

Making Ends Meet: The Experience and Consequences of Student Loans among UC San Diego Undergraduates

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Background

- UCSD's estimated cost of attendance for 2025 is \$45K for in-state and \$83K for out-of-state students, representing a greater than 20% increase over the past 5 years
- Students are concerned about being able to pay their expenses, but also worried about taking on debt
- Survey conducted in 2025 to evaluate:
 - Loan attitudes and practices
 - Loan offers and acceptance rates
 - Anticipated debt and concerns about its impact
 - Extent to which loans alleviate financial insecurity

Methods

- Qualtrics survey distributed to undergraduate public health and economics students at UCSD
- Response rate = 80% (774/968)
- Epilnfo 7.2.6 used to calculate frequencies, prevalence rate ratios, and p-values to determine the associations between student behaviors, resources, and financial gaps

Results

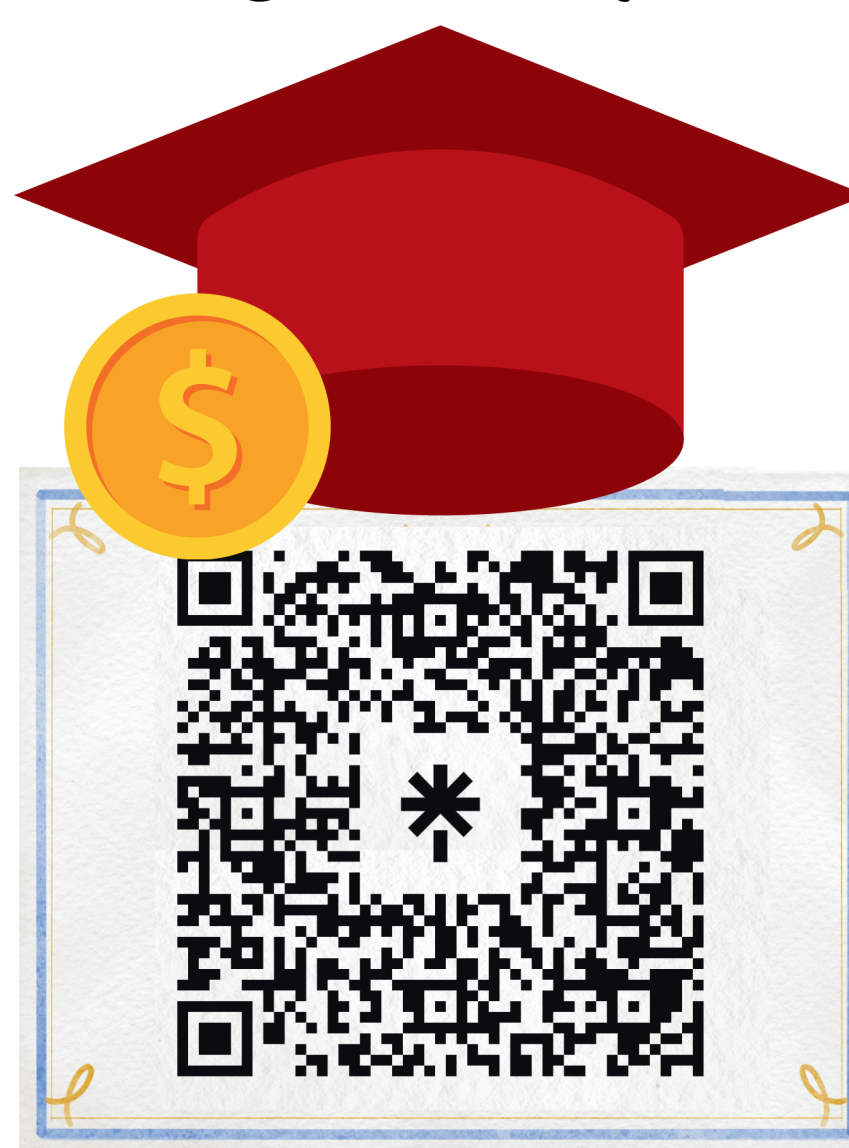
- 57% of students received a financial aid package
- 35% were offered Federal loans; 74% accepted
- Students with loans were 1.3 times more likely to face financial difficulties than students receiving scholarships, grants, and work-study (53% v. 41%; PRR=1.3; $p < 0.01$)
- 40% of students with loans expect to have a loan debt balance exceeding \$20,000 by graduation
- Most students with loans have concerns about how their accumulated student debt will impact their futures

