Trump Is Reaching Students With Social Media, But Will They Vote For Him?

If millennials are looking to avoid Donald Trump, the internet really isn’t the place to go.

Just as it is on Trump licensed properties and products, the name of the billionaire presumptive GOP candidate for president has been plastered all over the web since he declared his candidacy nearly a year ago. Inflammatory comments and insulting outbursts have landed Trump in the virtual laps of the electorate.

But, love him or hate him, the numbers show that the electorate has kept coming back for more. According to Google Trends, no presidential candidate, even the two remaining Democratic challengers, has come close to Donald Trump – who was the website’s fourth-most searched person in 2015 – in terms of searches.

What’s most surprising is how this 69-year-old is dominating social media, which is used by 90% of young adults and a mere 35% of Trump’s own age group.

The Donald’s supremacy in social media

The chief reason that the Internet has been rubbernecking Trump’s Twitter feed is as forceful as a car crash: his brash and confrontational style.

“He tells it as it is, and he takes that to social media as well, and that’s one of his strengths,” says Ryan Fournier, the national chair of Students for Trump, a student-led coalition of Trump campus groups not directly affiliated with the Trump campaign. “If you look at some of the
things that have been shot at him in social media, shot at him in the media, he’s been able to turn it around.”

If attention is the motive, it’s working; the real estate mogul’s followers outscore his remaining competitors’ followers by millions, despite the norm of conservative voters being older and liberal voters being younger and more likely to live on. In a party that, according to Cornell University’s Roper Center for Public Research, struggled winning the 18-29 age group in the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections, the outspoken and oft-controversial Trump has taken over the Twittersphere.

“He knows how to be bombastic and how to go on the attack,” says Mitchell McKinney, Ph.D., a political communication professor at the University of Missouri who specializes in political campaigns. “It’s entertaining, and he realizes that even those who are not his supporters want to follow him and see what he’s saying.”

Trump’s actions have had the desired effect, as evidenced by increased and outspoken social media activity from his followers. The pro-Trump hashtag #TheChalkening showered the real estate mogul with support, as students chalked out their support for the Republican candidate on Twitter and Instagram. #NeverHillary has steadily grown over the last few weeks according to data from Hashtagify.com, building from the distaste for the Democrat frontrunner from both Trump and Sanders fans alike.

“We have seen all sorts of protests, as innocuous as chalking… to the Trump rallies where he claims that folks are infiltrating and starting fights,” McKinney said. “One thing we do know is that it generates a lot of media attention.”

Young conservatives take Trump from the screen to real life

Also largely because of social media, “[School Name] for Trump” groups are springing out of universities across America.

“Today, we’re in 35, 40 states,” said Fournier, a rising sophomore at Campbell University in North Carolina who, as a freshman last October, started Students for Trump. The group’s website claims that Students for Trump has 280 chapters.
“We’ve been really successful. We’ve been helping out the campaign, volunteering at events.”

The success of the group – which started out as just a Twitter account managed by Fournier – is surprising, but Fournier says that growth was made possible by targeting the right areas of the web. What was once a one-man show has become a production of over 5,000 volunteers and over 13,000 pledged votes for Trump.

“No, we’re on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Reddit, Snapchat,” he listed. “Reddit is known as the liberal playground, but we were able to slap our little shop on it.”

While some young social media users use #NeverTrump hashtags and enraged posts to defy the candidate and his supporters, others like the founders of Portland State University’s “PSU Students for Donald Trump” work to turn the perception upside-down. The group has countered campus protests and has provoked furious reactions. The group shares the most controversial of these reactions in order to “further expose the left to the rest of the world,” as PSU student and group co-founder Stephen Johnston told Vocativ in a recent interview.

Not every Donald Trump student organization has taken off. The University of Pennsylvania’s “Penn for Trump” shut down after about four months when Trump called for a ban on Muslims entering the United States in January. But Fournier is optimistic that his group could contribute to Trump’s campaign when it counts in November.

“One of the jobs we do is make sure the correct information gets out to young voters,” he said of the organization’s accounts’ impact. “They think he’s the anti-Christ, they think he’s racist, and we get them to think that maybe he can do good.”

**The effect in November... Or lack thereof**

But could this swell of social media activity lead to higher turnout for Trump? McKinney is not so sure.

