



CHOICES in EDUCATION

GUARANTEE

3.0 GPA gets you into these
10 Mich. universities **PAGE 6**

NEW DIGS

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HIGH DEMAND

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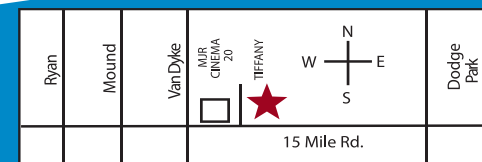
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Students discover new ways of looking at themselves and their world

There are no limits to what a student can discover at Macomb. It may be a new career or talent. It may be friendships, scholarships or internships in their field. It may even be a new way of looking at themselves or the world.

"Great classmates. Great faculty. I love them all," said Ivan Thomas, who joined his culinary arts family on a study abroad trip to Italy last May. "I never knew going to school would open up so many opportunities. I've learned you shouldn't be scared to try new things."

Thomas travelled through Milan, Bologna and Florence, sampling gorgonzola cheese and "OMG" gelato. He took part in a pasta-making workshop, visited a vineyard and learned to make fresh cheese on a dairy farm. Chefs at all levels work long hours and he hopes he will spend his in a fine-dining kitchen. But with travel in his heart, it will always be a priority.

"I want to go to Japan next," said Thomas, "and stay for a month or two at least."

While Thomas had never been outside Michigan before the trip to Italy, Elena Nicko is a native of Greece who moved to Michigan with her family. She studied singing and dance, sketched clothing designs on paper and painted on canvas, certain her future was in the fine arts. After a class in Python computer programming language at Macomb, however, she realized it was an interesting pastime but not a career.

"I don't know if it was the teacher that inspired me or the actual class," related Nicko, now majoring in computer science at Oakland University, "but I found it very interesting and continued taking more coding classes and ended up liking it a lot."

Brendan Wallace knew he wanted a career in business but thought he would start and finish his degree at University of Detroit Mercy (UDM). He decided to take the first two years at Macomb instead and received a full-ride transfer scholarship to UDM because of it.

"I never would have known about the scholarship if my professors at Macomb hadn't told me about it," said Wallace. "I knew Macomb was a great school, both of my brothers went there, but it was basically a financial decision at first. But Macomb's accounting courses changed my mind (about a general business degree). Now, earning a CPA is my goal."

After that and a master's degree, he hopes to return to Macomb.



Elena Nicko discovered she had a knack for computer programming while a student at Macomb. She's now majoring in computer science at Oakland University.

"I would like to go back as a professor," said Wallace. "I've always been interested in helping people and Macomb's excellent faculty had a big influence on what I've accomplished."



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CAREER PATHWAYS

The many benefits of vocational training

Earning a four-year degree is one path toward a rewarding career. However, that path is the only one available to aspiring professionals. Enrolling in a vocational program can provide students with the skills necessary to engage in high-demand and well-paying jobs.

Vocational school, often referred to as “trade school,” can be an advantageous route for many people who are looking for an alternative to college.

In 2020, the National Center for Education Statistics said a four-year private college cost around \$50,300 for a student living on campus, while a four-year public college was roughly \$24,300 annually.

A 2018 poll from The Learning House, a skills training and coursework company, found 35% of students said tuition and other fees were their primary concerns when choosing college programs. Trade schools can cost three times less than other schooling, making them more palatable to young people concerned about the high costs of college.

Career and Technical Education programs number around 1,200 in the United States alone. Many students begin vocational career tracks in high school, according to American Education Services.

Here are some benefits to pursuing an education in the trades.

- **Lower cost:** According to NCES, trade schools cost significantly less than four-year institutions. Data from the U.S. Department of Education says programs may run between \$3,600 to \$16,000 per year. Most vocational programs last two years, meaning that students graduate with far less debt than they might ac-



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Career and Technical Education programs number around 1,200 in the United States alone.

crue when pursuing a four-year college program.

- **Individualized attention:** Many trade programs offer instruction in very intimate settings, with experienced practitioners serving as mentors and trainers. While each program is different, vocational training schools tend to have lower faculty-to-student ratios than traditional colleges.