Conclusions

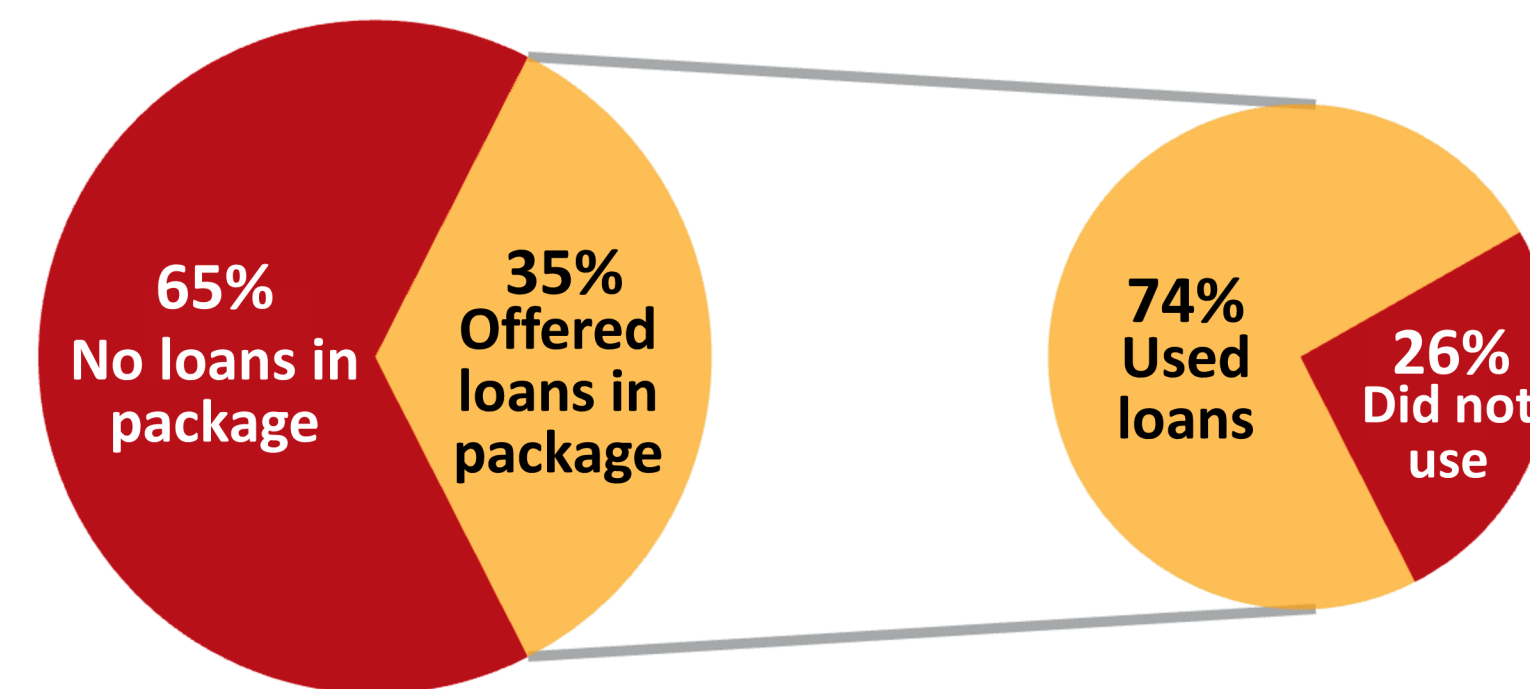
- Students rely on loans, but many are concerned about how debt may impact their futures
- Students receiving loans are more likely to be financially insecure than those receiving other forms of financial aid
- Effective aid and resources for debt repayment and financial planning is needed to accommodate students' needs
- A financial wellness program should be implemented to help students maximize use of available funds and provide a safety net for the cost of education