“We have little evidence yet that likes and social media traffic and followers necessarily translate into actual support,” says McKinney, who has authored several books about campaign communication including *Communication in the 2008 Election: Digital Natives Elect a President.*
According to McKinney, determining the real effect of social media activity on a presidential campaign would require a larger sample size than we currently have, which is only the 2008 and 2012 elections.

In each of these elections, the tech-savvier Obama held a convincing advantage on social media and, ultimately, electoral votes over Sen. John McCain and Gov. Mitt Romney; however, such a correlation cannot be claimed to indicate causation with such a small sample.

Additionally, the specific demographic of many of these Trump millennials – young males – is one that often does poorly on Election Day.

“We have demographic evidence to suggest that Trump does much better with younger males. Among younger voters, young males tend to under-perform – actually registering and showing up to vote,” he said. Young adults have always had the lowest turnout rate of any age group, and young women have had a higher turnout rate than young men since the 1996 election, according to the Census Bureau.

However, while Trump’s social media activity may not directly win him a drastic number of votes, McKinney believes that the payoff has been in the media attention his antics have garnered.

“His tweets become part of the news,” McKinney says, “so he does not have to buy advertisements.”

Trump’s online numbers may be high, but followers are not votes; if he wants to win in November, he’ll need to find a way to get his fans away from the keyboard and into the voting booth.
AFTER A FEW millennia of making roads, you’d think humans would’ve figured it all out by now. And yet, even the past decade has seen thoroughfare innovations come to the US. Since 2009, a new kind of interchange geometry has swept the nation, popping up 62 times in 22 states, with more under construction. Dubbed “diverging diamonds,” these fancy-looking road arrangements are a clever tool for neutralizing the most dangerous element of any high-speed intersection.

**The strength of the diamond intersection is its zero tolerance policy on left turns into traffic,** says Carlos Sun, a civil and environmental engineer with the University of Missouri. **Left turns aren’t just dangerous—forcing drivers to risk particularly violent head-on and 90-degree crashes—they’re inefficient. In busy intersections, through traffic loses valuable green light time to those safety-minded left turn arrows. “You’re wasting green light by accommodating the left turn,” says Sun.**

So the diamond intersection, ideal for spots where surface roads intersect with highways, and where cars move between the two, gets rid of the risky process of turning left across oncoming traffic. There’s a lot going on visually, but the system’s pretty simple. Say you’re coming from the east side of the road: First, you wait at a red light as drivers from the west smoothly criss-cross from one side to another. Then their light turns red, and it’s your turn turn to move through the elongated ichthys. More cars merge and exit the streams through wide turns. Meanwhile, a highway travels above the whole dance, allowing even more vehicles to move through a relatively constrained area. Traveling between freeways has never been so hypnotic:

The Columbus of diverging diamond interchanges is a chap named Gilbert Chlewicki. As a grad student back in 2000, Chlewicki wrote a term paper on the new traffic arrangement. Then he took a trip to France and was startled to find his tour bus smoothly rolling through a familiarly diamond-shaped intersection outside of Versailles. In fact, France has had a few of the things since the 1970s, but it was Chlewicki’s “rediscovery” that triggered their newfound popularity in
the US. So far, they’ve been especially hot in states like Utah and Missouri, where traveling wide
distances is a way of life.

Last year, Sun and transportation specialist colleagues from across the country teamed up to
perform the first in-depth safety analyses comparing the diverging diamond interchanges to
the common classic diamond setups, which force exiting cars to make turns across traffic.
The geometric oddities perform about exactly as well as the researchers hoped. Of the seven
intersections examined, five saw serious safety improvements. Overall, the engineers estimated
diverging diamonds should reduce crashes by 33 percent. What crashes remained were much
less likely to kill. Fatal crashes on terminal ramps fell by over 60 percent. Property damage fell
by half. And while these things look like they should leave drivers more confused than a cow on
astroturf, researchers find that drivers very rarely go the wrong way on DDIs. When drivers do
make mistakes—often at nighttime—the researchers’ observations show the what crashes do
occur are not often fatal.

In a country where even the well-vetted roundabout can be considered an out-there traffic
management idea, diverging diamonds are catching on quick. Sun and his colleagues say more
research is needed before calling them the safety king of intersections, but preliminary results
are looking good. If only the US devoted such dazzling feats of geometric mastery to, say, bike
lanes.

**MISSOURIAN**

**Marshall Stewart of North Carolina State to become new MU vice chancellor of extension and engagement**

IMANI COBBS, 13 hrs ago
COLUMBIA — Marshall Stewart, director of college leadership and strategy in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at North Carolina State University, will become the new vice chancellor of extension and engagement at MU.

