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December 1, 2021

Bernard Dean
Chief Clerk's Office
338 Legislative Building
Olympia, WA 98504

Brad Hendrickson
Office of the Secretary of the Senate
312 Legislative Bldg.
Olympia, WA 98504

Sent via email, bernard.dean@leg.wa.gov and brad.hendrickson@leg.wa.gov

Dear Mr. Dean and Mr. Hendrickson,

Thank you for the opportunity to report on how our 10 member campuses are complying with the Washington Student Loan Transparency Act (Chapter 154, 2017 Laws). As you will read in the following report, our member colleges are committed to guiding students through the financial aspects of postsecondary education, and all have implemented robust procedures to comply with the Washington Student Loan Transparency Act.

Independent Colleges of Washington member campuses work to ensure that borrowing is a last resort and, for those who must utilize this option, borrow as little as possible. On average, for those who borrow, students graduating from an Independent College of Washington member campuses owe approximately \$27,600, similar to the national average. Further, across the Independent Colleges of Washington membership, just 2.2% of our students who borrowed are in default, the lowest rate of any sector in the state of Washington.

Our campuses also support the development of financial literacy among our students. Financial aid, including both grants and loans, is crucial in helping students access and complete a postsecondary education. We work to ensure that our students are fully informed about the financial decisions they make about their education, including providing financial literacy training. Examples include student-led finance activities, online financial literacy programs, financial literacy courses, and digital resources.

We look forward to providing our biannual update to the Legislature, as required in statute, through December 25, 2025. Please let us know if we can be of any further assistance.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Terri Standish-Kuon'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Terri Standish-Kuon
President & CEO

Washington Student Loan Transparency Act Compliance Report

In accordance with the Washington Student Loan Transparency Act, the Independent Colleges of Washington (ICW) is pleased to submit this report on behalf of our ten member campuses to discuss our campuses compliance with this law.

Our campuses are committed to supporting Washington residents to and through postsecondary education. Our students boast the highest graduation rates of any sector and the lowest loan default rates. Our member campuses engage in a variety of practices to support students in all areas of personal finance.

Gonzaga University

Gonzaga University believes that finances should not inhibit students from receiving a world-class education. The University provides a wide array of options to help put Gonzaga in reach for as many students as possible. Approximately 98 percent of undergraduates receive some form of financial aid. For those students who must borrow, Gonzaga sends the student loan letter to all students who are borrowing in mid-August before the semester begins. This information is provided to new borrowers as well as borrowers that have had a loan change during the fall semester and again in the spring and summer semesters. In addition, all students who have a loan disbursed receive an email two weeks later informing them of their right to cancel the loan.

Heritage University

Heritage University is also committed to supporting student financial literacy. This year, Heritage University received a five-year, \$3 million grant from the U.S. Dept. of Education Developing Hispanic Serving Institutions branch. A portion of grant funds will be used to develop a financial literacy course with the goal of establishing the course as a General University Course Requirement for all students. The University also offers TRIO Student Support Services aimed at increasing retention and graduation rates by offering academic and personal support. The University's TRIO program offers a variety of services and activities including financial aid and financial literacy workshops. Additionally, the Heritage University Enactus team is a student-led group open to all majors on campus aiming to serve as an agent of change in the local community. Recent Enactus team activities have included partnering with a local bank to develop a financial literacy program that teaches participants how to create and live on a budget.

Pacific Lutheran University

Pacific Lutheran University is invested in student success and has restructured the formally separate offices of Financial Aid and Student Services to create a one-stop financial shop to support students more fully. The newly created office provides students with counseling and processing for financial aid, billing and payments, VA benefits, financial literacy, and student loan repayment. Further, to comply with the Washington Student Loan Transparency Act, PLU sends out weekly emails to students who have had a change in their loan offerings (when a new loan has been offered or an existing loan has been declined or cancelled). The email directs students to the area in their student portal where they can view the required information. For the 2020-21 academic year, emails providing loan transparency information were sent to 1,443 students.

Saint Martin's University

As an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution, Saint Martin's University knows the barriers that historically underserved and underrepresented students face in comprehending and applying for financial aid. The University strives to ease the financial aid process by providing empathetic and reverent counsel to students and their families regarding their financial education concerns, inquiries, and limitations.

Further, in 2020, Saint Martin's University received a \$2.25 million Title III grant from the U.S. Department of Education under the Strengthening Institutions Program. A portion of these funds will be used to develop and provide financial literacy programs to students. Saint Martin's also provides digital resources to guide students in financial literacy.

