



Sonny Perdue
GOVERNOR



Timothy A. Connell
PRESIDENT

November 18, 2005

Dear Colleagues:

Now that the Fall term is well on its way, and you are beginning to prepare for the Winter quarter or Spring semester of 2006, it is a good time to address a few topics regarding the HOPE Book Allowance.

As a reminder, beginning with the Winter quarter or Spring semester of 2006, in order for an institution to apply HOPE Book Allowance funds to other direct institutional charges, such as fees, the student must provide written authorization to do so. Our "Dear Colleagues Letter" dated June 29, 2005, only granted a waiver of this requirement for the Summer and Fall terms of 2005.

We have recently received several questions from institutions regarding the timing of HOPE Book Allowance disbursements to students. Neither State law nor the HOPE program regulations require institutions to provide the HOPE Book Allowance to students within a specific time frame. However, the regulations do require that "funds for the book allowance shall be made available by the institution to the student for the purchase of books and supplies." The intent of this regulation is that the HOPE Book Allowance should be available to students at the beginning of the school term so they are able to purchase the books needed for their course of study that term. We recognize that institutions have different systems and financial processes. For this reason the regulation was intentionally written so as to allow for flexibility. Clearly, institutional policies and procedures that result in the HOPE Book Allowance not being readily and equitably available to students until weeks after the first day of classes do not meet the spirit or intent of the HOPE Program. Institutions are able to invoice GSFC for HOPE funds, disburse the HOPE Book Allowance to students and apply HOPE tuition and fee funds to students' accounts as early as 15 days prior to the first day of classes. Ideally, the HOPE Book Allowance should be available to students during the first week of classes each term. Further, it is important for institutions that place the HOPE Book Allowance on student accounts at the college bookstore to have an alternative mechanism in place for students who wish to access those funds immediately.

We certainly acknowledge that complying with the statutory provisions related to the HOPE Book Allowance presents some unique administrative challenges. We stand ready to review any proposal that may be developed that accomplishes the requirements of the law but is tailored to your institution.

If you have any questions regarding the HOPE Book Allowance, please do not hesitate to contact Cindy Abbott (cindy@gsfc.org) or our Compliance Unit at (compliance@gsfc.org).

Sincerely,

Timothy A. Connell

2082 East Exchange Place, Suite 200 • Tucker, Georgia 30084
(770) 724-9003 • FAX (770) 724-9004 • 1-800-505-GSFC (4732)
Web Site: www.gsfc.org

