Facebook a way of life for graduates

Jenae Cohn
DAILY BRINN (UCLA)

Stephen Tabaquin checks in with his friends at UC Berkeley, California State University-Long Beach, Cal Poly-Pomona and UC-Irvine daily without racking up any mileage. Bradley Ostrander knows everyone’s birthday without ever having to ask, while Naveed Mahboobian can drop his friends a line without ever licking a stamp.

Welcome to Facebook, where a student’s friends, classes, interests and summer plans are all within a few clicks.

But will graduating students, who have gone through their college years addicted to Facebook, give up all this convenience upon graduation? Is it Facebook rehab time or will students continue to partake in the addictive obsession after embarking from college?

“It’s easier to see your friends on Facebook,” said Mahboobian, a graduating English student. “I don’t think it would be possible to call up everybody I know and hang out with all of those people and find out where they are, what school they went to, what they’re doing with their lives and everything.”

With friendships conveniently a URL away, it’s little wonder that Facebook’s popularity exploded with its inception in 2004.

“With Facebook, everything’s put out there for you. It’s very streamlined,” said Tabaquin, a graduating neuroscience and mathematics student.

For seniors especially, Facebook has become a primary way of maintaining old friendships and developing new connections.

“Coming in, I had a Friendster (account). Eventually, halfway through the school year, I joined MySpace, but shortly thereafter, I joined Facebook,” said applied mathematics senior Ostrander. “I remember at that time, there were probably less than twenty schools in the country (on Facebook).”

Facebook’s initial exclusivity as a site for college students only was a large part of its appeal over other social networking systems like Friendster and MySpace.

“When Facebook came about... it was much more of a smaller community and more trustworthy, and it was just people from school and not just random strangers,” Ostrander said.

Mahboobian agrees that the originally closed nature of Facebook lends to its initial appeal.

“I think the exclusivity of it gave it an edge or a hipness to it maybe that MySpace didn’t have,” he said.

But the question still remains as to how long the Facebook frenzy will last after students graduate and move on to careers and families.

“I don’t see any age where we’d have to get rid of it because, since we were there from the beginning, it’s less awkward or weird if we maintain it and use it to stay in contact with people until we get older,” Ostrander said.

With students checking their accounts as often as their e-mails, Facebook also has proven a secure way of potentially remaining in touch after graduation. Kimberly Stino, UCLA alumna of 2006 and former history student, still keeps her account running for its convenience.

“I had a fairly good number of people on there who I don’t get to see very often because they’re going to other schools,” Stino said. “So instead of racking up my phone bill, it’s nice just to leave them messages through Facebook.”

Although Stino is only a year out of UCLA, she still feels that Facebook is a service that will extend past her recent graduation.

“I don’t think it’s crazy to keep it up a few years after you graduate,” she said. “I don’t think it really matters.”

Tabaquin predicts that his use will depend upon the preferences of his acquaintances.

“I think if (my peers) still keep contacting me, I’ll still keep that avenue open because if they like using that form of communication, why not?” he said.

Facebook’s lasting value may be up for prediction, but for now, current college students see no foreseeable reason to quit Facebook any time soon.

“I think now I’ll be using it, and I’ll probably be using it for the next couple of years for sure,” Ostrander said. “If I grow out of it, I will, but who knows if that will happen?”

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Partying is such sweet sorrow

Janelle Eastridge

Congratulations, you’re a graduate! So now what do you do? Why, celebrate, of course! The Central Coast offers a bounty of options to fit your celebratory needs. The following is a quick list of some ways to commemorate the big day.

Wine tasting: Throughout the county, there are literally hundreds of well-loved wineries, many of which welcome visitors to their tasting rooms. Get some friends together and take a drive along U.S. Highway 46 — the so-called wine trail — and make frequent stops at your favorites. For more information, including profiles of local wineries, and custom-made maps and directions, visit www.pasowine.com.

Barbecues and/or bonfires at nearby beaches: Make the 10- to 15-minute drive to a nearby beach (Pismo Beach, Avila Beach, Grover Beach, etc.) for perhaps the last bonfire or barbecue before you leave the area. It’s a nice way to hang out and relax with friends — not to mention cheap and easy to plan. Check ahead of time for bonfire regulations at the beach of your choice.

Throw a party: Be creative and cater a party to your taste and interests. This is a party focusing on you, after all. Anything that suits your fancy can be used as inspiration.

Go out to dinner out your favorite San Luis Obispo restaurant: For you hard working students that are here for the celebration to fit your interests. Have fun!