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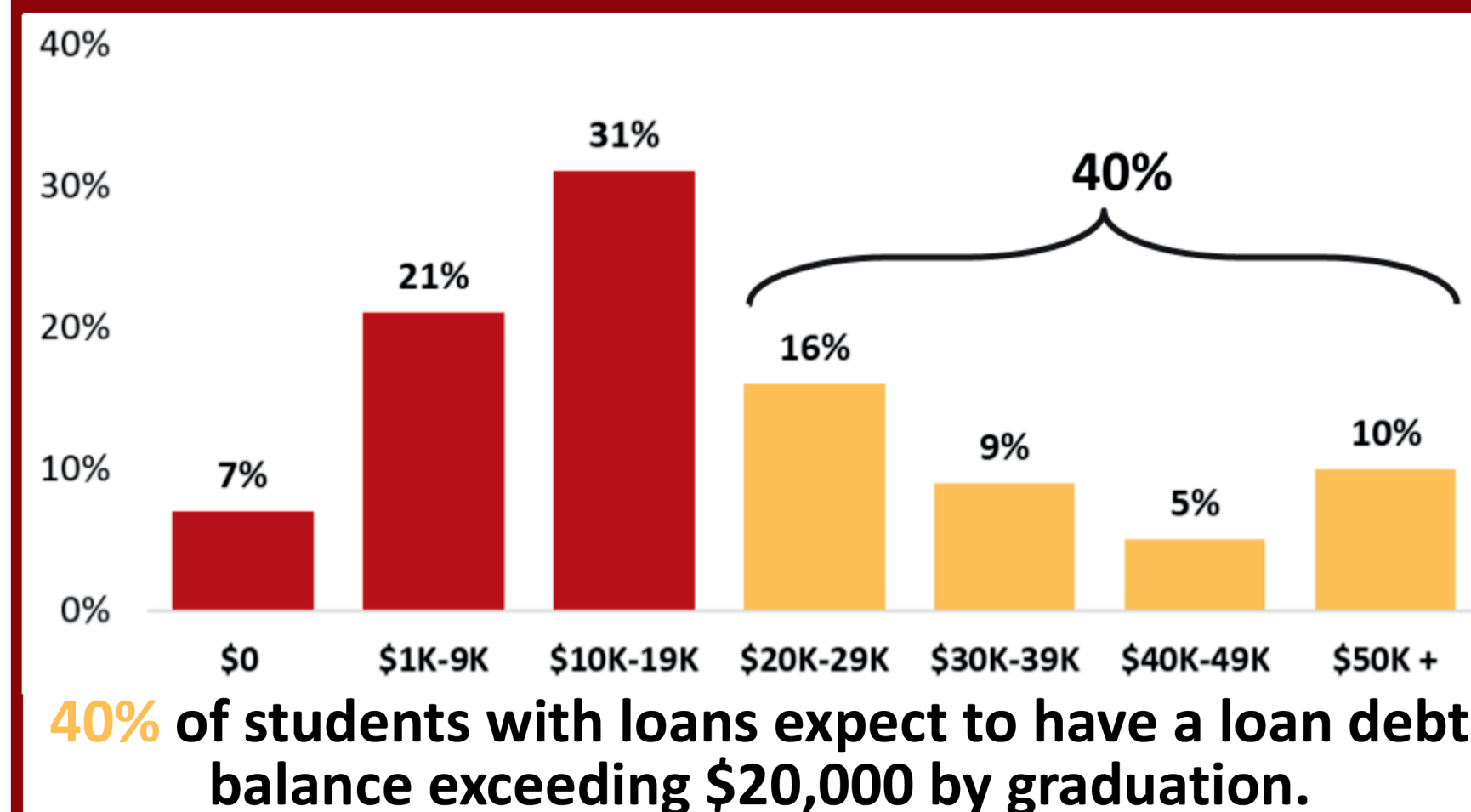
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Financial aid package loan offer and acceptance (N=440)



Expected loan debt by graduation (N=195)



What are student concerns about loan debt? (N=195)

