It’s Principal Paul Beekmeyer

Student voice, relationships will be top priorities in coming year

by ELLA BEISER
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Paul Beekmeyer will be the new U-High principal, and according to him, his focus will be on building relationships—important relationship. That is what makes it great,” Dr. Abelmann said. “He needs to build relationships with the university, which is what makes it great,” Dr. Abelmann added.

“As a new principal, he needs to focus on learning about and understanding Lab, and you do that by building relationships and doing a lot of listening,” Dr. Abelmann said in an interview with the Midway. “I think he needs to build relationships with the students. I think he needs to build relationships with the staff. He needs to build relationships with the administration.”

Mr. Beekmeyer was announced as principal-designate on May 13 in an email to the student body. In the email, Mr. Beekmeyer said:

“In our separate conversations, we both agreed that relationships are at the core of what makes the school what it is, and that we needed to focus on building and maintaining those relationships.”

Mr. Beekmeyer said that the school’s culture is centered around relationships, and that it is important for the new principal to prioritize building and maintaining those relationships.

“Relationships are what make Lab a special place,” Mr. Beekmeyer said. “I believe in the power of relationships, and I am looking forward to working with the students, faculty, and staff to continue to build upon the strong foundation that Lab has established.”

Mr. Beekmeyer will assume the role of principal on July 1, replacing Dr. Eliza Doss, who will retire at the end of the school year. During his tenure as principal, Mr. Beekmeyer plans to focus on several key areas, including:

- Building relationships: Mr. Beekmeyer will prioritize building relationships with students, faculty, and staff to create a sense of community and belonging.
- Educational programming: Mr. Beekmeyer plans to work with the administration to ensure that educational programming is aligned with the school’s values and goals.
- Student voice: Mr. Beekmeyer is committed to ensuring that student voice is heard and valued in all decisions that affect the school.
- Athletics: Mr. Beekmeyer is a supporter of Lab’s athletic programs and will work to ensure that they are competitive and successful.

Mr. Beekmeyer’s appointment is a testament to the school’s commitment to building relationships and creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

Going forward, Mr. Beekmeyer and the school community are excited to work together to continue the tradition of excellence and success at Lab.

by AUDREY MATZER
ASSISTANT EDITOR

In an election May 3, students elected all-school officers in a referendum which included 116 candidates for 26 positions. In total, 81% of students voted, according to information released by the Student Council.

The school-wide turnout was 82.5%, according to information released by the Student Council. Percentages of each grade voted: freshmen, 87.5%; sophomores, 93.6%; juniors, and seniors, 96.7%.

Despite the overwhelming support, some students expressed concern about the proposed amendments to the Student Council constitution.

“While I believe in the power of relationships, I also believe in the importance of representation,” one student said.

Credit: Eliza Doss

ben CIFU

IN DIALOGUE: Senior Jasmine Wang, holding lemonade, asks principal finalist Paul Beekmeyer a question at a student meeting in Ludd Cifu during the campus visit for Paul Beekmeyer from April 26–27.

“It’s what happens in the classroom and halls, it’s not what happens in the principal’s office. So, the focus has to be there.” — PAUL BEEKMEYER, PRINCIPAL DESIGNATE

Ben CIFU

Electoral wins: All-School President: Ben Cifu, All-School Vice President: Constantine Carrigan, All-School Treasurer: Jeremy Ng, All-School Secretary: Gershon Stein, All-School Council President: Kepler Tomatra, All-School Council Vice President: Ava Kucera, Senior Class President: Nikhil Patal, Senior Class Vice President: Alex Zelito, Sophomore Class President: Eliza Don, Sophomore Class Vice President: Noor Azad and Destiny Williamson, Sophomore Class President: Asha Bakshi, Sophomore Class Vice President: Zachary Chin, Junior Class President: Heim An Ngo, Junior Class Vice President: Scarpino, Sophomore Class Secretary: Gershon Stein, Sophomore Class Treasurer: Jeremiah Lipton, Sophomore Class President: Ava Kucera, Sophomore Class Vice President: Ben Cifu, Sophomore Class Secretary: Kepler Tomatra, Sophomore Class Treasurer: Ava Kucera.

