



WISCONSIN HOPE LAB



Wisconsin HOPE Lab Plays Role in HEA Reauthorization

This summer, findings from Wisconsin HOPE Lab research on college

affordability helped inform key policymakers and practitioners in Washington, D.C. about ways to strengthen the federal Higher Education Act, which is up for reauthorization.

On June 4, Sara Goldrick-Rab discussed making the first two years of college free and expanding the federal work-study program with U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin as well as staff members for U.S. Senator Ron Johnson, at their capitol offices.

Then, on June 10, she served on the Albert Shanker Institute-American Federation of Teachers [panel discussion](#) of "The Affordability Crisis: Rescuing the Dream of College Education for the Working Class and Poor." U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren delivered the keynote address, and Sara presented research supporting policy changes that would make the first degree free for students. Beth Huang of Jobs With Justice, and Zakiya Smith of the Lumina Foundation joined her on the panel.

Sara was back in the nation's capital on June 16 for a Demos panel on "The Student Debt Divide: Racial and Class Bias." The conversation centered on a new [Demos report](#), which the organization says "details how the shift to a debt-based system of financing higher education could be undermining [a national] commitment to racial equality and economic opportunity." To read a Wisconsin HOPE Lab report on race and student debt, [click here](#).

The Wisconsin HOPE Lab remains committed to helping members of Congress as well as national educational organizations, educational think tanks and policy organizations, and educators and practitioners around the country understand what research reveals about making college more affordable.

Free Community College Update

Our research on college affordability, including a [policy report](#) authored last year by Sara Goldrick-Rab and Nancy Kendall, also played a role in developing America's College Promise Act, which was introduced on July 8.

The federal Act would make the first two years of community college free AND provide an affordable pathway to a four-year degree.

On a state level, Sara Goldrick-Rab worked closely with the Oregon Legislature, led by Senator Mark Hass, on the Oregon Promise. She provided testimony to the State Senate and House of Representatives—you can read her remarks [here](#)—on its Senate Bill 81. The bill passed with bipartisan support on July 2 and will provide free community college for students in that state. Inside Higher Ed gave it a [nice write-up](#).



Impact and Influence

Sharing Wisconsin HOPE Lab research with practitioners and students is an important part of our work. Already this spring and summer, Wisconsin HOPE Lab researchers have presented papers, given testimony, checked in with project partners, and more.



SFARN Research

Russell Cannon, one of our graduate research assistants, attended [the 32nd annual conference](#) of the Student Financial Aid Research Network, June 11-12, in Indianapolis. Russ (R) and Justin Chase Brown (L), associate director of financial aid at the University of Missouri, presented findings from a partnership on outreach for re-filing financial aid forms.



CFPB Testimony

The Wisconsin HOPE Lab sent a team to the [field hearing](#) on student debt concerns convened in Milwaukee on May 14 by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Data Manager/Analyst Emily Brunjes [testified](#), and Postdoctoral fellows Drew Anderson and Esther Kim attended in support, along with graduate research assistant Karole Dachelet.



Oneida Visit

As part of [our study on students who receive scholarships](#) from The Oneida Tribe of Wisconsin, we met this summer with Oneida postsecondary education staff. Pictured above are Wisconsin HOPE Lab associate director Alison Bowman (L) and senior researcher Peter Kinsley (R) with Oneida Area Manager of Education and Training Norbert Hill.

Up and Running

Three of our major research projects continue to advance this summer, generating new rounds of study data to help universities better meet the needs of their students related to affordability, persistence, time to degree, and ultimate success.

STEM Study

Year One surveys are now complete, which means we'll soon be able to measure the

Ethnography

"How Institutional and Relational Contexts Affect Retention of

Time Use

Over 350 students attending 10 colleges and universities across Wisconsin have been

impact of financial aid on first-year college success! We started this [10-campus study](#) in 2014 to more accurately report on the impact that a need-based financial grant has on students' selection and completion of associate and baccalaureate STEM degrees.

Undergraduates from Low-Income Families" is the title of [this comparative study](#) of students at four Wisconsin universities during their first 18 months of school. Our four ethnographers have gathered Year One data and are now following their students through the summer.

using a smartphone app [developed by Wisconsin HOPE Lab researchers](#) to report time use, levels of engagement and spending habits in real time. We have now completed the first two survey waves of this study and expect to report results later this year.

Recommended Reading

Factors that affect how students apply for financial aid, whether they can stay in school once enrolled, and why they decide to switch institutions are topics covered in two briefs and a study. Click below to see what our data reveal.

FAFSA Brief

This Wisconsin HOPE Lab [data brief](#) analyzes the results of a survey of 1,065 first-year college students about their experiences in completing the FAFSA financial aid form. The results show that, despite federal reforms, the complexity of the form and the difficulty of obtaining parent information are both still barriers for some.

SAP Requirements

Twenty-six percent of the students we surveyed for "What We're Learning: SAP" did not know they were required to maintain "Satisfactory Academic Progress" in order to remain qualified for financial aid after their first year. Despite the incentive a SAP requirement creates, [our research](#) shows too many students don't know it exists.

Changing Schools

Sara Goldrick-Rab co-authored [this paper](#) with Hannah Miller, doctoral candidate in sociology and pre-doctoral fellow in the Interdisciplinary Training Program for Education Sciences. The paper finds that, among first-time college students from low-income Wisconsin families, about half of students consider transferring but an extended process of consultation and deliberation almost as often

as not leads to a decision
not to transfer.

Staff Updates

Want to get to know the talented and dedicated staff of the Wisconsin HOPE Lab? Visit the [staff page](#) on our website for bios and more. In the meantime, join us in welcoming the newest Wisconsin HOPE Lab staffers.



Drew Anderson

Welcome to **Drew Anderson**, an economist and postdoctoral fellow who earned M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in economics at UW-Madison. He joined the research team for Sara Goldrick-Rab's Wisconsin Scholars Longitudinal Study in 2012, and became a postdoctoral researcher at the Wisconsin HOPE Lab in May. Drew works on evaluations of financial and

Dylan Jambrek

Welcome to **Dylan Jambrek**, an executive assistant who signed on with the Wisconsin HOPE Lab after working in UW System Administration, where he supported communication and outreach efforts in President Ray Cross's office. Dylan also served in staff and student communication roles for multiple student associations while attending UW-Eau Claire.

Jamie Hawkins

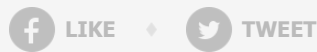
A second-year graduate student in the UW-Madison Department of Sociology, **Jamie Hawkins** is a project assistant at the Wisconsin HOPE Lab. She is a 2013 graduate of the University of California at Berkeley, and her research interests and expertise include issues of race, inequality, and access in higher education. Jamie is currently working on projects involving the study of emergency aid, as well as

informational interventions for college students, and investigates the incentives embedded in financial aid policy.

assisting in the AVID/TOPS program evaluation.



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