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New Analysis Finds Unequal Debt Burdens among University of California Undergraduates

Low-Income Students and Students of Color More Likely to Graduate with Student Loan Debt

Oakland (CA) — A new report released today by the University of California Student Association (UCSA) and The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS) finds that the burden of student loan debt is not borne evenly across all university graduates. [*First Comes Diploma, Then Comes Debt. Unequal Debt Burdens among University of California Undergraduates*](#) finds that the lowest income college graduates were the most likely to leave school with student loan debt to repay, despite the university's relatively robust financial aid offerings which fully cover tuition for 56 percent of undergraduates.

The analysis, which looks at student costs and debt among 2017-18 bachelor's degree graduates across the UC's nine undergraduate-serving campuses, finds that students of color are also paying the price. Two in three dependent African-American and Chicano/Latino graduates left UC with debt, compared to 40 percent of their White peers. Overall, 50 percent of dependent 2017-18 UC bachelor's degree recipients had incurred student debt.

"Many underserved populations are not receiving the assistance they need to cover total college costs without burdensome work hours or debt, and many are experiencing food and housing insecurity," said **Caroline Siegel-Singh**, president of UCSA. "California's students need stronger financial aid programs to better support their total costs of attendance and close equity gaps."

To reduce students' need to borrow and help more students graduate, the report, which includes campus-level information on student costs, debt burdens, and graduation rates, recommends strengthening the state Cal Grant program and other need-based financial aid to assist more lower income Californians and provide them with sufficient support to cover the total costs of attending college.

"California needs to be increasing college completion and closing equity gaps, not saddling its neediest students with unmanageable costs and burdensome debt," said **Laura Szabo-Kubitz**, associate California program director of TICAS. "Substantial new investments in need-based financial aid are critical to our state's economic prosperity and ensuring that all Californians have the resources to successfully earn a college degree."

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The University of California Student Association (UCSA) is the official voice of students from across the UC's system of campuses. It is our mission to advocate on behalf of current and future students for the accessibility,

affordability, and quality of the University of California system. For more about UCSA, see <https://ucsa.org>.

An independent, nonprofit organization, The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS) works to make higher education more available and affordable for people of all backgrounds. Our Project on Student Debt works to increase public understanding of rising student debt and the implications for our families, economy, and society. For more information see www.ticas.org or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/TICAS org](https://www.twitter.com/TICAS_org).