- **Fewer admission requirements:** Trade schools may not have the same stringent application and

admissions processes as colleges. Course prerequisites and grade point average requirements also may not dictate trade school admissions policies.

- **Direct, hands-on training:** Unlike a traditional college that marries general education courses with those specific to a major, trade school programs focus only on skills and training relevant to each student's chosen career path.

- **Less time to complete schooling:** More direct les-

sons means that students can complete their certifications or degrees in shorter times and enter the workforce much more quickly than their counterparts at traditional colleges and universities.

Vocational training in trade schools is a viable option for students who want to spend less money and gain valuable skills they can utilize to earn a good living.

Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection

Unlike a traditional college that marries general education courses with those specific to a major, trade school programs focus only on skills and training relevant to each student's chosen career path.



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STATE

10 Michigan universities to guarantee admission with 3.0 GPA

By Matthew Fahr
mfahr@medianewsgroup.com

Oakland University is among 10 public universities that will admit any in-state student with at least a 3.0 high school grade point average applying to enroll next fall.

Beginning next fall, Michigan high school graduates who have earned a cumulative high school grade point average of 3.0 or above (on a 4.0 scale) will be admitted to the participating universities.

OU is one of ten Michigan public universities to come together to form the Michigan Assured Admission Pact (MAAP), a new initiative aimed at streamlining the college admissions process and help boost enrollment. The new enrollment standard looks to remove ambiguity from the admissions process and encourage more high schoolers to apply to colleges in the state.

“We are saying that having this uniform and more widely communicated standard helps students to hopefully feel empowered to go through the application and admission process,” said Shane Lewis, undergraduate admission director at OU. “It will remove some of the anxiety and uncertainty that might come with, what is for a lot of students, this daunting college search journey.”

The universities participating in MAAP for the Fall 2024 admission cycle are:

Central Michigan University, Eastern Michigan University, Ferris State University, Lake Superior State University, Northern Michigan University, Oakland University, Saginaw Valley State University, University of Michigan-Dearborn, University

of Michigan-Flint, and Wayne State University

The program was developed after over a year of research by the Michigan Association of State Universities, who worked with all 15 public universities in the state.

“From there, it was determined which universities wanted to participate based on that grade threshold,” said Lewis. “The reasons why institutions decided not to participate were varying, but our hope was to get as many involved as possible and our hope is more will decide to join in the future.”

Universities opting not to participate were the University of Michigan — Ann Arbor, Michigan State University, Michigan Technological University, Western Michigan University and Grand Valley State University.

The program mirrors the new Guaranteed Admissions Program in Washington state that was announced in 2022.

Their program gives automatic acceptance to Western Washington University, Central Washington University, Washington State University, Eastern Washington University, and the Evergreen State College for students who have a 3.0 GPA and complete the core requirements for college admission.

“Their process is slightly different than ours, where they have MOU’s (memorandum of understanding) or agreements with individual school districts and communicate directly with students via those agreements,” said Lewis. “We are attacking this more as a promotional opportunity to help students see this as not such an intimidating



MATTHEW FAHR — MEDIANEWS GROUP

OU is one of 10 state universities that will admit students with a 3.0 grade point average and part of a new program. The new threshold will go into effect in the fall of 2024.

process.”

Lewis said the program is to let students know what the standards are before they begin the application process, instead of assuming their grades rule them out because they do not know what the threshold is when they start the application process.

“We so often hear from students that they did not apply to the school they really want to go to because they have this fear that they are not going to

get in,” Lewis said. “Students have these preconceived notions about what it takes to get into a school and these schools have a mission to allow access for everyone by telling them what the standard is.”

A 2022 report from the Michigan Association of State Universities showed the majority of universities in the state saw a drop in student headcount from the 2021-22 school year to 2022-23.

Only Michigan State

and Michigan Tech saw gains in enrollment of under 1%, while Lake Superior State and Eastern Michigan dropped by over 8% and Oakland, Western Michigan and University Michigan-Flint fell by just over 6%.

But Lewis said the announcement was not aimed at helping universities recover student losses in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Everyone is losing students, but our new student enrollment this fall is up

and was last fall as well,” said Lewis. “Our freshman class was up about 5% last year and will be up again around 5% this year. Each of us knows the number of high school students is shrinking, our thought was how can we help more students understand that this might be the pathway for them.”

