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**Goldrick-Rab to Discuss College Affordability Crisis**

On Monday, February 13, at 7:00 p.m. at the Iowa City Public Library, Sara Goldrick-Rab, Professor of Higher Education Policy & Sociology at Temple University, will give a public lecture on the crisis of college affordability and student loan debt. She will offer solutions for fixing the U.S. financial aid system to make higher education accessible to all, drawing on research published in her newest book, *Paying the Price: College Costs, Financial Aid, and the Betrayal of the American Dream*. The book chronicles the experiences of working- and middle-class students who enter public colleges with federal aid and Pell Grants but leave without a degree, unable to afford tuition, books, and living expenses.

Goldrick-Rab places the blame for the national college affordability crisis on outdated, convoluted financial aid systems. “In the 1970s,” she writes, “targeting financial aid for the poorest individuals made sense—after all, most people didn’t want to attend college, it wasn’t required, and college costs were low enough that the Pell Grant largely covered the bills. Today, that model is failing: the vast majority of the populace wants access to affordable, high-quality public higher education, it is required by the modern labor market, and college costs are so high that grants and scholarships are restricted to only a fraction of students with financial need.”

At the state level, according to the Iowa College Student Aid Commission’s 2016 report, Iowa ranks 30th in the nation in BA degree attainment and a lowly 50th in the percentage of financial aid provided to students with demonstrated need attending its public institutions (16%). The state also has the eighth-highest percentage of students graduating with student debt (68%), and the average amount of debt its graduates carry is the eighth-highest in the nation.

Goldrick-Rab, who identifies as an “activist-scholar,” is the Founder of the Wisconsin HOPE Lab, which seeks ways to make college more affordable. Her research examines the efficacy and implications of financial aid policies, welfare reform, transfer practices, and interventions aimed at increasing college enrollment among marginalized groups. She has published articles in *The Atlantic*, the *New York Times*, and the *Washington Post*, was a recent guest on Comedy Central’s *The Daily Show,* and, in June 2015, joined Senator Elizabeth Warren for a college affordability roundtable at the renowned Albert Shanker Institute.

“Goldrick-Rab’s scholarship fills a critical void in our conversations about the realities of financial aid policy in the face of rapidly rising tuition,” notes F. King Alexander, president of Louisiana State University. “[It] is an important, poignant reminder of the ongoing negative impact of state appropriation reductions in this era.”

In addition to her public lecture, Goldrick-Rab will meet with University of Iowa Inequality Seminar to discuss “Making College Affordable: Adventures in Scholar-Activism.” The seminar, hosted by the Public Policy Center, will meet at 2:00 p.m. on February 13 in W113 Seashore Hall on the University of Iowa campus. Both events are free and open to the public.

Goldrick-Rab’s visit is sponsored by the University of Iowa’s Obermann Center for Advanced Studies, Public Policy Center, College of Education, Educational Policy & Leadership Studies, Graduate & Professional Student Government, UI Student Government, Graduate Student Senate, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Department of Sociology, Division of Student Life, College of Business, and Chief Diversity Office. It is part of a year-long series of events examining the current state of public higher education. The series began with a screening of the documentary film *Starving the Beast* and will culminate in a day-long public forum in April.