



# The Guide

November / December 2007

For South Carolina's Guidance Counselors

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Dear Counselors,

The holiday season is approaching and we all have so much to be thankful for this year. SC Student Loan is thankful for the relationships we have with guidance counselors. We are thankful for your continued support and most of all, we are thankful that we have been able to help your students and their families fulfill their dreams of higher education.

As we move into the new calendar year, your seniors and their parents will face the challenges of the college financial aid process. The FAFSA, scholarship guidelines and terms like, "cost of attendance," will become all too familiar to them. Thank goodness you are there to provide proper guidance.

As a reminder, SC Student Loan is a resource you can rely on. We can answer questions via phone or we will be happy to come to any special events you might have on your own campus to help every student and family understand that higher education is possible.

I hope you will find this newsletter informative and useful. Thank you for everything you are doing to help the young people of South Carolina achieve their educational dreams.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "CSanders, Jr".

Chuck Sanders  
President & CEO

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For additional copies of The Guide, please visit [www.scstudentloan.org](http://www.scstudentloan.org), and click on the "Guidance Counselors" tab in the upper right.

# From SC Student Loan

## Federal Stafford Loan Interest Rate Drops

Undergraduate students receiving subsidized Federal Stafford Loans after July 1, 2008 will receive a fixed interest rate of 6.0%, down from the current rate of 6.8%. This rate will continue to drop annually until it reaches a low of 3.4%.

This decreased rate is only for undergraduate borrowers receiving the subsidized Stafford Loan. All graduate students and undergraduate students receiving the unsubsidized Stafford Loan will continue to receive the current 6.8% interest rate.

## Fear Factor

Halloween may have just passed, but the real fear is now striking the hearts of high school juniors and seniors as they write scholarship and college admission essays. Many students procrastinate on this task for weeks, or even months, as they struggle with the unfamiliar task of writing a personal, persuasive essay. Knowing what the scholarship administrators and college admissions staff are looking for can help calm the nerves, and get the fingers working on the keyboard.

The single most important goal for students is to distinguish themselves in a positive manner. The essay provides the opportunity for the student to persuade the reader that they are the right person for the scholarship or the college.

Students struggling with a topic may want to consider the following questions for inspiration.

- Have you had a significant learning experience that was not part of your high school career that tells the reader about your character?
- Do you work or spend time volunteering? What have you learned about yourself?
- Has someone in your life challenged or inspired you to be your best?
- Have you faced any challenges? How did you deal with them?
- Have you made any significant decisions that have affected your life?

Once a topic is determined, the challenge is to bring it to life for the reader. Use specific examples and stay away from clichés. Link the topic to your academic and career goals. Always use a strong introductory statement to engage the reader and to encourage them to continue reading. Stay positive, no whining or making excuses to explain life experiences, the goal is to impress not depress. Stay away from controversial topics, the reader may have a different opinion. A strong conclusion leaves the reader knowing you are the person they want.

Proofreading is essential. Spelling, grammar and structure should be as perfect as you can accomplish. Don't trust the computer's spell check. Have others read and critique the essay before it is sent.

Most importantly, get started and get it done.

## SC Student Loan Commits Zero No Fees

Recent federal regulations have drastically cut the return lenders can earn on student loans. Many lenders have indicated that the cuts will force them to reduce borrower benefits specifically in the area of fees.

While the cuts will affect every lender, SC Student Loan remains committed to zero fees on all of our loans for the 2008-2009 academic year.

