



Federal Student Aid

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Student Loan Ombudsman Caucus Conference

The **Student Loan Ombudsman Caucus (Caucus) Conference** will be in Indianapolis, IN Oct. 7 – 8, 2008: **Speakers include:**

- **Janelle Barlow**, Co-Author “*A Complaint is a Gift*”
- **Chuck Doran**, Executive director, Mediation Works, Inc. and ASA Employee Ombudsman;
- **Tim Fitzgibbon**, Vice President, Debt Management Services, NCHelp;
- **Joy Van Skiver**, Founder and President, The Writing Exchange; and
- **Walter Witthoff**, VP, Compliance and Government Relations, Iowa Student Loan Liquidity Corporation.

Getting There: The Conference will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn in Indianapolis, Indiana. April Petroski and Heather Schlingman (Sallie Mae) secured rooms at \$79.00/night. Call 317-577-5900 for reservations; ask for the Ombudsman Caucus block. If you *hope* to attend, don't wait; 16 rooms are booked already.

Registration: Attendance is free. Use the registration form attached to the newsletter transmittal e-mail. Questions?? Call Lynel McFadden at: 202-377-3811, or e-mail Lynel at lynel.mcfadden@ed.gov

Special Offer! “*A Complaint is a Gift*” Attendees will be able to receive the book at a discount price, autographed by the author. We are unsure of the cost at this point; the regular cost is \$19.95. E-mail April at: April.M.Petroski@slma.com, if you are interested in purchasing the book at the Conference.

Hurricane Gustav

Hurricane Gustav: Go to **DCL ID: GEN-04-04: General Guidance for Helping Title Iv Participants Affected by a Disaster** at:

<http://ifap.ed.gov/dpclatters/GEN0404.html>

Helpful websites:

<http://ifap.ed.gov/disaster.html>; and
<http://ifap.ed.gov/eannouncements/082908IFAPHurricaneWebsiteV2.html>

Preview of End of Year Numbers

Case Intake: General assistance and research cases received by telephone declined while cases received through the Ombudsman website and by e-mail increased. The Ombudsman received 888 fewer cases by telephone while experiencing an increase of 683 cases received through the website and by e-mail.

General Assistance: For FY 2008 general assistance cases increased by 8.26% as compared to the same time period in FY 2007.

Research Cases: During FY 2008 to date, research cases declined by 4.3% relative to FY 2007.

Top Issues: For FY 2008 the top 5 research case issues are:

- Loan Cancellation/Discharge
- Account Balance
- Repayment Plans/Amounts
- Default
- FSA Assistance

Loan Cancellation/Discharge: Total and Permanent Disability (TPD) Discharge issues continue to be the single most common subcategory of research case. Despite the slight reduction in overall research cases noted above, loan cancellation/discharge research cases increased by nearly 20%. TPD cases account for more than one-half of loan cancellation and discharge cases and nearly 13% of all research cases.

Consolidation: Consolidation research cases continue to decline in total number. Through the first three quarters of FY 2008, consolidation research cases decreased by 62.3% compared to the first three quarters of FY 2007.

Congressional Inquiries: Congressional offices are a growing source of referrals. Through the first 3 quarters of FY 2008, referrals of research cases from Congressional offices increased by 41.2% compared to the same period in FY 2007.

Issue Increases: Private loan, repayment and public service discharge questions are on the rise, but not of great concern at this point.

Reminders/Military Deferment

Remember! The military deferment provisions from CCRAA. Be sure to *ask* before rejecting deferment requests!

Military Service Deferment – New Provisions: The College Cost Reduction and Access Act (CCRAA) of September 27, 2007, modifies military service deferment for borrowers in the FFEL, Direct Loan and Federal Perkins Loan programs who are called to active duty during a war, other military operation or national emergency. Under HERA, the military service deferment had a maximum time limit of 3 years and was available for loans first disbursed on or after July 1, 2007. Effective October 1, 2007 the CCRAA eliminates the 3-year limit for this deferment and removes the provision that limited the availability of the deferment to loans first disbursed on or after July 1, 2001.

Active Duty Student Deferment! The CCRAA also created a *new* deferment in the FFEL, Direct Loan, and Federal Perkins Loan programs for members of the National Guard or Armed Forces Reserve and members of the Armed Forces in a retired status called or ordered to active service. Effective October 1, 2007 these borrowers may receive a deferment on repayment of their Title IV loans for up to 13-months following their completion of active military service if they were enrolled in a postsecondary institution at the time of, or within six months prior to, their activation. For information on these topics, go to: <http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/difficulty.jsp>

Kudos and Welcome!

Kudos!...to **April Petroski** (SLMA) for providing very meaningful assistance to the parents of a deceased student. Thank you, April!!

Kudos!...to those [you know who you are] who are assisting in the final details of Hurricane Katrina discharges. The anniversary of the 08/29/05 event spurs the need to tie loose ends.

Welcome!...to two new Vangent members of the Ombudsman Team: **Wendy Enlow** and **Stephanie Ryan**. Your help is sorely needed!!

COMING EVENTS: **September 29-October 3**, United States Ombudsman Association Annual Conference, Lexington, Kentucky; **October 7-8**: Student Loan Ombudsman Caucus Meeting, Indianapolis, Indiana; **Oct. 28-31**, FSA Fall Conference, Dallas, TX; **Dec. 2-5**, FSA Fall Conference, Las Vegas, NV

“It’s not about who’s right...it’s about doing the right thing!”