



**Promoting Real Opportunity, Success, and Prosperity through Education Reform
(PROSPER) Act
Talking Points Related to Graduate Education**

The following four considerations of the PROSPER Act have been developed with respect to the likely impact on graduate students. Please think about how these proposals would specifically impact your students, faculty, and your surrounding community/employers. We encourage you to work with your university government relations staff to further develop these talking points should you reach out to your legislators, campus leadership, or other stakeholders with a vested interest in graduate education.

Concern: Capping Certain Federal Loans

- Reforming federal student loans should not disadvantage graduate students. A single cap for both undergraduate and graduate student loans would likely require graduate students to take on private student loans that do not carry the protections of federal student loans, including an income-based repayment option.

Concern: Elimination of Federal Work Study for Graduate Students

- Many graduate students participate in the Federal Work-Study program, which provides part-time jobs for graduate students with financial need, allowing them to earn money to help pay educational expenses. The program encourages community service work and work related to the student's course of study. The support offered to these graduate students helps to offset the cost of their living expenses while attaining their Master's or doctoral degree, while gaining relevant work experience.
- Federal Work-Study has historically supported those most in need of financial aid. For some, eliminating their eligibility for Federal Work Study would eliminate graduate education as a viable option.

Concern: Ensuring Parity in Loan Repayment Options for Graduate Students

- The PROSPER Act would give graduates just two options of repaying their loans: a current Standard 10-Year Plan, or an income-based repayment program. Transparency around these repayment options should be readily available, and should be income-based, not education-based. As proposed, the "income-based repayment scheme" would extend the repayment period for students who borrow to finance their graduate education beyond the period for those who borrow only for their undergraduate degree, regardless of the amount borrowed or the income of the borrower.

Concern: Elimination of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Program

- Many professions require a Master's or doctoral degree to serve in their respective fields (i.e., healthcare, education, and public service, where a graduate degree is necessary for licensure). PSLF helps ensure these highly-qualified individuals can serve where they are needed most, which is the primary goal of the program. PSLF is intended to encourage students to consider service careers in jobs that typically do not have high salaries, even over the long-term.