Credit: Eliza Doss

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The review is “a combination of following up on people who have raised concerns in the past, as well as ensuring that Mr. Ribbens looks at the book before the election.” Ms. Noel said, adding that it would make sure that the student council’s work is done efficiently and effectively.

Instead of questioning the proposal because of scheduling conflicts, Ms. Noel added that it would ensure that the school’s values are upheld.

“We had been talking to Ms. Miller a lot about it before we had sent it in, so we were already really excited about it before it had been sent in,” Sydney said.

In a message sent to team members and their families through Schoology, Athletics Director David Ribbens wrote, “the trip would not require a lot of planning. I think she is excited about it before it had been sent in.”

Sydney Rogers, a junior, said the players were all disappointed when they heard the news.

“We are excited about it before it had been sent in. Sydney said.”

Dr. Ribbens and other members of the administration to review decisions about athletics with respect to the proposal. She said she has identified so far that the administration’s policies with regard to scheduling conflicts should be more inclusive and transparent. If this had been the case, the volleyball team might not have been disappointed when their proposal was denied.

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“I’m really excited to have won it,” Mr. Beekmeyer said in an interview with the Midway. “I think it’s a great opportunity for me.”

Ben CIFU

Credit: Eliza Doss

The proposal was finalized early spring, the amendments were not shared with the student body until 12:15 a.m. on election day via Schoology. The amendments are linked to the digital hallway.

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According to an 88% Student Council president Shiva Menta, Student Council did not anticipate a controversy with any of the proposed amendments, and he said therefore that he thought sharing further in advance would be unnecessary.

“We will use voting by secret ballot to vote on the proposed amendments, and the students will have the opportunity to vote on them in the upcoming election.”

Additionally, the delay was deliberate, as members hope it would ensure changes are more meaningful to students.

“It will give us more time to really understand the amendments and determine how to vote on them.”

Shiva said.

“With our amendments, there will be a cultural shift and a growing awareness among students about what it means to be preparing students to be global citizens.”

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University reviews Lab tuition benefits

by ELIANDY OLIVER
Midway Reporter

The University of Chicago is proposing changes over the next two years to its faculty benefits programs in response to concerns raised by faculty, many of whom are parents of Laboratory Schools students.

The changes are to address the areas of Lab tuition, the university’s relationship with public schools, the cost of housing and services available to students with learning differences.

Provost Daniel Diermeier announced these changes in an email sent to all benefits-eligible faculty on April 16, acting on the recommendation of a group of faculty and administration members.

The Provost said that revision plans for the Lab tuition bene-

“...We worry about this exodus harming the cultural identity of Lab and the rich intellectual life cultivated by the University, and we are concerned that future tuition increases will further exacerbate this problem.”

— 2017 FELLOWSHIP

The university stated it is implementing a similar call to action for the academic year 2020-21 school year.

The Provost said that the changes were in response to a 2017 faculty petition. It stated that the current benefit plan does not make it viable for families to send multiple children to Lab and services may also be difficult even with the benefit.

The petition stated that many faculty were finding it increasingly difficult for their families to commit to Lab due to this reason.

“We worry about this exodus harming the cultural identity of Lab and the rich intellectual life cultivated by the University. We are concerned that future tuition increases will further exacerbate this problem,” the petition stated.

To address the needs of diverse learners, the university is allocating a substantial portion of the tuition to the City Elementary or Hyde Park Day School in a three-year pilot program. The allocation will be based on household income.

“The program is to end of un-

“We worry about this exodus harming the cultural identity of Lab and the rich intellectual life cultivated by the University, and we are concerned that future tuition increases will further exacerbate this problem.”

— 2017 FELLOWSHIP

In order to pursue their scheduling priorities together, the group has put out a call to faculty to ask for feedback and topics that they need to learn in order to be able to put on a similar call to students.

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Can’t Believe It’s Not Meat on 53rd Street offers delicious substitutes to common meat dishes

by MIRA COSTELLO

Patrons chatter over fresh R&B. Afternoon sunlight flows in on the wind, glinting on sleek counters and light fixtures. Fifty-third Street pedestrians stop to consider the wall-mounted menu through large front windows. In fading light, the gold-painted proclamation of Hyde Park restaurant Can’t Believe It’s Not Meat glisters. “Our mission is to shift the culture around being veg,” and vegetarian by cultivating healthier eating habits. This work is one of your favorite comfort foods.