To learn more about the Michigan Assured Admission Program, visit MAAP.org.



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TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Strategies to help transfer students adjust to a new school

It's not uncommon for all students to experience some first-day jitters, but that nervous excitement might be especially pronounced for transfer students. The transition to a new school is made simpler for many students because they make it alongside classmates they've known for years. Transfer students have no such security blanket, but can embrace the following strategies as they prepare to begin the school year in a whole new environment.

Attend student orientation sessions

Orientation sessions can benefit any student, but may be especially useful for transfer students. Orientation sessions typically include a campus tour, a rundown of both academic and social activities and a chance to meet the school staff, including teachers and coaches. Transfer students who attend these sessions also may meet fellow class-

mates, who typically serve as guides on campus tours or in other capacities which requires them to interact with session attendees. This can be a great opportunity to connect with individuals who could serve as a familiar face come the first day of school.

Schedule a visit with a guidance counselor

Guidance counselors can be invaluable resources for transfer students. Parents can come along and discuss the student's interests in a direct conversation with a counselor, who can fill the family in on all that's available on campus. That can include academics and extracurricular activities.

Dive in socially

Though it's not always easy to transfer to a new school that already has its own social networks, the best way to meet new people is to make

a concerted effort to engage socially. Student-athletes may have an advantage because the team atmosphere provides a ready-made social network. However, extracurricular clubs also provide that benefit and do so without the added pressure of competing for a spot on a team.

Don't go it alone

Students should recognize that the transition is not something they need to do on their own. If students transferred because their family moved, then others in the family, including parents, are likely to experience their own ups and downs as well. Speak with parents and siblings if the transition does not get off to a smooth start. Such openness can open the door to new strategies and help to alleviate some of the stress that can accompany a transition to a new school.

Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Guidance counselors can be invaluable resources for transfer students. Parents can come along and discuss the student's interests in a direct conversation with a counselor, who can fill the family in on all that's available on campus.

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CAREER PATHWAYS

How to determine if nursing is right for you



PHOTOS COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Individuals considering nursing need to determine if the field might be the right fit for them.

Nursing is a popular career choice. With strong job security and the potential for growth, it is no wonder nursing draws such interest. In 2021, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated there would be about 203,200 openings for registered nurses each year for the next decade. And employment of registered nurses is expected to grow by 6% between 2021 and 2031.

A strong job outlook and competitive pay (nurses earn median salaries of \$77,600 as of May 2021) appeals to any aspiring professional, but a career in nursing is about more than opportunity and compensation. Individuals considering nursing need to determine if the field might be the

There are different levels of nursing, each of which requires a different amount of training and certification.

right fit for them. It's not always glamorous being a nurse. In fact, it can be quite challenging and often stressful. However, the rewards tend to outshine the trials and tribulations. The following are some components of nursing that can help individuals determine if the field is right for them.

Training time constraints

There are different levels of nursing, each of which requires a different amount of training and certification, according to Nurse Money Talk. A certified nursing assistant must complete a program at a specific CNA vocational school, and such programs run between four and 10 months, on average. Licensed vocational nurses can expect to study for 12

to 18 months, and must pass the NCLEX-PN licensing exam. Registered nurses will need two to four years of schooling and are expected to earn an associate's degree or bachelor's degree. Aspiring RNs also will need a passing grade on the NCLEX-RN licensing exam. Most nurses will have to complete clinicals to showcase skills in real life situations. Flexibility Nurses need to be adaptable and flexible. Shifts may not be consistent and the demands of the job may differ from day to day, even though there may be some overlap. If challenging new experiences come easy to you or if you have the flexibility to work different shifts rather than a set schedule, then nursing could be a good option.

Problem-solver and critical thinker

Although nurses are part of a larger health care team and may need to leave certain decisions to physicians, there are plenty of critical decisions and think-on-your-foot actions that may need to be taken to ensure patient health. It is essential for nurses to keep their emotions in check so they can think clearly in stressful situations.

