



## Student Debt: Setting the Record Straight

### Speaker Biographies

**Beth Akers** is a fellow in the Brookings Institution's Center on Children and Families and the Brown Center on Education Policy. She is an expert on the economics of education, with a focus on higher education policy. Akers's recent writing has been on higher education finance, including student debt. She coauthored *Game of Loans: The Rhetoric and Reality of Student Debt*. She was previously staff economist with the President's Council of Economic Advisors, where she worked on federal student lending policy and other education and labor issues. Akers received a BS in mathematics and economics from the State University of New York at Albany and a PhD in economics from Columbia University.

**Sandy Baum** is a senior fellow at the Urban Institute and professor emerita of economics at Skidmore College. An expert on higher education finance, she speaks and writes about college access, college pricing, student aid policy, student debt, and affordability. Since 2002, Baum has coauthored the College Board's annual publications *Trends in Student Aid* and *Trends in College Pricing*. She is a member of the board of the National Student Clearinghouse and has chaired major study groups through the College Board and the Brookings Institution, developing proposals for reforming federal and state student aid. Baum's articles on higher education finance have been published in professional journals, books, and the trade press. Her recent work includes studies of how behavioral economics can inform student aid policy, a meaningful definition of college affordability, tuition and financial aid strategies for broad access public institutions, and the National Science Foundation-funded *Educational Attainment: Understanding the Data*. Baum's book *Student Debt: Rhetoric and Realities of Higher Education Financing* was published in summer 2016. Baum earned her PhD in economics at Columbia University and her BA in sociology at Bryn Mawr College, where she serves on the board of trustees.

**Matthew Chingos** is a senior fellow at the Urban Institute, where he studies education-related topics at the K-12 and postsecondary levels. Chingos's areas of expertise include class-size reduction, standardized testing, teacher quality, student loan debt, and college graduation rates. His current research examines the long-term effects of school choice policies, student transportation, and college living costs. Before joining Urban, Chingos was a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. He coauthored *Crossing the Finish Line: Completing College at America's Public Universities* and *Game of Loans: The Rhetoric and Reality of Student Debt*. His work has been published in academic journals, including the *Journal of Public Economics*, *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, and *Education Finance and Policy*. He has received support from the US government and several philanthropic foundations. Chingos received a BA in government and economics and a PhD in government from Harvard University.



**Catherine Rampell** is an opinion columnist at the *Washington Post*. She covers economics, public policy, politics, and culture, with an emphasis on data-driven journalism. Before joining the *Post*, Rampell wrote about economics and theater for the *New York Times*. She received the Weidenbaum Center Award for Evidence-Based Journalism and is a Gerald Loeb Award finalist. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Princeton University.

**Sarah Rosen Wartell** is the third president of the Urban Institute. A public policy executive and housing markets expert, Wartell was President Clinton’s deputy assistant for economic policy and the deputy director of his National Economic Council. At the US Department of Housing and Urban Development from 1993 to 1998, she advised the federal housing commissioner on housing finance, mortgage markets, and consumer protection. In 2012, she was named a “Woman of Influence” by *HousingWire*. Wartell cofounded the Center for American Progress, serving as its first chief operating officer and general counsel. Later, as executive vice president, Wartell oversaw its policy teams and fellows. Her work focused on the economy and housing markets, and she directed the Mortgage Finance Working Group and the “Doing What Works” government performance program. Wartell practiced law with the Washington, DC, firm Arnold & Porter and was a consultant to the bipartisan Millennial Housing Commission. Wartell has an AB degree with honors in urban affairs from Princeton University’s Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs and holds a JD degree from Yale Law School.