Ultimately, though, as cliché as this may sound, a graduation celebration must be catered to you for it to have any meaning. Use these suggestions as starting points (or think of your own) and tailor the celebration to fit your interests. Have fun!
The ABCs of summer vacationing

Daniella Orihuela-Gruber
MUSTANG DAILY

With finals over and summer here, that usually means three things: time to relax, go to the beach and work on that tan. Or not. There are many more ways to have fun with your summer vacation:

A: Alaska. Everyone thinks of Alaska as a cold, desolate place. While that’s true during the winter, summer is a whole other story. Flowers are in bloom, the animals are out and it’s not 100 degrees outside.

B: Biking. Not everyone is an avid biker, but those who can scale Bishop Peak on their bikes might want to consider a more long-distance ride. Bike trips can be in parks or on the roads Tour de France-style. And best of all: fuel costs only as much as you need to eat and drink. Also an option: organized bike tours.

C: Concerts. Want to see your favorite band during the concert season but find they’re not coming anywhere near you? Get a bunch of friends and go on a concert tour. Instead of focusing on locations, focus on where the music is at.

D: Disneyland. Seriously, the happiest place on earth is not just for kids. It has exciting rides, good food, and long lines with no choice but to stand around with your friends and talk. Other than the sore feet you’ll have by the time they kick you out of the park, this is one of the most care-free ways to spend your summer. Go to Disneyland in Florida for a different Disney experience.

E: East Coast. The East Coast is amazing transportation-wise. Once you’re in a major city like New York City or Washington, D.C., you can ride your way up and down the coast all you want. Their transportation is not only extensive, but cheap, allowing you to explore all that the original 13 colonies have to offer.

F: Fishing. This is a pretty classic way to spend some time with your dad (or your family in general) during the summer, and it is a great way to bond and maybe catch something nice and healthy for dinner. Fish on the barbecue anyone?

G: Guggenheim Museum of Modern Art. OK, so you don’t have to go all the way to New York, but museums are often a great and enriching way to enhance a vacation experience. If you’re not usually the museum type, it’s OK — spend as much or as little time as you want there.

H: Hiking. California has some great hiking. Not only can you find great hiking spots in San Luis Obispo, but there’s Yosemite National Park and dozens of other places as well. Bring your tent and sleeping bag and you can explore to your heart’s content.

I: Ice skating. Listen, summer gets really hot. Other than escaping across the equator, there’s not much you can do about it. But ice skating is cool AND can damage-free, unlike the Pacific Ocean. The cost of skate rentals gets you in for a few hours of chilly attempts to imitate Will Ferrell and Jon Heder a la “Blades of Glory.”

J: Jetset. If you’ve got a lot of airline miles or if you just plan of flying somewhere, become a temporary jetsetter. Don’t let coach seats get you down; a true international traveler of mystery is fashionable in any situation. Just put on a colorful printed scarf and a pair of big sunglasses and you’re set.

K: Kayaking. Yet another water-related activity, kayaking is easy (once you get into the water that is). You can go kayaking in a lake or in the ocean as long as the water is calm enough. Avila Beach is one local kayaking spot where you can even watch the seals swim around you.

L: Lakes. You can go camping near lakes, get a hotel room or rent a cabin by one and have the time of your life.

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Vacation continued from page 5

your life. Lakes are good places to go because of their versatility. You can go swimming or do any number of water sports.

M: Mexico. Ay Caramba, everyone and their mom has been to Tijuana. Cancun is an obvious choice, but can get really expensive so choose a less popular city. For a chance to eat less expensive enchiladas, places like Oaxaca and Puerto Vallarta are perfect.

N: NASCAR. NASCAR pretty much runs all year round, but it’s a popular summer sport. Imagine wearing a tank top, shorts and a baseball cap with a hotdog and a soda in either hand, watching fast cars zoom around the hot tarmac. Not on your TV, but in person.

Now that’s hot.

O: Orbitz. Can’t find anything you want to do on this list of ideas? This online travel site has a lot of good deals on everything except the food you’ll eat and the stuff you buy.

P: Pampering. People tend to think that spas are for people with miniature poodles under their arms, but a little saving can get anyone a day of luxury and massages at almost any spa. Places like Glen Ivy Hot Springs in Riverside County have a myriad of ways to relax within their compound without breaking the bank.

Q: Quickie Vacation. OK, so you don’t have all summer to cruise around the world. You have a job lined up and maybe even a few summer classes, so you still have

see Vacation, page 9
Job options without water coolers

Janelle Eastridge
STAFF WRITER

Just as the Peace Corps claims "life is calling" to recent graduates. But that doesn't mean they have to respond by finding an 8-to-5 job or attending graduate school.

Two programs in particular — Teach for America and Peace Corps — offer recent graduates the opportunity to enter the workforce, albeit in a slightly less conventional way.

