



Photo by Matthew Anderson / WWU



## Associated Students of Western Washington University

# *2014 Federal Agenda*

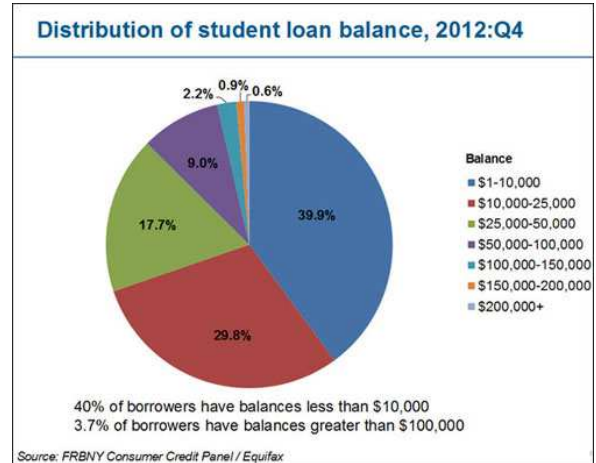
The Associated Students of Western Washington University (ASWWU) represents and protects the interests of 14,950 Western Washington University students. Our three priorities are:

- 1. Student Debt*
- 2. DREAM Act*
- 3. For-Profit College Accountability*

# STUDENT DEBT

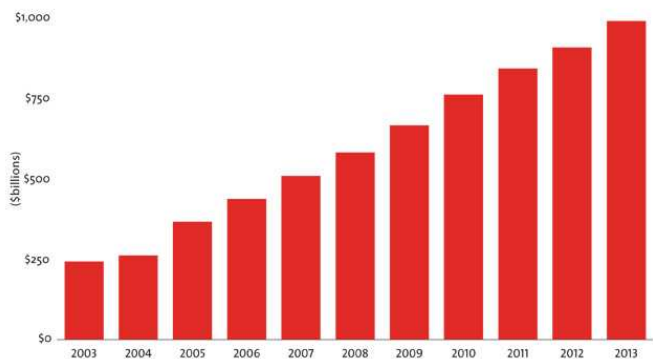
*We believe that \$1.2 trillion of student debt is detrimental to economic growth nationwide. Higher education should be accessible to all students, regardless of socioeconomic class. Accumulation of debt should not be a barrier to higher education. Student debt has quadrupled in the last decade proving the necessity for the following reforms:*

- Maintain low interest rates and increase deferment period on all loans for all students to ensure a sustainable and reasonable repayment process.
- Increase funds to the federal work study program in order to foster student professional development and college affordability.
- Increase assistance and transparency of loan repayment processes to ensure student awareness and accountability.
- Reauthorize the Higher Education Act in order to ensure students have access to financial aid. We believe the HEA should include the following criteria:
  - Restore and lock federal student loan interest rates at 3.4% to aim for a long term fix to student loan interest rates to pave the way for loan refinancing.
  - Improve Income Based Repayment programs to make federal loan payments more affordable.
  - Allow borrowers to refinance or modify their existing loans.
  - Ensure graduate student access to federal subsidized loans and undergraduate level interest rates.
  - Require private lenders contracted with the Department of Education to make borrowers fully aware of repayment options.



## Big Debt on Campus

Student loan debt has nearly quadrupled in the past 10 years.

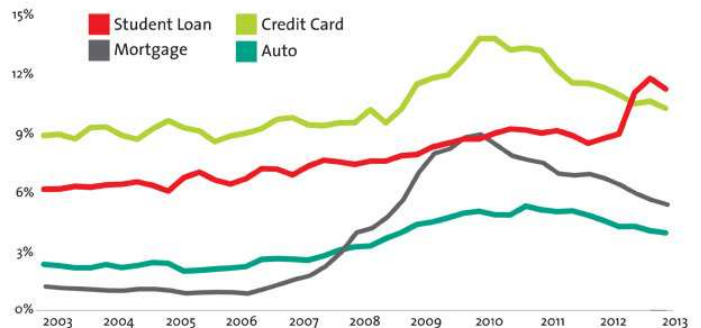


Source: Federal Reserve Bank of New York

Mother Jones

## Underwater

Borrowers with loans that are 90+ days delinquent



Source: Federal Reserve Bank of New York

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## DREAM ACT

*We believe that all students should have equal opportunity to obtain a higher education. There is inherent value in providing both a stable living situation and more accessible opportunities to pursue a career. We support the DREAM Act because:*

- Students and families residing in the U.S. who are undocumented pay taxes, and therefore, should receive the benefits funded by those taxes.
- Students benefit from greater diversity in higher education while preparing to participate in the multicultural society in which we live.
- The U.S. economy benefits from engaging and investing in the creative potential of a diverse and highly educated work force.
- A pathway to citizenship means that previously undocumented students can utilize their degree to benefit our national economy, increasing our global competitiveness.

## FOR-PROFIT COLLEGE ACCOUNTABILITY

*We believe increased regulation and oversight of the for-profit college industry is critical to ensuring the accountability of federal financial aid dollars because:*

- For profit colleges report hundreds of millions of dollars in profit every year the majority of which comes from federal financial aid dollars.
- In August 2010, a U.S Government Accountability Office investigation into for-profit colleges raised concerns about possible fraudulent and unethical behavior.
- Although for-profit colleges only enroll about 12 percent of students nationwide, such institutions account for a disproportionate share of students who do not graduate, remain unemployed, and/or default on their loans.
- Congress should support efforts to reinstate the 85/15 rule and include non-Title IV funds like the Post 9/11 G.I Bill and Department of Defense tuition assistance programs towards the 85 percent of federal funding for-profit colleges are allowed to receive.

## BILLS OF INTEREST

**H.R. 1330:** Student Loan Fairness Act

**S.114:** Fairness for Struggling Students Act of 2013

**S. 1241:** Bipartisan Student Loan Certainty Act

**S.744 or HR.15:** Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act

**H.R. 3496:** Protecting our Students and Taxpayers Act of 2013