THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL AND EXTENSION EDUCATION

CHANGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION ENROLLMENT, TUITION AND FINANCIAL AID HOW THESE FACTORS MAY AFFECT FUTURE GRADUATES

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ABSTRACT

Each year hundreds of thousands of students attend colleges and universities throughout the United States. Recently there have been reports about universities increasing building projects, decreasing government funding, and the increasing cost of attending college. While it is a national problem, this project focused on the University Park campus of Penn State University. The purpose of the project was to discover if students 1) believed their student loan debt would affect their financial stability after graduation, and 2) examine whether or not the increase in enrollment, rise in tuition, and decreased in government funding created changes in students' financial aid packages at University Park.

Quantitative and Qualitative methods were used to conduct this study. Thirty-six (36) seniors, who attended University Park since the 2008-2009 academic year were interviewed, about how they felt about the rise in tuition and how it might affect their financial stability after graduation. Each participant's 2008-2009 and 2011-2012 student aid summaries were used to compare the financial aid packages from these two school years.

The research showed that for the most part students believed their student loan debt, or lack thereof, would affect their monetary situation after graduating from Penn State. Many students viewed their debt as a setback and hindrance from being able to pursue certain goals such as attending graduate school, purchasing a car or renting an apartment, or etc. The comparison of the student aid summaries found that the average total aid had decreased between 2008-2009 and 2011-2012. It also showed that there has been an average increase in grants. The results from this project suggests that while students may not be accumulating more debt as higher education costs increases, they are still being affected by the rise in tuition and decrease in funding.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Receiving a college education is more important today than ever; it has almost become a necessity in society. Most careers require some type of post secondary education and without education, the chance for professional advancement for young adults diminishes. The National Center for Education Statistics reports that between 1997 and 2007, enrollment in higher education institutions increased by 26% (26). This increased enrollment translates to a diverse student population in higher education institutions, with students coming from all backgrounds and low to high income families. As enrollments increased, so has the demand for financial aid to pay tuition. While the need for financial assistance is steadily increasing, funding for students has been decreasing (17). When these factors are considered collectively—higher enrollments, more demand for financial aid, and increasing tuition costs—it signals a new problem developing for future generations of college students.

Statement of Problem

While there is information on student financial aid, funding, and tuition costs individually, there is not much on how these three factors affect students' lives post graduation. With less funding and higher tuition, loans are becoming a greater proportion of student financial aid packages each year, with the end result leading to students accumulating more debt. This research was conducted to describe how these factors affect students' financial stability. This project focused on the University Park campus of Penn State University. University Park's tuition has increased every year for at least the past decade (23) and most recently state funding for the University was cut in half from $334 million to $165 million (12). This suggests that students who depended on financial aid could expect loans to become a larger part of their financial aid package. Information showed a growing problem that students faced with their financial aid packages, which will affect their monetary handlings in the future.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this project was to discover how changes in students' financial aid packages at Penn State University, University Park campus and rising tuition costs may affect students' economic stability after graduation. Through interviews and comparison of past and present financial aid packages, this study describes how students felt about their future economically. This topic was important because students will become key consumers. Consumers are the base unit of society and consumer spending drives the United States economy. Students overburdened with student loan debt are likely to delay taking traditional next steps associated with adulthood after graduation such as buying a car, investing some of their earnings, and moving out of their parents' home into an apartments and saving to buy their own home. Setting up household as a renter and buying a home generates a number of large ticket purchases the keeps the U. S. economy moving in the right direction.

Research Objective

The objectives for this project were to: 1) compare students' financial aid packages from their freshman to senior year; 2) discover if the rise in tuition, increase in enrollment, and decrease in funding may have affected students' financial aid package (i.e. causing them to accumulate more debt); and 3) record students' opinion on the rise in tuition, decrease in funding, and how they feel these trends will affect their lives after they graduate.

Limitations and Delimitations

One weakness of the study was the small sample size. There were only 36 participants. This sample size may not represent the Penn State University Park population, but it provides a base for larger studies in the future. Efforts were made to make the sample size diverse and representative of the University Park population.

