



FOR

## GA MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOLS



### College Goal Georgia!

Events begin February 12th. Be sure to check [www.collegegoalsundayga.com](http://www.collegegoalsundayga.com) for scheduled events. Our goal is to assist low-income college students by providing free on-site professional assistance in filling out the FAFSA to receive consideration for federal and state aid.

[Click here to download information flyer.](#)

### Student Access Loan Program Update

As you probably know, GSFC implemented the Student Access Loan Program earlier this year. This program was passed into law in 2008 and fully funded by the General Assembly and Governor for the first time in 2011. Lawmakers funded the program so that students who had a gap in his or her college financing would be able to use this last resort loan to help meet their need.

There have been two application cycles to date. Combined, we received more than 8,800 applications requesting \$65 million in funding at 95 schools. So far schools have approved SAL loans for 2,451 students attending 75 different schools for nearly \$15 million. The first cycle is closed and the second is underway. At the present time, we don't anticipate opening a third cycle.

While the program is targeted at students who have a gap in their college financing, it is not necessarily targeted at students with what is traditionally thought of as high need.

However, results so far have shown that 72% of all the SAL borrowers are also eligible for Pell Grants. Further, 52% of the recipients had a "zero" Expected Family Contribution or EFC meaning, they were considered students of high financial need. Also of interest is that about 30% of all SAL recipients were also eligible for HOPE Scholarships.

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All participating schools have done a tremendous job administering the program this year. We would also like to thank and acknowledge the hard work of our own IT staff, Loan Services, Loan Origination and those who have stepped up and made this program run smoothly. For SFY 2013, the Governor has recommended that the SAL program again be funded in the amount of \$20 million. More details about next year cycle to come.

## Transcript Exchange Update

The high school Transcript Exchange process for 2012 Preliminary HOPE GPA calculation is well underway. So far, the processing has gone well and is ahead of last year. Transcript processing for Preliminary HOPE GPA and GPA Verification will continue through the end of February.

At this time, out of 762 high schools and an estimated 105,000 senior students:

- 439 schools uploaded transcripts and received GPA calculations
- 127 schools verified their GPA results
- 75,711 senior students were uploaded and calculated
- 19,169 senior students GPA calculations were verified by their school

There is still time for the schools that have not completed all the steps through verification, to do so. The number of senior students uploaded, calculated, and verified looks like it will exceed any previous year for Preliminary HOPE submissions. The list of all these eligible senior students has been and will continue to be available to all post secondary schools in the state through the SURFER system. Senior students continue to have access to their Preliminary HOPE GPAs through their secure My411 Account on GAcollege411.

The HOPE Progress Report for ninth through eleventh grade students is also available. The service will allow students, parents and counselors to monitor a students' progress towards HOPE eligibility as early as the ninth grade.

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The 2012 Final HOPE GPA process will begin in early May, with a deadline for submission and verification of all results by June 30, 2012.

## Atlanta National College Fair



The advertisement features a young woman with dark hair, wearing a purple top and a backpack, looking off to the side. In the top left corner is the NACAC logo with the tagline "...guiding the way to higher education". Below the logo, the words "College Fair" are written in a large, orange, stylized font. At the bottom of the ad, a dark blue box contains the event details: "Sunday February 12, 2012", "Georgia World Congress Center", and "12:00 P. M. - 4:00 P. M.". The logo for "The Press" is in the bottom right corner, with the website "pressofAtlanticCity.com" and "Advertising Supplement" below it.

The Atlanta National College Fair will be held on Sunday, February 12, 2012 at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta, GA from 12:00p.m. - 4:00p.m. Sponsored by the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) and hosted by the Southern Association for College Admission Counseling (SACAC), this event is free and open to the public.

Complete information about this National College Fair can be found online: [Atlanta National College Fair](#)

As the process of applying to and selecting a college becomes more and more competitive and complex, students and parents need all the help and information they can get. Attending a college fair is the best way to gather information about colleges and universities. The national college fair program provides valuable resources for students and parents attempting to navigate the college-admission process.

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The fair allows students and parents to meet one-on-one with admission representatives from a wide range of national and international, public and private, two-year and four-year colleges and universities. Participants will learn about admission requirements, financial aid, course offerings, and campus environment, as well as other information pertinent to the college-selection process. At the fair's counseling center, students and parents can discuss their individual needs with college experts.

"The resources and opportunities that the National College Fairs provide for students and their families are invaluable," said Greg Ferguson, NACAC Director of National College Fairs Programs and Services, "and admission professionals have been delighted by the caliber of students attending our programs."

Now in its 40th year, the National College Fair program annually helps more than 500,000 students and families nationwide explore their options for higher education, making it one of the most visible college recruitment tools in the country. In addition to the National College Fairs program, NACAC also holds Performing and Visual Arts College Fairs. These fairs are held during the fall and are designed to serve students with particular interest in the fine arts. NACAC currently sponsors National College Fairs and Performing and Visual Arts College fairs in 73 locations across the country. For a complete schedule, visit [www.nationalcollegefairs.org](http://www.nationalcollegefairs.org).

Students can now register prior to attending these events. This makes navigating the fair and collecting information from multiple colleges and universities much easier for students. By registering, students can print a bar coded confirmation to be used on-site at the fair as an electronic ID. Register online at [www.gotomyncf.com](http://www.gotomyncf.com).

