

# The New Student in the Real World

Elizabeth Deleon, Simon Jarrar, Nick Lara,  
Jamieson Mockel, Khoa Tran

# A Real World?

- “After you graduate, you are going to have to live in the REAL world.”
  - Getting a PERMANENT job
  - Paying MAJOR bills
  - Starting an ACTUAL family
  - Dealing with LEGITIMATE stress
  - Engaging SERIOUSLY with politics

# Perceptions About Students

When people talk about the ‘real world’ after school, they are making major assumptions:

- Students don’t have many responsibilities
- Students receiving FAFSA have a free ride
- College is easy compared to “real work”
- They may be using old/bad data about the costs of higher education

# Free time?

- Time-management is a constant concern
- Getting proper meals is difficult
- Students still have to sleep, too! - adults need 7-8 hours a night
  - Are you sacrificing your health with more sleep and fast food?
- And we also need to study!

# The time cost

- Rising costs of living/tuition → more working hours.
- More working hours → less time for school.
- Less time for school → Grades and attendance suffer.
- They get less out of what they are paying more for because they have to work more.
- Some find it harder to finish in 4 years

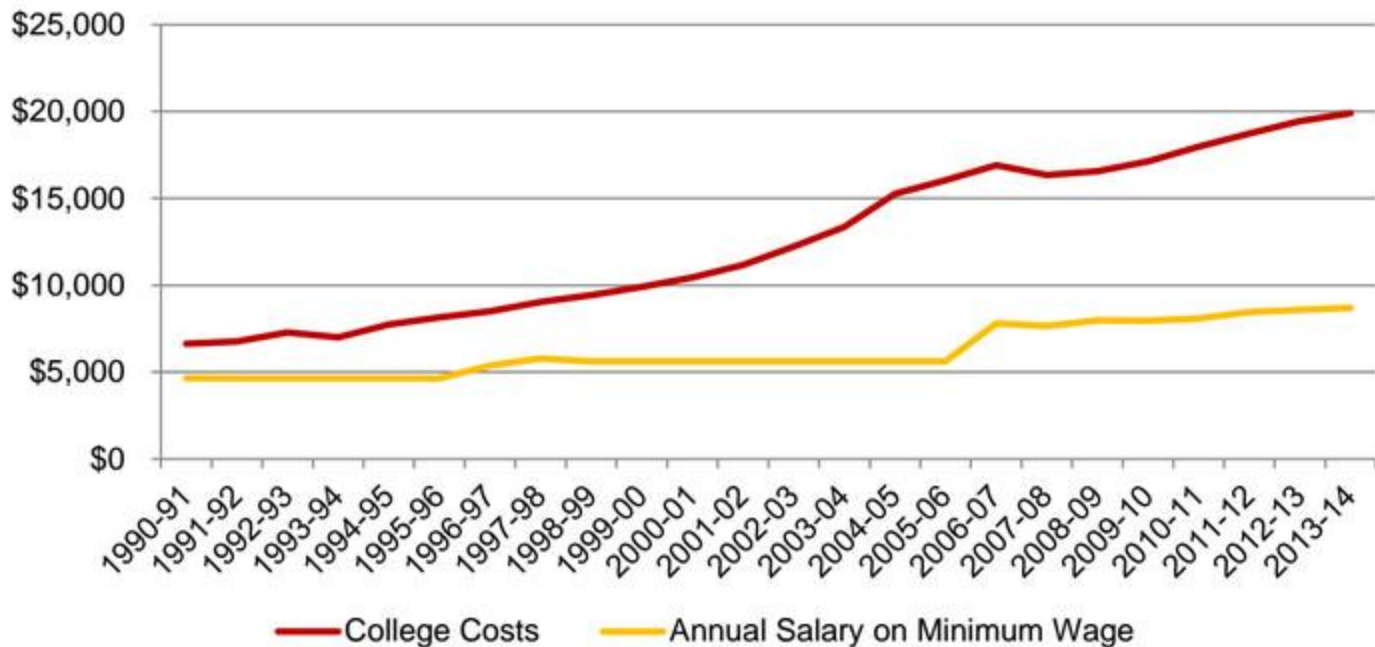
# When school's out...

- There's still work!
- Students work 34% more hours in the summer than during the school year to compensate for semester-time expenses (Peng and Yang 2010).
- Tuition increase is directly correlated with more working hours.
- The work is usually outside of the student's area of study.

