

# Early Graduation + Same Degree + Saving Money = The Three Year College Plan

BY AKIRAH JUSTICE  
Reporter

Skyrocketing costs of tuition have convinced students seeking higher education to seek alternatives to four or five-year plans. Recognizing the student body's concern with the seemingly endless debt upon graduating from college, many institutions are considering a change to the typical four-year enrollment.

French teacher Laura Wolf explored the ups and downs of early graduation.

"I finished from Carolina in three years, and I was 20 when I started teaching. It was strange to have 18-year-olds in class then. That is when they called me Madame "Fox" instead of Madame Wolf. I think it saves a lot of tuition dollars. I did it by going to summer school for two summers. The down side is that you really have to know what you plan to study and major in. There is hardly any time to change your major or even double major. The biggest disadvantage, in my opinion, is that it would be very difficult to take a semester or a year to study abroad, which I did later. I regretted not doing it in my undergraduate years because I could have spent more time to be abroad then."

Earning AP and IB college credits during high school contribute to a solution. By excelling in one's high school career, semesters can be eliminated, positioning a student for early completion. According to an article by Lamar Alexander in the Oct. 26, 2009 issue of "Newsweek," approximately 20% of college students advanced because of such credits.

Many people agree that graduating in less time would be beneficial, but it would also mean exerting more effort and longer hours year round.

"Let me say that there is nothing keeping students from graduating in three years if they work hard, get AP credits, and go to school every summer while in college," said Dr. Mark Burkey, economics professor at NC A&T University.

Three year options, over time, will have little effect on the job market and economy, but according to economic professor R.J. Angell, also from NC A&T University, the first year will have the greatest impact.

"The year in which the first of the three-year students graduate will result in a flood of applicants in the marketplace, but the num-

ber of students in the marketplace would not be the only factor affecting the marketplace. Businesses don't hire people for their degree. They hire them because they believe that they have an enhance skill set and the ability to learn. If the graduates don't possess something that others don't have, why should businesses be interested in hiring them?" said Angell.

Some people wonder if a three-year solution is such a good idea, since it may cause a lack of experience, not knowledge. Providing additional summer courses for

more students studying on campuses year round will allow students to work at a faster pace and save money on tuition; however, they may have a more difficult time competing with other students who have four years of experience in their field. This system, if put in place, will instantly create a new pay class.

Students participating in three-year programs will each earn a bachelor's degree, but employers may only be willing to pay slightly more than

an associate's degree recipient would earn. The lack of experience is not always considered equal to knowledge of the field.

With the economy in decline, some students believe they should take their time through college because when they finish, they might not have the opportunity to work where they originally intended. Rushing through college may seem like a reasonable plan for saving money, but opinions on the subject differ among students, parents, and business executives.

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Our plan is to begin with a strong kickoff, so upon our return to school in January, there will be many Man Up events. Therefore, **your participation is essential.** Education involves more than textbooks and examinations; we must learn from each other. Male adults will guide and set positive examples for male students. After all, your future is in our hands now, but ours will be in your hands later! Please assist us by encouraging your friends to join us. Let's generate excitement and enthusiasm about this grand opportunity to shape all of our lives! Thank you in advance for your commitment.

**Darrell Harris and Brandon Greeson**

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by Misleading Financial Aid Offers

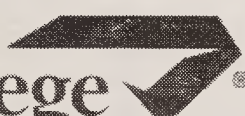
**You should never have to pay:**

- for information about financial aid
- to apply for federal financial aid (FAFSA)
- to receive financial aid

Never give out your Social Security number or other personal information unless you know the offer is legitimate.

For free and accurate information about financial aid, go to [CFNC.org](http://CFNC.org) or call 866-866-CFNC. You can also contact your school counselor or a college financial aid administrator.

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