## MORE INFORMATION

More information about the [Atlanta National College Fair](#), including directions to the fair, a list of colleges exhibiting at the fair, and tips for preparing for the fair, is available on the NACAC Web site at Atlanta National College Fair, by emailing [collegefairs@nacacnet.org](mailto:collegefairs@nacacnet.org) or by calling 800/822-6285.

## ABOUT NACAC

NACAC is an Arlington, VA-based education association of more than 11,000 primary and secondary school counselors, independent counselors, college admission and financial aid officers, enrollment managers, and organizations that work with students as they make the transition from high school to postsecondary education. Founded in 1937, the association is committed to maintaining high standards that foster ethical and social responsibility among those involved in the transition process, as outlined in the NACAC Statement of Principles of Good Practice. This program is also an approved program by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. For more information, visit [www.nacacnet.org](http://www.nacacnet.org).

## GSFC/XAP School Visits

At Georgia Student Finance Commission, we are committed to providing Georgians with the tools and resources necessary to achieve their goals of post-secondary education.

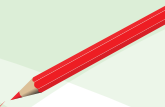
In order to add value and be useful the site must perform at optimal levels all the time. Based on feedback received from you regarding site performance, XAP, our vendor agreed to send consultants into the schools to observe usage of students and professionals.

This project began in late 2011 and concluded with, 3 school districts and 20 schools being visited. The consultants and GSFC representative observed and documented site performance, system constraints and other useful information during the school visits. GSFC is waiting on a final report from the consultants and we will work with XAP to develop an action plan to address and resolve site performance issues identified.

Please continue to send any comments or concerns regarding the site to [gacollege411@gsfc.org](mailto:gacollege411@gsfc.org).

## GSFC Customer Survey

At Georgia Student Finance Commission, we are committed to providing quality customer service to you and the students of Georgia. Every year we ask you to complete a survey based on our services and your experiences when working with us. Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey; with your feedback we strive to continue to provide excellent services. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns. Some survey results are highlighted below.



### 2011 Customer Confidence - School Counselor Survey

- GSFC staff responds in a timely manner - 89% always or most of the time
- GSFC staff clearly communicates changes and improvements - 90.6% always or most of the time
- GSFC overall customer service - 90.9% excellent or good

### 2011 Customer Confidence - Financial Aid Officers Survey

- GSFC staff provides consistent and accurate information - 96.5% always or most of the time
- GSFC staff is knowledgeable of products and services - 94.8% always or most of the time
- GSFC overall customer service - 98% excellent or good

### 2011 Customer Confidence Admissions Officers

- GSFC staff responds in a timely manner - 96.9% always or most of the time
- GSFC staff clearly communicates changes and improvements - 94% always or most of the time
- GSFC overall customer service - 90.6% excellent or good

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## Professional Center Tips

The Professional Center is your resource to manage and organize your students GAcollge411 accounts; so why not get the most out of your Professional

Center account? Many counselors have been asking about the tools in their professional center and how to organize their student's accounts. Here are a few tips for making the professional center work for you.



1. Customize for your district! Under the "Administration" tab, you can edit the courses that are offered in your school district, edit the high school graduation requirements, and update programs of study for clusters and pathways with the courses your high school offers. This trick will help your students get a clear picture of the courses that are actually offered to them.
2. Scholarships! It is scholarship application time, so be prepared to get the information to your seniors through GAcollge411! Use the "Edit Local Scholarships Database" tab under the "Administration" tab to update local scholarships that are available for your students. When students or parents come to your office asking about local scholarships, you can tell them the applications can be found on their GAcollge411 accounts! This trick will save you time and paper.

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3. Merge those accounts! Several of your students forgot their username or password, so instead of using the “forgot username/password” link, they created a brand new account. To top it off, they are actually using the new account and you are worried that it is going to skew your numbers for the BRIDGE legislation. Well no worries, all you have to do is go to the “Students and Groups” tab, then to “Merge Accounts” at the bottom. This will give you a list of potential duplicate accounts that can be merged. All you have to do is chose which account you want for the “main account” and “merge all these accounts into the Main Account.” All the information from the duplicate accounts will be included in the Main Account. **BE SURE YOU HAVE CHOSEN THE CORRECT “MAIN ACCOUNT” FOR THESE TO BE MERGED INTO BECAUSE ONCE THEY HAVE BEEN MERGED, IT CAN NOT BE CHANGED.**
4. Build Groups! Under “Students and Groups” tab you can build groups of students for easy communication. Click on “Group Builder” and follow the 3 simple steps. Create a name and type of group, then chose the students for the group, and finally view the group to make sure it is correct. After that, communicating with Mrs. Smith’s homeroom class and the Student Council will be a walk in the park.
5. Utilize the Events Calendar! Under the “Communication” tab you can easily add events to the students GAcollge411 calendars. All you have to do is click “Add Event” in the “Events” box and follow the simple instructions. If you have groups built (see tip #4) you can chose a specific group, you can choose a grade, or more

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specifically, you can choose an individual student. Fill in the details of the event and click “Add Event.” This is perfect for reminding students of deadlines, upcoming assignments and other pertinent information. Planning has never been easier!

We are working on making this column a monthly feature. If you have a tip or trick that you have found useful in the professional center, please send us an email to [clientservices@gsfc.org](mailto:clientservices@gsfc.org) or upload a comment to the [GAcollge411 Facebook](#) page.

## Final Thoughts

We are excited about the continued growth of GAcollge411 and look forward to sharing additional information with you. If there is anything we can do to assist you, please don’t hesitate to contact me at [angien@gsfc.org](mailto:angien@gsfc.org) or by calling 770-724-9126.

Best wishes for a great February!



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