

SPRING 2026 THESIS & DISSERTATION WORKSHOPS

Overview

This spring **it is crucial to attend a workshop** if you are working on a thesis or dissertation. To ensure full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, [the university is committed](#) to making all digital content accessible by **April 2026**. This includes your thesis or dissertation.

Attend a workshop this semester to learn how you can ensure your thesis or dissertation meets **requirements** for digital accessibility while also adhering to the Graduate School's formatting requirements.

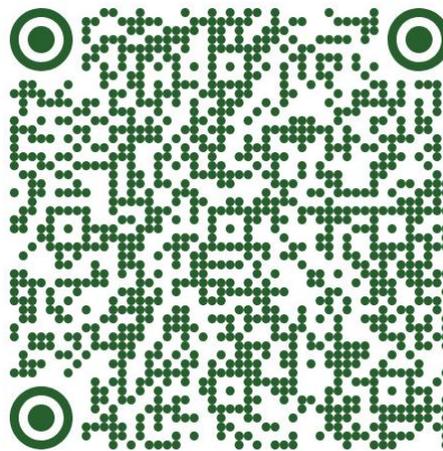
Dates, Times, and Locations

- **Monday, Feb. 2, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m., Close-Hipp 584**
- Thursday, Feb. 5, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m., ONLINE (Zoom)
- Wednesday, Feb. 11, 4:00 – 5:30 p.m., ONLINE (Zoom)
- **Thursday, Feb. 12, 3:00 – 4:30 p.m., Close-Hipp 584**
- **Tuesday, Feb. 17, 12:00 – 1:30 p.m., Close-Hipp 584**
- Friday, Feb. 20, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m., ONLINE (Zoom)
- Tuesday, Feb. 24, 12:00 – 1:30 p.m., ONLINE (Zoom)
- **Friday, Feb. 27, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m., Close-Hipp 584**

Where to Register

To sign up for a workshop of your choice, visit the Graduate School's [Thesis and Dissertation Calendar](#). You can also **scan this QR code** to access the site.

Visit the university's own [Digital Accessibility](#) website to learn more.



Dean's Award for Doctoral Achievement

The Award

One award of \$1000 is given annually to one doctoral student who demonstrates overall excellence in research, teaching, and service. The service contributions can extend beyond campus.

Eligibility

Nominees must be enrolled in Spring 2026 and can be from any academic program. The committee will consider relevant activities conducted from May 2025 through the time of the application's submission.

Nominations

Graduate Directors must submit nomination packets as one PDF document to Matt Klopfenstein, klopfenm@mailbox.sc.edu. **Only one nomination per program is allowed.**

The package must include:

- One-page support letter from Graduate Director, advisor, or mentor
- One-page student statement
- Student CV or resume (2 pages maximum)

The committee will consider the following:

- Student's impact and accomplishments within research, teaching, and service
- The ability for the student to describe their significant accomplishments (one page)
- One-page support letter from the Graduate Director, advisor, or mentor
- CV or resume from the student (not to exceed two pages)

Dean's Award for Master's Achievement

The Award

One award of \$1000 is given annually to one graduate student in any master's program who demonstrates overall excellence in research, teaching, and service. The service contributions can extend beyond campus.

Eligibility

Nominees must be enrolled in Spring 2026 and can be from any academic program. The committee will consider relevant activities conducted from May 2025 through the time of the application's submission.

Nominations

Graduate Directors must submit nomination packets as one PDF document to Matt Klopfenstein, klopfenm@mailbox.sc.edu. **Only one nomination per program is allowed.**

The package must include:

- One-page support letter from Graduate Director, advisor, or mentor
- One-page student statement
- Student CV or resume (not to exceed two pages)

The committee will consider the following:

- Student's impact and accomplishments within research, teaching, and service
- The ability for the student to describe their significant accomplishments (one page)
- One-page support letter from the Graduate Director, advisor, or mentor
- CV or resume from the student (not to exceed two pages)

FIRST-GENERATION SYMPOSIUM 2026



Sonja Ardoin, PhD
Keynote Speaker

Dr. Ardoin is an Associate Professor in the Higher Education and Student Affairs programs at Clemson University, with over 65 academic publications.