Can’t Believe It’s Not Meat is owned by Larissa Chandler and her brother Erik “Rico” Nance. Nance also owns LifeHouse Whole Food Grill, Mikey’s Retro Grill and Soul Shack, situated next to Can’t Believe It’s Not Meat. Their mission statement says it all: this new restaurant sells itself as the go-to for “Soul Shack” cuisine, good food for those in the process of becoming vegan or vegetarian.

In an interview with Block Club Chicago, Nance said he hopes to make plant-based diets more familiar to the everyday American. “We wanted to encourage transitioning into healthy eating by creating healthier versions of your favorite comfort foods and providing knowledge about plant-based alternatives,” he said.

The space is small and has only a few tables and counter seats, making it more popular for take-out orders or quick lunches. Although the restaurant itself is small, people constantly enter and exit the space, seeking a supplement to meat dishes that does not stray too far from what they are used to.

The restaurant offers a wide array of southern and midwestern comfort foods with meat substitutes. One of the most popular is the “Who Beta” burger, a veg patty topped with vegetables, cheese and a Japan-inspired “Epo’s” sauce.” The “Can’t Believe It’s a Pizza Pull” is also a crowd favorite, a wrap filled with taco-style vegan beef, cheese and herbs.

Despite having the heartiness of regular meat, the food is light and refreshing. In this case, a variety of meals. Although the restaurant itself is small, people constantly enter and exit the space, seeking a supplement to meat dishes that does not stray too far from what they are used to.

Can’t Believe It’s Not Meat is open from 11 a.m. to 8:45 p.m. on weekdays.

If you’re looking to challenge your ideas about food, check it out — you might find it unbelievably good. She said, “It’s really nice when it’s sunny because it makes everything warm.”

But Willow also appreciates the quietness of her lunch location — something the cafeteria lacks. “As for the cafeteria, I will sit there every once in a while with some friends, and I eat there in the beginning of the year, but it is just too crowded,” Willow said. “I didn’t like it — there are so many people and it gets very loud and hectic.”

During lunch, students can be found swinging their feet in the stairways of Gordon Parks Arts Hall or working together near the third-floor benches or gardening outside the library. One thing is for sure: the cafeteria is not the only place to eat.
Teacher creates unique historic composition

Students from digital music ensemble present a composition using sounds from the Illinois Holocaust Museum

by OTTO BROWN

Zippers. Boots. Menorah. These are just some of the artifacts from the Illinois Holocaust Museum in Skokie used to create a unique piece of music performed at the Holocaust Remembrance assembly May 2.

U-High music teacher Francisco Dean worked with his students in the electronic music ensemble to develop pieces using the sounds of Holocaust-era artifacts. Each sound was digitally arranged using a technique called sound design to create “Vifungipik, Oshhand” or “As the Spring, Unconquered.”

"Many of the artifacts used came from Jerry Glass, who was born in 1926 to a Yiddish-speaking family in Chicago. He joined the U.S. Army at 17 and helped liberate the Mauthausen concentration camp and served as a Yiddish translator for Jewish prisoners. The sound of the zipper on his army jacket, his boots hitting a table and his pants rubbing together are all sounds captured for this project, which was presented at the assembly organized by the Jewish Students’ Association every year."

Mr. Dean said the arrangement is divided into three movements, each derived from a poem. The first movement comes from "I am a Jew" and depicts life after the Holocaust. The second, based on "Fear," captures the time during the Holocaust. The final movement comes from "I am a few" and depicts life after the Holocaust.

"We tried to find creative ways to take these articles and these words and bring them to life vocally," Mr. Dean said while sharing samples of the work.

Members of the Lab community, including members of JSA, read each of these poems aloud. Mr. Dean then resculpted the frequencies of each recording into a unique frequency. Together, these resculpted sounds create different notes, as one would hear on a piano.

"That’s Nathan Appelbaum saying the word fear slowed down about 600% with some degrading of the signal," Mr. Dean said of an eerie sound used in the second movement.

"It’s Nathan Appelbaum saying the word fear slowed down about 600% with some degrading of the signal," Mr. Dean said of an eerie sound used in the second movement.