Teach for America

According to Teach for America's Web site, of the 13 million children growing up in poverty, only half will graduate from high school. Those who do will perform, on average, at an eighth-grade level.

The program enrolls recent graduates nationwide who are committed to combating what the program claims is the nation's most pressing problem through two years of teaching in urban and rural public schools.

"I joined Teach for America because I wanted to take some time while young to give back to society," said Elisabeth Katlyn LaMotte-Mitchell, a political science senior who will begin teaching with the program in Washington, D.C. this fall.

"I considered the Peace Corps but was not ready to leave the country. I think that we privileged Americans sometimes forget there are problems here that we need to address as well," she said.

After graduation, LaMotte-Mitchell will fly to Washington, D.C. and then attend intensive summer training in Philadelphia. She said that she is looking forward to learning the necessary skills to start the school year off strong.

For LaMotte-Mitchell and others, the thought of finding the so-called normal job is simply not as appealing as potentially changing 30 lives.

Chris Albeck, a political science senior who will begin teaching in Oakland, next fall, decided to join Teach for America because he wanted to "do something that actually meant something.

"I have a lot of friends who are going off to law schools and becoming accountants and engineers and there is nothing wrong with that, but I feel that there is a certain civic virtue aspect that everyone should try to acquire and those types of jobs don't provide that," he said.

"I did consider doing something else, but that was with the Peace Corps or overseas non-governmental work, so that sort of fell under the same category. I just can't imagine sitting behind a desk for eight hours a day. That would just be horrible."

Teach for America isn't just an option that graduating seniors should consider, though. LaMotte-Mitchell pointed out that since the application process is extensive, taking a couple of months and numerous interviews to complete, juniors (or underclassmen) should look into the program now.

Today, over 4,400 corps members are working in 25 regions across the country. For more information regarding Teach for America, including applications and deadline listings, go to www.teachforamerica.org.

Peace Corps

On a global scale, Peace Corps offers recent graduates the opportunity to travel, learn about another culture and language, and help make a developing community better.

Last year, Cal Poly was one of the top 25 schools in the nation to send Peace Corps volunteers overseas. Since Sept. 30, 2005, about 878 Californians have volunteered through the program; 46 of those have been Cal Poly students.

Peace Corps is a 27-month commitment. After three months of training (which focuses on helping volunteers learn the cultural and logistical aspects, and the language of the country where they will be going), volunteers serve in their overseas community for two years.

"Some people think it's a long time, but having done it, I wouldn't want to commit to any less. There are good times and bad times, but the memories you have and friends you make last a lifetime," said Marta Block, Cal Poly's Peace Corps representative.

Block served as a volunteer in Ghana, working with four nursery operators who produced citrus seedlings; she also participated in some health-related programs that helped those with HIV/AIDS and Guinea worm.

"There's really too much to say about the experience other than I loved it — I loved the people I met, the language I learned (Twi), and the experiences I gained through work," she said. "But I mostly just enjoyed living a totally different way of life for two years."

For those who have had a history of volunteer experience, the Peace Corps offers a sort of continuation of this as a career.

"At the start of my (second) senior year, I wasn't quite sure what I wanted to do. I'd been volunteering time with one organization or another for most of my life since junior high, so it was probably because of that that I was initially attracted to Peace Corps," said Lyle Kozloff, a 2005 Cal Poly graduate and volunteer in Benin in western Africa.

Kozloff will be finishing up his two years of service in the following weeks.

"In truth, the experience has been great. It's been both at the same time, wonderful, frustrating and rewarding. Sort of hard to sum up, but I think Peace Corps recruiting stages of The toughest job you'll ever love is pretty damn accurate," he said in an e-mail interview.

Though the experience has been great, Kozloff said, it does have its drawbacks. As part of their commitment, volunteers receive a stipend that allows them to live at more or less the same as the average local. But this isn't necessarily the case, Kozloff said.
Vacation
continued from page 7

somewhere to be for 10 weeks. No problem; do a day or weekend trip. Most of these ideas are easily done in a day or two, so don't think you're stuck smiling for customers all summer long!

R: Road trips. Yes, gas is expensive, but get a couple of people together and you can drive anywhere by splitting the cost. You can even rent an RV if you don't want to pay for hotels and AAA will provide you with maps and other useful information to help you along.

S: Surfing. The ever-popular ocean sport is practiced year-round even in the coldest of waters, but summer is when it comes alive. California is lined with great surfing beaches, and if you don't know how, you can boogie board or body surf instead. Or you can watch one of the many surfing competitions that will visit the California coastline this summer.