See more event details:
bit.ly/2026firstgensymposium

SCAN TO REGISTER



March 27, 2026

9:00 AM - 1:15 PM

**University Conference
Center (8th floor, Close-Hipp)**



IMPACTS OF ONE BIG BEAUTIFUL BILL ACT

Graduate & Professional Students



AGENDA

01

Impacts to Graduate/Professional Students - Loans

02

Impacts to All Programs/Students

03

Impacts to Federal Parent PLUS Loans

04

Action Plan





01

Impacts to Graduate/Professional Students - Loans



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01

ELIMINATION OF GRADUATE PLUS LOANS

- Graduate PLUS Loan program eliminated
- Removes key funding option covering full cost of attendance

Source: https://www.nasfaa.org/uploads/documents/OB3_Loan_Changes_Brief.pdf

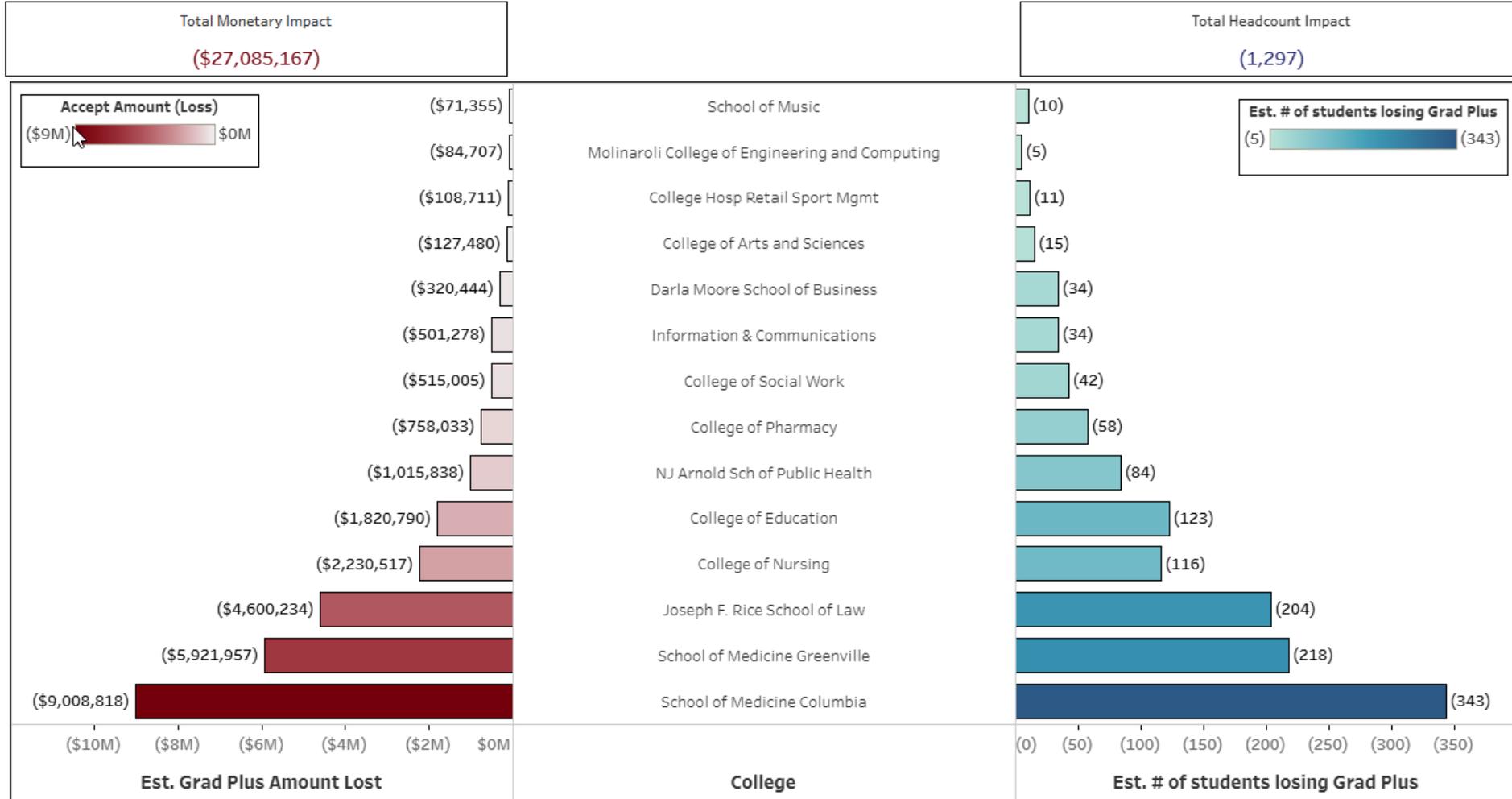


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Loss of Grad Plus (2024-25 Figures)

By College



Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships, Source: HC Financial Aid

Nearly Live Data

Data Current as of October 29, 2025



01

DIRECT UNSUBSIDIZED LOAN LIMIT CHANGES

- Graduate annual limit unchanged at \$20,500
- New aggregate limit: \$100,000 (previously \$138,500 incl. undergrad loans)
- Professional annual limit: \$50,000; aggregate: \$200,000

Source: https://www.nasfaa.org/uploads/documents/OB3_Loan_Changes_Brief.pdf



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01

PROFESSIONAL DEGREE PROGRAMS

- **Medicine/Osteopathic:** 51.12 (Medicine), 51.19 (Osteopathic Med)
- **Dentistry:** 51.04 (Dentistry)
- **Veterinary Medicine:** 51.24 (Veterinary Medicine)
- **Pharmacy:** 51.20 (Pharmacy)
- **Law:** 22.01 (Law)
- **Theology/Divinity:** 39.06 (Theology and Religious Vocations)
- **Optometry/Podiatry:** 51.17 (Optometry), 51.21 (Podiatry)
- **Clinical Psychology:** 42.28 (Clinical, Counseling, and Applied Psychology)
- **Nursing (Specific):** 51.38 (Registered Nursing/Nurse Practitioner)

Source: https://www.nasfaa.org/uploads/documents/OB3_Loan_Changes_Brief.pdf



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01

INSTITUTIONAL & STUDENT IMPACTS

- Students may no longer cover full cost through federal funding
