Slope Calculator Scenario—Megan Wilson

Enter the following information, as prompted:

College start date: 09/23/2017
College graduation date: 06/10/2021
Career Category: Education, Training and Library
Career: Elementary Education
Will you pay interest on Direct Unsubsidized Loans during school: Yes

Keep the suggested interest rate, loan term, and minimum payment for the calculations.

Loans: Enter the following loan information for all four years—Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior:

- Direct Subsidized Loans: 2,000
- Direct Unsubsidized Loans: 3,500
- Other/Alternative Loans: 1,500

What is Megan’s SLOPE calculation: % (ideal is 8% or less)

Additional Information on Megan’s Journey (not used in SLOPE calculator)

- High School GPA: 3.9
- ACT Composite Score: 24
- College to Attend: Minot State University
- College Cost: $6,568 (tuition) + $1,100 (books) + $6,164 (room/board) = $13,832/year (or $55,328 for four years)

Amount of Scholarships, Family Support and Loans

- Has ND CTE Scholarship ($1,500 per year/$6,000 total), Other Scholarships ($1,750 per year/$7,000 total)
- Expected Family Contribution (EFC)–$3,582 per year/$14,328 total
- Loans per each year: $2,000 subsidized federal loans, $3,500 unsubsidized federal loans, $1,500 other loans
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Take Home Pay and Monthly Expenses

Projected yearly income (from Slope Calculator)

$43,550/Year – Entry Level Salary
$65,180/Year – Average Salary

Projected Budget (Slope Calculator Figures)—see page 1-2 of screen print

$43,550 Gross Income – $13,065 Deductions = $30,485 Net or Take Home Pay
$2,540.42/Month – ($2,008.30 Fixed + $450 Variable) = **$82.12 Total Net Income** (left over a month)

Summary for SLOPE Calculator Activity

Megan is ok with the results of the Slope Calculator. She understands that the 8.8% is a little higher than she wanted. She would have liked to see a higher total net income, but realizes this is an entry level starting salary. She realizes she will most likely get pay increases each year. She is open to a part-time job on the weekends, if she struggles with money. She also knows she may have to look at finding a roommate to help decrease her rent expense to free up more money, as well.

Arrival on campus, Minot State University

Megan registers for her first semester: 14 credits of general coursework. Megan met with her advisor when it was scheduled, therefore was able to enroll in all of the courses she needed to get started. She was worried because she knew that if she waited too long to register, she might not have gotten into a course she needed.

Megan grew up in Minot, therefore is living with her parents for the first year of college. They live about 10 miles out of town. She works part-time at an after school program at a local elementary school. She has worked there for three years. Her hours are 3:00pm-6:00pm, Monday through Friday, with weekends off. Because of her hours, she has to ensure her last class of the day is no later than 2:00 pm. Megan’s first year of college expenses will be covered by her income, scholarships, student loans, and some help from her parents, when needed.

Megan easily finds all of her classrooms for the first days of class and starts her classwork.

First Setback

During Megan’s first two weeks of school, she was feeling very overwhelmed. She didn’t realize how difficult it would be to learn and understand what each of her instructors expected from her. She already had two quizzes coming up, as well as, two written assignments, all due within one week! She struggled to keep up with her schedule and then would run to work right after her last class of the day. She wouldn’t get home until 6:30pm. By the time she ate and got settled for the evenings, she was exhausted. She is beginning to wonder if college is for her.
First semester, conclusion
After Megan’s second week of classes, she decided to meet with her advisor. She thought he would be able to help her, because she wanted to succeed and do well her first semester. After meeting with him, she learned that how she is feeling is normal for most first year students. He explained to her that she was most likely experiencing the “U-Curve Theory of Adjustment.”

He explained the “U-Curve Theory of Adjustment” describes the transition to university experience in four stages:

1. **Honeymoon** – this period is characterized by interest in the new environment that is not threatened by assessment deadlines
2. **Culture Shock** – disillusionment and dejection, can occur when academic requirements become urgent or overwhelming
3. **Adjustment** – when things start to look up or improve and starting to figure out how the rules of the new culture works and is feeling more comfortable and in control
4. **Mastery** – at this point, you have adapted to the new environment and able to function with much less effort, perhaps even adopting a cultural identity

Her advisor gave her some advice on time management and managing her class and work load, along with referring her to the Peer Mentoring program on campus.

After spending time with a peer mentor and working through the next couple of weeks of classes, Megan started to feel more comfortable with her studies and classes. She readjusted how she worked through each day with her classes, study time, and work (time management). She now feels she is handling her daily schedule much better.

Second semester...
Megan did well her first semester. She ended up with an A in College Composition I, A in U.S. History, B in Psychology, C in Biology, and a C in Educational Psychology. She feels comfortable transitioning into her second semester of classes. She knows she may struggle with her College Algebra course, as math is her weakest subject.

Second Setback
Megan started out her courses much stronger than her first semester. This was probably because she knew what to expect after her first semester. However, she struggled understanding her College Algebra teacher. He had a foreign accent, which at times made it hard for to understand what he was saying. If that wasn’t all, there was about 60 students in this class. Because of her struggles with math, her gut instinct told her she should check to see if there was a different College Algebra class taught by a different instructor. After checking, there was not. She was stuck with this instructor and she was developing anxiety about this class and feared she would not pass.
**Second semester, conclusion**
After the second week of classes and feeling overwhelmed with College Algebra, Megan knew she had to do something. One day she went to class and was sitting next to a group of four students that were talking about what was due today and how difficult the assignment was. She decided to get in on the conversation. She learned that she wasn’t the only one worried about the course, so she asked if any of them were interested in a study group. They were all interested and thought it was a great idea. After they all worked out their daily schedules, they decided they would meet twice a week to work through assignments together. Megan found that what she missed from the instructor lectures and demonstrations, she picked up in her study group. She not only ended up with a B in the course, she found four new friends in the process.

**Third semester**
Although there were some issues her first year of college, Megan worked through them with her persistence and effort for wanting to succeed. Megan is excited about her third semester schedule and is eager to get started.

**Third Setback**
The start of her third semester didn’t go as well. On Megan’s third day of classes, she tripped going down the stairs in one of the buildings she has class in. The result of the fall was a broken ankle that required surgery.

**Time for a “Take-2”**
What should Megan do about her third semester of classes? Will she try to complete her third semester? Is it even an option to continue her third semester of classes? What options does Megan have?

Megan needs to make a decision about her third semester—will she take the third semester off, take time to recover and return the next semester? Not completing her third semester will set her back a semester and she will finish her degree program later than expected. Trying to work through her third semester would take commitment, use of communication skills with her instructors, and persistence, as she would miss at least 3-4 weeks of class.

**What would you advise Megan to do? Use the Take-2 Planning Grid!**
**Slope Calculator Scenario—Megan Wilson**

**Take-2 Conclusion**
After Megan was informed she needed surgery and wouldn’t be able to be on campus to attend her classes for 3-4 weeks she knew she had to make some serious decisions about her third semester of classes. She discussed her possible options with her parents and college advisor. She learned that her instructors would be willing to work with her for the first month of classes. It was possible for her to move forward with her third semester of courses.

Her surgery on her ankle took place the day after her incident. The day after surgery she was able to start contacting each of her instructors and develop a plan for each class. The plan involved frequent communication with her instructors, her parents physically turning in assignments for her that couldn’t be sent via email, and reaching out to college tutors to help her get through some more difficult course work.

Megan finally was able to attend classes three weeks after her incident. With Megan working hard, being determined, working consistently with her instructors, and depending on tutors, friends, and family, Megan was able to successfully complete her third semester of college.