T: Third World Countries. You may think that international travel beyond Tijuana is out of your league, but in reality, it's not. The airfare is a bit expensive, but once you get halfway home, hotels and no one likes wrinkly, unnatural orange-tinted skin at age 30. Melanoma can be a deadly cancer every few hours. Remember kids, cover yourself in lots of sunscreen... Feels like your skin is being run over by a boat. Also, you aren't the biggest fan of winding roads. Either way, a cruise on any kind of boat is an option for almost anyone who's able to stand a few days at sea. For a little more fun, pretend to be a pirate for the entire trip.

Z: Zoos. A lot of metropolitan cities have zoos. Although you may not be the biggest fan of winding your way through thousands of little kids just to see a monkey, take your girlfriend or maybe your little sister and score some brownie points. Later on, you can check out some of the cooler parts of the city.

Whether it's surfing or just hanging out at the beach, California weather provides the great summer escapes before school starts again.

U: UV Rays. They aren't good for you, but you can still go back in the sun all you want as long as you cover yourself in lots of sunscreen every few hours. Remember kids, melanoma can be a deadly cancer and no one likes wrinkly, unnaturally orange-tinted skin at age 30.

V: Vines. If you're 21 and over, why not go on a wine tour? San Luis Obispo County has many wineries offering wine tastings and other attractions. ( Cave tours, anyone?) If you want to go beyond fair wine tours, a wine tour in France or Chile is another option.

W: Water skiing. A few summers ago I spent a few weeks learning how to water ski. It was pretty easy to learn, a great workout and a lot of fun once I got over the fear of being run over by a boat. Also, it's something the whole family can do together (or a big group of friends). No boat or skis? No worries. Many areas with lakes have rentals available.

X: The X-Games. This August, at the Staples Center in Los Angeles. So unless you're going back home to Maine, you can probably catch them. Of course, if you're a fan of extreme sports or the adrenaline rush of watching something along the lines of "Jackass," this is perfect.

Y: Yachting. OK, so most college students probably aren't going yachting this summer unless they're one of the Ivy League elite or something. Either way, a cruise on any kind of boat is an option for almost anyone who's able to stand a few days at sea. For a little more fun, pretend to be a pirate for the entire trip.
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Cal Poly's original news feed
Leaving the memories, leaping into the future

"A step toward my future. I have been trying to embrace this phrase as my personal mantra every time I feel reluctant about graduating (every day now as June 16 nears). Most often I find myself overwhelmed by what the future will bring. Graduation is a giant stride to the next step of my life and future endeavors, but a leap that is anxiety-laden. I will be taking the paces soon (gulp, almost like walking the plank!) and I am realizing I don't want to leave Cal Poly.

For those of us not on the six-year plan, leaving Cal Poly seems an all-too-sudden reality. As graduation nears, I find myself dragging my feet around campus, an ironic end to my past four years of purposefully trekking from class to class, class to coffee, library to The Avenue; from paying parking tickets at the University Police Department to photocopying notes at DRC. I have run to class, power-walked Poly Canyon, skipped out of a final exam, been led to the Health Center, sleep walked to Julian's, and stumbled back into the dorms.

My life in San Luis Obispo has been centered and created on this campus. Heck, when all my freshman friends were dying to move off campus, I was praying to get into Cerro Vista to continue my college days "living off campus." I have become possessive of the landscape, the buildings, and the people I see every day on the 155 acres of the "campus core" I trudge. I even have what I consider to be "my chair" on the second floor of the library. I feel at home on campus. I feel part of a community of students, individually pursuing their own lofty life goal, but unitarily dreaming of the future, what we each can and will contribute to our world. I accomplish my most productive dreaming while perusing campus (iPod in place, Tina Turner full blast) and waving to friends. On campus, I feel inspired to achieve everything I dream. I don't want to leave my safe Cal Poly community (which I swear has a rainbow arching from "P" to the PAC after every rain — it's utopia!) and pioneer an uncertain path beyond campus.

Like you, I have napped in the University Union, cheered at the baseball games, sunbathed on Dexter Lawn, and shook my sillies out at the ASI Children's Center (well, maybe only the staff do that). The path between Perimeter and Inner Perimeter roads has been my sole route to all destinations. What will happen when I venture out of the perimeter? What will that look like?

Future forecast still hazy in Destination Unknown, I adorn my shoes and prepare my feet to strut across stage, an uncertain tread away from campus but a step toward my future. Danielle Martin is a psychology senior.

Graduation is a giant stride to the next step of my life and future endeavors, but a leap that is anxiety-laden. I will be taking the paces soon (gulp, almost like walking the plank!) and I am realizing I don't want to leave Cal Poly.
First job after college: paying off debt

Jobetta Hedelman

Senior Melissa Walther was determined to pay for college entirely on her own. At Portland State University, her freshman year, she saved rent by living with her parents in Scappoose — a 45-minute commute each way — and worked 40 hours per week. On top of her work schedule, she took a hill course in order to pay for college.