This study, focused on current seniors at the University Park campus of Penn State University. Because the tuition and financial aid criteria differs at each Penn State campus, only seniors that attended the University Park campus, four or more years were interviewed.

Summary

Financial aid is used by 70% of students at Penn State University Park (9). Without the help of scholarships, grants, and loans most students at Penn State would not be able to attend. Although these financial aid components help pay the tuition bill, 75% of students who receive aid also get some type of loan (18). Students are responsible for these loans after graduation, and if financial aid packages consist of more loans and fewer scholarships and grants, that implies a greater proportion of future earnings will be earmarked for repaying loans. This paper discusses how increasing school loan debt, may affect future graduates' economic stability after graduation and how these soon to be alumni feel about the rise in tuition and changes in their financial aid packages. Findings from this study can be used as a foundation for more in-depth studies on the changes in financial aid packages offered to Penn State students, and possibly students throughout the nation.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Enrollment in Higher Education Institutions

Studies have shown a vast increase in the enrollment of students in higher education institutions. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reported that enrollment in higher education institutions increased 26% from 1997 to 2007, and 38% between 1999 and 2009, with much of the enrollment increase (45%) being full-time students (28). NCES explained that enrollment increases may have been a result of population growth between 1999 and 2009. They reported that, between this ten year period, the number of 18 to 24 year olds grew by 14%. During the same time, enrollment of students in the same age group went from 36% to 41%. NCES stated that another possible factor that boosted enrollment in higher education institutions could have been the result of more people over the age of 25 enrolling. Between 1999 and 2009 enrollment of students 25 and over increased by 43%.

Many journals published several articles that focused on the increase in college students. These articles explained that the increase in enrollment had been a trend over the past decade and is expected to continue in the future (4; 7; 11; 21). They also warned readers how the trends in increased enrollment correlated with a national trend that developed over the years. The Learning Alliance for Higher Education at the University of Pennsylvania reported similar enrollment trends in the state of Pennsylvania. The Learning Alliance Report suggested that the number of Pennsylvanians that enrolled in a higher education institution between 1990 and 2000 increased by 30 % (3).

An additional factor considered for the boom in enrollments to higher education institutions was the increase in international students. The world's population is constantly growing and many students come from developed and developing countries to attend some of the world's best universities in the United States. The Institute of International Education (IIE) reported that during the 2009-2010 academic school year international students in higher education increased by 3% in the United States (10). A record high was set with 690,923 international students studying at colleges and universities in the U.S. during that academic school year. China was deemed the leading sending country with a total of 128,000 students studying in the states, a 30% increase from previous years. In prior years, the IIE reported that there were 547,867 international students studying in the U.S. during the 2000-2001 school year; and between the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 academic years international enrollment went from 623,805 to 671,616, a 7.7% increase (13).

Socio-Economic Diversity in Higher Education Institutions

The increased enrollment in higher education institutions and the subsequent diversity in the student population can be attributed to a growth in the middle class and an increased demand for higher education from all socio-economic classes. Philip Altbach concluded that some expansion of higher education occurred because of the growth of the middle class post World War II; and their demanding to have access to higher education (1). Altbach explained that after the war, higher education began many transitions from just serving the, "elite class to mass and then to universal." The government's response to this demand created a more diverse socio-economic population at colleges and universities. With more students from middle and lower classes attending higher education institutions, more financial assistance was required. This was the beginning of students attending college who could not afford to pay their tuition bills without some type of financial assistance.

William Sewell explained that socio-economic status played a part in graduation rates at colleges (16). He illustrated that socio-economic status influenced whether or not students would attend college in the first place, and how their socio-economic status would affect the chances of them graduating. Moreover, Sewell stated that students from low income families were less likely to attend college, and even more less likely to graduate than students from high income families. Lower socio-economic students relied more on monetary assistance to attend college. If that assistance decreased, it affected whether or not they would be able to finish their degree. Sewell's study also documented that more socio-economic diverse students were attending colleges and universities than in the past, and that the increases in tuition and changes in financial aid could have potentially changed their ability to continue their education.