- Increased reliance on private educational loans
- Access and enrollment challenges for high-cost programs
- Greater need for advising and financial literacy

All these changes affect new borrowers. Current borrowers can continue to borrow under current statute for three years or until they complete their current program of study, whichever is sooner.

Source: https://www.nasfaa.org/uploads/documents/OB3_Loan_Changes_Brief.pdf



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01

LOAN REPAYMENT CHANGES

Only two repayment plans remain

- Standard Repayment: Fixed payments over 10–25 years.
- Repayment Assistance Plan (RAP): Income-based, minimum \$10/month, up to 360 payments.

Source: https://www.nasfaa.org/uploads/documents/OB3_Loan_Changes_Brief.pdf



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02

Impacts to All Programs/Students



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02

CHANGES FOR ALL STUDENTS

- New lifetime maximum Federal Student Loan limit of \$257,500
- Institutions may set lower limits per program
- New requirement to adjust loan limits for less-than-full-time enrollment

Source: https://www.nasfaa.org/uploads/documents/OB3_Loan_Changes_Brief.pdf



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02

INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Creates a new accountability measure that would result in a program losing Federal Direct Student Loan eligibility if it fails the "low earnings outcomes" measure 2 out of 3 years.

Source: https://www.nasfaa.org/uploads/documents/Federal_Student_Aid_Change_OB3.pdf



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INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Undergraduate Programs: Compares the median earnings of completers 4 years after program completion with the earnings of “working adults” with only a high school degree or GED who are not enrolled in higher education.

Graduate Programs: Compares the median earnings 4 years post-enrollment with the earnings of “working adults” with only a bachelor’s degree who are not enrolled in higher education.

