

Public college isn't as affordable as it used to be

By Danielle Douglas-Gabriel, Washington Post

Michael Bayne has done everything you're supposed to do to avoid taking on too much debt for college. He lives off-campus to save money on housing. He's always working at least one job – sometimes two. And he enrolled at an in-state public school, Arizona State University.

But it's not nearly enough. The \$2,500 in grants Bayne received this semester covered less than half of his tuition at ASU. A decade ago, the same amount of aid would have been enough to pay his entire bill.

"My parents don't have money to help me, so to help pay for tuition, pay for books, pay for everything, I work a full-time job," he said. "And I still have \$17,000 in student loans."

It used to be that students such as Bayne could attend a public university and graduate with little to no debt. Then came the recession, when state governments slashed funding of higher education and families began paying higher tuition bills.

Now, even as the economy recovers and taxpayer revenue is pouring back in, states have not restored their funding, and tuition keeps rising, leaving parents and students scrambling to cover costs.

Total student debt now surpasses \$1 trillion and is growing by the day. For the first time ever, according to a recent study, families are shouldering more of the cost of public university tuition than state governments.

Read the whole story