

MDC's debt-free graduates

The Aug. 3 story No-debt college not real option anymore, brought to light the rising cost of a college education in our country.

But the headline simply is not true, because a solution for students and families exists at Florida's state colleges. Students can gain an outstanding education at a fair cost and graduate debt-free.

Miami Dade College and all 28 state colleges maintain tuition costs that are among the lowest in the nation. Combined with Pell Grants, the federal grant program for low- and moderate-income students and families, MDC is able to provide a top-flight higher-education experience to students from every economic strata in our community.

Today, MDC students receive more Pell Grants than any other college or university in the nation. In addition, MDC's American Dream Scholarship is available to every high school student in the county who graduates with a 3.0 grade point average. The overall result is that only 7 percent of MDC graduates incur any debt at all.

In other words, in our community, a great college education is available at a very affordable cost.

In addition to a full range of associate degrees and workforce certifications, MDC offers baccalaureate degrees that cost students and their families less than \$12,000, not yearly but in total. All of MDC's industry-related degrees are developed in concert with leading South Florida companies, providing immediate and high-paying jobs.

These are just a few of the quality opportunities at MDC. When the discussion is about college affordability, MDC and state colleges should be front and center, a real solution with a proven record of excellence.

Lenore Rodicio, provost for academic and student affairs, Miami Dade College, Miami