



MARCH 2009

# NATIONAL DIRECT STUDENT LOAN COALITION

## *A Letter from the Chair ...*

Over the past year, the National Direct Student Loan Coalition has worked with hundreds of schools to help them transition to direct lending. Welcome to all new Direct Loan schools who have recently joined the program and the National Direct Student Loan Coalition. The National Direct Student Loan Coalition is the only organization that is solely dedicated to representing the interests of Direct Loan schools. We are proud of our work on behalf of DL schools over the years and look forward to working with all of the new schools in the future.

Since we have so many new members, we wanted to use this opportunity to ask for feedback on how the transition to direct lending went. The Coalition is in constant communication with the Department of Education and we would love to give them feedback on what schools are mentioning about the transition. Since we also had opportunity to mentor many schools over the past year, your feedback would allow us to know what was most helpful in making the transition or areas where we could improve.

**If you are a school new to the Direct Loan Program, please email your transition experience to Brian Smith at [bsmith@mrss.com](mailto:bsmith@mrss.com).** We value your input!

Sincerely,

Roberta Johnson  
*Chair, National Direct Student Loan Coalition*  
*Director of Student Financial Aid, Iowa State University*

## The Coalition Urges Congress to Support President's Budget

As many of you know, the President released an outline of his budget in late February. In this outline, the President called for moving all loans into the Direct Loan Program to save taxpayers money and provide more funding for needy students.

**To read the Coalition's letter to members of Congress, [click here](#).**

## Coalition Announces Partnership with NEFE

National Direct Student Loan Coalition (NDSLCLG) with help from the National Endowment for Financial Education® (NEFE®) is taking action against the lack of financial knowledge in college students by promoting CashCourse to its member organizations. CashCourse, NEFE's unbiased and noncommercial online financial education resource for students, is available free to all public and private nonprofit colleges and universities in the U.S. Since the CashCourse pilot launch in fall 2007, 218 schools across the country have signed up to use CashCourse.

**To see the full release, [click here](#).**

The mission of the National Direct Student Loan Coalition is to promote the success of the Federal Direct Student Loan Program in serving the interests of students, families, taxpayers and institutions.

### EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

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## Supporting our Members

The Coalition made its first visit to Washington, DC in late February and had an extremely busy three days. On Monday, the Coalition had its first meeting with new Associate Director of Education at the Office of Management and Budget, Robert Gordon. The meeting was a great opportunity for the Coalition to discuss the budget savings in the Direct Loan Program. Following the meeting with OMB, the Coalition met with Federal Student Aid at the Department of Education and discussed the continued partnership the Coalition would have with FSA as more schools continue to switch to direct lending. In the afternoon, the Coalition had a meeting with Bob Shireman in the Secretary of Education's office. This was a great opportunity for the Coalition to introduce itself to the new administration and offer its advice on the future of student lending. Late on Monday, the Coalition had a very fruitful meeting with higher education association leaders and key federal relations officers. The Coalition then spent all of Tuesday on Capitol Hill, meeting with over 30 Congressional leaders on higher education. This was the Coalition's first meeting with the 111th Congress and was a great opportunity to talk about the stability and reliability of the Direct Loan Program during these difficult economic times.

## Mentoring New DL Schools

Our phones are still ringing off the hooks with new schools who are interested in switching to Direct Lending. If you are in contact with colleagues that are considering switching to DL, please refer them to our website. We have lots of helpful resources that make the transition a simple process. We also have a list of mentors based on software platform that have volunteered to help schools with the transition. The Coalition and its allies have already mentored dozens of schools and we are ready and willing to help any other schools looking to make the switch.

If you are interested in being added to our mentor list, please contact Brian Smith at [bsmith@mrss.com](mailto:bsmith@mrss.com).

## In the News

- Catholic University Reports: Federal Direct Loan Program to be Utilized this Fall (March 15, 2009)
- Kentucky: U of L Changing Process for Students to Get Loans (March 10, 2009)
- Government's Direct Student Loan Program Gets a Boost (March 9, 2009)
- National Direct Student Loan Coalition Responds to the President's Budget (March 5, 2009)