

Dear usmnews.net

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I hope Dr. Bennett reads your website. He doesn't seem to have a clue what we [students at USM] are facing. As much as I would like to graduate in four years, I can't [afford it]. I have to work. I don't have a choice. I could borrow a lot of money, but if I did, all I would do is worrying about how I was going to pay it back.

If Dr. Bennett is worried about students graduating in four years, he might try cutting costs [and ultimately tuition, fees and expenses]. Cancel sports – we don't have time, money or interest [to go to the games]. Stop building. We don't need extravagant dorms. I can't afford to live in them anyway. I live at home to save money. Sell your plane. Get rid of the pen pushers that seem to be everywhere [on campus], but don't seem to be doing much.

Name withheld

Dear Name withheld,

What follows is a peculiarly unfunny cartoon from a reader.



In Mississippi, "[since 2000](#), average tuition among the eight universities increased 96 percent, an average of 8 percent a year." In 2012, [USM students endured](#) an 8.7% tuition increase for 2012-13, with an additional 6.4% increase for 2013-2014.

Reports about the rising cost of education and the massive debt students are incurring as they struggle to pay for an education are everywhere. [The Wall Street Journal](#) reported that "total student debt outstanding appears to have surpassed \$1 trillion last year." Burdened with historic amounts of debt, college grads are [moving home](#). Many of those who are not moving home are unable to [qualify for a mortgage](#) because of their student debt. Making this situation worse, is the fact that "nearly 14 percent [of student loan borrowers default](#) within three years of making their first loan payment." And, the situation has only gotten worse as "[Surging student-loan debt is crushing the system](#)." According to Equifax, "\$3.5 billion in government

and private student loans went bad in the first three months of 2013, the most since the company began keeping track.”