Financing a college education takes creativity, commitment and support; to fund the Carnegie Mellon educational experience, over half of undergraduates rely on some form of financial aid to help pay for educational expenses. This bulletin examines the financial aid landscape for undergraduates at CMU, including need-based financial aid, types of aid, Pell grant dollars, average borrowing, and graduates’ loan default rate. For detailed, historic information about financial aid at CMU, visit the website of Institutional Research and Analysis at www.cmu.edu/ira.

Need-Based Financial Aid for Undergraduates

The percentage of financial need met by grants, federal loans and other awarded aid is consistent from first-year students to upperclass students.

Need-based aid is awarded to students who demonstrate financial need and meet other eligibility criteria. Eligibility for federal, state, CMU, and most institutional financial aid programs is determined by using a Congressional formula called Federal Methodology. It uses student and family total taxable and untaxed income, information reported on the FAFSA, size of household, and number enrolled in college to determine a family’s Expected Family Contribution (EFC).

2014-15

47% of CMU Students Received Financial Aid

Source: IRandA Common Data Set, 2014-15

2013-14 Financial Aid Sources

$76 million CMU Grants Awarded

- All CMU Grants (& SEOG): $76
- Student Loans: $15.2
- Other (ROTC & Outside): $4.4
- All Fed & State Grants: $4
- Work Study: $1.6

Carnegie Mellon commits tens of millions of grant dollars annually to support students with financial need. Of those grant dollars, $8.9 million are generated by contributions from generous donors who contribute to scholarship funds in the CMU endowment. Grants do not have to be repaid by the student or family and are used to directly offset tuition, fees, and room and board expenses. The financial aid sources noted here do not include parent loans.
Pell Grants Awarded

Average CMU Pell Grant Award in 2014-15

$4,293

Often a measure of a school’s socioeconomic diversity, Pell Grants are given to families with high need based on information reported in their FAFSA. In 2014-15, 779 CMU undergraduates received Pell Grants totaling $3.34 million.

Source: CMU Student Financial Aid Office

Student Loan Commitment Upon Graduation

College graduate indebtedness is a topic that receives significant attention across the US and in the media. At CMU, taking out loans is part of the financial and bill payment equation. In 2014-15, 45% of CMU undergraduates borrowed student loans (including institutional, state, federal Perkins, subsidized/unsubsidized, and private loans certified by CMU) to support their educational expenses.

CMU Undergraduate Class of 2014*

Average Amount Borrowed

$31,905

*Class in this section is defined as the 2014 undergraduate class who graduated between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014, and those who started as full-time students and received a Bachelor’s degree. This information excludes students who transferred to CMU and funds borrowed at other institutions.

Source: IRandA Common Data Set, 2014-15

Graduates’ Loan Default Rate

Our graduates - in the collective - have a very low loan default as compared to similar institutions – including the other prestigious, research institutions in the Association of American Universities (AAU). The AAU is an association of 62 leading public and private research universities in the United States and Canada.

CMU vs. National vs. AAU Average Default Rates

0.9%

CMU Loan Default Rate

Sources: IRandA (www.cmu.edu/ira), using data from Department of Education (www2.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/defaultmanagement/cdr.html).
Note: This information is the most recent available.