Another article focused on how students from different socio-economic backgrounds paid for their higher education. Greg Toppo from USA Today interviewed Richard Kalenberg the editor *of America's Untapped Resource: Low-Income Students in Higher Education* about how a diverse student body, from a socio-economic standpoint, was affected by financial aid. Kalenberg mentioned that while there was financial aid for students from different economic backgrounds, the percentage of aid that was available to them had not kept up with the consistent rise in tuition (20). He stated that the Pell grant, specifically for low income students, used to cover 40% of the tuition bill, but currently only covered about 15%. While not specifically stated in the article, readers could surmise that the increased enrollment of students from low to moderate income households plus rising tuition would result in a change in financial aid packages.

At Penn State alone, the number of underrepresented students, which consists of African American, Latinos, and Native Americans, has grown 38% over the past decade (2). Penn State's Vice Provost for educational equity, Dr. Walter Terrell Jones, insinuated a correlation between underrepresented students and low income first generation students trying to attend college. While Dr. Jones went on to say that one major road block is a lack of proper academic preparation, another was factor was lack of funding available to these students in need, especially since there are more. In 2006, Penn State reported that minority enrollment was at a record high of 10,905 for the 2006-2007 school year. This was an 8% increase from the previous year (14).

Rise of Tuition and Budget Cuts

Another trend with higher education institutions was the constant increase in tuition. NCES reported that the national average for tuition, and room and board, rose 34% at public institutions between the 1999-2000 and 2009-2010 academic years (27). FinAid explained that between 1989 and 2005 college tuition inflation averaged 5.94 % while the general inflation averaged 2.99 % (6). NCES indicated that tuition was expected to continue to increase at twice the rate of the country's general inflation. FinAid stated that with college tuition increasing at the current rate, 1.83 times more than general inflation, tuition would double every nine years. A child born today would have to pay three times the current tuition costs to attend college 18 years from now.

Focusing closer to home, the Penn State tuition history website showed that tuition per semester at the University Park campus had more than doubled over the past decade (23). Tuition at University Park increased every year for the past 10 years. Overall, there has been an automatic 10-15% increase in tuition, depending on the major, when a student transitioned to an upperclassman for their junior and senior year. Over the past decade, Penn State's yearly tuition increase was far more than yearly inflation rates. Of all the Big Ten Universities (12 universities), Penn State had the highest tuition for in-state students during the 2009-2010 academic year (22). In response to the rise of tuition there were many student protests throughout the state of Pennsylvania and at the University Park campus of Penn State. Various students campaigned about how the rise of tuition and lack of aid had prevented them from being able to afford to attend college (24). Penn State was not the only school to have students stressed about the constant increase in tuition. Gammage informed readers about several Pennsylvania higher education institutions that raised tuition for the 2011-2012 academic year, and how this affected students' ability to pay their consistently growing bill (8).

On top of tuition increasing at an alarming rate, with the economy being in an uproar there were budget cuts to funding from all forms of governments. In early 2011, the president of Penn State, Graham Spanier, discussed the recent budget cuts in state funding for Penn State and how it forced tuition to raise at an even higher rate than already anticipated (17). Spanier also explained how the $182 million budget cut hurt various units throughout the university, especially Agricultural Research and Cooperative Extension.

Changes in Components of Financial Aid Packages

Changes in components of financial aid packages could have been another factor why students were having difficulty paying their tuition. The NCES reported that for the 2007-2008 school year 65.6% of full time students, receiving postsecondary education, received financial aid and 38.5% of the financial aid packages consisted of loans (25). In a report posted by College Board only 46.8% of Penn State's first year students received a financial aid package, and of the students who did 36% of their package consisted of loans (15). The Chronicle of Higher Education reported that students who attended for profit colleges and universities were more likely to graduate with bigger loan debt than students who attended public or nonprofit private institutions (19). The Chronicle also indicated that 99% of students that attended for profit schools would accumulate some loan debt whether they came from a household with income of less than $30,000 or households with income of $120,000 or more. In comparison, only 68% of students that attended public colleges and universities and came from a family with income of less than $30,000 would graduate with loan debt; and only 40% would have loan debt if their family's income was $120,000 or more. Regardless of families' household income, students enrolled in colleges since 2000 and beyond accumulated more loan debt than students enrolled prior to 2000.

