RETURN ON INVESTMENT (ROI)

With the rising costs of higher education and concerns about student loan debt, students and parents often ask: “Is the cost worth it?” Recognizing that each student and family will arrive at their own equation about the value of a private educational experience such as the one Carnegie Mellon offers, the following information provides context for these decisions. See if you agree that a CMU education is worth the cost and that our graduates manage their debt capably – we have the data to show it.

Earning Potential for CMU Graduates - External Sources

In recent years, several US publications have used existing, publicly-available data to develop mechanisms to provide insight regarding return on investment and to address the question about whether the cost of an institution is a good value given the earning potential of its graduates.

CMU vs. Peer Institutions Early Career Salary

PayScale releases an annual College ROI Report (based on its annual salary survey) to provide an understanding of the value of college education in the job market. The graph above gives us a good idea about earning potential for graduates of CMU as compared to peer institutions. In engineering jobs specifically, CMU graduates reported higher median salaries than the national median. While fields such as engineering and computer science typically offer a higher salary, CMU fares well in the overall ranks, too.

Median Salary by Job - CMU vs. National

25/1223
Overall ROI Rank

14/402
Private Not-for-Profit ROI Rank

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The 45% of undergraduates who borrow money while attending CMU can determine their estimated monthly repayment amount by using the US Department of Education’s repayment estimator at http://studentaid.ed.gov/repay-loans/understand/plans.

After graduation, it is not unusual for students to pay several hundred dollars a month toward their student loans for a period of approximately ten years. That said, CMU’s federal loan default rate is extremely low; in fiscal year 2012 (most recent information available), the default rate was 0.7%.

What We Know...

1. A CMU education is a significant financial commitment for students and families.
2. At the same time, 47% of our undergraduates receive some kind of financial aid - including more than $84 million in grant aid annually.
3. Our graduates have demonstrated that their earning potential is high.
4. As a result, our graduates pay back their loans in remarkably strong numbers; our graduates’ default rate on student loans is less than 1%.

We encourage students and families to use reputable financial advising resources such as:
- www.whitehouse.gov/issues/education/higher-education/college-score-card
- www.payscale.com/college-roi