

- 1. My Financial Aid:** Financial aid information is available at all times in CyberFriar - which is the student self-service portal. Students can activate their 'proxy access' section if they wish to give their parents the ability to log in and view information. Emails are sent to the student only (at their PC issued email) when new changes or messages are added.
- 2. My Billing Statement:** Bills are published through CashNet system mid-July and mid-November. Bills are typically due within 30 days of the published date. Payments arrangements must be made in place by the billing due date to avoid sanctions. Students can set up their parents as an 'authorized user' in CyberFriar so they can be notified and view bills when available.
- 3. Ways I Can Pay:** The most common ways families manage their out-of-pocket costs are a) paying out of pocket in full (i.e. half in August, half in December); b) spreading out payments monthly through Nelnet Campus Commerce; c) securing a private/alternative loan; d) or some combination of the three.
- 4. My Loan Options:** When choosing a loan most families first consider whose name they want the loan to be in – the student or parent. Once that decision has been made it tends to steer families to look in one of the following two directions:
 - a. Parent PLUS Loans:** Parent PLUS loans are through the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) and only the biological/adoptive parents of the student may apply for this loan. This fixed interest rate loan (i.e. set each July 1) only requires a credit check and the FICO score to fall within a range set by the DOE. No employment verification or income to debt ratio information is required. The parent is the only person responsible for repayment – they can pay now (interest/principle) or pay after graduation. You can find more information about PLUS by visiting our website and selecting the Types of Assistance link under the Costs & Need-based aid section.
 - b. Private Student Loans:** Students are the primary borrower, however, since most students are not employed, make enough money or have an established credit history they will most likely need a cosigner. Both student and cosigner are equally responsible for the loan. Several lenders do have provisions to release the cosigner of their responsibilities, however, it is usually tied to a number of on-time payments and the ability of the student qualify on their own. These loans do have a minimum FICO score as well as employment and income to debt ratio requirements. Requirements and review process can vary greatly from lender to lender. You can begin your search by using our Suggest Lender List which is available under the Paying Your Bill section of our website.
- 5. When I Apply:** Most lenders announce new loan products each spring. This will give you plenty of time to research loans that best meet the needs of your family. Remember loans are approved for just one academic year at a time. This means you will need to research a product each year and select the one that best supports your family each year.
- 6. How Many I Apply For:** Although tempting to apply for multiple loans to guarantee financing or get the best rate, it will negatively affect your credit score. Do your research up front, apply for one at a time, and wait for the answer from the lender before applying for more loans. Most lenders have online applications and you should receive your approval or denial within days if not immediately.
- 7. Apply for Both Semesters:** When you select a loan amount make sure you borrow enough to cover out of pocket costs for *both* semesters. If you choose to only borrow enough for the Fall semester, when you reapply for Spring you risk securing a higher interest rate and/or being denied for the second loan altogether.

8. **What I Need To Borrow:** To calculate how much you need to ***borrow for the year*** subtract your total financial aid award (excluding work-study) and cash payments from your bills (Fall + Spring). Using your CyberFriar Account (*available mid-May for freshman*), complete the box below:

I Am Logged into My CyberFriar Account, Where Is This Information?

My Bill	\$	Click on 'Student Services', then 'Bursar's Office – NEW!', then on 'View' for the most recent date listed. <i>Remember bills are published by semester! Multiple it by 2 before you fill in the box!</i>
My Financial Aid	\$	Click on, 'Financial Aid', then 'Award', then 'Award by Aid Year'. Pick the most recent Aid Year from drop down and click 'Submit.' Click on 'Award Overview' and scroll to the bottom. <i>Remember, don't include work-study in your totals and use the total amount for both semesters!</i>
My Cash Payments	\$	If don't plan on making any cash payments or spreading out payments through the Nelnet payment plan then enter \$0 here!
What I Need To Borrow	\$	This is what you need to borrow for the Fall & Spring semesters.

9. **Borrowing Looks Like This:** Here is an example how much a \$20,000 loan will look like once you go into repayment. It will show you the impact of choosing to pay now or pay later.

Best Bargain!

A. Pay All Now	B. Pay All Later	C. Interest Only
Interest & Principle	No Interest & Principle	Interest only in school
10 years to repay	10 years to repay	10 years to repay
Borrowed 20,000	Borrowed 20,000	Borrowed 20,000
Fixed at 6.54%	Fixed at 6.54%	Fixed at 6.54%
Paid back \$27,300	Paid Back \$36,000	Total Paid back \$32,500
Monthly \$227	Monthly \$300	Monthly in school \$110 Monthly post grad \$227

10. Things To Know About Repayment:

- Choose the shortest repayment option you can afford.** Some lenders will offer a repayment schedule greater than 10 years in order to minimize your monthly payment. However, it will significantly increase the overall amount of interest you have to pay. For example, if you choose 'Option B' with a 15 year repayment, your monthly payment would be reduced to \$230 but overall debt would increase to \$41,400.
- Send in a payment even if you are paying all later.** If you choose to pay all later, any payments you can send in along the way will help reduce the overall amount of principle and interest you have to pay.
- Over the four years, take out ONE loan where you pay all now.** While you are deferring payment on loans in subsequent years, paying one just one loan now will minimize the overall amount of principle and interest you have to pay.
- Don't forget that your student already has loan debt.** If your student accepts the maximum Direct Loans available to them each year they will already have roughly \$27,000 in debt to manage upon graduation. That is approximately \$230 a month.