Stewart said Tuesday that a colleague, from neither North Carolina nor Missouri, learned of the vacant position and suggested he would be a good fit and might enjoy the job. Stewart also received a call from a search firm that was interested in him.

He said he studied the position, became attracted to it very quickly and realized his colleague was correct.

"MU is one of the best jobs of extension in the country," Stewart said.

The vice chancellorship provides leadership for Cooperative Extension, Continuing Education and Extension Field programs at MU. The job description MU posted said that engagement with traditional and nontraditional partners is essential to enhancing the impact of MU's extension programs.

Stewart's responsibilities will include promoting cooperative extension, continuing education, working in partnership with various colleges and schools and working closely with the chancellor to ensure the institutions' land grant mission is being met.

At North Carolina State, Stewart has served as a teacher, director and dean assistant in agricultural education and extension services. He is expected to finish his work there on Aug. 12 and start at MU on Aug. 15.

"I'm looking forward to learning about the people of Missouri, the culture and the needs of the state," Stewart said. "I want to figure out ways the university can better serve the people's needs."

Stewart holds a bachelor of science degree in agricultural education, a master of science degree in agriculture sciences and a doctorate in agricultural and extension education from North Carolina State.
Stewart will replace Linda "Jo" Turner, who has been serving as interim vice provost and director of extensions since April 2016.

MU hired new vice chancellor of extension and engagement

COLUMBIA - The University of Missouri hired a new vice chancellor of extension and engagement. Marshall Stewart, current director of college leadership and strategy at the North Carolina State University, or NCSU, will replace Linda "Jo" Turner.

The position is effective Aug. 15, 2016, according to a letter from the Office of the Chancellor at the university.

The letter states Stewart also serves as special assistant to the dean at NCSU. Between the two roles, he is responsible for the development of new leadership development programs for stakeholders and strategic partnerships and external relations with college policymakers.

Some of his leadership initiatives established include the Warren Leadership and Public Policy Program, a program focused on food and agricultural issues for undergraduate students, and a leadership program for faculty and staff, stated in the MU letter.

The letter states Stewart is also currently developing a public leadership development program that would prepare participants for public leadership opportunities.

He is also the director of the Association of Public and Land-Grant Univeristies' Food Systems Leadership Institute. The letter says he provides leadership education for food and agriculture system leaders in higher education and industry around the nation and world.

Stewart served as associate director of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service and department head and program leader of the State 4-H and Family and Consumer Sciences Program at NCSU, prior to his current position at the university.
During his 30-year career in agricultural education and extension services, Dr. Stewart served as both an educator and a leader. The letter says he understands the importance of the land-grant mission and the university's obligation to new discoveries and improvement in the lives in Missourians.

Stewart holds a bachelor of science degree in agricultural education, a master of science degree in agricultural sciences and a doctorate of education degree in agricultural and extension education from NCSU.

MISSOURIAN

College of Arts and Science Dean Michael O’Brien to leave MU

TAYLOR BLATCHFORD, 13 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — Michael O’Brien, dean of the College of Arts and Science, is leaving MU to become the provost at Texas A&M University–San Antonio.

His last day will be July 15 and the university will seek input from the campus community to find an interim dean, according to an emailed announcement from Provost Garnett Stokes.

"I want to thank him for his service and dedication," Stokes said. "We will miss him."

Steven Olswang, the current interim provost at Texas A&M–San Antonio, said O’Brien was one of three final candidates for the provost position and visited campus for an interview several weeks ago.

O’Brien has been the college’s dean since 2006. He came to MU in 1980 as a professor of anthropology and served as the college’s associate dean from 1986 to 2006.

In 2012, O’Brien was a finalist for the provost position at Louisiana State University, according to previous Missourian reporting.
The College of Arts and Science is the largest college at MU and the oldest college west of the Mississippi. It is housed in 60 buildings across MU’s campus and comprises 32 departments, programs and schools, according to the college’s website. It also includes the Museum of Anthropology and the Museum of Art and Archaeology.

O’Brien earned his bachelor's degree at Rice University in 1972 and his doctorate at the University of Texas–Austin in 1977.

In a recent interview with the Missourian, O’Brien described himself as the No. 1 champion of the Association of American Universities at MU. He said he’s seen MU’s status as a member of the AAU deteriorate in his 35 years at the university, and he's worked with other deans to boost MU’s ranking.