It's just looking at knowing that I have to have a good enough job that I can pay rent, that I can hopefully eat something better than ramen and I can pay back my student loans faster than they expect me to.

—Melissa Walther
Portland State University senior

Bickford said, "That's actually — It would be more meaningful." Nine years ago, in the 1997-98 school year, the average amount borrowed was $14,531. It has steadily risen since as the price of tuition and the costs of living continue to rise. "Along with that, over the last five or so years, the federal government and in Oregon, the state financial aid hasn't really been increased to keep pace with those increases," Bickford said.

"It isn't just the tuition and fees — it's your books and board, and you can't afford more and you have to work part-time — there are all these choices that factor into how fast you can get through school," Bickford said.

After her freshman year at PSU, Walther's parents sat her down to discuss the possibility of her taking out loans and said they would be willing to help out with her expenses. "They said, 'this is ridiculous, you're going to kill yourself,'" Walther said.

Although she was "academically inclined" in high school, Walther was in the middle of her class grade-wise and did not think she would qualify for scholarships, so she did not apply for any.

Unhappy at PSU, Walther decided to transfer to the University of Oregon. "I immediately had a change in attitude," Walther said.

The costs of attendance have risen while the number of grants available has stayed the same, but the amount an undergraduate may borrow each year also remained the same. Some students are forced to take fewer courses per year because of these limitations, so they attend longer, making their total indebtedness higher, Bickford said.

The average student who borrowed money left college with more than a diploma and $18,813 in federal student loan debt, not including parent loans. The "mid-range" — those who take out tens of thousands. The "low-range" — those who take out at least some money to pay for their education and $8,8 percent graduated with debt.

Some take out small loans but others borrow tens of thousands. The financial aid officer's calculation does not take into account students in the "mid-range" — those who take out between $14,000 and $18,000 total. "We have not looked at that," Bickford said.

"We have not looked at that," Bickford said. "That's actually — It would be more meaningful." Nine years ago, in the 1997-98 school year, the average amount borrowed was $14,531. It has steadily risen since as the price of tuition and the costs of living continue to rise. "Along with that, over the last five or so years, the federal government and in Oregon, the state financial aid hasn't really been increased to keep pace with those increases," Bickford said.

"It isn't just the tuition and fees — it's your books and board, and you can't afford more and you have to work part-time — there are all these choices that factor into how fast you can get through school," Bickford said.

After her freshman year at PSU, Walther's parents sat her down to discuss the possibility of her taking out loans and said they would be willing to help out with her expenses. "They said, 'this is ridiculous, you're going to kill yourself,'" Walther said.

Although she was "academically inclined" in high school, Walther was in the middle of her class grade-wise and did not think she would qualify for scholarships, so she did not apply for any.

Unhappy at PSU, Walther decided to transfer to the University of Oregon. "I immediately had a change in attitude," Walther said.

The costs of attendance have risen while the number of grants available has stayed the same, but the amount an undergraduate may borrow each year also remained the same. Some students are forced to take fewer courses per year because of these limitations, so they attend longer, making their total indebtedness higher, Bickford said.

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I woke up the Monday morn­
ing of dead week and the
first thought that came into
my head was that it was the last
week of school I would ever have.
The realization was a full-on blow
to my world view, albeit a good
one.

For many Cal Poly students, dead week marked the final time
they would have homework to do
or tests to study for. After this, it
will be time to pack up shop and
move out of San Luis Obispo, per­
haps forever.

It was a strange feeling I’ve had
since waking up; there’s no immi­

tent sense of responsibility loom­
ing over my shoulder like some
spectral horror. Graduation is the
closure of dead week and the
end of an era. Make the most of the
time that is left as the people that
will be paying us to do the
work that drives the economy. At 5
o’clock, the rest of the day will be
ours: no homework, no projects, no
studying until the early hours of
the morning.

In some ways, it’s a frightening
thought to suddenly discover so
much freedom. And in some
ways, the college environment
can never be found again.

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College graduation: end of an era

Every student finishing their
lives at Cal Poly should
feel incredibly proud of
themselves. We worked
hard to learn the necessary
skills that will set us up for
a job that pays decently and
the means to enjoy ourselves in the time this
mortal coil affords us.

In some ways, it’s a
frightening thought to
suddenly discover so much
freedom. And in some
ways, the college environment
can never be found again.