Loans are not the only components of financial aid packages. Many financial aid packages consist of grants and scholarships. One assumption may be that grant funding has decreased, when in actuality the complete opposite has occurred. Grants such as the Pell grant have increased, but covered less of the tuition bill (5). The high rise in tuition also affected the percentage of the financial aid package that came from grants. While the average Pell grant had increased from $2,474 to $3,646, the percent of cost covered by this grant for four year public higher education institutions decreased from 39% to 34% over the past decade since 2001.

Chapter 3

Methods

Research Design

This research was conducted in two steps; first, the researcher received a copy of participants' student aid summary from the 2008-2009 and 2011-2012 school year, and secondly interviewed participants on how they thought the changes in financial aid packages at Penn State University Park would affect them.

Instruments

The instruments used to collect the quantitative data were student aid summaries from the respective years mentioned above. This information was needed to compare the financial aid packages from students' first year and senior year at Penn State University Park. The other instruments used to collect the qualitative data for this project were eight interview questions composed by the researcher. Students were asked how they felt about the changes in their aid packages and if they believed the changes would affect their financial stability after they graduated.

Recruitment

Requests to recruit participants were sent to various list-servs throughout the University Park campus. Social networking websites such as Twitter and Facebook were also used to reach participants. Several announcements were made in classes where the professor gave permission.

Sample and Population

The sample consisted of 36 volunteer participants, 22 females and 14 males. Penn State University Park had 38,630 undergraduate students enrolled during the time the project was conducted. While the researcher reached out to diverse groups, the sample may not represent the Penn State University Park population.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected through an informal one on one interview with the participant and the researcher in a private environment. The data collection process and interview was approved by Institutional Review Board (IRB).The researcher began by explaining the project to the participant and giving the volunteer an opportunity to read the informed consent and confidentiality form. After the participant read and signed the informed consent the researcher signed the form and gave the participant a copy for their personal records. In the top right corner of the consent form the researcher assigned the volunteer a participant number, which is how the participant was identified in the word document. Next, the volunteer gave the researcher a copy of their student aid summary from the 2008-2009 and 2011-2012 academic school year. For confidentiality purposes the name of the participant was removed from the document and replaced with their participant number. Following, the researcher created a password protected word document, with the file name being the participant's assigned identification number, and asked the participant the following eight questions:

1. How do you feel about the increase in your tuition from your freshman to your senior year?

2. How do you feel about the increase (or decrease) in the percentage of each component in your financial aid packages from your freshman to your senior year?
3. Graduation is just around the corner. How do you feel about your loan debt?
4. Do you have a repayment plan?
5. Did you use the tuition calculator before making a decision to attend Penn State?
6. Have you used the tuition calculator since being enrolled as a Penn State student?
7. Do you know the total amount you will owe for student loans after you graduate? Why or Why not?
8. Do you think your student loan debt will affect you economically after graduation? Yes or No. Please explain? (Examples of affect include----ability to rent an apartment, get a new car; ability to buy a house or how much house can be purchased, saving for retirement, starting an investment program).

Data were collected between August 29, 2011 and September 22, 2011. Data collection consisted of taking notes and capturing direct quotes from each interviewee. Student aid summaries were received from each individual and the researcher used descriptive statistics to analyze the different components of the student aid summaries. The researcher compared percentages of loans, grants, and scholarships between the 2008-2009 and 2011-2012 school year on each interviewee's financial aid package.

The Microsoft Excel program was used to analyze data collected from financial aid summaries. Comparing financial aid summaries between two school years could only capture any changes in the students' financial aid. However, interviews captured the component of having student loan debt, impact on students, that numbers alone cannot convey. The one on one personal interview allowed students to openly express how any changes could make a difference in their lives after they graduated or left Penn State.