MU Philosophy Department Chair Robert Johnson said in an email that O'Brien set the bar high when it comes to academic leadership.

"The loss of Dean O'Brien will be a very big blow," Johnson said. "The university will have to go to extraordinary lengths just to search for and find an adequate replacement."

**University of Missouri program connects local doctors and autism specialists, improves care**

A program launched at the University of Missouri is helping family doctors better screen for and begin treating autism spectrum disorders in children.
Local doctors might not know all the ways to recognize autism that a specialist, such as those at the University of Missouri hospital, might. The new program – Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes, or ECHO – lets specialists train and consult with local practitioners through videoconferencing.

Associate Professor and ECHO director Kristin Sohl told Missourinet the result is that autism patients can be treated by family practitioners.

“That allows the family to get care right there in their own hometown as opposed to having to drive to the University System for that level of care,” said Sohl. “We are able to provide that type of mentorship and care through the pediatrician, family physician, or nurse practitioner.”

The ECHO model began at the University of New Mexico and has been applied in treating many other conditions, including hepatitis C, rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes, and addiction. MU developed the first application of the ECHO model for the care of children with autism, so that children in rural communities can get care more like that of those in larger communities.

“We’re trying to change the conversation about autism so that people who don’t have access to specialty centers can still have access to the best practice care,” said Sohl. “Families can be recognized sooner, get a diagnosis sooner, and then enter treatment and therapy more quickly, to improve their outcomes.”

In the pilot, local doctors improved and showed more confidence in diagnosing and responding to autism. MU is working to replicate the program in ten more academic centers that would see it reach doctors and patients in other parts of the U.S., and Canada.

“We are open to new providers joining at any time,” said Sohl. She said those providers interested in participating need to contact her or the Missouri Telehealth Network.
MU develops program training primary care providers in autism care

COLUMBIA - The University of Missouri is introducing a new program training primary care providers in high quality care for autism spectrum disorders.

According to a news release from the university, Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes, or ECHO, Autism is answering a call for a health care system that is equipped and responsible for the complex needs of autism.

“Currently there are not enough specialists to manage the number of children with autism who need health care,” said Micah Mazurek, assistant professor of health psychology in the School of Health Professions and lead author of the study. “A real need exists to assist community-based health care providers as they help families get the answers they need without traveling or waiting to see a specialist.”

The news release states that during the pilot program, ECHO Autism showed significant improvements in primary care provider confidence in management and screening of autism and the ability to utilize tools and resources.

“We are very excited about the initial results from the ECHO Autism model,” said Kristin Sohl, associate professor of child health and the director of ECHO Autism. “Children with autism can show symptoms as early as 12 months; however, in too many cases children may not receive a diagnosis until they are 5 years old. Early diagnosis is critical for children with autism, and primary care providers play an important role in that initial process.”

ECHO Autism uses high-quality secure videoconferencing technology to connect primary care providers to experts at the MU Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders, according to the news release. The panel of experts includes a pediatrician specializing in ASD, a clinical psychologist, a child and adolescent psychiatrist, a dietitian, a social worker and a parent of a child with autism. The release says this allows direct training in diagnosis, screenings, treatment protocols and care management.
MU's news release states the Autism Intervention Research Network for Physical Health is conducting future research on ECHO Autism and the outreach of the program will extend to 10 additional academic centers, connecting experts with more primary care providers across the US and Canada.

The ECHO model was created by Sanjeev Arora, MD, from the University of New Mexico. He first used it to improve outcomes for hepatitis C and the model has expanded to address other complex medical conditions. MU researchers have developed the first model to be applied to caring for children with autism.

New MU study tackles mental health court engagement

BOONE COUNTY - **People with mental health problems are overrepresented in the U.S., criminal justice system, according to a new MU study.** This inequality inspired one MU social worker to look at the courts responsible for helping those people, and what makes them successful.

Kelli Canada, a social worker at MedZou Community Health Clinic, said the problem began back in the 1950s and 1960s with a movement to shut down institutions that treated and housed those with mental illnesses.

"People were moving from these institutions into the community. It sounds like a great plan, and it was in theory," Canada said. "But the problem is, was that money that was supporting those institutions wasn't shifted to the community. So we were left with a lot of people who had very serious needs and not enough community support."

Canada said without this community support, the U.S. saw an increase in people with mental illnesses ending up in the criminal justice system, and not being able to get out.