In addition to words being digitally altered, other poems were read aloud and incorporated into the performance. World language teacher Marianne Zemil read aloud a letter written in German as well as its English translation.

"The poems themselves are the narrative of the story," Mr. Dean added. "While a poem is being read aloud, you’ll also hear different words in the background, forming a verbal tapestry."
As the hit show wraps up, students and fans react to the final twists by MAX GARBINKEL

Many fans watched the final season of the popular HBO series "Game of Thrones" on April 14. According to CNN, 17.4 million people tuned in. The show, which has been on the air since 2011, will conclude its eighth and final season May 19. Fans have been waiting years for the show's conclusion, and the anticipation has been building for months. With more than 130 game including a mini golf course, Lucky Strike also has 18 bowling lanes, ping pong and billiards. To bowl, Lucky Strike charges $6 per person per lane.

Theaters themselves are big with leather semi-recliner chairs to huge Hollywood productions. Locations by George R.R. Martin on which "Game of Thrones" is based. Although Eve usually watches each new episode by herself, she enjoys discussing it with her friends the next day to de-brief. "As it comes into its final season, all of us are on the edge of our seats," she said. "All these things could happen, and after we have been following it for so long we are so anxious to see how it will end. And while all these big things keep happening this season, one of the first things you want to do is tell someone about how crazy it was or your reactions. She explained that this season each episode is important, so discussing the "OMG moments" helps process the show. From games to dining to shopping, these theaters turn a typical movie-going experience into a unique outing that could fill up a whole afternoon.

More than just a movie theater

ACTS

Armed with Radars, leaders and dragons. These have been on the minds of fans of the cultural phenomenon that is "Game of Thrones" during its final season, which premiered April 14. According to CNN, 17.4 million people tuned in. The show has been ap- plauded by its fans for satisfying character development, intense drama and intricate storylines. Viewers started the season antici- pating what would prevail in the "Game of Thrones'" – Cersei Lanister, who started the season on the throne; Jon Snow, king in the North; or Daenerys Targaryen, the dragon queen.

However, with the show's reputa- tion for throwing the audience curveballs, someone completely unexpectected could end up win- ning. After all, even after years of character development, you never know when a main character will be killed off. The first episodes of Season 8 addressed some of the show's main plot lines, building tension for the finale. In the penultimate episode May 13, Jon Snow and Daenerys Targaryen met amid the ruins of King's Landing, to the burn down to the ground by Daenerys' forces. Fans are now more perplexed. By the May 19 finale, viewers who ends up on the Iron Throne and wins the Iron Throne.

FINAL MOMENTS. Ser Davos Seaworth (Linn Cruin) and Jon Snow (Kit Harrington) look upon the battlefield with their army at their back. Both characters have been in the "Game of Thrones" series since its first season. The cultural phenomenon's eighth and final season concludes May 19.

Even though there will not be any new episodes of "Game of Thrones" coming out, that doesn't mean Eve is done with the show. "Once I finish it, immediately after I'm going to take a break just to process it," she said. "But after a few weeks I see myself coming back and rewatching the whole show in its entirety." Although Eve is excited to see the last episode, it is bittersweet for her. "It'll be nice to see the end since it's the end of such a big story and everyone wants to know what happens," she said, "and I think at some point there is a right time for everything to end!"

STANLEY SHAPIRO has also watched the show since Season 5. He watches and de-briefs with his dad. "It's always fun to talk with him after something major happens in an episode," Stanley said. "After the episode we will predict what we think is going to happen. We are usually totally wrong about what's actually going happening. It's always fun to discuss what you think.

Stanley, a junior, started watch- ing "Game of Thrones" at the be- ginning of his freshman year of high school. He initially started watching after hearing about it on the internet and in news articles. He said he didn't know much about it and actually thought it was kinda weird, but as I got older I started seeing more reference- es and that got me into the show. Eve is not surprised that the show's following has grown as big as it has. She said it's gained such a large following since it has something for everyone. "It includes everything we want to see. It has really interesting charac- ters, it's got love, and you never know what's going to happen," she said. "I think the broadness of the world as a whole attracts a lot of people who like fantasy or like seeing big battles or like seeing re- al characters and deep characters dramas and development."

From games to dining to shopping, these theaters turn a typical movie-going experience into a unique outing that could fill up a whole afternoon.

