

REJOYCED

JOYCE TSUI
Editor in Chief



Every Little Thing is Gonna Be Alright

Just like every other senior on this campus, I have been counting down the days until graduation (16 days and counting); however, throughout the year, I have often found myself reminiscing about the past four years and the memories I have made here at Alhambra. Though high school has been a seemingly endless journey from freshman year to graduation, the time has finally arrived for us to take our final steps across the stage and soon, we will all have reached the finish line, where the next steps include—but are not limited to—going off to college, taking a gap year or going straight into a job or the military.

For the coming fall, I will not be returning to Alhambra High School like I have for the past four years. Instead, I will be attending a school 400 miles away from my comfort zone in Southern California. I have called Alhambra home for the past eighteen years and it is frightening to think that I will be off on my own in just three short months. I will no longer bask in the warm SoCal sun, come home every day to the sound of the Chinese channel playing on the TV in the living room, eat my mom's home-cooked meals or be bothered by my brother's up-roars while playing games when I am trying to sleep. Now it will be cold and foggy weather and quiet nights in my dorm studying (or trying to study, anyway) with instant noodles for dinner.

But of course, there is always a silver lining to every cloud. While I will be several hours away from my family and friends, I will also be residing in one of the best cities in this country—or so Google tells me. Considering the fact that the only place I have ever visited outside of Alhambra has been Nevada, I am excited for the new environment I will be in, not just the school, but also the city itself.

The change in my surroundings will definitely be a shock for me; however, I am anxiously anticipating the new places I will discover throughout the city, the (very expensive) education I am going to receive and the new people I will encounter and befriend over the next four years.

Sure, it is going to be scary to be away from my family for the first time. Who wouldn't be scared? Knowing I will have to fend for myself without my parents always being there to look after me when I am sick, helping to do my laundry or driving me to places I need to be is an aspect of my life that I will have to accept. I will no longer be able to be dependent on my parents to do the little things for me, but as the cliché goes, I must spread my wings and fly.

There is no way to know how my next four years will pan out, but I know that my parents have raised me well enough and that, with time to adapt to the new atmosphere, everything will be just fine.



Need a Break? Take a Gap Year!

MICHELLE PAULINO
Opinions Editor

Graduating high school is daunting. Most students feel a combination of anxiety and excitement as the end of everything they have ever known. The unknown of the future and the insecurities of possibly leaving their comfort zones beckon. With so many students furthering their education immediately upon the completion of high school, the pressure to know exactly what they want to do with their lives is on. Of course, some choose to pursue other options such as serving in the military or working without a college degree. A recently growing debatable alternative to attending college right after graduating high school is taking a gap year.

Most commonly practiced in England and

other parts of Europe, the gap year is a period of time in which a student decides to take a year off between high school and college. Typically, within the year, young adults have the opportunity to do whatever they feel would be enriching for their future. With focus and determination, students are able to discover their passions prior to enrolling in college, therefore saving time and money by investing in what they find fulfilling, as opposed to enrolling in various courses only to discover that the desire to continue within the subject is absent.

Not everyone knows exactly what major they are going to pursue or what occupation they wish to work up to. Those who take a gap year are able to learn more about their interests either by immersing themselves in internships or by deciding to work or com-

municate with companies pertaining to their passions. It is common for undergraduates to frequently change majors; some realize inconveniently late in their college career that they do not really like what they thought they loved. Working part-time jobs allows for experience to be gained in the respective medium, relationships to be built with potential business partners and allows for a small income. The hard-earned money can be invested in future educational pursuits and cultivates an appreciation for the value of working.

Another popular activity people participate in within a gap year is travel by volunteering abroad, exploring their interests or simply engrossing themselves in a different culture. Living and working abroad can be both delightful and beneficial because the experience gained also looks great on a resume. Travel options are not limited to the wealthy either; there are certain programs such as World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms, which feeds and houses students in exchange for several hours of work on farms that are located worldwide. By choosing to participate in this sort of exchange program, relationships gained with hosts can make traveling decisions in the future both easy and affordable. Volunteering in developing countries is also a popular option which rewards participants with an enriched understanding of the world and an enlightened morale. When the year of gained experience and itch is scratched, the student can either return to attend college with a clear and motivated mindset or realize college is not for them.

Choosing to not take a gap year can also be enriching and efficient, regardless of missed experiences. Many universities also offer study abroad programs typically available to

students in their sophomore year. Choosing a major does not necessarily define which field a person chooses to pursue for the rest of their life. Colleges are very accepting of most students' exploration through majors. The first two years are allotted for general education courses, so in actuality, beginning college students have two years to develop a strong interest in the subject of interest they would like to obtain a degree in. Of course, following the traditional college course ensures timely graduation; given class availability is not problematic.

However, self-discipline is crucial for the student choosing to take a gap year. The year off does not entitle one to vegetate their life away on a couch all day. Most students secure an enrollment deposit upon acceptance and can ask for a deferral to guarantee a spot in a college as soon as their gap year is over. Many colleges approve the gap year with proof of a concrete plan detailing their gap year actions to make sure the student is not wasting time lazily vegetating their life away. Unfortunately, those who lack the discipline use the free time recklessly by remaining dependent upon their parents or getting too accustomed to the time off, resulting in the discontinuation of school; sadly, many fall victim to the trap. A gap year with a lack of ambition is a deadly combination; the desire to further education should remain the number one priority.