# The Effects of Tuition and the Cost of Education

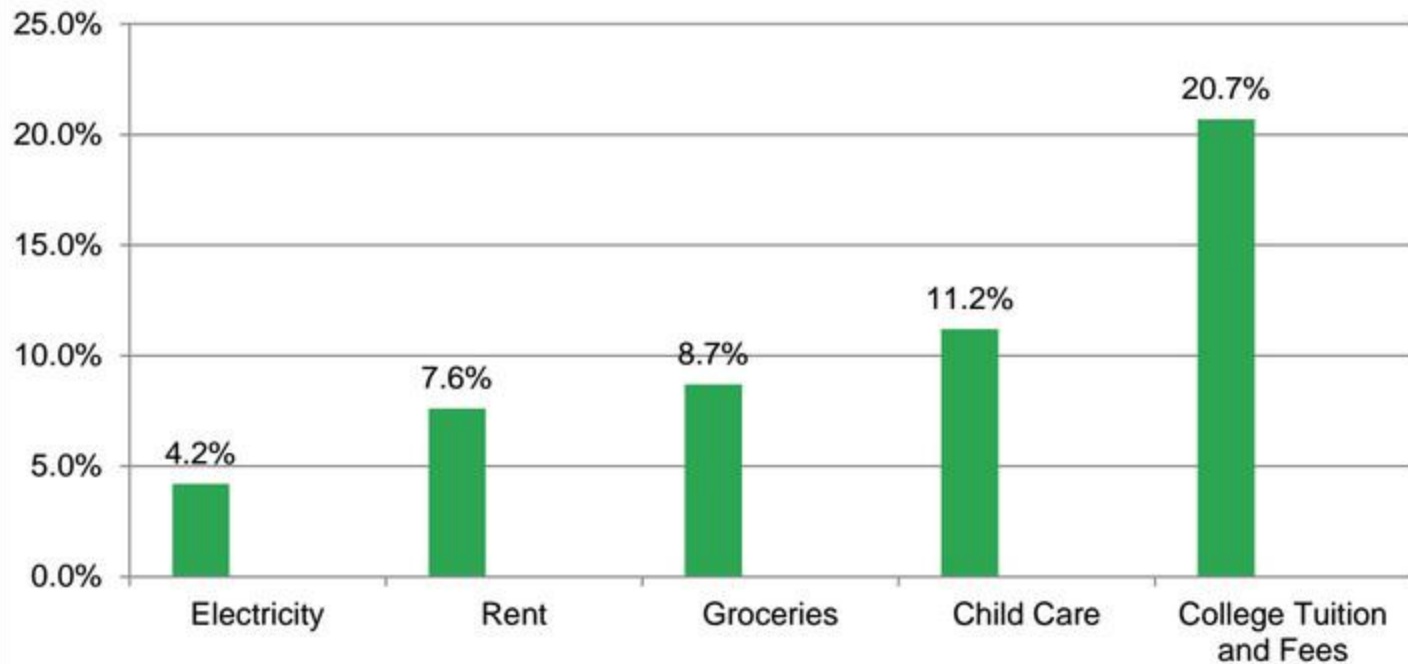
- To deal with the cost of school, students adopt financial strategies
  - Working multiple jobs
  - Skipping classes to work
  - Skipping classes to save transportation money
  - Skipping meals
  - Asking one's families

## College Costs v. Annual Salary on Minimum Wage, 1990-2014

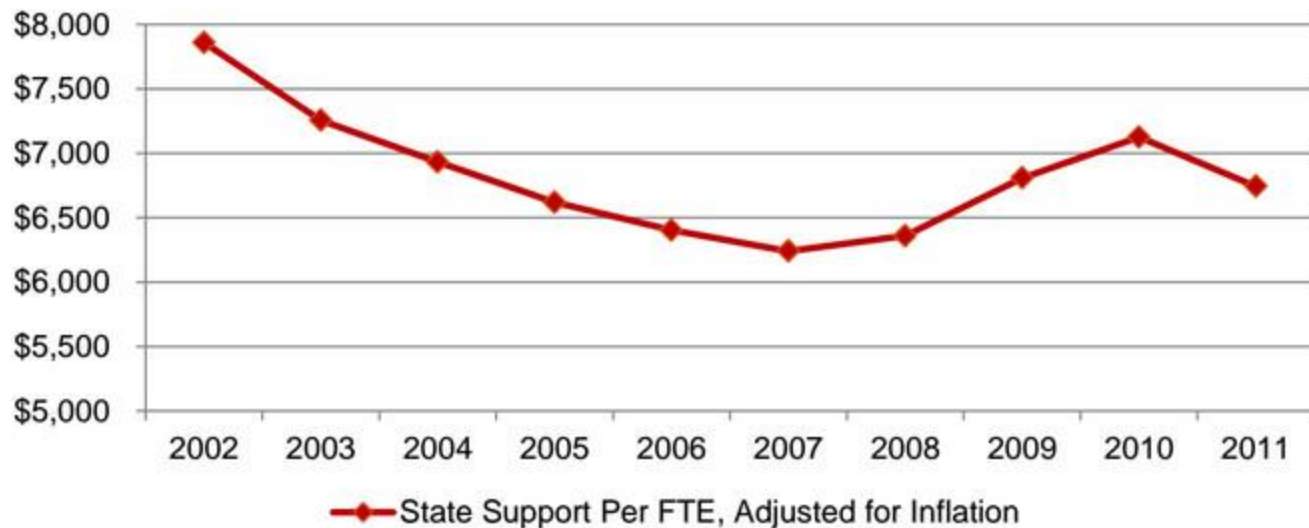




## Percent Increase in Costs, 2009-2013



## University Main Campuses: 14.2% Decline in State Support, 2002- 2011



# General Info from Articles:

- In 1987, 47% of college freshmen studied six or more hours outside of the classroom
- In 1998, 39% of college freshmen work 16 or more hours per week, and increase of 4% since 1993 (Gose 1998)
- In 2002, 65.3% of entering freshmen have concerns about not having enough money, 1% increase from 2001
- Only 11% of low-income, first-generation students had earned bachelor's degrees within 6 years, compared to 55% of their peers.
- Study by Bozick (2007) examined the effects of employment and living arrangements on first-to-second year persistence and found that students who worked more than 20 hours a week were more likely to leave school during the first year

