

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION



Letters

Correspondence from *Chronicle* readers.

July 16, 2015

Article on Graduate-Student Debt Lacked Context

To the Editor:

Student-loan debt is of great concern to me as a president, as I am sure it is to all presidents. At Nova Southeastern University we do everything to keep tuition as low as possible and offer the quality education expected of a private selective research university of nearly 26,000 students, 80 percent, or approximately 21,000 of which are graduate and professional students. On a per-student loan basis, we have made an examination of the average loan amount, versus per institution, revealing that there are more than 170 colleges and universities with higher average unsubsidized loan amounts per student and more than 180 with higher grad PLUS loans per student than NSU.

Our student-debt burden is indeed large, and when NSU students feel they must borrow funds to assist them in paying for their education, they do so confidently because of our solid track record of professional job preparation and employment. In fact, NSU graduates have a loan-default rate that is among the very lowest of any university in America, graduate or undergraduate, private or public, at just 3.5 percent. This is support that after completing rigorous academic programs, our graduates are getting jobs in professional careers sufficient enough to keep current with their student loans. Although we are just 50 years old, we're seeking to build our endowment and expand research in an effort to attempt to offset rising tuition costs, just as older research universities have been able to do successfully in the past.

Unfortunately, your recent article on graduate-student debt ("[As Graduate-Student Debt Booms, Just a Few Colleges Are Largely Responsible](#)," *The Chronicle*, July 8), while dutifully reporting the contents of a study, omitted much of this important information and perspective. The discussion about graduate student debt needs to be in context with the academic programs offered at an institution, the total number of students, and the ability of the student to repay the loan after graduation.

George L. Hanbury II
President and CEO
Nova Southeastern University
Fort Lauderdale, Fla.