Story and photos by ABIGAIL SLIMMON, SPORTS EDITOR

Final words from fans

Junior Eve Grobman got reeled into the show when it started gaining a lot of hype. She has been watching the show since its fifth season, but bingy-watched Sea- sons 1-4 before beginning. Before she started watching the show, she had read the first three books of the "A Song of Ice and Fire" se- ries by George R.R. Martin, on which "Game of Thrones" is based.

Although Eve usually watches each new ep- isode by herself, she enjoys discussing it with her friends the next day to de-brief. "As it comes into its final sea- son, all of us are on the edge of our seats," she said. "All these things could happen, and after we have been following it for so long we are so anxious to see how it will end. And while all these big things keep happen- ing this season, one of the first things you want to do is tell some- one about how crazy it was or your reactions. She explained that this sea- son each episode is important, so discussing the "OMG moments" helps process the show.

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Story and photos by ABIGAIL SLIMMON, SPORTS EDITOR

Eve Grobman

AMC River East
232 E. Illinois St.

Landmark Theaters
2828 N. Clark St.

AMC Dine-In Block 37
108 N. State St.

THURSDAY, MAY 16, 2019
U-HIGH MIDNIGHT • UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL, CHICAGO
Sexist images in video game communities harm players

by KATRINA LOPEZ

In 2014, gamer Zoe Quinn received comments like these after she tried to change a gaming culture she deemed toxic. This is not the only time comments like these have been made or aimed at video game players.

Five years later, some gamers still struggle to understand. When I spent time playing “Hotline Miami” as recently as this month, I received similar degrad ing comments criticizing me with comments like, “Girls can’t play games.”

These comments only further prove Ms. Quinn’s point: gaming culture must move on from its infant stages. Although approximately an equal amount of men and women play video games, according to a 2012 study published in the Journal of Interpersonal Violence, the games are structured around the sexualization of female characters to target men. In fact, this study has found evidence that the depiction of violence and sexualization of women increases the likelihood the player engages in more aggressive or tolerate violence such as rape through rape-supportive attitudes. The researchers reported that men who have to women’s bodies as depicted in video games transfers to their everyday lives. Some male gamers make demands to women and feel entitled to do what they wish. I am afraid that the over sexualization of the female characters, which leads to the dehumanization of women, will lead these men to commit these horrible crimes.

Despite awareness of this objective, the gaming community is still divided in most cases. When women gamers stand for their dignity and ask for women characters to be shown in less revealing clothing, the gamers face horrific backlash, including threats of death and rape, and doxing — publishing someone’s personal information online. In 2013, Ms. Quinn came out with a text-based game about her struggles with depression. This game received major backlash such as death and bomb threats resulting in her fleeing her home. The aftermath created the GamerGate movement, demanding fair representation and equality for women in the gaming community.

At U-High, students tend to think that education is the only way anyone obtains their dream job. Many individuals see high school and college as mere stepping stones to get to the job they want. By doing this, students effectively isolate themselves from the learning process, and from gaining the life experiences that come from these stepping stones. To honor our school’s founders, we must honor high school, college and other levels of education as more than stepping stones. They are valuable stages of life that much be explored to their fullest, not rushed through in endless pursuit.

U-HIGH MIDWAY

CORRECTIONS
ISSUE #8, APRIL 26, 2019

Page 3 - “The Ethics of the Ethicist” work shop focused on providing moral guidelines for games.

Page 2 - The Labapalooza brief was written by Nicky Edwards-Levin.

Page 10 - Nick Neen is not a starter in the University High School football team. The Midway is created by students, for students.
Students build, repair their bikes to avoid expenses of bike shops

by TEDDY NEER
MIDWAY REPORTER

While some students enjoy extracurriculars, playing video games or gridding out their schoolwork, two juniors have spent the past year investing their time and sweat in a new passion. Luke Sikora and Aden Chon didn’t buy bikes that were ready to ride. Instead, they each built a custom bike from the frame up.

Over the past year Luke and Aden have each worked on their bikes. Building a bike appealed to them for different reasons. Aden was tired of spending lots of money at bike shops and wanted to save money but eventually be able to enjoy the work. However, Luke began working on bikes because it gave him freedom.

“It’s really fun. Once you get real into the zone with it, you can work on your bike for a whole day and it’s easy and smooth to ride.”