"We know that people with mental illnesses don't do well in the criminal justice system. They don't do well in jail. They don't do well in prison," she said.
Mental health courts were designed to give criminal offenders a voluntary option to seek treatment for their condition. Participants are required to go through assessments and regular monitoring during their time in the program to ensure they stay on track, in exchange for access to resources and treatment for their illness.

The courts seek to provide mentally ill offenders with what they need in order to get and stay out of the criminal justice system.

"We do see that there's reduction in criminal recidivism, and we do see that for some of those people there's more treatment access than they had prior, but what we don't really understand is why," Canada said.

Canada's research focused on answering that very question: what makes a mental health court successful?

Canada found that one of the biggest factors in determining a mental health court's ability to help its participants is its access to services. She said if a community doesn't have the services necessary, there's no way a mental health court can be successful.

"I don't just mean mental health services, I mean comprehensive services," Canada explained. "So, mental health, substance abuse, vocational training, job placement training, so we can help people understand how to build a resume and look for jobs."

Canada's research also looked at the role the mental health court "team" played in participants' success.

"It's not just the court side, it's the treatment providers, and they all work together to try to develop a plan for that individual," Canada said.

She found that courts with the best success engaged in the rehabilitation process every step along the way. This means all individuals involved - social workers, judges, attorneys, therapists - were aware of the offender's mental health problem and how to deal with it.

"They really felt that the process was fair. They really felt like they had a chance to tell their story and that people were actually listening to that story," Canada said. "They talked a lot about trust in their team, which we don't always hear that, we don't always hear people trusting the judge."

The mental health court in mid-Missouri is a facet of the Boone County Alternative Sentencing Center. The first mental health court was held on April 22, 2003.

According to a 2015 report from the Boone County Mental Health Court, criminal offenders in Boone County who were mentally ill often spent unnecessary time in jail before the court’s creation. The report said many of them became repeat offenders due to a lack of access to treatment services.
Mikala Houchins, a behavioral health caseworker with Burrell Behavioral Health, said she tries to make sure those who are mentally ill in the criminal justice system know they are not alone, and not without resources.

"They are just not aware of everything out there that is available to help them," Houchins said. "They think they're alone and that they're kind of stuck with what they have."

Burrell caseworkers and therapists work with participants in the Boone County Alternative Sentencing Courts as part of their treatment and to provide access to services in the area.

Houchins said the job of the "team" is to ensure their participants have access to anything they might need in order to facilitate the rehabilitation process, whether it be transportation, food, work or education.

"So many clients are not able to advocate for themselves. They realize that there is a better way to do things instead of maybe selling drugs or doing drugs to cope with things," Houchins said. "Our program offers them a lot as far as stability for their mental health by getting them health care, mental health care, things like that, and getting them connected."

Houchins said the team that works with the Boone County Mental Health Court is lucky, in that many of them have a background in mental health, and those who don't are always willing to get the training necessary to be more successful in working with the court participants.

"That is also kind of my piece in that team, is to say, okay so some symptoms of that mental health disorder is this, and so we need to take that into consideration as to maybe why this client is acting this way or why they are having some issues in that area," she said. "Not everybody is a therapist or in mental health."

Both Canada and Houchins agreed it is very important that the mental health court program is a group effort among the offender, the team and the community, to make sure participants are able to sustain treatment in the long run.

"As we create these court programs, because we are seeing so many people with mental illnesses in the system, we have to have that same initiative in the community to make sure that there's enough services and that we are well-funding our mental health system and really pushing for that collaborative care," Canada said.

"That's just something we tell them even when they enter into the program is use your team, that's why we're here," Houchins said.
MU curators and community members sit down for first Health Affairs Committee meeting

COLUMBIA, Mo. - Three UM System curators and two community members met in open session for the inaugural meeting of the Health Affairs Committee.

Pam Hendrickson, John Phillips, and Phillip Snowden will represent the board on the committee.

The two community members will serve to give a more unofficial view on the committee and provide more transparency for the committee as well.

UM System spokesperson John Fougere said the board decided it wanted a direct line to the business and financial practices of the University of Missouri Health Care system.

"The health system's input on the University of Missouri mission is very profound," he said. "The board wanted to make sure it had greater oversight into that going forward because it's a relationship it never had before."

According to the committee description, members will "receive and review regular reports from the University of Missouri Health Care and the MU School of Medicine's faculty practice plan."

