-study programs to more than 13 million students attending over 6,100 participating schools. Proper training of the institutions responsible for packaging and disbursing these funds helps ensure the integrity of the Title IV programs and reduces incidence of waste, fraud, abuse and mismanagement in these programs.*

About The Higher Education Assistance Group

The Higher Education Assistance Group, Inc. is a comprehensive higher education consulting and financial aid consulting group located in Wellesley, Massachusetts. In operation since 1989 initially as a financial aid consulting firm, we have since grown and expanded to represent all areas of student services management. We continue to advance and evolve to meet the needs of our school clients. The Group provides exceptional administrative and professional management services to all student service fields, including Admissions, Financial Aid, Continuing Education, Bursar and Registrar offices at two and four year institutions, both public and proprietary. The Group's highly qualified team of consultants has spent decades in the field providing administrators with the tools, knowledge and support necessary to complete institutional objectives. We pride ourselves on assisting post secondary institutions to meet challenges such as program regulatory compliance, organizational structure, staffing needs, and technological support.

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