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## Graduate School Loans

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## Graduate School Loans Testimonials

**Charles W., Boston, MA**

Thank you, Graduate School Loans for your assistance in helping me consolidate my loans and clearing up my confusion about the whole process.

## BILL MAY INCREASE FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID

- GITANJALI HAZARIKA

Legislators from Wisconsin are hoping that President Bush will sign a bill to decrease student loan interest rates and increase student grant eligibility this week.

If passed, this piece of legislation, the College Cost Reduction Act of 2007 (H.R. 2669), will provide the single largest investment in higher education since the 1944 GI Bill. If the bill is signed into law, nearly 70,000 Wisconsin college students will benefit from a boost to their share of federal financial aid. Almost 68,000 of the 76,000 Wisconsin students who take out loans to attend college each year receive Pell Grants.

Introduced by U.S. Rep. Steve Kagen (D-WI), the College Cost Reduction Act was overwhelmingly approved in both the House and the Senate and is expected to go into effect next month. The bill aims to increase Pell Grants without burdening taxpayers by reducing interest rates on student loans by half over the next four years.

Under the act, interest rates would ultimately be reduced from 6.8% to 3.4%, enabling students to save about \$4,000 in interest payments over the lives of their loans. Additionally, the federal grant ceiling would rise to \$5,400 by 2012, increasing by \$1,900 each year for the next five years.

Apart from allowing for loan forgiveness after 10 years of public service in specific fields, including nursing and firefighting, the legislation would also make repaying debts and loans more affordable for new college graduates.

Wisconsin Republicans Jim Sensenbrenner and Paul Ryan voted against the bill. They are concerned, they said, that the bill will hurt financial institutions and argued that universities should concentrate on lowering their tuition rates instead.

## FAFSA WILL SOON ONLY BE AVAILABLE ONLINE

- AMIT AGARWAL

The U.S. Department of Education will no longer send out paper copies of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Instead, the department wants to encourage students to access the FAFSA online. According to Terry W. Hartle, senior vice president for government and public affairs at the American Council on Education, beginning with the 2008-2009 school year, the department will stop routinely mailing paper applications to high schools.

The Department of Education will also create a PDF version of the FAFSA that will be available on various federal student aid websites, such as [www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov](http://www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov). Schools will also be able to access the PDF at [www.fsapubs.org](http://www.fsapubs.org). Students can complete the PDF form of the application on the computer or by hand and mail it in for processing.

The move will save significant costs for the Education Department, but it may add an additional step for disadvantaged students attending college.

The online version of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid is currently used by about 90% of applicants. Students can, however, obtain paper copies of the FAFSA by calling the Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC) toll-free at 800-4-FED-AID (800-433-3243).

Schools will be able to order paper copies of the FOTW Worksheet, which teaches students how to fill out the online FAFSA. Students and schools can also order promotional publications to explain how students can file the FAFSA.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### CARSON TO INTRODUCE BILL TARGETING TEXTBOOK COSTS

Publishers and universities will be required to disclose their hidden textbook costs if Rep. Julia Carson (D-IN) has her way. Carson is expected to table a bill shortly that will create "an open discourse on the costs of higher education and eventually ensure that students will be able to access affordable study materials." The escalating costs of textbooks are making acquiring a college education difficult for many students, says a report published by the Government Accountability Office. The average price students at four-year institutions have to pay for their textbooks—approximately \$898—is calculated to be equal to almost 27% of their tuition costs. Rep. Carson said the problem intensifies at two-year institutions, where the average cost of textbooks equals almost 72% of students' total tuition costs.

### STANFORD DEVELOPS INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH PROGRAM

A new International Outreach Program (IOP) at Stanford University headed by Reinhold Steinbeck is reinventing methods for helping students learn. In a joint effort by

Stanford University and several African and Latin American universities, researchers are looking for new ways to prepare "students for work in the borderless world of the future." The IOP, which is based at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies (FSI), is supporting the pilot project under the guidance of political science professor Coit Blacker. Professor Blacker said the project aims at "expanding Stanford's outreach efforts into other regions with new interdisciplinary content and innovative approaches to learning and teaching."

### BOOHER NEW SCHOLARSHIP DIRECTOR AT INDIANA UNIVERSITY

Sarah Booher has been chosen to head the Office of Scholarships for Indiana University's Bloomington campus. The new Office of Scholarships will fall under the administrative purview of the university's enrollment management and will serve as a repository of information for IU academic scholarship initiatives available to high school students with strong academic backgrounds. Roger Thompson, IU's vice provost for enrollment management, stated that Booher's passion for helping students achieve their goals as well as her "strong understanding of high school students [and] their families" make her the right candidate for the leadership role.