Chapter 4

Results/Findings

This chapter provides the results from the student aid summaries and the one-on-one interviews with University Park seniors. Again, the purpose of this study was to compare financial aid packages of Penn State University Park seniors from their freshman year to their senior year, examine whether or not there have been changes in the financial aid packages over the past four years that resulted in students accumulating more debt, and to discover if students believed their financial stability after graduation would be affected by the changes in their financial aid package. The results are organized to show the information from the interview, and the quantitative analysis of how financial aid packages have changed.

Interview Data

The results from the interviews varied very much in terms of how students believed the increased tuition and changes in financial aid packages would affect them. The majority of participants, 31, had some form of negative response when asked "How do you feel about the increase in your tuition from your freshman to your senior year?" Most participants expressed themselves as being upset, annoyed, frustrated, or sad. Several mentioned that even if the rise in tuition did not directly affect them it affected a lot of their friends' ability to be able to return to school. The five students who did not have anything negative to say either did not understand the rising tuition or were not really aware of the tuition changes.

Question 2: How do you feel about the increase (or decrease) in the percentage of each component in your financial aid packages from your freshman to your senior year?

When asked how they felt about the changes in their financial packages from the 2008-2009 school year to the 2011-2012 school year, 27.7% of participants responded saying they had more loans in the 2011-2012 year than in 2008-2009. Twelve students reported having less grants, fewer scholarships, or less of both grants and scholarships. There was a consistency between students who reported having more loans and fewer scholarships and grants. However, not all students reported negative changes. Seven participants stated that there were no changes in their financial aid packages between the two academic years. The students who reported this were generally on full scholarships. Other positive reports were three students who had an increase in grants, scholarships, or both.

Question 3: Graduation is around the corner. How do you feel about your loan debt?

Participants were asked how they felt about the student loan debt that they accumulated over their years at University Park. Twenty-five percent of them did not have any student loan debt. Of the remaining 27 participants who had loan debt, 10 said they were worried, 14 stated that they thought the debt was manageable and they were not stressed about it, and three mentioned that while they were not necessarily worried, their student loan debt would affect their post graduation decisions.

Question 5: Did you use the tuition calculator before making a decision to attend Penn State?

Question 6: Have you used the tuition calculator since being enrolled in Penn State?

Although not wildly publicized, Penn State does offer a tuition calculator on their website so students can get an estimate of what their bill will look like. The majority of the students interviewed, 80.5%, did not use the tuition calculator before they decided to attend Penn State. Many of those who did not use the calculator were unaware that it existed. Even after deciding to attend Penn State University Park campus, 77.7% had not used the tuition calculator while enrolled.

Question 4: Do you have a repayment plan?

Question 7: Do you know the total amount you will owe for student loans after you graduate?

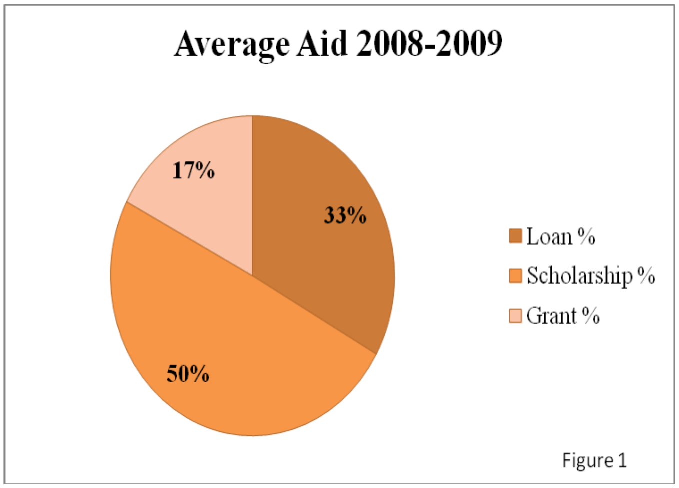
A crucial part in being able to pay back student loans, or any type of debt, is to understand financial obligations and recognize other responsibilities. Creating a personal repayment plan for student loans is one possible way of organizing how to pay bills. Twenty two of the 26 participants stated they did not have a repayment plan. Several of those students mentioned that they had not even thought about it until asked in the interview. Five participants had a personal repayment plan, and the question was not applicable for nine participants since they did not have any student loans. Next, participants answered whether or not they knew the total amount of student debt they would have when they graduated. Of the students who actually had student loans, more than half, 59.2%, knew how much student debt they would have accumulated by their graduation.

