



NEWS RELEASE
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'05 Graduates in New Hampshire, Iowa, North Dakota, Rhode Island & Pennsylvania Had Highest Student Loan Debt, Utah Students the Lowest

New State-by-State Analysis Underscores Urgent Need to Lower Student Loan Debt

A new analysis of student loan debt for the class of 2005 finds that students who graduate from state schools often carry loan debt nearly as high as those who graduate from private colleges. In Arkansas, Delaware, Iowa, Kentucky, North Dakota, South Carolina and Tennessee, the average loan debt for students graduating from public universities is even *higher* than for graduates of private, nonprofit colleges. The new study from the Project on Student Debt also finds that high cost of living and high tuition do not necessarily predict higher student loan debt for a state's college graduates.

Student Debt and the Class of 2005: Average Debt by State, Sector, and School finds that average statewide debt for all four-year college and university graduates ranged from a high of \$22,793 in New Hampshire to a low of \$11,709 in Utah. The 10 states with the highest average student debt for the class of 2005 were: New Hampshire, Iowa, North Dakota, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Maine, South Dakota, Washington and Indiana.

“There are many reasons for the variations from state to state, including the availability of state grant aid, how loans are treated in financial aid packages, and the income profile of the student population,” said Project on Student Debt executive director Robert Shireman. “But overall, the level of debt for college graduates is much too high. Millions of young people face decades of student loan payments, delaying home-buying, retirement savings, and saving to put their own children through college. It's time for policymakers to adopt practical, cost-effective reforms that make student loans more affordable for families, and states and schools should rethink their approach to financial aid. Otherwise, college will move farther out of reach for generations to come.”

The new study finds that average debt for seniors graduating from public universities ranged from \$23,198 in Iowa to \$11,067 in Utah. The 10 states with the highest average student debt for graduates of public four-year institutions were: Iowa, North Dakota, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Maine, Oregon, Vermont and Ohio.

At private colleges, averages ranged from a high of \$32,504 in Arizona to a low of \$13,309 in Utah. The 10 states with the highest average student debt for graduates of private, nonprofit

four-year institutions in 2005 were: Arizona, Alaska, New Hampshire, Idaho, Montana, Oklahoma, Minnesota, Washington, Maine and Rhode Island.

The new study is based on data reported by more than 1,400 four-year public and private non-profit colleges and universities around the country to Thomson Peterson's Undergraduate Financial Aid and Undergraduate Databases, © 2006 Thomson Peterson's, a part of Thomson Learning Inc.

Along with the full report, an interactive map at www.projectonstudentdebt.org provides the statewide debt averages *and* data for individual campuses, including the average debt of graduating seniors, percentage of students with debt, tuition and fees, and percentage of students receiving Pell grants (primarily those with family incomes below \$40,000).

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The Project on Student Debt works to increase public understanding of the changing role of student debt and its implications for our families, economy and society. Recognizing that loans play a critical role in making college possible, the Project's goal is to identify cost-effective solutions that expand educational opportunity, protect family financial security, and advance economic competitiveness.

The Project on Student Debt is managed by The Institute for College Access and Success, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to expanding educational opportunity. The Project is supported by the Partnership to Reduce the Burden of Student Debt, an initiative of the Pew Charitable Trusts with support from the Surdna Foundation. The Project's other funders include The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation, and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. For more information see www.projectonstudentdebt.org.