Good communicator

Nurses must be able to speak and interact with doctors and others in a clinical setting, but also communicate effectively with patients who may not fully understand all of the medical jargon

nor what is happening to them. Nursing requires social skills and an ability to pivot between many different roles — all the while adjusting communication tactics depending on the audience.

Organized and diligent

There isn't too much room for mistakes in health care, which means nurses will need to maintain their attention to detail; otherwise, they could subject patients to injury or even death.

In addition to these traits, good nurses should have compassion for patients. A desire to help others during difficult times compels many people to become a nurse.

Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection



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CAREER PATHWAYS

Why access, education and support are vital to close the gender gap in tech careers

While women make up approximately half of the U.S. workforce, they are underrepresented in the technology sector, making up 28% of the industry. These numbers are even lower for women of color seeking opportunities in the field, with 3% of computing-related jobs being filled by African American women, 6% by Asian women and 2% by Hispanic women.

Conversations often focus on empowering diverse voices to ensure they are represented in society. While these conversations raise awareness, they may not result in action and shifting the narrative surrounding diverse hiring practices. Diversity becomes a guide for program development to ensure diverse and female students feel supported in their pursuit of tech-related jobs, helping to address the gender gap in the industry.

To address the gender and diversity disparities, women must have access to resources and learning opportunities that give them the skill sets and confidence to pursue tech careers. Higher education institutions can play a significant role in bridging the gap. Creating greater awareness of job opportunities in the tech industry, potential career paths and sharing how to attain the necessary skills provides emerging talent with a clear trajectory for a future career in tech.

Higher education institutions can design inclusive programming.

In higher education, diversity is often thought of as the physical makeup of the student body. But di-

versity also extends beyond demographic data to how students learn — taking into consideration the tools they need to succeed. These tools can come in the form of academic success teams or programming rooted in uplifting diverse students to help them achieve their academic and professional goals.

Higher education institutions are tasked with providing the most current and industry-relevant education to students to augment a work-ready pool of talent. To be successful in this mission for all students, institutions can use adaptive programs to close the opportunity gap for female and diverse students. An example of a curriculum informed by student need is DeVry University's Women + Tech Scholars Program, which was established to increase female representation in the tech field by providing women with tools, support and resources such as: access to mentors, early access to industry-related internships and job opportunities and industry association memberships.

Providing more women with a seat at the table helps to advance the tech industry.

Despite increased efforts to diversify a traditionally homogenous workforce, nearly 70% of tech companies report a lack of diverse representation in their workforce. In 2020, Google reported that 5.5% of new hires during that year were Black. Creating a more diverse tech workforce can lead to greater opportunities for collaboration because new perspectives are brought to the forefront



PHOTO COURTESY OF BRANDPOINT

Providing more women with a seat at the table helps to advance the tech industry.

that were previously unrepresented — driving innovation, creativity and productivity.

“Considering the current workforce and the growing need for tech talent, the share of diverse and female tech employees remains at alarmingly low levels,” said Randi Zuckerberg, founder and CEO of Zuckerberg Media. “Programs like DeVry University's Women + Tech Scholars Program help create greater awareness of tech careers and give women of all backgrounds the tools they need to persist in this academic path and obtain the skills they need to pursue tech-enabled

careers.”

Diversity of thought enhances problem-solving exercises because teams are mitigating the potential of finding themselves in an echo chamber of a singular thought derived from similar opinions. Studies suggest that companies that prioritize gender or racial and ethnic diversity are more likely to see financial returns that are above national industry averages.

Higher education institutions have an opportunity to create supportive networks and communities.

Seeing someone from a similar background succeeding in a career path

builds awareness. Higher education institutions that create opportunities for women to network and build connections with leaders they can identify with increase the chance of success in these highly sought-after, influential industries.

“Access to education alone is not enough. Students, particularly those from underrepresented communities, need support, opportunities and resources throughout their education journey,” added Veronica Calderón, DeVry University's chief inclusion, belonging and equity officer.

Carving out unique, defined spaces in which di-

verse and female communities can feel a sense of belonging helps increase overall academic performance, persistence and academic success, which can translate into professional success post-graduation.

