An oral examination in defense of the dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Education with an emphasis in Educational Practice

Molly B. Hurley
Master of Education, May, 2018, University of Missouri-St. Louis
Bachelor of Science in Organizational Communication, May, 2014, Murray State University

Ashley N. Nickell
Master of Education, May, 2018, University of Missouri-St. Louis
Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies, May, 2012, University of Missouri-St. Louis
Associate of General Studies, May, 2009, St. Louis Community College

An Examination of the Impact of Student Loan Debt on Alumni Giving

Date: July 23, 2021
Time: 10:00am-12:00pm central
Place: Remote

Abstract
The present study examined the effect of student loan debt on alumni’s willingness and ability to give back to their alma mater, and determined other identity-based motivating factors that were associated with alumni’s decision to give or not to give. Participants (N=25) were recent graduates of a doctoral program in the healthcare field and were purposefully selected to answer questions regarding their income, loan debt, decision to give (monetarily and non-monetary), and financial literacy education/financial preparedness by way of personal virtual interviews. The study concluded that the majority of the participants (68%, N=17) did not give to their alma mater and the most frequently cited reasons for not giving were high student loan debt/low disposable income, poor experience at their alma mater, and no longer feeling connected to their alma mater. The study also explored how lack of financial literacy education at the study institution may be connected to alumni’s lack of financial knowledge, financial preparedness, and high amounts of student loan debt.

Keywords: alumni giving, student loan debt, financial literacy, student experience, healthcare professionals

Defense of Dissertation Committee
Dr. Shawn Woodhouse, Ph.D.
Dr. Jennifer Simms, Ph.D.
Dr. Christiane Hubbard Jackson, Ph.D.