To Luke and Aden, building a bike is not just saving money and making an ideal bike. Both felt that riding on a bike they had built themselves made for a stronger connection.

“When you learn how to do repairs yourself, you feel more connected to your bike. That’s something that you built — all your own effort, all your own money, all your own parts,” Aden said. “You can also make it ride exactly how you want it to, unlike when you buy a prebuilt bike from a shop.”

While building and repairing a bike has some clear advantages, it can seem daunting. Those who want to build their own bikes have many resources, ranging from YouTube videos to books, to help learn about working on bikes. There is also no right or wrong way to learn. Neither Luke nor Aden rode bikes before, but were still able to build bikes.

“I learned about all this stuff in an unorthodox way, but it was pretty much just doing it by myself. I never took any classes or anything. I wasn’t gifted a 300-page book that has everything you could think of,” Luke said.

“I would just read and study that book like it was a bible. And with that knowledge, I rode with a lot of people that I rode with that were bike mechanics, I just picked it up as I went along.”

Working on bikes may be difficult work. If one is willing to put in the time, money, and effort, it can become a fun pastime that yields many rewards. Luke said his best advice for those who want to work on bikes is to just give it a shot.

“My only advice is that you should definitely fix up your bike,” Luke said. “Even if you don’t care much about having the latest and most aesthetic parts, being able to fix up a bike and have it to ride is awesome.”

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**FRAME: $500**
**WHEELS: $200**
**PEDALS: $20**
**TOOLS: $100**

**Luke and Aden’s Bike Costs:**

**BUILD IT, RIDE IT, LOVE IT:** Junior Aden Chon kneels down to tighten the axle nuts on the front wheel of his custom made bike. Aden has assembled his bike throughout the past year, first getting into it after realizing just how much money he was spending on repairs at local bike shops.

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**PLAY HARD.**

**U-HIGH MIDWAY • UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL, CHICAGO**
**THURSDAY, MAY 16, 2019**

**Girls Soccer, Varsity**

Sophomore Willow Young shields the ball during a Girls Soccer, Varsity game against Wheaton Academy May 9. The team lost 0-1 during the last three minutes of their final regular season game.

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Undergraduate debt affects students long-term

by PRIYANKA SHILLIJAY 
EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

Saving for retirement. Buying a home. Raising children. As high school students consider taking out loans to pay for the ever-increasing cost of attending college, they may not consider these potential major facets of their future lives, but life milestones can be directly impacted by the debt students incur throughout their higher education.

High school students think about prestige or the ideal of college life. Few consider cost a priority, and many take out loans. Yet the decision to take out loans is one of immense importance, as it has significant long-term impacts. According to college counselor Patty Kovacs, most statistics regarding student loan debt are of aggregate debt. This means that the majority of those dollars are from graduate school loans. Students still often take out hefty loans for their undergraduate education, but colleges try to keep them from taking on too much debt.

"For undergraduate student loans, debt, most colleges are going to cap that," she said. While colleges may stop students from taking out colossal loans, they put no such restrictions on parents. Any parent with a good credit record, regardless of financial profile, could qualify for a government loan to aid in paying their child’s tuition. The question then, is whether or not families are willing to go into debt to pay for their child’s college education. Students must consider how much responsibility they will take and how much will fall to their parents, and in addition to that, families should consider long-term financial aid plans, according to Ms. Kovacs.

“You might say, ‘I want to go to college, and I want to be a doctor, and I want to open a practice,’” she said. “How long do families want to be contributing to the overall educational costs?” Does it end totally at the bachelor’s degree, or can we say, “We’ve put this money aside and we’ll extend it if you work on a financial options that are different.”

While students should be mindful of the long-term impact of their student debt, according to Ms. Kovacs, undergraduate student loans shouldn’t affect a student’s ability to attend graduate school as students will not have to begin payments until after graduate school.

“I don’t think it affects the ability to go to graduate school,” she said. “It kicks that undergraduate loan repayment off until you’re finished with that grad school. And then it gets folded into the aggregate.”

Undergraduate debt may not affect a student’s ability to attend graduate school, but it does affect a student’s ability to take out loans for other major components of adult life.