As diversity in tech remains a topic of critical importance, comprehensive and agile programming that focuses on female learners allows women, particularly women from diverse backgrounds, to break down barriers that have persisted in the tech industry for decades.

Story courtesy of Brandpoint



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CAREER PATHWAYS

Exploring a career in occupational therapy

Occupational therapists are important allies for individuals with a chronic illness or those who are trying to live independently after an accident. According to *The Balance: Careers*, occupational therapy involves assisting people of various ages build or restore their ability to live daily life by modifying or changing daily activities that a person wants to do.

There are three main types of practitioners who work in the field of occupational therapy. These include occupational therapists, occupational therapy assistants and occupational therapy aides. Salaries, duties and educational and licensing requirements differ between the three roles.

Individuals who want to become occupational therapists must complete a four-year bachelor's degree and a two- to three-year master's degree. Individuals will then have to go through the local licensing process. Many people begin working in OT in positions of less responsibility to gain relevant experience once they have completed the associate's level program, and then gain experience and build their résumés from there.

- **OT therapy aide:** This person has the fewest educational requirements and will earn the lowest salary on an OT team. However, OT therapy aides are essential. The aide sets up treatment rooms and prepares equipment. He or she also may perform clerical duties.

- **OT assistant:** This person falls between an occupational therapist and an OT aide on the spectrum of responsibility. This can be a good option for someone who is uncertain about an OT career, but wants to try it on for size. Assistants work under an OT's super-



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Occupational therapy involves assisting people of various ages build or restore their ability to live daily life by modifying or changing daily activities that a person wants to do.

vision and make sure patients are correctly performing exercises spelled out in treatment plans.

- **Occupation therapist:** OTs oversee the operations and have the most responsibility by setting goals and developing treatment plans. An OT will do a home or

work assessment to analyze a patient's environments and make accommodations. He or she also will suggest equipment to use in a workplace to help that patient do his or her job comfortably. To become an OT, one will need to go through a master's program accredited by

the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education. Occupational therapists have many ways to specialize their careers.

ExploreHealthCareers.org says OTs may work with premature babies, assist children with cerebral palsy or Down syndrome, work in

schools with students who have learning disabilities, or may work with older people in nursing homes or private residences. There are new specialties, too, such as training workers to use the correct ergonomics or helping people with low vision issues maintain their inde-

pendence.

Occupational therapy is a great career for individuals who want to help others maintain their independence and live life to the fullest.

Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection

COLLEGE PREP

7 steps to take after receiving college financial aid award letters

Perhaps even more nerve-wracking than waiting for your child's college acceptance letters is learning whether they've been awarded financial aid. This is the piece of the puzzle that tells you how much it will really cost, and ultimately, whether a particular school is within your budget.

"Decoding award letters and comparing their terms can be a challenge," says Angela Colatriano, chief marketing officer of College Ave Student Loans. "Just be patient and take the time to understand each offer."

In a recent College Ave Student Loans parent survey conducted by Barnes & Noble College Insights, 42% of parents who received an aid offer letter found aspects of it confusing, and 68% agreed that terms and layout of these letters varied from school to school, making it hard to compare them.

To make better sense of financial aid award letters, follow these steps:

1 . Look for free money. The award letter will list whether your student is eligible for scholarships and grants (sometimes called Merit or Gift Aid). This is money you typically don't need to pay back. Some merit aid is tied to how your child performed in high school. They worked hard for this recognition; congrats!

2 . Look for Federal Work-Study. Your child might be eligible for Federal Work-Study jobs. While jobs aren't guaranteed, they can be a good opportunity to help cover educational expenses.

3 . Spot the loans. Schools will list any federal loans your child is eligible to receive. Helpful hint: They may be grouped with scholarship and grants. You should also take note of whether a Federal loan is subsidized or unsubsidized. Subsidized loans are more desirable, as they don't accrue interest while your student is still enrolled, or during deferment periods.

4 . Calculate your net cost. To get an apples-to-apples look at the offers, determine the net direct cost of each particular school. This is calculated by subtracting offered scholarships and grants from the cost of attendance (the



PHOTO COURTESY OF HIGHWAYSTARZ-PHOTOGRAPHY — ISTOCK VIA GETTY IMAGES PLUS

This is the piece of the puzzle that tells you how much it will really cost, and ultimately, whether a particular school is within your budget.

total cost of tuition, room, board, textbooks and fees). If applicable, you can subtract work-study aid too. It's important to do this math, as the biggest scholarship doesn't always amount to the lowest out-of-pocket cost.

