Imagine ways to address the needs of students who conclude they can’t afford to stay.

Synopsis of Conversations with Students:

Student 1
University Scholar - Has a scholarship, but was not aware they needed to pay taxes on it.

Student 2
Some scholarships - Is involved in Work Study. With course load can not get enough hours to stay up on finances. Program of study is very demanding.

Student 3
Knows students who are struggling financially, but none that have had to leave. Receives MAP and PELL grants that have stayed fairly consistent. Will leave with over $50,000.00 in student loans. Works 2 jobs, one on campus one off. Student did not have any specific suggestions on how to address financing college education.

Student 4
Suggested the following; a. Provide students with Scholarship Opportunities, b. Help students obtain Student Loans, c. Provide students with jobs, d. Direct students to the Financial Aid office and e. Hold workshops to provide students access to the information they need - what their options are and how to access those options.

Student 5
Foreign Graduate Student - Not allowed to work off campus. Came here with an understanding that they will be able to fund campus employment (assuming they do not land an RA or TA potion) and who are unable to find work in our offices to support the cost of attending NIU. At the very least we need to communicate better to those students about the realities of employment possibilities on campus so they can come here with reasonable expectations.

Undergraduate Students
Many students knew students that have left NIU to work while attending a community college for their associates degree but eventually completed their degrees either at NIU or elsewhere.

MBA Student
A current MBA student mentioned leaving a Big Ten school due to lack of funds, attending a community college, and completed his undergraduate degree at NIU. He was very pleased with his experience and believes “NIU provided a great return on his investment.”

After speaking with students our group concluded that there is a significant need to provide students with access to individuals that would be able to provide them with financial guidance. Many students were unaware of their financial options. Currently, students have to navigate their way through the Huskie Shuffle to find opportunities for financial aid. This can be quite confusing as there is no clear path to any one office. It would be very helpful if we were able to provide students with a clear path through a Financial Guidance office that would then have access to all the other offices/departments on campus that can provide some type of financial assistance.