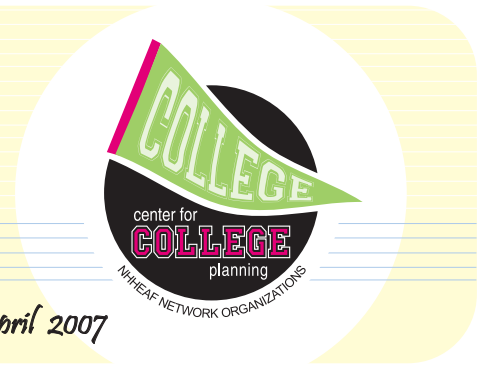


Guidance

# Gazette

April 2007



Spring is in the air, and it can be an exciting time of year for many high school students as offers of college admission roll in. Your seniors are also starting to receive their financial aid award letters, which can bring about stress and anxiety for many students and their families.

One of the first challenges for students and parents is to understand the terms and language financial aid offices use. Below is a review of key terms that will help them to understand what the college has offered and better comprehend the terms of the package.

## Key Terms

**Award Letter:** The way in which a college's financial aid office assigns a specific fund or group of funds to an individual student. An award letter may include a variety of different grants, scholarships, loans or work-study. It's important to understand that award packages will differ from college to college based on different resources and the family's need level at each campus.

**Electronic Award Notification:** While many schools will still send a paper award letter via the mail, some colleges invite students to go online to view their award. For example, Plymouth State University issues all of their award letters online. Whether colleges provide paper or electronic awards, students can usually view their offer online at the college's Web site.

**Expected Family Contribution (EFC):** The amount of the money the student and parent is expected to contribute to the student's education this academic year. The Department of Education calculates how much they feel the student's family can afford to pay for one year of school. The EFC is determined by family size, number of family members in school, income and assets. The difference between the Cost of Attendance and the EFC is the student's financial need, and is used in determining the student's eligibility for need-based financial aid.

**Federal Stafford/Direct Loans:** These loans will be in the student's name only. For the high school class of 2007, the undergraduate limits are \$3,500 during freshman year, \$4,500 during sophomore year, and \$5,500 during the third, fourth and fifth years. There are two types of Stafford/Direct loans: subsidized and unsubsidized. Subsidized portions have interest paid by the government while the student is in school. Unsubsidized portions have interest accruing over the full life of the loan. Both types of stafford loans have a fixed interest rate of 6.8%.

## The Center for College Planning

provides parents and students with the information, materials and guidance they need to begin the process of applying for college admission and financial aid. We offer free services and materials for every population. Call our Concord office with questions or to schedule an appointment with one of our college counselors, 800.525.2577 x119.

- Individualized college counseling in our Concord office
- Specialized lists of colleges that match search criteria
- Calculation of your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) for financial aid purposes
- Access to career surveys and popular college majors
- Assistance filing complicated financial aid paperwork

Students can submit their college essays for feedback to [collegeplanning@nhheaf.org](mailto:collegeplanning@nhheaf.org)

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## Upcoming:

September: An overview of outreach programs and publications to assist your students.

**Perkins Loan:** These federal loans are in the student's name only and have the lowest interest rate available (fixed at 5%). They are awarded by the college to students with exceptional need. The interest is subsidized while the student is in school.

**Federal Work-Study:** This program provides undergraduate students with part-time employment during the school year. Eligibility is based on need. Money earned is not credited to the tuition bill, and is not counted as income for the subsequent year's needs analysis process.

**Federal Parent PLUS Loans:** Federal loans available to parents of dependent undergraduate students to help finance the cost of education. Parents may borrow up to the full cost of their children's education, less the amount of any other financial aid received. As of July 1, 2006 the interest rate is fixed at 8.5% for FFELP PLUS Loans and 7.9% for Direct PLUS Loans (The school will determine whether parents take out a FFELP or Direct PLUS loan). Parents must pass a credit review. If denied, the student may be eligible for additional money in an unsubsidized Stafford/Direct Loan Program.

**Pell Grant and Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (SEOG):** Federal grant programs awarded to students with exceptional financial need. Award is based on Cost of Attendance, Expected Family Contribution and enrollment status.

**Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG):** Federal grant program for first academic year students who have completed a rigorous secondary school program of study and have graduated from high school after January 1, 2006. ACG grants are also available to second academic year students who have at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA.

**Verification:** A review process in which the financial aid office requests supporting documentation related to income and assets. Colleges are required by the federal government to verify at least 30 percent of all applications and many private colleges verify all of their applications. So, students and parents should not be surprised if they receive a request for more information.

## *Other Resources for Students*

### Presentations

Invite a representative from the Center for College Planning to your school for an Award Letter Seminar and request our publication *Not Just the Bottom Line* for assistance. Students and parents need to be informed about college costs, options for financing, the importance of saving and questions to ask the school's financial aid office.

As your 8th graders will be transitioning to high school in the fall, spring is a great time for our *Who Wants to be a College Graduate Program*. Our 8th grade program is designed to get your students excited about college and to encourage them to begin thinking about how the courses they take in high school will prepare them for college.

