

How Students Pay Their Tuition

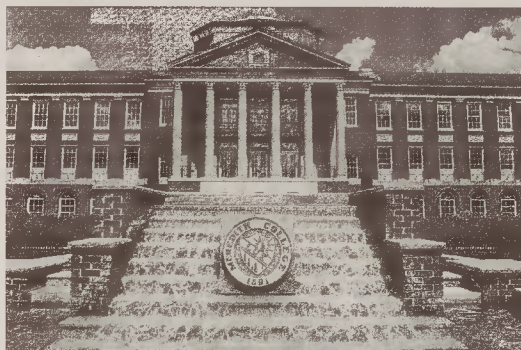
By Riley Heeb, Reporter

College and university tuition are realities for most students with very few exceptions or at least nominal fees in some parts of the world. Students across America use different ways to pay for college, and this sparked a curiosity as to how students pay tuition at Meredith College. Many Meredith students work on campus to earn a wage, work off-campus jobs, own small businesses or have other unique ways of earning money.

Alina Avellaneda, Class of 2026, works an on-campus job at Meredith and also has a paid internship at NC State. Avellaneda said, "At first, having a job was not predominantly based on needing to pay tuition but after looking at this semester's remaining tuition I must say, I can not afford to quit either of my jobs."

Many have this dilemma in that, once they get a job, they cannot afford to quit. For people who can not get a job on campus, especially if they do not qualify for work-study, they must get jobs off campus.

Olivia Mason, from the Class of 2023, works two jobs off campus and one job on campus. Working many jobs comes with its challenges as well, including for Mason, who says that "it can definitely be hard to balance everything, especially depending on [their] course load that semester" and that "there have been times



To pay for tuition and school-related materials, students often come up with creative ways to supplement funding (Photo by Grayson Morris)

[she] have had to call out or postpone meetings and projects."

International students have different criteria that impact how they can support themselves financially. Khadejra Golding, a graduate student at Meredith, stated, "As an international student, I'm not able to work more than 20 hours a week[,] which isn't enough to cover rent, much less tuition."

As an international student, Golding depends on a sponsor to pay for her tuition as she can not work a sufficient amount of time to cover expenses and there are limited scholarships for international students. She has recently "encountered financial difficulties" and has not found a way to "work sufficient hours to sustain [herself] through

grad school at Meredith."

Avellaneda believes that the high price of tuition "puts an unnecessary strain on students" and that "spending so much on college tuition means spending just as much time on studies as well, but not everyone has the ability to get assistance on college tuition, let alone assistance that covers it all." She also stated that if she did not have to pay tuition, she would be putting more time into her passion of photography and her graphic design business.

Mason stated that "for the amount which students pay, one would expect us to have access to a high standard of facilities, educational tools, resources

and more" and that "many buildings lack accessibility, general cleanliness, and enough space for all their students." She stated that if tuition was not an issue she would have a "job [that] act[s] as a self-care activity and an enjoyable activity versus a demanding obligation that leaves less time for being a student and a healthy person."

Chapel Bartee, Class of 2023, has to rent out their horse and work multiple off-campus jobs to pay tuition. She believed that some elements of Meredith were "very old and outdated," making her "wonder where students' money goes." She continued, "Not only do [students] have tuition, but there's so many fees and hidden tricks they have to get more money." Bartee also included that if she did not have to pay tuition she "would definitely not be leasing out my horse and have him live with me."

Mason stated that "many students often have to miss class because they need to work in order to pay their bills including housing, food, and tuition." While some students have to miss class to pay for tuition, others have to go to another college. Bartee stated that she "hears all the time from classmates that they think about transferring because of the high price, especially because they can get similar educations somewhere else and cheaper."

Disability Panel Works to Improve Accessibility

By Shae-Lynn Henderson, Features Editor, and Camila Cardoso-Herrera, Contributing Writer

Meredith College has an established Disability Panel. Historically, this panel has dealt with any disability related grievances and has also played a role in facilitating the annual Access Award. This semester, there are a series of topics and goals which the Disability Panel is looking to progress based upon a monthly meeting.

The Disability Panel is a space for faculty and students to convene and discuss a variety of topics that are present in Meredith Campus. Carolyn Koning, the Assistant Director for Disability Services, and Karen Coffey Hager, a Disability counselor, note the importance of the Disability Panel and how it cultivates spaces to "work with Facilities Services and other partners on campus to combine resources to accomplish improvements and larger access projects (for example, acces-

sible residence hall rooms, suites, kitchens, laundry, and parlors)." Koning and Hager also met and consulted with Lilianna Madrid, the DEI Coordinator, with the hope of "expand[ing] the Disability Panel representation to improve communication, awareness across campus and overall accessibility."

The Disability Panel has worked to create a platform of goals that will further be established at their followup meeting late this Feb. 16. Both Koning and Hager note that Panel members have identified four major goals:

1. Increase campus awareness of disability issues and create a climate of inclusivity.
2. Improve accessibility of campus programs, services, and built environments.
3. Adapt campus policies to reflect current legal and ethical trends related to disabilities.

4. Improve campus communication related to accessibility concerns.

Beyond these goals, Koning and Hager also expressed wanting to highlight or rather bring attention to a myriad of topics around campus. "The Disability Panel recognizes there is work to be done regarding accessibility at Meredith, and the Disability Panel is committed to developing a process for addressing and eliminating access barriers." Dr. Janley Strutz McMillen, the Director of Sponsored Program of School of Natural & Mathematical Sciences, believes that the Panel is in a "transition phase in which we are working toward becoming proactive, rather than reactive, in addressing accessibility-related issues on campus." Dr. McMillen explained that the

Panel envisions a college community in which "programs, services, and environments are universally accessible and usable by all people."

With regard to promoting change on campus, Koning and Hager stated, "[The Disability Panel] have created subcommittees connected with each goal. The subcommittees will determine their own strategies and activities for the year." Dr. McMillen also added that "these subcommittees will be charged with identifying key activities for meeting the goals as well as key metrics for measuring [the panel's] success."

The Disability Panel has already opened space for students and faculty to talk about resolving issues on campus. For those who are interested in learning more about the Disability Panel, the next meeting is on Thursday, Feb. 16 from 12:30 p.m. until 1:30 p.m. on Zoom.