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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATE-PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS ORGANIZES NATIONWIDE “CALL CONGRESS DAY”

Washington, D.C. (November 22, 2013) – The National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS) and the University of Missouri Graduate Professional Council (GPC) have organized a nationwide “Call Congress Day” for graduate and professional students across America to spark conversation in Congress about the staggering debt burden and interest rate inequality facing students pursuing post-baccalaureate degrees.

The University of Missouri GPC partnered with NAGPS this summer to launch the “GradsHaveDebt2” public awareness campaign in response to recent legislation that raised the interest rate caps from 6.8% to 10.5%, resulting in graduate students paying higher interest rates than undergraduates. This legislation is yet another blow to graduate students who lost their eligibility to access subsidized Stafford Loans in 2012 as part of the Budget Control Act – a move that will add \$18 billion to graduate student debt over the next 10 years.

The “GradsHaveDebt2” campaign has already gained the attention of Members of Congress. Less than a week after its launch, concerns raised by NAGPS through the GradsHaveDebt2 campaign, regarding the bipartisan student loan bill, were quoted on the floor of the U.S. Senate by Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-CA).

“We know that all students face significant debt throughout our nation and something needs to be done to address this problem. Graduate and professional students in particular, have the highest debt rates in part because they pay the highest interest rates, yet they also have the lowest default rates on their loans,” stated Meredith Niles, Director of Legislative Affairs for NAGPS. “Our campaign aims to shed light on this issue and give students an opportunity to talk about the impact debt burden has on American families and communities.”

On December 4, 2013, NAGPS members across the country will host local “Call Congress” events on their campuses, as part of this nationwide initiative. This event is the

first in a series of local, regional and national events. The campaign, which will continue into 2014, urges Members of Congress to pass new legislation that:

- Reduces interest rates and caps on federal student loans available to graduate-professional students
- Unifies the undergraduate and graduate rates to reverse the current inequalities
- Restores graduate-professional student eligibility for subsidized Stafford loans

Visit [Facebook.com/GradsHaveDebt2](https://www.facebook.com/GradsHaveDebt2) to find out more about the event and to read the stories that graduate and professional students across the country have shared about their struggles with student loan debt.

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The National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS) is a volunteer, student-run organization representing more than half a million graduate and professional students from 90 institutions across the United States. See www.nagps.org/members

NAGPS develops and sustains a member network that connects graduate and professional students across America, allowing them to share resources and best practices in ways that empower member organizations to successfully serve their constituents and amplify students' voices to campus, state, and federal policymakers.