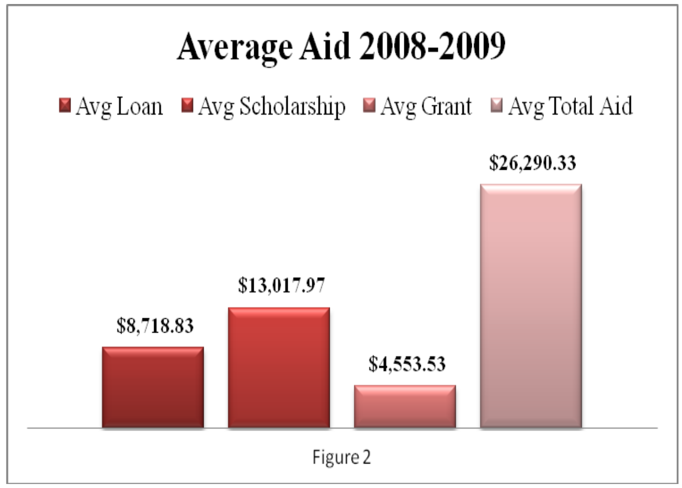
Question 8. Do you think your student loan debt will affect you economically after graduation? Yes or No. Please explain?

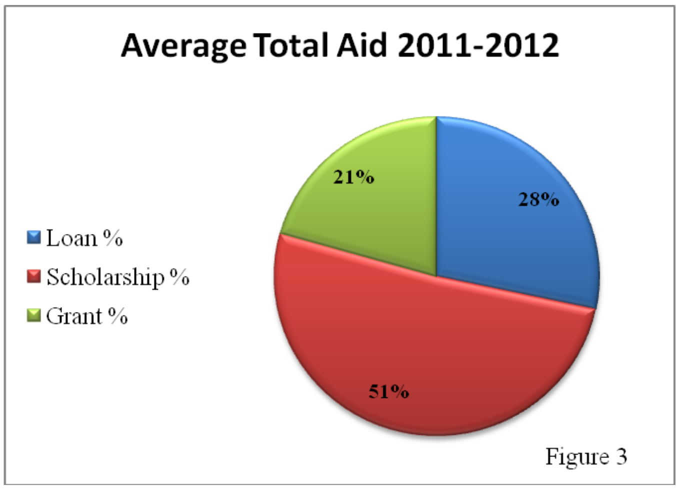
Finally, participants were asked whether they thought their student loans, or lack thereof, would affect them economically after graduation. Twenty-five students answered yes. While their reasons why loans would affect them economically varied, many students stated that student loans would be a setback for them moving forward in life after graduation. Some students mentioned wanting to continue their education and go to graduate school, but were concerned or wondered if they should work to pay back some of their undergraduate loans first. Others stated that their student loans would delay them from being able to move out of their parents' home or purchase a car. A few participants said their lack of student loans would affect them positively since they did not have to worry about the pressures of finding a job immediately. Some expressed that not having loans could be a setback because they did not have established credit, so it may hinder their opportunity to buy a car or rent an apartment. Five students did not really think their student loans would affect them much after graduation either because they either did not have many loans or they believed they would be able to pay them back and still make large purchases and investments. Lastly, six students believed that their student loans, or lack thereof, would not affect their economic stability at all mostly because they did not have any to pay or were relying on their parents to pay the loans back for them.

