

# COLLEGE CORNER

## Cutting Loan Payments—Quick

(NAPSA)—It shouldn't take an advanced degree to understand student loan forms. That's the lesson many students have taught colleges and lenders. As a result, steps have been taken to make the loan application process easier and faster.

Today, students can use the Web to apply for loans, check the balance owed on a loan or "shop" around for lenders. A group called Consolidation Assistance Program<sup>SM</sup> (CAP) even lets students sign their Federal Student Loan Consolidation applications online with a secured electronic signature.

The technology can help speed the borrowing and consolidating process, helping students borrow at the rates they want, when they want. In addition it reduces paperwork significantly.

Loan consolidation has become a popular choice for students burdened with heavy student loan payments. Students can consolidate loans without paying a fee or needing a credit check.

As of July 1, Federal Consolidation Loan interest rates are at 4.125 percent—their lowest point in history—and in some cases, even lower. With CAP borrower benefits, those rates could drop as low as 2.25 percent. Even parents consolidating Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students (PLUS loans) can get rates as low as



**New technology helps student borrowers lock in the loan rates they want, when they want.**

3.625 percent (including borrower benefits). For some borrowers, the new rates could reduce their monthly loan payments by more than half.

"Consolidation is a process that makes sense for graduates seeking affordable education payments," says Ellen Frishberg, Director of Student Financial Services for the John Hopkins University. "Even though students are counseled on the importance of repaying an education loan, many are still overwhelmed by the size of their monthly payments when they get out. For those students, consolidation can be a positive alternative."

To apply for a consolidation loan or for more information on consolidation rates visit the Web site [www.mycaploan.com](http://www.mycaploan.com).