Who can deny that 13 years of traditional schooling are physically and emotionally draining? Taking a gap year breaks the monotonous structure of attending school yet another year and serves as a form of creative liberation from the repetition of the classroom. As long as an individual is focused and disciplined, a gap year can be a life-changing experience.



Brace Yourselves—Student Loans are Coming

SEAN NGUYEN
Staff Writer

For many college-bound seniors, there is a certain two-word phrase that will be the topic of heated discussion, deliberation and debate — “student loans.”

To many seniors, student loans may seem like a snake waiting to strike. In fact, for many students, student loans are often the only way that college is even a feasible idea. Truthfully, the question is no longer “How should I pay for college?” but rather “How am I going to pay back my student loans?” A recent congressional proposal titled the Student Loans Fairness Act (H.R. 1330) seeks to solve the issue of outstanding student loan debts, but does not actually address the underlying issues that cause such high levels of student debt.

The essence of H.R. 1330 lies in what the bill calls the “10/10 Loan Repayment and Forgiveness” plan. Eligible borrowers who participate in the 10/10 plan will have all their loans consolidated, meaning that the federal government will purchase any private education loans. Borrowers agree to pay an entire ten percent of their monthly adjusted gross income every month for ten years. After the ten year period, the loan is forgiven (up to a maximum of \$42,520). Sounds great, right? Quite honestly, I’m not so sure.

There is nothing wrong with the idea of helping students resolve the debts that they incur as a result of their educational pursuits. However, as much as future me might like to take \$42,520 off of his future debt, one

must ask: Where exactly does the money for this come from? Because the government must actually purchase the private loans of participants for this plan to work, I cannot see the United States being able to maintain the plans outlined by H.R.1330 in the long run especially with the already enormous national debt that the United States is currently responsible for.

Some may argue that this is what our tax dollars are for! That spending money on making higher education accessible to students is something that we should all agree on. The issue with H.R. 1330 is that, by simply forgiving the loans and passing on the burden to taxpayers, universities are given a free pass to increase their tuitions to whatever they want. Universities do not have to care whether a student can pay for tuition because they receive the amount of money they ask for no matter what. Moreover, because H.R. 1330 essentially shifts the burden of debt to taxpayers, lenders no longer have to exercise as much discretion when they hand out loans because, again, the government is sure to make up for it if the student cannot. Simply forgiving student loan debt will not resolve the underlying issues of astronomically high tuition costs that have led to the current situation we are in.

It is recognized that the increasing sum of national student loan debt is an issue that should be rectified. Instead of attempting to pay for the constantly rising student loan debts of college graduates, the United States would do better to emphasize the opportunities of learning trade skills or pursuing other, less costly, alternatives to college. As attractive as simply forgiving student loans can be, the government of United States cannot afford to do so nor should it.

What has someone important to you done to get you back into the running towards graduation?

“My parents because they [paid for] my tuitions and inspired me to study harder.”

-Stephy Lao

“My family because they supported all [of] my decisions including enlist[ing] in the Navy.”

-Baron Chen

“My parents taught [me] that no one will limit me.”

-Condy Kan

“[My friends], because they bring me motivation when I see how hard they work and study and talk about their future like the universities they [want to] go to. It’s [good] knowing I’m not the only one striving for success.”

-Josh Lopez

“Mr. Tong warned us about the future and the education it takes to have a successful future.”

-Oscar Miranda

“My friends made my high school life bearable and motivated me to keep trying no matter what.”

-Nelson Ho

“Summer Burlingham. Last year, I was expelled [and] I didn’t want to come back to school. I was at a low point [in life] and I couldn’t get back up. Summer lifted up my spirits and pushed me to do better and to graduate. She’s been my support system. My one inspiration is her.”

-Angel Jimenez

“My best friend helped me survive high school. Mr. Morgan also helped me a lot; he tutors me in life.”

-Rebecca Pelayo

“My parents because they supported me [when] I needed them and they always motivated me to keep on going.”

-Adela Arroyo

“My friends and my parents because they listened to my problems and helped me when I was at my worst.”

-Howie Feng

“My dad didn’t want to graduate [around my age], [but] my grandma told him that it’s a family accomplishment since the family supported him. Knowing that story has always put my mind towards graduating.”

-Thomas Richetts

- ### CHEERS
- Online registration for classes
 - Blue and Gold Fridays
 - School has new Wi-Fi system
 - One of the larger Econ Summits in AHS history
 - Increased school spirit
 - Survived Mayan 2012 Apocalypse

- ### JEERS
- No more food fairs
 - Complicated process for dance contracts
 - Super A closed
 - Earlier start to school year
 - PSAT cancelled last minute, causing inconvenience
 - Student banker, Mrs. Chun, transferred to SGHS

Senior Quotes

The MOOR 101 South Second Street, Alhambra, CA 91801

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Note: Issue reviewed and edited by adviser for content and journalism standards.

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