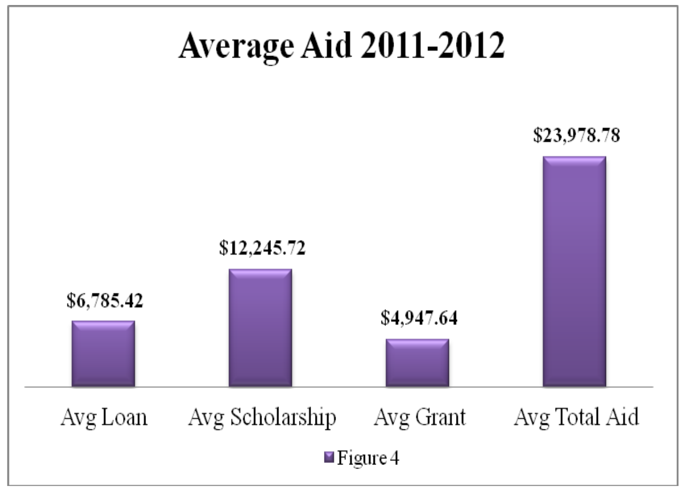
Student Aid Summary Data

The second part of this project was to compare the student aid summaries from the 2008-2009 and 2011-2012 academic years. These results are based on the 36 participants. Some students' (3) entire financial aid package consisted of just scholarships. In the 2008-2009 school year, grants made up 17% of the total financial aid package, scholarships consisted of 50%, and









loans averaged 33% (Figure1). The average total financial aid package in 2008-2009 was $26,290.33 (Figure 2). More specifically, loans averaged $8,718.83, scholarships $13, 017.97, and grants $4,553.53. Figure 3 shows that grants made up 21% of the financial aid package for the 2011-2012 school year, a 4% increase from the 2008-2009 academic year. It also displays that loans made up 28% in 2011-2012, where as in 2008-2009 loans made up one third of the financial aid package. The percentage of scholarships also increased from 50% in 2008-2009 to 51% in 2011-2012. When looking at actual numbers, Figure 4 shows that while the average of total aid decreased from $26,299.33 in 2008-2009 to $23,978.78 in 2011-2012 the average amount of grants increased by $394.11 and the average amount of loans decreased by $1,933.41. The average amount of scholarships decreased by $772.25.

Discussion

This project found that current seniors at Penn State University Park generally believed that their student loan debt would affect their economic stability after graduation. Several students expressed that they felt like the student loans would hinder them from being able to do things in the near future such as travel, buy a car, rent an apartment, or start a 401(k). Some students were very uninformed about their school loans which may or may not affect them negatively after they have graduated.

When thinking about whether the increase in enrollment, rise in tuition, and decrease in funding affected students' financial aid packages, there was no direct answer. Yes, there were changes in the average financial aid package from the freshman to senior year. However, it was not possible to determine a direct relationship between these changes and the changes in enrollment, tuition and funding with the data collected. One possible correlation could have been between the decreased funding and the decrease in the average overall package, however, this could be argued because there was actually an average increase in grants, which typically came from the federal government. The average decrease in loans and scholarships could have been a result of the recession that began December, 2007, or it could have been a result of the increased enrollment. Since there are more students attending college, maybe the number of scholarships and loans increased, but the amount of these scholarships and loans decreased. In order to document a more direct correlation between all of these factors more research needs to be conducted.

In reference to comparing the financial aid packages between 2008-2009 and 2011-2012, overall the financial aid packages got worse. The total average amount of aid went down, which meant students paid more money out of pocket; money they might not have had. Also, the amount of loans and scholarships went down. It was clear that tuition increased. However, the average amount of grants increased which actually went against the notion that federal government funding decreased.

The results from this project proved that this topic is important and needs to be researched more. It showed that most seniors are receiving less financial aid while tuition continues to rise and these seniors are concerned about their financial well being. While this research did not discover a solution, it did provide information on why increased enrollment, rise in tuition, and decreased funding is important. Since students believe that their college loan debt will affect them economically after graduation, there should be concern that student loan debt will affect the entire economy, since there are so many adults graduating from colleges and universities each year. If a large number of students are unable to invest in the economy, then the entire nation will suffer the repercussions. One way Penn State could approach the issue is by implementing a personal finance workshop teaching students more about loans and money management in the first-year seminar courses that are required by all first year students. Freshman and upper class students could benefit from multiple exposures about credit, using credit (whether on student loans or credit cards), and the process of how a credit history is established.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

It is almost a necessity today to receive some form of higher education. College enrollment, as well as the cost to attend, has steadily increased over the past decade. With the nation currently suffering from economic downturn, it has resulted in a decrease in government funding to higher education institutions. There are so many changes occurring simultaneously in higher education that it has to affect students in some way. However, it was not possible to pinpoint the true impact of a single change.