Justin Facino is a journalism senior
and Mustang Daily staff writer.
STAFF COMMENTARY

Poly sends prepared grads into real world

After graduating high school, I thought I was entering the "real world." It was a glorious thought: I, like the majority of my high school classmates, would start the next chapter of my life at a university. I would be free to do whatever I wanted. It was difficult to even imagine what complete freedom from rules would feel like. If I didn't want to go to class, it was my decision. My room could get as messy as I wished, and I would be allowed stay out as late as I desired without calling to check in.

Looking back, it's easy to see that college life is not, in fact, the real world. Sure, we have more freedom and responsibilities than in our adolescent high school years, but we are still under the close watch of authority. Most of us still receive financial support from our parents in one way or another and we have these four to five years of our lives mapped out.

Cal Poly's graduation statistics do, thankfully, offer comfort to the undeniable insecurity felt before entering the real, post-college chapter of our lives. The most recent statistics (from the 2004-05 school year) showed that 73 percent of graduates were working full time within one year of graduating. Of the leftover 25 percent, only 2 percent were still looking for a job. The other 25 percent stayed busy doing a variety of things. Twenty-one percent continued their education at graduate school and 3 percent were working part-time. The other 1 percent was neither working nor looking for a job.

Perhaps they are taking a break from studying, work and spending time traveling the world, or maybe they're starting a family. The 2005-06 graduation statistics showed that the median starting salary for Cal Poly graduates (of both graduate and undergraduate students) is $48,000. The highest median salary — $60,000 — came from the College of Engineering. Engineers were followed by the Orfalea College of Business and the College of Architecture and Environmental Design, where the median starting salary was $48,000.

The 2005-06 graduation statistics showed that the median starting salary for Cal Poly graduates (of both graduate and undergraduate students) is $48,000. The highest median salary — $60,000 — came from the College of Engineering. Engineers were followed by the Orfalea College of Business and the College of Architecture and Environmental Design, where the median starting salary was $48,000. The College of Education came next with the median salary at $43,000, followed by the College of Science and Mathematics and the College of Liberal Arts at $39,000 and $35,500, respectively. Some students will get their dream job, others their dream salary, and yet others may find that they are still not ready to embark in the realm of uncertainty. The latter group may still find a job (as the statistics show, only 2 percent were not able to do so) or they may choose to continue their journey of transition.

Santattiva Frietas is a journalism senior and Mustang Daily staff writer.
Debt
continued from page 12
Oregon. Although her parents had expressed a willingness to help her, they were apprehensive about giving their information during the aid application process.

Walther eventually borrowed what she could to continue her education, while her parents took out a loan her first year at the University of Oregon, which seemed strange to her.

"It was nice, because I didn't have to work and I could just live in the dorms and do whatever but at the same time I felt like a total freeloader," she said.

Walther continued to have some problems because her parents did not want to provide their information on her FAFSA form, leading her to borrow what she needed—but no more—to complete her education. She now has around $30,000 in federal and private student loan debt.

Working as a Resident Assistant during her second and third years at the University of Oregon helped Walther with the costs of room and board, but she was unable to earn enough money through work to make a dent in the size of her loan debt because RAs are not allowed to work more than 10 hours per week in other jobs.

Walther said she only recently considered what it would mean to graduate tens of thousands of dollars in debt.

"Honestly, I didn't start thinking about that until a few months ago," she said. "It was one of those things I just put out of my head. This is just and work," Walther said. "I just backed and told me I should take time off script, knowing I had one year left, again saying they didn't want to give about $20,000. That was ugly."

"They don't give you enough in tuition," she said. "I couldn't register for fall classes because I actually owed about $6,000. That was ugly."

"Last year, when my parents were again saying they didn't want to give me their information, I spoke to a counselor who looked at my transcript, knowing I had one year left, and told me I should take time off and work," Walther said. "I just broke down. I was like, 'you've got to be kidding me. I have one year left and you're dispensing this kind of advice.'"

Eventually, Walther was able to borrow money to pay the last $6,000 and paid for this school year with a private loan through Sallie Mae. That loan, which does have a higher interest rate than her federal loans, paid all her tuition and fees for the year.

Walther said she never considered the interest rates on her loan because she was focused on finishing school.

After graduation, the time eventually comes to begin paying off loans. The best way to go about this is different for everyone, but the financial aid office recommends attending one of its loan consolidation workshops, Bickford said.

"We're not selling a product, we're just explaining what happens and what are things to consider, whether consolidation would work for an individual student or not," she said.

Bickford was quick to point out that while the financial aid office does sponsor these workshops, outside companies sometimes come to campuses to present their own plans. These workshops are not sanctioned by the University, she said.

Bickford said she would advise students to look very carefully at the product they are being offered and should always bring any questions about consolidation to the University financial aid office.

There are no more workshops this year, but students can still go to the financial aid office with questions about consolidation, Bickford said.