Seattle Pacific University

The Student Financial Services office at Seattle Pacific University has an area dedicated to financial wellness. Financial Wellness Services offer emergency help, budgeting resources, and food and housing as well as information on loan exit counseling and critical financial life topics like credit, protecting identity theft, and savings. The University also offers an online financial literacy program with four levels of courses to help students develop their loan IQ, protect their identity, and learn how to invest.

To comply with the Washington Student Loan Transparency Act, Seattle Pacific contracts with Ascendium to use their College Cost Meter product to meet the requirements of the Washington Student Loan Transparency Act. Seattle Pacific periodically sends a file of student loan information to Ascendium. Ascendium then emails the students a message that meets all the requirements of the Washington Student Loan Transparency Act.

Seattle University

Seattle University also contracts with Ascendium to send students notifications that follow the Washington Student Loan Transparency Act. The notifications are sent via email. Last year, 3,065 students received at least one notification and this year 2,785 students have received notifications thus far.

In addition to this service, Seattle University is committed to helping students gain the knowledge necessary to make sound financial decisions. The University offers a variety of digital resources to help students understand basic personal finance concepts, learn about student loans and how those are paid back after college, as well as other helpful tools to practice good financial habits.

University of Puget Sound

The University of Puget Sound provides a host of resources to students around financial literacy including library resources and an outreach librarian to provide supplemental guidance. Library resources include information about credits and loans, student loans, investing, renting and rental agreements, consumer rights, and critical financial literacy, which borrows from critical theory to engage students in the social, historical, and ideological forces and structures that create and maintain our systems of finance and economics.

In compliance with the Washington Student Loan Transparency Act, the University of Puget Sound provides a student loan statement to every student borrower at the university during each term. Students are provided with a personalized summary of their estimated student loan liability as a result of student borrowing as well as instruction on how to access the student loan summary through the student portal. Within the student portal, each student has access to their own personalized “Student Loan Statement” that updates in real time and incorporates the compliance items included in the Washington Student Loan Transparency Act.

Walla Walla University

The Student Financial Services office at Walla Walla University aims to help students navigate the financial planning process to ensure that postsecondary education can be within reach for every student and family. The office provides support with student finances beginning with their time at Walla Walla University and into loan repayment, offering several paths to financial literacy including a student-oriented financial literacy course and financial counseling.

To comply with the Washington Student Loan Transparency Act, twice a year each student that chooses to borrow for post-secondary education is provided an explanation of the communications required by the Act. In addition to the biannual notification, throughout the year students receive access to an updated copy of this information any time their financial plan is revised.

Whitman College

Whitman College offers a comprehensive, diversified financial aid program that includes scholarships, grants, employment, and loans. Further, as part of the College’s *Life After Whitman* strategic priority, Whitman aims to be able to provide every student with funding for a paid internship or a paid collaborative research opportunity during their time at Whitman. To “qualify” for that funding, students are required to participate in co-curricular programming related to the world of work, financial literacy, resume writing, and interviewing skills.

Whitworth University

At Whitworth University, each student is assigned a financial aid counselor who will help them every step of the way, even preparing them to steward their finances after they graduate. Whitworth’s counselors work hard to connect students with scholarships, grants, and other aid; even in the event that their situation changes. With 100 percent of incoming students receiving aid, Whitworth financial aid counselors take student goals to heart and work hard to connect them with every financial resource available to keep college debt low. In fact, Whitworth guarantees graduation within four years, or the University will cover the additional classes students need to complete their education.

In these challenging days of the pandemic, our member campuses know that college costs matter more than ever. We are committed to supporting students and families throughout the duration of their time with us as well as during their transition into the work force. With our innovative programs and initiatives, we are committed to serving students and are excited to continue our work to support Washington residents, our communities, and the state as a whole.

Appendix: Completed Compliance Forms

Student Loan Information Compliance Form

Institution:

Person completing the form: Louisa Diana

Gonzaga College/University did did not
send information to students as required in [RCW 28B.10.285](#) to students with a certified loan.

The communication contained the following estimated information on student education loans this college/university has certified:

- Total amount of education loans taken out by the student and certified by this institution
- Potential total payoff amount (or a range of the total payoff amount) of the student education loans incurred and certified by this institution, including principal and interest
- The estimated monthly repayment amount for the loans taken out at, and certified by, this institution, based on the federal loan repayment plan borrowers are automatically enrolled in
- A statement that a variety of repayment plans are available for federal students loans that may limit the monthly repayment amount based on income; income-driven repayment plans may allow a federal student loan borrower to reduce their monthly payment amount according to a percentage of their income; and a brief summary of the potentially applicable plans
- An estimate of the aggregate federal direct loan borrowing limit applicable to the student's program of study the student has reached at the time the information is sent
- Consumer information about the differences between private student loans and federal student loans, including a brief overview of the availability of income-driven repayment plans and loan forgiveness programs for federal loans
- A statement that estimates and ranges provided are general in nature and not meant as a guarantee or promise of the actual projected amount
- Information about how to access resources for student education loan borrowers by federal or state agencies, such as a student education loan debt hotline and web site or student loan advocate, federal student loan repayment calculator, complaint portals