This project focused specifically on Penn State University Park campus students who had been attending campus since the 2008-2009 academic school year. The three objectives of the study were to: 1) examine how the decrease in funding, increase in tuition, and rise in enrollment affected students' financial aid packages, 2) discover if the changes mentioned above resulted in students having to take out more student loans than in the past, and 3) compare the changes in financial aid packages from the 2008-2009 and 2011-2012 academic years.

To conduct this research, quantitative and qualitative methods were used. Thirty six interviews were conducted and eight questions were asked to gain insight on students' knowledge of the changes in their tuition, enrollment, and financial aid packages, how they felt about the changes, and their opinion of how they believed these changes would affect their future. The 36 participants also provided copies of their student aid summaries from 2008-2009 and 2011-2012. The summaries contained information on the grants, scholarships, and loans they received both school years to allow comparison.

The results from the interviews and student aid summaries displayed both similarities and differences. Some similarities were that many students believed their financial aid packages changed throughout their years at University Park. Several students mentioned that they lost some of their scholarships, and that also correlated with the results found in the student aid summary comparisons. The scholarships average did decrease between 2008-2009 and 2011-2010, but they covered a higher percentage of the financial aid package in 2011-2012 than in 2008-2009. Another shocking similarity was students claimed they lost a lot of aid over the years, and had to pay more money out of pocket. The results reiterated what students reported because the average total aid decreased by 8.8%. Many students stated they accumulated more debt, but the average loan amount actually decreased in the 2011-2012 school year. Also, while several students stated they received fewer grants, the proportion of grants (21%) in average total aid and the average grant amount ($4,947) increased in 2011-2012 when compared to 2008-2009 figures, 17% and $4,553, respectively.

Although the results from the study did not match all expectations, findings revealed that financial aid packages have changed over the years. Findings also showed that decrease in funding had some affect on students' financial aid packages. While average grants amounts increased, the overall average of the student financial aid package decreased from 2008-2009 ($26,290) to 2011-2012 ($23,978). This could mean that funding in other areas decreased which resulted in less aid. Students' have mixed feelings about their student loan debt. Some are worried and stressed about it, while others view it as a good investment and believe it is manageable and can be paid back.

Since this study only consisted of 36 participants it may not represent the population at Penn State. In the future, this research could be expanded with a larger sample size and be even more focused. It may be beneficial to narrow in on each factor, increased enrollment, increased tuition, and decreased funding individually and try to answer the three objectives previously mentioned.

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EDUCATION

The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA

Smeal College of Business:	Finance
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Expected Graduation Date:	Fall 2011

The American University in Cairo, Cairo, Egypt

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HONORS/AWARDS

Schreyer Honors College	Bunton-Waller Fellow	Gates Millennium Scholar
Herbert Lehman Scholar	Golden Key Int'l Honor Society	

EXPERIENCE

Pennsylvania State University

Foundation Relations Office, Intern, University Park, PA 3/2011 – 5/2011

- Document past corporate and foundation donations
- Enter and organize data using Microsoft Excel, Office and Power Point

Pennsylvania State University

Donor Services, Intern, University Park, PA 1/2011 – 3/2011

- Organize monetary donations and acknowledge donors
- Assist in fundraising financial reporting

Pennsylvania State University

SROP, Research Assistant, University Park, PA 6/2010 – 8/2010

- Analyzed local taxpayer financial literacy data
- Presented at annual CIC summer Conference

Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency

Customer Service Representative, State College, PA 1/2010 – 6/2010

- Assist customers with loan logistics
- Advise borrowers loan repayment options and solutions