Warnings to students must be provided if a program fails the “low earnings outcomes” measure.



03

Impacts to Federal Parent PLUS Loans



IMPACTS ON PARENT PLUS LOANS (AFFECTS UNDERGRADUATES)

- Annual Limit: \$20,000 per dependent student
- Lifetime Limit: \$65,000 per dependent student
- Prior to this legislation, Parent PLUS Loans were limited only by the annual cost of attendance.

Source: https://www.nasfaa.org/uploads/documents/OB3_Loan_Changes_Brief.pdf



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Limiting Parent PLUS Loans to \$20k

Students over \$20k in Parent PLUS Loans

Total Headcount Impact

(1,639)

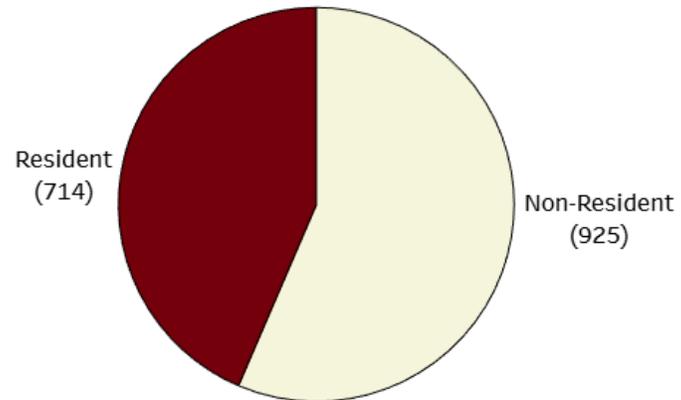
Total Monetary Impact

(\$23,190,219)

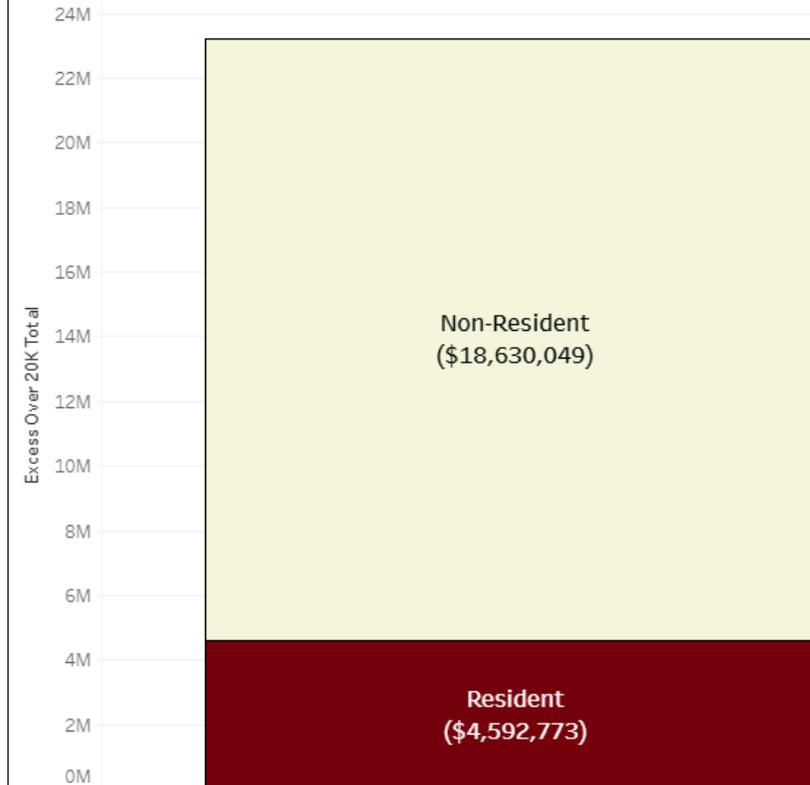
Residency Status Legend

Non-Resident
Resident

Headcount Impact by Residency



Monetary Impact by Residency



Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships, Source: HC Financial Aid