The large amount of debt people have can affect them even after they decide whether to consolidate loans, Bickford said, because the amount of debt does get reported to credit bureaus.

"That's one of the conversations that's happening nation-wide regarding debt," she said. "The education debt is delaying people being able to purchase homes and purchase cars. That is a concern we are trying to approach with individualized counseling."

Robert Mullins, a representative of Consumer Credit Counseling for the state of Oregon, said while student loans have the potential to have a negative affect on one part of a person's credit score, the debt is not that high if students have enough income to manage the debt.
After graduation, it's time to look for ... health care

Carmen Vice
The Stanford Daily (Stanford)

As the end of the school year approaches, many high school and college seniors are filled with excitement about what lies ahead. Graduation ceremonies taking place over the next two months mark an incredible achievement in the lives of students who have worked hard to ensure a great future for themselves. However, as the countdown towards completing honors theses and final exams begins, another challenge looms.

Students may be unaware that, along with the opportunities that accompany their newly earned degrees, many of them will no longer qualify for their current health insurance plans and will be faced with the task of replacing them. Many of them will eventually join a growing number of uninsured peers. Of the 46.6 million Americans who are currently without health insurance, 13 million are young adults — ages 19 to 29 — representing a disturbing increase of 2.2 million since 2000.

In the 2004 Economic Report of the President, the Bush administration perpetuated the idea that the young and uninsured of our country lack health insurance because they don't consider it a necessity. In actuality, the fact that so many remain uninsured is more reflective of the high cost of insurance. For many young adults, funds are limited. Post-graduation, paying the rent and keeping the fridge stocked takes precedence over paying hundreds of dollars a month for insurance. When asked by an NYU journalist to comment on obtaining health insurance, a Coastal Carolina University student lamented, "When I think about health insurance, I think about a lot of money. Right now I have $300 to my name. I ate ramen noodles today. If you don't have a job yet, how would you even pay for it?"

This student's situation is not unusual. From 1996-2000, 38 percent of college graduates went part or all of their first year after graduation without health insurance.

Further statistics support this scenario. A 2005 Report issued by the Commonwealth Fund found that although young individuals have the desire to obtain health insurance, many are no longer eligible for their parents' health insurance that remained in place while they were students, or the Medicaid funding some may have had as children. As a result, 66 percent of young adults report "missing needed care and/or having problems paying medical bills," and 56 percent declined to see a physician when sick.

In an interview with Online NewsHour, Ryan Speaker, a senior at Colorado State University, explained, "It's either an extra month of rent, or accidental coverage. I try to be mindful of washing my hands during flu season and do the preventive things I can in the meantime."

However, young adults are always at risk for accidents. And considering that the monthly payment and deductible of health insurance which can range from several hundred dollars and several thousand dollars, respectively — is unaffordable to many recent grads, what happens in the case of an injury? The cost of emergency room procedures are exorbitant in comparison, with treatment for a burst appendix currently approximated at $48,151 and treatment for a compound fracture of the tibia and fibula at $101,790. Further, in addition to being more likely than older Americans to be involved in accidents that require a trip to the emergency room, many young adults begin to start families in the first several years after college. For the 3.5 million women in their twenties who become pregnant each year, prenatal care is crucial.

The unfortunate plight of so many hard-working grads as they are faced with a transitional period in their lives should force a reassessment of the overall U.S. health care system. It is unsettling that the United States is the only developed nation that does not have a consistent plan in place to protect the health of its people.

Until a health care system is implemented that guarantees its citizens the right to health care, the government should strongly consider the feasibility of short-term health insurance plans, or extending current policies for recent graduates that are attempting to establish stable living situations for themselves. While programs are in place that provide care to most children and the elderly, one's health should be recognized as something of great value by their country throughout their lives — not overlooked from their senior year of college until they become senior citizens.
Sumbling into the real world is not an easy thing to do. I have spent the last four years absolutely dying to get out of college and start my real life. With graduation looming ahead, many seniors are beginning to encounter some of the difficult decisions that come with this transition.

To tell you the truth, the real world scared the hell out of me for a while. Graduation brings up all the questions students are so good at avoiding, like where will you live, what will you do? All of a sudden, the not-too-serious, problem-free relationship decisions that come with this transition.

As my real job search was looking grim, I started toying with the idea of relocation. Although I have always thought I wanted to leave Alaska, the last two years have been asking myself started to sound that appealing. I found out that he would ... stop moving with me! That grand, but the idea of leaving with a man again just did not sound that appealing.