# Academic Performance of College Students: Influence of Time Spent Studying and Working:

- Hypothesis: Behavior (more time spent studying outside of class) will significantly interact with motivation in that the influence that motivation has on academic performance will be higher for students who spend more time studying outside of class compared with students who spend less time studying outside of class.
  - TSW= Time students spend working during a given week
  - TSA= time students spent outside of class on academic activities during the week
  - TSW did not directly affect academic performance

# Work and Family Commitment and Decision-Making Status Among Emerging Adults

- Hypothesis: To test the hypothesis that men and women would not differ on work commitment, but women would be more committed than men to family
- There were no statistically significant differences in either work or family commitment
- How much thought has gone into work plans appears to be related to work commitment
- Family commitment was significantly related to decision-making status regarding parenthood

# Effects of Employment on Persistence of Low-Income, First-Generation College Students

- Purpose: The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of employment on first-to-second year persistence of low-income, first-generation college students at 4-year postsecondary institutions
- Of the total sample, 68.0% worked while enrolled in college. Fifty-one percent of all those working low-income, first-generation students in the study worked more than 20 hours a week.
- This finding indicates that the negative effects of employment might disappear when students consider academics as their most significant responsibility and place school at the top of their priority list.

Like Comment Share

Apr 25 at 8:18pm  
I just want to graduate already! I hate school so much idk if I should rush and finish school by next semester or take my time and graduate in 2! I just wanna start making money, move out, have my puppy & fat kitty, and live happily ever after! lol why must that be so hard! :( - 😞 feeling miserable.

22 likes 26 comments

Like Comment Share

“You don’t even realize how easy you have it while you’re in college.”

–Interview informant

May 4 at 11:18am · San Jose, CA ·  
I need at least one day off from school and work next semester to just focus on my schoolwork. Working 5 days a week, usually full shifts, where I'm waking up for work at 5am, and going to school 2 days is not cool.

Unlike · Comment · Share

You and 4 others like this.

Write a comment... [camera icon] [smiley icon]

What's on your mind?

STATUS PHOTO CHECK IN

27 mins near Sunnyvale, California  
Skipped class to go to work to pay for school. Funny how things works lol  
13 likes 5 comments

Like Comment Share

3 of 5  
I'm seriously considering becoming a stripper 😊

# Ethnographic Data

General trends expressed among 13 adults in regards to their experiences in sending their kids to college:

- The rising costs were unanticipated when parents began to save
  - Savings might only cover 1 to 2 years of tuition depending on the school and additional costs (housing, books, food, etc.)
- Costs are a major factor in deciding which college to attend
  - Parents urge their kids to be cautious about considering an expensive school, or a cheap school in an expensive area.
- College is still important, but considering the high cost, parents today feel that they would be more understanding if their kids decided not to go.
  - Parents experienced enormous amounts of pressure to get a college degree when they were younger



# Defining “the New Student”

- The full-time student with a full-time (or nearly) job
  - even loans/scholarships can't pay for education
- Balancing social, financial, and educational responsibilities has become paramount to success
- We make networks that we hope will help us immediately or in the future
- We building interpersonal relationships that we expect will last

# Student Reality

- We pay for school, housing, food, leisure
- We have to work
  - and we seek advancement
- We maintain families and raise children
- We deal with interpersonal pressures
- We stay politically active

# Reality After Graduation

Our post-graduation “real world” will be a bit different from non-graduates

- We'll have expanded perspectives
- We'll be more competitive in the job market
- We'll be more responsible
- We'll have student loan debts
- We might even have free time

# What Are We Going to Do About it?

- Anthropologists are in a unique place to study student life
  - Our discipline is social, academic, and scientific
- Serious study needs to be done on student life so our investment in our educations can be maximized
- Student life is a unique (and hectic) culture
- Insights into the reality of students' highly active lives can help to change negative perceptions and associations

# The Study of Students

- Studying college life as well as K-12 foundations
- People should know the sacrifice and dedication necessary to succeed
  - And alternatives (trade schools, etc)
- A cross-cultural approach which looks at academically top-performing countries
  - And asks, “Why are American students burning out?”
- Most importantly, a study that acknowledges a problem

# Takeaways

- For students to understand where their tuition money goes
- For families to understand the sacrifices that go into gaining an education
- Raising a general awareness that modern students are genuinely busier today than in the past

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