### College Counseling

As always, counselors at the Center for College Planning are available to help students and parents better understand their award letters, and the funding options available to them. Encourage them to call 800-525-2577 X119 to schedule an appointment in our Concord office.

### Financial Aid Forecaster

Federal student aid has put together a great new tool that is designed to help students and their families plan for college. The FAFSA4caster provides students with an early estimate of their eligibility for federal student financial assistance. It provides the family with a chance to familiarize themselves with the FAFSA form and it calculates an accurate Expected Family Contribution (EFC) at that time. This is a great tool for middle and high school families preparing for college funding. Students and families can access FAFSA4caster by visiting: [www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov).

### KnowHow2Go

As counselors, we know that college is important, but a dream is not enough. College doesn't just happen. Students have to work to make it a reality. The new national ad campaign called, KnowHow2Go has hit the airwaves. Studies show that the college planning process should start early, ideally in middle school. There are several television and radio spots targeting middle school students. The campaign attempts to get students excited about college and invites adults to become mentors to children who need a little help to get to college. The Center for College Planning is working with the New England Board of Higher Education and several other New Hampshire groups such as TRIO, Upward Bound, NH College and University Council (NHCUC) and the USNH system to develop a plan on how New Hampshire can intergrate this ad campaign into the college outreach programs already in place. Visit [www.knowhow2go.org](http://www.knowhow2go.org) for more information and to view some of the ads running now.

## *Student Publishing Opportunities and Guidance Counselor Survey to be Featured in NH NEXT.*

The NHHEAF Network Organizations are pleased to once again sponsor *NH NEXT*, a special yearly magazine published by Parenting New Hampshire magazine. *NH NEXT* is a guide for high school students to aid their transition into the collegiate world, the job market, the military, or whatever post-secondary path they choose. *NH NEXT* magazines are utilized during Center for College Planning 10th grade programs, as well as sent to high schools throughout the state each fall.

This year, the editors at *NH NEXT* are looking for more the voices and opinions of NH students and counselors to include in the magazine. Guidance counselors who are interested in participating in a short survey will provide valuable insight and experience as the publication is put together.

In addition to the survey results, *NH NEXT* would also like to publish student writings. Transitions and change are an emotional time and we would like to share their stories. Work must be non-fiction, but poetry, artwork, or essay formats are all welcome. The content should focus on an aspect of deciding what to do after high school and how that decision is made.

Please contact Lindsay Galvin at lgalvin@parentingnh.com or 603-413-5113 for more information about submission requirements and to participate in the survey.

### *Not Your Ordinary Career Day!*

Over 700 sophomores and juniors from 17 NH high schools joined Southern New Hampshire University and the Manchester Monarchs at the Verizon Wireless Arena for an exciting morning of career exploration. Students met experts and learned how to start careers in the following exciting fields:

Sport Management  
Food Service  
Homeland Security/Criminal Justice  
Public Relations  
Concert Promotion  
Finance and Accounting

Marketing and Advertising  
Video Production  
Information Technology  
Retail and Fashion Merchandising  
Sport Agent Representation  
Graphic Design

### *Coming to a Campus Near You!*

#### **DISCOVER U.**

Saturday, April 28, 2007

Click on the link below for more information on *Discover U*, an early college awareness program for 8th grade students and their parents.



#### **SAT Spring Test Dates**

Saturday, May 5 – Registration deadline was: 4/3/07 Saturday, June 2 - Registration deadline is: 4/27/07

#### **NEACAC College Fair**

Friday, May 18 at Franklin Pierce College

#### **Annual ASCA Conference**

June 23-26, 2007

The American School Counselors Association will be holding their annual conference on June 23-26 in Denver, Colorado. On April 2nd at the NHSCA annual meeting, the NHHEAF Network Organizations awarded a \$500 stipend to a lucky counselor so that they may attend the national conference in Denver.

#### **New Guidance Counselor Training**

Friday, September 14

In addition to the everyday responsibilities of managing schedules, meetings, graduation requirements, counseling and advising, guidance counselors are often expected to be experts on college admission and financial aid. With the college admissions and financial aid processes changing constantly, this task can be overwhelming. The Center for College Planning will provide you with insights and helpful tools to assist you and your students on this adventure. You will have an opportunity to connect with you colleagues to discover what has made their

experience successful! To register, please contact Zanna Blaney at 1.800.525.2577, x443.

#### **Destination College 2008**

Saturday, March 29, 2008 at Southern New Hampshire University

**Your next Guidance Gazette will be sent in September. Meanwhile, enjoy your summer and we'll be in touch next fall. If you don't want to receive further college planning emails, please respond to [collegeplanning@nhheaf.org](mailto:collegeplanning@nhheaf.org).**

*The NHHEAF Network Organizations are comprised of four nonprofit corporations dedicated to helping New Hampshire students and families plan for and fund higher education. As a guarantor, lender and servicer of student loans, the Organizations are consistently recognized for providing outstanding service before, during and after the college experience. The NHHEAF Network Education Foundation administers the charitable giving programs of the Organizations. Since their inception, the Organizations have made the higher education dreams of more than 270,000 students a reality. To learn more visit [www.nhheaf.org](http://www.nhheaf.org) or contact us at 1-800-525-2577.*