



Sonny Perdue
GOVERNOR



Georgia Student Finance Commission
Georgia Student Finance Authority
Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation
GAcollege411

Timothy A. Connell
PRESIDENT

August 19, 2010

Re: College Opportunity Grant

Dear Colleagues:

I am writing to share information and details with you regarding the State of Georgia's first true needs-based aid program, the College Opportunity Grant (COG). The State's appropriations bill, HB 948, signed by Governor Sonny Perdue in June, appropriated \$15 million dollars for the COG program for FY2011 and indicated that the program should aim to assist with the affordability of college education and should include a community service requirement.

The Georgia Student Finance Commission (GSFC) has worked to establish program regulations, which were formally adopted by its Board of Commissioners on August 6, 2010.

The COG program requires an eligible student to meet basic eligibility requirements, such as residency, citizenship, satisfactory academic progress, and other requirements similar to the HOPE program requirements. Additionally, an eligible student must be fully matriculated in a degree-seeking program at an Eligible Postsecondary Public Institution in a full-time status. Furthermore, a student must be a recipient of the Pell Grant during the term for which he or she is seeking the COG award.

Several requirements identified in the program regulations have specific criteria that GSFC will establish on a yearly basis. For the FY2011 award year, the following program specific criteria shall apply:

- 1 – Eligible students must have an Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) value, as calculated on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application, of \$0.
- 2 – Eligible students must complete community service hours at a Non-Profit Organization at a rate of 10 hours per quarter or 20 hours per semester of COG payment.
- 3 – The first COG awards will be paid during the Winter Quarter and Spring Semester of FY2011, in the amount of \$250 per quarter and \$500 per semester.

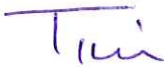
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Students seeking to receive a COG award must complete a FAFSA application, including resolving any rejections or verification requirements. Additionally, a student must submit a GSFC Certification of Community Service form to the Eligible Postsecondary Public Institution *before* the student will be awarded.

The COG program regulations are available on our websites at both www.GSFC.org and www.GAcollge411.org. The Certification of Community Service form will also be posted to our website shortly. GSFC will hold several training events this fall at which the COG program will be discussed.

We are excited about this new program and the opportunity to assist more students with their college financing. We hope you are as well, and we look forward to working cooperatively in the administration of this program. Should you have any questions regarding the COG program or other state scholarship and grant programs, please contact Caylee French, Division Director, Student Aid Services at 770-724-9244 or via email at cayleef@gsfc.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "Tim", with a horizontal line above the first few letters.

Timothy A. Connell