All the questions I had not been asking myself started to surface, and the idea of leaving my significant other did not sound appealing at all. So, after bringing it up delicately, I asked him if we would have to live together if we moved, he was a little hurt by my reluctance. He reasoned that he would be uprooting his whole life here and finding a new job and friends for me, and after that great show of commitment, shouldn't I take a step to show I was willing to take a plunge too? I agreed with him, but I was relieved that I don't have to thrust my young relationship into a realm it is not ready for and I can also enjoy it how it currently is — separately fabulous in our separate homes.

So did I choose Anchorage for him? I have always been the type to look forward to it again. I can also enjoy it how it currently is — separately fabulous in our separate homes. I don't want to thrust my young relationship into a realm it is not ready for and I can also enjoy it how it currently is — separately fabulous in our separate homes.

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Getting help preparing your resume and doing an internship can boost your chances in a competitive job market.

Miles Duncan
THE CALIFORNIA AGER (UC-Davis)

DAVIS — For most college seniors, graduation is a time of joy marked by feelings of finality and eager anticipation toward beginning a new chapter of life. Yet it can also mean having to find a real job or career — a daunting task even for those versed in the timeless advice that there’s a great future in plastics.

Landscape architecture senior Daniel Krompholz said he still feels fully involved as a student and is having a hard time grasping that his college years are coming to an end. “I’m pretty excited,” Krompholz said. “It didn’t really hit me that I’m graduating; I still don’t think it really has hit me.”

Krompholz said he spent part of this past quarter looking for jobs, but turned down one offer from a landscape maintenance company. This summer, he has plans to complete a nine-week internship program in Southern California with three landscape architecture firms, which he said may or may not lead to job offers. “It’s definitely an opportunity, but I’m really not looking in the Irvine area for work,” he said. “It’s work experience for me and it’s also just getting to know people.”

Martha Schuster, a director with liberal arts and business for the Internship and Career Center, said internships are one of the best ways to get a job straight out of college. “A lot of publications will say that in many companies, about 60 percent of the people that do internships convert to permanent full-time employment,” she said. “So it’s a huge factor with companies who do have internships.”

Schuster said the ICC is used to helping graduating seniors find jobs, adding that the University of California-Davis has the only career center in the UC system that serves alumni free of charge.

Schuster also recommended students try other methods such as looking for jobs with friends, looking at professional association job postings, and even directly contacting potential employers, as Krompholz did earlier this quarter. “I just called a bunch of firms that I’m interested in and asked them if they have job openings,” Krompholz said. “But you can’t do that for all fields. If you’re a bio-SCI major, you’re in a different position.”

Such is the case for John Lee, a biochemistry and molecular biology senior. Lee said he has received several job offers since posting his resume on a job search site, credit ing a well-rounded background of internships and other activities as factors in his quick success.

Schuster said aside from work and academic experience, things like community involvement, activities and leadership are important to employers who want to make sure their employees are well-balanced individuals. She also added that it is never too late to start a new career.

“As far as the employment outlook and the job market, Schuster said the impending retirement of millions of Baby Boomers provides an unprecedented opportunity to young people looking for jobs. “It’s really a great time for people who are graduating from college right now,” she said.
College students lean toward religious experiences

Adarsh Bagrodia
DAILY TEXAS (E. Texas)

A University of Texas professor and graduate student have concluded that students who attend college are more likely to maintain religious beliefs than those who choose not to attend higher education.

A paper written by assistant sociology professor Mark Regnerus and sociology graduate student Jeremy Uecker analyzed the idea that college life influences religious faith and practice, based on the findings from The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health.

“We wanted to know if the college experience had a secularizing effect,” Regnerus said.

The survey tracks 15,000 students randomly selected from high schools across the country and monitors their religious devotion post-high school.

In general, the survey has shown that “the young-adult years of many Americans are marked by a clear decline in outward religious expression, which is popularly thought to hit bottom during — and perhaps because of — the college experience.”

Surprisingly enough though, college graduates reported a 59.2-percent decline in religious service attendance compared to a 76.2-percent decline among those who chose not to attend college, according to the report. Regnerus and Uecker explain that the structure of college life reinforces and provides for a more religion-friendly environment.

“With all the pressures of drinking, smoking and sex, you would think that people might end up less religious than before,” said Jacqueline Adair, a psychology and Asian studies senior. “I haven’t changed at all since I’ve been here.”

The study supports Adair’s theory, showing that students who engage in drinking, marijuana use or sexual activities are less likely to attend religious and religious organizations to be helpful and enriching aspects of their college and academic life,” said Benjie Slaton, campus minister for Reformed University Fellowship, a Presbyterian-affiliated program.
Congratulations MUSTANG DAILY
Graduating Staff Members

Your countless hours of work, along with the rest of the Mustang Daily staff, made this year one of the best!

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