Nearly Live Data

Data Current as of October 29, 2025



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Limiting of Aggregate Parent PLUS loans to \$65,000 (Undergraduates)

Students over Aggregate Parent PLUS loan of \$65k

Total Headcount Impact

(1,189)

Total Monetary Impact

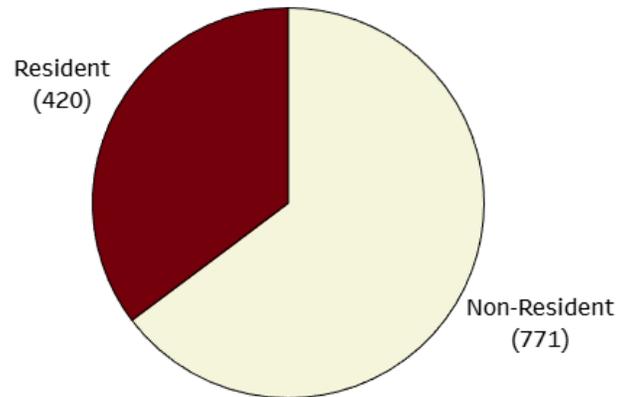
(\$48,585,133)

Residency Status Legend

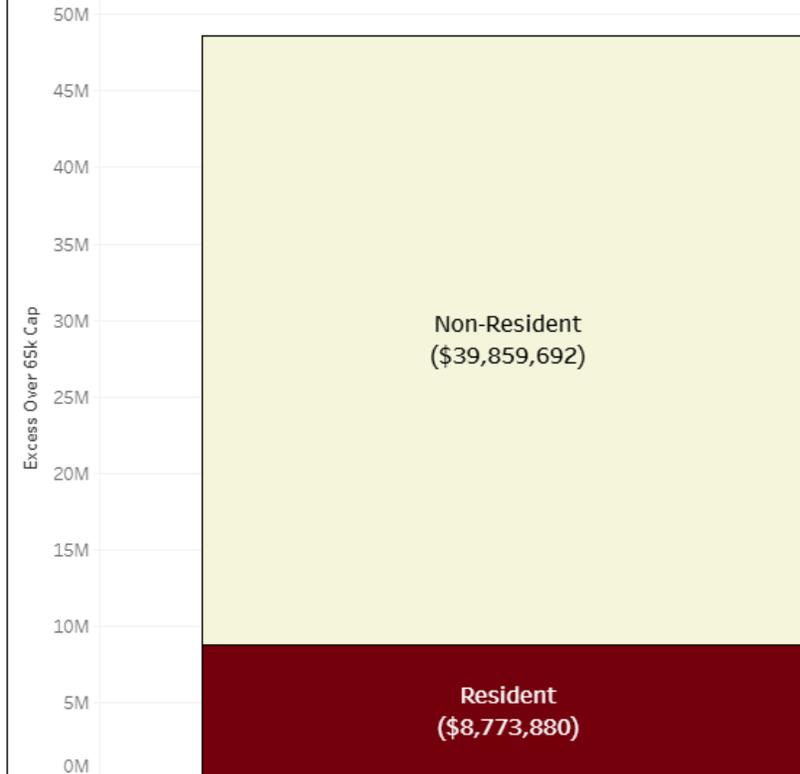
Non-Resident

Resident

Headcount Impact by Residency



Monetary Impact by Residency



Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships, Source: HC Financial Aid

Nearly Live Data

Data Current as of October 29, 2025



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04

Action Plan



ACTION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Currently Underway

- Software updates currently underway with Student Information Systems (SIS) vendors, including Ellucian (Banner)
- Configuration changes in Banner in anticipation of new rules
- Publicizing changes to faculty and staff
- Preparing website/policy updates
- Staff training
- Regular interaction with national associations and Department of Education
- Increasing staffing in preparation for higher volume of private educational loans



ACTION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Upon Release of Final Rules (Spring)

- Implementation of Banner Updates
- Changes and Additions to Data Warehouse Reports
- Notification to Affected Students
- Website/Policy Updates
- Ongoing review of impacts as aid year unfolds



THANKS!

Joey Derrick

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