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Preventing SDTs: Student Debt Troubles [brochure and streaming video]

Christian Montgomery

Western Kentucky University, christian.montgomery@wku.edu

Sam Mallory

Western Kentucky University, samantha.mcmahan836@topper.wku.edu

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Bob Enlehart. Hartford Journal

“A 2006 USA Today/National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE) poll of young adults ages 22 to 29 found that, of those with debt, 30% said they worried about it frequently; 29% had put off or decided against furthering their education because of debt; and 22% had taken a job they would not have taken otherwise because of debt” (Lusardi, Mitchell, Curto, 2010, p.4)

PREVENTING SDTs: STUDENT DEBT TROUBLES

Student Debt On the Rise

“The amount of student debt now stands at over \$1 trillion for both undergraduate and graduate loans and exceeds Americans’ overall credit card debt, according to the Federal Reserve. In particular estimates put the average amount of undergraduate student loan debt for the class of 2014 at just over \$33,000” (Dugan & Kafka, 2014).

“Student loans were created to be an engine for social mobility, but they are, in fact, limiting young people’s ability to achieve financial success:

- 27% of respondents to ASA’s survey said that they found it difficult to buy daily necessities because of their student loans;
- 63% said their debt affected their ability to make larger purchases such as a car;
- 73% said they have put off saving for retirement or other investments; and
- The vast majority—75%—indicated that student loan debt affected their decision or ability to purchase a home” (*American Student Assistance*, 2013).

“Student debt is linked to lower financial, purpose, physical, and community well-being. Notably, well-being is worse for students taking out more than \$50,000 worth of student debt, suggesting student debt is most problematic when it is substantial” (Dugan & Kafka, 2014).

HIGH SCHOOL STEPS

Freshman— Senior Year

- Take AP & Dual Credit Classes
- Sign up for ACT/SAT Prep Courses
- Research two-year institutions for transfer opportunities
- Research colleges with joint bachelors/masters programs

Senior Year

- November: Talk to parents about FAFSA
- January: Fill out FAFSA
- February: Apply for internal & external scholarships
- May: Apply for work study (if eligible) or jobs with tuition reimbursement

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO AVOID BECOMING A STATISTIC?

- Take AP and dual credit courses in high school.
- File the FAFSA early in order to qualify for first-come, first-serve grants. You can always go back in later to include your school code and updated tax information.
- Apply for scholarships at the institution of your choice; check the financial aid website months in advance to ensure you don't miss deadlines.
- Apply for external scholarships (be sure to check with your state's Higher Education authority!)
- Consider joint admission programs that allow you to earn your associate degree at a community college and then transfer to a four-year institution. Look into the requirements for a transfer scholarship.
- Take summer classes at a community college.
- Consider joint bachelors/masters programs to reduce time to completion.
- Apply for Resident Assistant or Work Study positions if eligible. Apply for jobs with employers who offer tuition reimbursement.
- If you need loans, take out the bare minimum.
- If you plan to work for government or not-for-profit organizations, research the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.

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