

A Conversation on our Commitment to Schools

College Assist's Managing Director Caron Peterson is a 34-year veteran of the financial aid industry. Caron is currently responsible for Business Development, which includes marketing, sales and business technology, and she has managed all areas of guaranty operations for College Assist.

With a newly reauthorized Higher Education Act being implemented, a new set of rules governing lender and school relationships, and lenders facing a completely new market landscape, we thought now would be an ideal time to emphasize College Assist's expertise and commitment to schools. Following is a Q & A session with Caron Peterson.

Outlook: What does College Assist offer to a school that might be considering Direct Lending?

Peterson: At College Assist, we have exceptionally strong customer service. Our staff has strong school expertise and working knowledge of the school processes, and that allows them to provide a higher level of service. We also offer very strong default aversion and financial literacy materials, plus a whole range of training opportunities. In general, our customer relations staff also have a lot to offer in the way of personal knowledge and experience in the financial aid arena, including good information – like marketplace data – and the ability to find solutions to financial aid office issues.

Outlook: What are College Assist's strengths?

Peterson: We have top-notch compliance and training services. Our staff does everything from working one-on-one with schools to answer their questions, to

providing in-person trainings, Webinars, and resources that can be downloaded from the Internet. It's a real point of pride for us.

We also have staff in all areas who excel when it comes to helping schools. When there are occasional bumps in the road, our operations team has demonstrated its willingness to literally be at the office day and night for problem solving. Even though we have a national sales team now, we are not so large that we don't offer individualized service. I know from talking with schools individually that's a strength they value.

Outlook: How has going national with your sales team last year worked out?

Peterson: College Assist has been very successful adding new school partners over the past year. It's been an experience of growth for us, and that's always a good thing. When we grow, we also expand our services, so it's a win-win for everyone.



When she can make time for it in her busy life, Caron loves to travel. She recently returned from a trip to Costa Rica where, among other adventures, she climbed and rappelled a rainforest waterfall.