The areas the board will oversee could include strategy, governance, compliance, operations, and coordination of the clinical, teaching, and research missions.

Tuesday's meeting served as an orientation for the committee where MU Health officials explained just how they operate when it comes to those clinical practices, research and teaching techniques.

The committee also heard an overview of the financial performance of the health care system at MU, including its operating expenses and incomes for the past year, from MU Health CFO Brian Steines.

UM System CFO Brian Burnett discussed the financial impact of the health system.
"Brian Burnett talked about, overall from a financial side, just how important the health care system is to the overall University of Missouri system's financial health," said Fougere. "That's extremely important and the board just wanted to have some greater insight into that."

Steines explained some of the statistics the committee will be working with as well, including the number of ER visits and inpatient surgeries that have been done in the last fiscal year, July to March.

The committee plans to meet again in conjunction with the June Board of Curator's meeting.

**MISSOURIAN**

**Five graduate students at MU: Why they're still in school and how they're paying for it**

NICOLE KOTTMANN, 1 hr ago

COLUMBIA — In 2014, graduate students made up 15 percent of the college population in the United States. The same year, they were granted one-third of the federal student loans.

Nationwide, graduate students owe an average of $57,600 in student debt after they graduate, according to a 2014 report by the New America Education Policy Program.

One-quarter of graduate students owe nearly $100,000, and one in 10 borrow up to $150,000.

Yet, despite the weight of student debt, the number of students choosing to attend graduate school continues to grow. At MU, the number of graduate students has increased to 6,442 in 2015 from 3,992 in 1997.

Nationally, the number has grown to an anticipated 3.02 million in 2016 from 2.05 million in 1997, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

For most of them, earning a graduate degree will typically pay off in higher salaries, but balanced against the cost of a graduate education, the advantage isn't as clear.
March 2016 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that the median weekly earnings of those age 25 or older with a master’s degree is $1,341. Those with a bachelor's degree earn $1,137 a week.

Yet graduate students can be at a disadvantage if you factor in the time away from the workforce to acquire another degree.

Workers with a bachelor's degree and at least three years of experience make more on average than those with a master’s degree and no work experience, according to a 2015 study by the Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce.

This is the “opportunity cost” associated with graduate school — the cost of delaying income to acquire the extra degree.

This opportunity cost is often overlooked in the discussion of graduate education, said Vimal Patel, a reporter for the Chronicle of Higher Education.

Time away from the workforce also means potential loss of retirement income.

Someone who puts $300 every month from age 23 to 30 into an Standard & Poor's 500 index would have $512,000 for retirement at age 65, Patel said. That same contribution from age 30 to 37 earns just $299,000.

Even with this financial picture, these five MU students decided to enroll in graduate school and figured out ways to fund their education without going into debt.

Here, they share the reasons they decided to get a graduate degree — and how they’re paying for it.

**Waiting out the recession**

**Name:** Will Moore

**Age:** 26
Undergraduate degree: Bachelor of Arts in English and film from Cornell University in Ithaca, New York.

Graduate degree: Master's degree in English with an emphasis in creative writing from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.

Pursuing at MU: Ph.D. in English

Ideal job: Undecided

Tuition cost per semester: $0

Tuition waiver: $3,150.90

Fees per semester: $512.46

Monthly stipend: $1,300

As a child, Will Moore was an avid reader, and English was his favorite subject in high school. So it made sense for him to pursue the subject in college.

Moore studied English and film as an undergraduate at Cornell, a degree underwritten by his “well-off” parents, who had contributed to a college savings fund throughout his childhood.

After graduating from Cornell, he was unsure what career path he wanted to pursue, so he applied to graduate school. He finished in 2014 at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, without incurring any debt.

Moore only applied to programs that were fully funded, he said, though he paid student fees. He also received a stipend of $1,300 a month during the school year and $1,500 a month during the summer through his program.

After he earned a master's degree, he still wasn't ready to leave academia, so he came to MU last year to work on a Ph.D. in English.
“I was just waiting to enter the real world for a little bit longer,” he said.

Moore is still not accumulating much debt. A stipend covers his living expenses, and an assistantship waives his tuition at MU.

At the outset, Moore’s reasoning for getting his master’s degree was to outlast the recession until the job market improved.

Now, with few tenure-track positions available in college English departments, and most only modestly funded, a cost/benefit analysis shows his frugality is paying off.