Signed _____

11/01/2021
Date

Position: Financial Aid Director
 Compliance officer
 President
 Other (please specify) Associate Director

Student Loan Information Compliance Form

Institution: Heritage University
Person completing the form: Dianne Fernandez

Heritage University College/University did did not
send information to students as required in RCW 28B.10.285 to students with a certified loan.

The communication contained the following estimated information on student education loans this college/university has certified:

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Signed Dianne Fernandez 11/29/2021
Date

Position: Financial Aid Director
 Compliance officer
 President
 Other (please specify) _____

Student Loan Information Compliance Form

Institution:

Person completing the form:

Mike Frechette, PLU College/University did did not
send information to students as required in RCW 28B.10.285 to students with a certified loan.

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Signed



11-3-2021
Date

Position:

Financial Aid Director

Compliance officer

President

Other (please specify) _____

Student Loan Information Compliance Form

Institution:

Person completing the form:

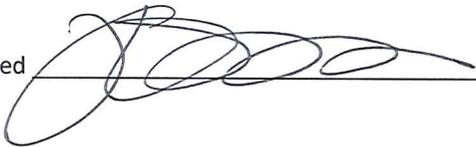
Julie Anderson

Saint Martin's University _____ College/University XXX did _____ did not send information to students as required in [RCW 28B.10.285](#) to students with a certified loan.

The communication contained the following estimated information on student education loans this college/university has certified:

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Signed



11/10/21

Date

Position: Financial Aid Director

Compliance officer

President

Other (please specify) _____

Student Loan Information Compliance Form

Institution: Seattle Pacific University

Person completing the form: John Middeljans

Seattle Pacific College/University did did not
send information to students as required in RCW 28B.10.285 to students with a certified loan.

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Signed



Date

11/2/2021

Position: _____

Financial Aid Director

Compliance officer

President

Other (please specify) Interim Co-Director of Student Financial Services

Student Loan Information Compliance Form

Institution: University of Puget Sound

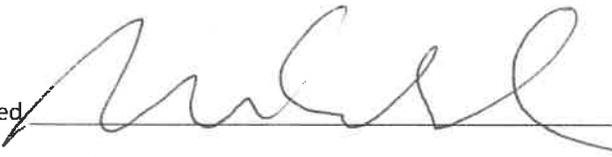
Person completing the form: Bryan Gould, Director of Financial Aid

University of Puget Sound did did not
send information to students as required in RCW 28B.10.285 to students with a certified loan.

The communication contained the following estimated information on student education loans this college/university has certified:

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Signed



Date

11/2/21

Position:

Financial Aid Director

Compliance officer

President

Other (please specify) _____

Student Loan Information Compliance Form

Institution: Walla Walla University

Person completing the form: Kathy L Iwasa

Walla Walla College/University did did not
send information to students as required in RCW 28B.10.285 to students with a certified loan.

The communication contained the following estimated information on student education loans this college/university has certified:

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Signed



11/4/2021

Date

Position: Financial Aid Director

Compliance officer

President

Other (please specify) _____

Student Loan Information Compliance Form

Institution: Whitman College

Person completing the form: Karri Mickelson

Whitman College/University did did not
send information to students as required in [RCW 28B.10.285](#) to students with a certified loan.

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Signed Karri Mickelson

11/19/2021
Date

Position: Financial Aid Director
 Compliance officer
 President
 Other (please specify) Associate Director of Financial Aid

Student Loan Information Compliance Form

Institution: Whitworth University

Person completing the form:

Traci Spoon Stensland College/University X did did not send information to students as required in RCW 28B.10.285 to students with a certified loan.

The communication contained the following estimated information on student education loans this college/university has certified:

- X Total amount of education loans taken out by the student and certified by this institution
X Potential total payoff amount (or a range of the total payoff amount) of the student education loans incurred and certified by this institution, including principal and interest
X The estimated monthly repayment amount for the loans taken out at, and certified by, this institution, based on the federal loan repayment plan borrowers are automatically enrolled in
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Signed Traci Spoon Stensland

11-3-21 Date

Position: Financial Aid Director
Compliance officer
President
X Other (please specify) Assistant Vice president Student Financial Services