“In many ways that’s like buying a car. If you haven’t budgeted for that, then it can come as a shock,” Ms. Kovacs said. “It does delay in some cases, students buying a home, getting married, those kinds of things.”

From Oct. 9 to Oct. 24, 2018, 7,095 adults with student loan debt from all 50 U.S. states were surveyed by Student Debt Crisis, a non-profit organization dedicated to student debt reform. More than half — 56% of those surveyed — said their student debt prevented them from buying a home, and 19% delayed getting married. While some may look toward loan forgiveness to tackle debt, qualifications are strict. According to the Department of Education, to qualify for loan forgiveness, one must work at a non-profit organization for 10 years, work for the federal, state or local government, and make 120 monthly payments. In 2017, 28,000 people applied for loan forgiveness, and only 96 were approved according to the New York Times.

As students consider financial aid, it is essential that they consider the impact and understand what their future will look like financially.

Ms. Kovacs said, “I think one of the best things to do is to parlay and students to have an honest and open conversation early in high school, like sophomore year — what are you really talking about in terms of college affordability.”

Five things you need to know about financial aid

by EMMA TRONE
EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

In 2019, student loan debt in the United States reached a whopping total of $1.5 trillion, with an average of $29,000 owed per student. It takes student debt holders an average of 19.7 years to pay off their debt, with an average monthly payment of $393 per month, according to the New York Times. While politicians like U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren have now called for student debt relief, hoping it will boost her campaign.

In many ways, that’s like buying a car. If you haven’t budgeted for that, then it can come as a surprise. It does delay in some cases, students buying a home, getting married, those kinds of things.” — PATTY KOVACS, COLLEGE COUNSELOR

Survey:

Loan debt resulted in:

18% defaulting on at least one loan
80% not saving for retirement
58% reporting credit score decline
26% delaying having children

SOURCE: STUDENT DEBT CRISIS

“Many parents say, ‘We’re spending so much money on our college, and we’re not really teaching them about the savings, the responsibility, the debt,’ ” said Ms. Kovacs. “I think that’s an easy place to start talking to students about where the money is going, how much it costs, and the different options, so they can decide on their own what’s best for them.”

For students, it is important to understand the difference between a grant, scholarship and loan.

Grants:

Grants are need-based and merit-based, with anything from high grades and scores to a particular talent qualifying a student. A loan is money that needs to be paid back. The most common federal loans are Stafford Loans and Perkins Loans, which are low-interest. Students can also choose to borrow from private loan companies like Navient or Sallie Mae, which often have higher interest rates.

The difference between a grant, scholarship and loan is how much debt students have to accumulate to attend college.

How much debt is too much debt?

According to college counselor Melissa Warehall, students should borrow within a reasonable amount.

“My opinion is that a reasonable amount is in between $20,000 and $25,000 over four years, not per year,” Ms. Warehall said. “Right now, the way that both the Stafford subsidized and unsubsidized loans work, if you’re awarded both a subsidized and unsubsidized loan, that’s about $5,500 a year. So that works out to be about $22,000 over four years. Once your loan debt gets above around $25,000, it becomes a burden.”

What happens if you borrow too much?

Ms. Warehall said that borrowing an unreasonable amount can create a years-long burden.

“There are two ways it could come into play. One, when you’re making your first career choice out of college, there might be a great opportunity where you want to work for an NGO or a non-for-profit. But if you need to make a $400-500 loan payment each month, that might affect the type of position you are able to take when you first graduate from college,” Ms. Warehall said. “The other concern is that the way the government has structured bankruptcy rules, loans can never be forgiven. So even if you declare bankruptcy, your loan debt gets deferred, but not discharged.”

What are some benefits to borrowing?

“The upside to taking out student loans and borrowing during the time you’re in college is you start having a credit record,” Ms. Warehall said. “If you start paying those loan payments back as you should, you end up having a really nice credit score to start out with. You can’t get a credit score until you start accruing credit, so it’s a safe way to start building credit, as long as it’s a reasonable amount of debt.”

What are some resources I can look at to start?

The Federal Student Aid website is home to endless information about financing a college education. The website’s FAQ, or frequently asked questions, can help explain eligibility for federal aid with a few bits of information. To search for scholarship opportunities, the Department of Labor’s CareerOneStop section features over 7,000 scholarships and other financial aid opportunities.