“If I was spending a lot of money to get this degree, it would probably be unlikely to pay off because, again, there are just not a lot of positions out there,” he said.

Even though he doesn’t think he’ll use his Ph.D. to pursue a career as an English professor, he believes his education has not been wasted. He said he has gained additional knowledge and writing practice in graduate school.

**Values flexible schedule**

**Name:** Cheyenne Dunham

**Age:** 24

**Undergraduate degree:** Bachelor's degree in agricultural science with a minor in agricultural business from Truman State University in Kirksville, Missouri

**Pursuing at MU:** Master's degree in agriculture and applied economics

**Ideal job:** Commodity analyst

**Tuition cost per semester:** $0

**Tuition waiver:** $3,150.90
Fees per semester: $512.46

Monthly stipend: $1,218.60

Cheyenne Dunham doesn’t particularly like school. But her appreciation for field experience and a flexible scheduling make an investment in graduate school worth her time, she said.

A master’s degree will help her find a higher-level position where she can shape her work schedule around her personal life. Her current position as a research assistant at the MU Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute is a 20-hour commitment each week, even fewer if she gets her work done sooner.

This time commitment allows her to go home every weekend to see her family and ride her horses — an opportunity Dunham really values.

“I’m part time, so yeah, I study a lot, but I also have a flexible schedule and a lot of free time,” Dunham said. “That’s important to me at this stage of my life.”

Spending quality time with the people she loves is more valuable than jumping into a career with a rigid schedule, she said. A master’s degree will allow her to stay close to home and earn a comfortable living.

She also credits the tuition waiver with making it financially possible to attend graduate school.

“I don’t have a lot of financial commitments outside myself,” she said. “I know some people have house payments or things like that, but my costs are pretty minimal right now.”

She said she expects to earn $20,000 more than agricultural economics majors who enter the workforce with only a bachelor’s degree. Although it wasn’t the primary reason to continue her education, the higher income was definitely appealing.

“Long term, I would like to make more money, but also, part of it is just being able to get a job in the area,” Dunham said.
“I don’t want to have to up and move to Chicago or wherever. Location is probably a bigger aspect for me than the extra income is.”

**Hoping for high-level job**

**Name:** Corey Johnson

**Age:** 24

**Undergraduate degree:** Bachelor’s degree in animal science from MU

**Pursuing at MU:** Master’s degree in animal science with an emphasis in poultry nutrition

**Ideal job:** Poultry nutritionist for agricultural company (feed additive company)

**Tuition cost per semester:** $0

**Tuition waiver:** $3,150.90

**Fees per semester:** $954.36

**Monthly stipend:** $1,200

Like many animal lovers, Corey Johnson wanted to be a veterinarian when he grew up.

After he transferred to MU in fall 2013 from Murray State University in Kentucky, where he was on the pre-vet track, he faced a hard reality: the high cost of education and the low job prospects for vet students.

So he switched to animal science with a focus in poultry nutrition as an undergraduate, then stayed for a master's degree.

After earning a bachelor's degree, Johnson said he wasn’t ready to leave school because there was much more to learn.
“I love being a student,” he said. “I like the idea of being educated, and I have respect for people who have a lot of education.”

His graduate education is essentially free thanks to his tuition waiver, and he expects to make more money when he enters the workforce. If he opts for a doctoral degree, which he’s hoping to pursue, he would receive a bigger stipend, plus the likelihood of a higher income.

There’s also a prestige aspect to getting a Ph.D., he said. "There’s ego-boosting you get from that, for sure."

Johnson has seen fellow graduates earn $90,000 as a starting salary — as much as $150,000 with overtime. A friend of Johnson will soon start at $60,000 as a live processing specialist, not uncommon for students at the master’s level.

As a poultry nutritionist, he would formulate diets for chickens at minimum cost and maximum efficiency, engaging in both sales and research. Johnson believes sales is his best fit.

“I can develop a rapport with people pretty quickly,” he said. “I like the idea of academia, but I just don’t like the reality. It’s fun to teach classes, but it’s not fun battling to get grants for research.”

He listed small class size and approachable, expert professors as benefits of his graduate education. There could be an opportunity cost if he pursues a doctorate, he said, but he’s confident the benefits would outweigh the loss.

“That will be nine years that I could have been working somewhere else,” Johnson said. “I think the cost-benefit (of education) will ultimately outweigh those nine years in school.”