5 . Play the field. Some parents have found success in appealing the financial aid package offered, especially if their financial circumstances have changed. Contact your top schools of interest and share the awards your student has been offered. Some schools will match other schools' award packages or will offer additional funds. You should

also ask about additional scholarships or grants that might be available.

6 . Consider other factors. Check if awards being offered are for all four years and understand what your child will need to do to continue being eligible for them, year-to-year. You should also factor in expected increases in tuition, room, board and other fees.

7 . Fill the gaps. If after doing the math, you find you have a financial gap to cover, you may also consider a private student loan or parent loan. Look for a lender with great rates, flexible re-

payment terms, and the opportunity to customize the loan to fit your family's budget. For example, College Ave Student Loans offers tools and resources to help you along your financial road to college, along with a pre-qualification tool that offers quick answers without affecting your credit score. To learn more, visit CollegeAve.com.

While awaiting financial aid award letters and deciphering them can be confusing and stressful, the good news is that once these letters are in-hand, your family will have the tools needed to move ahead.

Story courtesy of StatePoint Media

MONEY MATTERS

Everything you need to know about student loans

More American families are borrowing for college. At the same time, merit aid and the use of personal income and savings is falling.

That's according to an annual College Ave Student Loans survey of college students at four-year universities, conducted with Barnes & Noble College Insights. The survey also found college affordability is top-of-mind for the majority of students (57%). Despite financial concerns, 81% of students report that a college degree is crucial for their future.

"The mix of methods that families use to pay for college has shifted; however, one thing remains consistent: students and families value the investment in higher education," says Angela Colatriano, chief marketing officer of College Ave.

To borrow smart for college this fall, consider these tips and insights:

Exhaust all options

Before turning to private student loans, first exhaust other sources of financial aid. Complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid to be considered for grants, scholarships, work-study programs and federal student loans. If your selected school is one of the 400 institutions that requires the CSS profile, submit that too to qualify for institutional aid. Finally, search for private scholarships offered by companies and non-profit organizations. One easy one to apply for is the College Ave \$1,000 monthly scholarship sweepstakes.

If you do need to borrow, turn to federal student loans in the student's name first, which generally offer the lowest rates and come with additional benefits. They don't depend on credit scores, and offer longer deferments and forbearances, income-driven repayment plans and student loan forgiveness.

Private student loans

Federal student loans have annual and aggregate loan limits. If you find yourself needing to bor-



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If you do need to borrow, turn to federal student loans in the student's name first, which generally offer the lowest rates and come with additional benefits.

row parent or private loans to cover remaining costs, consider these factors:

- Compare costs of different loans by looking at the actual interest rate you'll be charged, not the lowest advertised rate. Understand the difference between variable and fixed interest rates, and be aware of any fees and available discounts, such as those offered for using autopay.

- A creditworthy cosigner doesn't just increase the odds of loan approval, even if the stu-

dent can qualify on their own, co-signing may yield a lower interest rate, reducing the overall cost of the loan.

- Borrow only what you need. With private loans, you can usually borrow up to the total cost of attendance. However, borrowing less than the maximum can help you save over time. A simple rule of thumb you can use to determine how much student loan debt you can afford: If total student loan debt at graduation, including federal and pri-

ivate loans, is less than the student's annual starting salary, you can likely repay the loans in 10 years or less.

- Look for repayment flexibility to match your needs. For example, College Ave Student Loans offers 5-, 8-, 10- and 15-year repayment options, along with the choice of deferring payments until after graduation or beginning payments right away. No matter what option you select, understand the terms.

For more resources, including

an online student loan calculator, and to learn more about paying for college, visit CollegeAve.com.

Private loans for college can play an important role in financing your education. By researching your financial aid options, applying for scholarships and comparing private student loan options, you can minimize college costs, so you can better manage your finances after you graduate.

Story courtesy of StatePoint Media

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