The College Scorecard tool (https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/) first released by the U.S. Department of Education in February 2013, and a later updated version in September 2015, attempts to provide data transparency for students and their families. This online tool is intended to help students and their families make an informed decision on college choice based on college affordability and earning power after graduation. The complete College Scorecard has over 1,600 data items for over 7,000 colleges spanning 18 years (1995 to 2012). This briefing examines just a few data items relevant to the cost of education, incurred debt and loan and earning power after graduation. The briefing will compare the Purdue data to our peer Association of American Universities (AAU) public institutions as well as to the Big Ten institutions and other Indiana higher education institutions.

### AAU Publics

- Univ. of Arizona
- Univ. of Minnesota, Twin-Cities*
- Univ. of Ca., Berkeley
- Univ. of Colorado, Boulder
- Univ. of Missouri
- Univ. of Ca., Davis
- Univ. of Florida
- Univ. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
- Univ. of Ca., Irvine
- Georgia Inst of Technology
- Ohio State Univ.*
- Univ. of Ca., San Diego
- Univ. of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign*
- Univ. of Oregon
- Univ. of Ca., Santa Barbara
- Indiana Univ.*
- Penn State Univ.*
- Univ. of Ca., Los Angeles
- Univ. of Iowa*
- Univ of Pittsburgh
- Univ of Virginia
- Iowa State
- Rutgers Univ., New Brunswick*
- Univ of Washington
- Univ. of Kansas
- SUNY-Stony Brook
- Univ of Wisconsin, Madison*
- Univ. of Maryland, College Park*
- Univ. of Iowa
- Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor*
- Univ. of Texas, Austin
- Michigan State Univ.*
- Texas A&M Univ.

*Also Big Ten Institutions plus Univ. of Nebraska, Lincoln.

The College Scorecard information is based on the data submitted by institutions to federal data sources such as the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) and the Department of Treasury. The College Scorecard provides insight into the performance of schools that receive federal financial aid dollars and the outcomes of the students of those schools.

### Average Net Cost for Undergraduate in-state Students

The cost of a college education is one of the key metrics which appear on the College Scorecard interactive tool. Student and their families looking for institutions that are within their financial reach, usually evaluate the Scorecard data item called Average Net Price. This data item is a calculated field derived from the IPEDS full cost of attendance minus federal, state, and institutional aid, for undergraduate Title IV-receiving in-state undergraduate students. The average reported in the Scorecard is the weighted average of the net price by family income category. This methodology leads to a higher reported value than the IPEDS reported average net price³.

Figure 1 shows how the Scorecard average net price has changed over time broken out by Purdue and the comparison groups we are using. While Purdue is above the median value in Indiana, they remain below the median in the Big Ten, and are in the middle of the pack when compared to AAU public universities.

### Federal Loan Debt for Completer’s

The College Scorecard allows a look into the median debt incurred by students who graduate from an institution. Along with evaluating the average annual cost, this information on debt becomes important to students and their families when making a college choice decision. The data item is an accumulated amount at the institution by all student borrowers of federal loans who graduate in a given fiscal year, measured at the point of graduation. More specifically, the measure represents the sum of all originated federal loans over students’ college education—e.g., if a student receives a federal loan for $2,000 for each of eight semesters, their cumulative debt is recorded as $16,000².

Figure 2 compares federal loan debt between students who complete their education against those who do not. Purdue fares well against our peers in the state throughout the entire time period with completed students, but rises above the median values of public AAU universities and Big Ten universities in the most recent few years of the data. Additionally, the Scorecard indicates only 39% of our students received federal loans. When looking at students who have not completed, we are consistently below the comparison group median.
College Scorecard

When looking at debt in various comparison groups, the trends mentioned above appear the same. We were generally below the median when looking at the earlier years, but start to move past the median debt of our competitors in more recent years.

### Earnings after Graduation

One of the most common reasons cited by students for choosing to go to college is the expansion of employment opportunities and increased earning power. To that end, data on the earnings displayed on the College Scorecard are influential in evaluating an institution's value proposition.

According to the College Scorecard Data Documentation, the median earnings are for the institutional aggregate of all federally aided students who are currently enrolled in graduate school at the time of measurement. The variation across programs within a school may be even greater than aggregate earnings across schools; for instance, STEM and health majors frequently earn more than students who study in other fields. Second, the data include only Title IV-receiving program-level earnings data. The data are not yet available to produce program-level earnings comparisons based on self-reported FAFSA data.

There are two notable limitations that researchers should keep in mind for these metrics. First, the data are not yet available to produce program-level earnings data. The variation across programs within a school may be even greater than aggregate earnings across schools; for instance, STEM and health majors frequently earn more than students who study in other fields. Second, the data include only Title IV-receiving students, so figures may not be representative of schools with a low proportion of Title IV-eligible students. Additionally, the data are restricted to students who are not enrolled (enrolled means having an in-school deferment status for at least 30 days of the measurement year), so students who are currently enrolled in graduate school at the time of measurement are excluded.

Figure 4 shows the earnings of students no longer enrolled at 6, 8, and 10 years after entry. Note an overall trend of declining earnings, between 2006-07 and 2010-11 which is in line with research showing significant decreases in the wages of young college graduates in the 2000s (http://www.epi.org/publication/snapshot-wages-young-college-graduates-failed-grow). However, Purdue does slightly outperform both the AAU and the Big Ten throughout this period and does much better than the other in-state group. In fact, by 2010-11 Purdue earnings 10 years out had completely recovered to the 2006-07 level.

### Figure 4: Earnings Comparison

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median earnings of students working and not enrolled 10 yrs after entry</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Median earnings of students working and not enrolled 6 yrs after entry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Median State of Indiana Value</td>
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<td>33,200</td>
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</table>

**Figure 5 shows a breakdown by gender for the 6 and 10 years out groups, using the mean rather than the median salaries. This table highlights the large difference in earnings by gender, with males earning much more for Purdue and all the comparison groups. The effect only worsens over time in comparing the gender differences from the 6 to 10 year results, showing an expanding gap for females in earnings. This gender gap for Purdue is greater than that of any of the three comparison groups, on the order of $3K for the 6 year out group and approaching twice that ($18K) for the 10 year out group. This could be due to the differential in gender enrollment in Purdue’s STEM and non-STEM areas, with the heavily male STEM students earning high wages.**

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2. [https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/assets/FullDataDocumentation.pdf](https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/assets/FullDataDocumentation.pdf)
3. [August 2015 OIRA Briefing Average Net Price of Attendance](http://www.purdue.edu/oir)

This data does not take into account whether a student graduated, so will include drop outs.

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