Johnson said he stretches his $1,200 stipend because he doesn't spend much — his rent is $350 a month — and his parents are willing to lend him money if he runs low.

He hopes to bypass entry-level jobs with his graduate degree.

“I want to work in an office,” he said. "I don’t want to be in on a chicken farm.”
Following dream to teach

Name: Jordan Burkhardt

Age: 23

Undergraduate degree: Bachelor of Science in education from MU

Just received: Master’s degree in education

Ideal job: First-grade teacher (already hired)

Tuition cost per semester: $0

Tuition waiver: $3,150.90

Fees per semester:

Monthly stipend: $1,100

This year, Jordan Burkhardt’s schedule looked exactly like that of any first-year teacher: She woke up, drove to school, planned lessons and taught a roomful of first-graders all day.

The difference: She then spent four hours in class every Thursday.

Burkhardt spent the last year enrolled in the MU Teaching Fellowship Program, requiring her to teach full time while also completing her graduate degree — all without a regular salary or health insurance.

She received a $1,100 monthly stipend with the option of paying for graduate health insurance. Because she was not technically a school district employee, her first year of teaching won’t count toward retirement.

Although her tuition was waived, Burkhardt said the stipend only paid her bills, so she taught dance lessons in Jefferson City for extra spending money.
The year was exhausting, she said, but worth it as a free, convenient way to earn a graduate degree within a year.

In Missouri, a bachelor's degree in education awards graduates a certificate that allows them to work for four years.

Certificate-holders must have 30 hours of professional development that can include graduate school in order to obtain a permanent certificate that will allow them to continue teaching. Burkhardt's master's degree can fulfill the requirement.

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education requires schools to have a mentorship program for beginning educators. A major benefit during the fellowship was Burkhardt's assigned mentor, she said.

Mentors in the fellowship program don't have a classroom of children to manage.

Her mentor was available “as early as 5 a.m. to work through problems,” she said.

Burkhardt said she also was able to directly apply the lessons she learned in her Thursday lectures to the first-grade classroom, unlike the theory-based lectures she attended as an undergraduate.

“Pretty much everything we learn we can apply the next morning,” she said.

She said she chose to apply for the fellowship after realizing how much she could gain in a short time by continuing her education right after she earned a bachelor's degree.

“It just made sense, while I’m in student mode and I’m used to being poor, to just keep going,” she said.

**Looking for expanded opportunities**

**Name:** Rachel Gaffney

**Age:** 29
Undergraduate degree: Bachelor of Arts in interdisciplinary studies from MU

Pursing at MU: Master’s degree in health science in clinical diagnostic sciences with an emphasis in diagnostic medical ultrasound

Ideal job: Diagnostic medical sonographer

Tuition cost per semester: $5,951.70

Tuition waiver: N/A

Fees per semester: $2,188.06

Monthly stipend: None

Rachel Gaffney is a mom of two, a graduate student and a self-described "badass." Originally, earning a graduate degree while raising a family wasn’t part of her plan.

She started college as an art student, then got pregnant and began questioning her choice of major. So she left school, had her first child and married.

After a brief stint as a cake decorator, Gaffney moved with her family to Kansas City and found a job in human resources. Unhappy, she decided to finish her undergraduate degree in health care.

“It sounds silly, but I like to help people, and I like to do that through problem solving," she said. "Ultrasound allowed me to do that with as few bodily fluids involved as possible.”

After moving to Columbia in 2014, Gaffney realized she could earn both a bachelor's and a master's degree in three years. She had her second child and started online classes at the same time.

“I was submitting an online discussion post in the hospital bed while they were prepping me for the C section,” she said.
She is banking on the expanded opportunities a graduate degree could bring.

“It offers you a leg up to management positions and an opportunity to teach if you choose to,” she said.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median annual wage for a diagnostic medical sonographer was $63,630 in 2015.

Gaffney said her anticipated salary would compensate for the time and money spent on her education. Her tuition is about $12,000 a year, and her salary as a sonographer should help cover that.

She said she doesn’t receive financial aid from MU, nor does she have a scholarship or assistantship.

Her husband is a dentist, and his salary prevents her from qualifying for needs-based aid, she said. Instead, his income pays much of her tuition along with loans she expects to repay when she starts working.

The main cost of her graduate education has been her time away from her family.

“I don't sleep a lot, and my house is messy, but that’s OK because I’m getting good grades,” she said.

“There is a real culture of education in our house, which I really love, and I think our kids will see that.”