

Editorial: Bringing the tuition-free dream to Ohio

It's the college student's dream: going to school without having to worry about covering the costs of tuition or paying off loans after you graduate. Some people will do just about everything to cover their dream of earning a higher degree.

For students in the state of New York, this dream is becoming a reality. By 2019, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo estimates 940,000 families will be eligible for the Excelsior program, the state's free public college tuition program. That's 940,000 high school students who will have a chance to go to college for free.

The funding for the program comes from a combination of federal and state governments. New York has already appropriated \$87 million for the program's first year.

Discussions so far show that the Excelsior Scholarship is going to be groundbreaking. It has already attracted a lot of attention across the country. The question, however, is whether this program will be effective or if it will become a tangle of red tape. Is it practical?

The basis of the program is that you must be an New York citizen, you must maintain full-time status (30 credits per year), you must stay in-state for the same amount of time after graduation (four years of scholarship = four more years of living in-state) and you must qualify (determined by familial income of up to \$100,000). The income limit will go up to \$110,000 in 2018 before rising to its ultimate cap of \$125,000 the following year.

The Excelsior Scholarship is a program that bridges the gap between tuition costs and available state and federal aid. It will be available to students who are New York residents and

attend public four-year colleges and universities and community colleges.

We wonder what this would be like if it went into effect in the state of Ohio.

Ohio's median household income is \$49,429 per year, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey. The New York Times also estimates the median family income of a student from University of Toledo at \$72,300 per year. Less than 24 percent of students are from families that make about \$110,000 or more per year.

This means that almost three-fourths of UT students may qualify to apply for this program, using their household income alone.

This isn't the first time a college has grants or scholarships that come with a residency requirement. Arkansas, for instance, requires its grant recipients to work in Arkansas. Additionally, Maine offers tax credits to reimburse students who lived in the state after graduation. Many states, including New York, already have loan forgiveness programs for graduates if they work in certain professions and in certain geographic areas.

But what if the state you go to school isn't the best state to live in?

Only 26.1 percent of Ohio's population holds a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to the 89.1 percent that have a high school education or equivalent.

According to a University of Minnesota study, generally, Rust Belt and Midwest states like Ohio, Michigan and Iowa, and Plains states like South Dakota and Nebraska have the largest net losses in younger, college-educated people. The flows of young college graduates out of a state can often be replaced by flows of young college graduates moving in. The problem

that many interior states face is that young college graduates moving into the state aren't keeping up with those that are leaving.

In 2011, Governor John Kasich stated that one-third of Ohio's college graduates leave within three years.

It's possible that Ohio could fix this problem by enacting a program like New York's. Students that make the cut will earn their degree for free and, in return, stay in Ohio for a commensurate number of years that they held the scholarship. Maybe at the end of four years, they'll like it so much they'll stay for another 10. This would increase the number of people with higher education degrees and probably contribute to the pool of highly skilled and educated residents in the state.

Ohio has agreements in place with other states, including Michigan, Kentucky, Indiana and West Virginia, that make students from other states considered Ohio citizens for tuition purposes.

Students from nearby counties in Michigan (such as Monroe County) can study at UT at in-state tuition rates due to an agreement between the two states. Would these students still be considered in-state and qualify for free tuition? Many are commuters and don't live/work in Ohio. Would they be required to move across state lines for four years? Or would Michigan want to keep them as their own?

Still, we envisage some problems that this program could pose to the state. Not all college graduates are Ohioans. Many students even here at the University of Toledo are from out-of-state and even from other countries.

As college students, we like the idea of free tuition. The residency requirement is an issue for students who can't find a job in their field in this state. But if Ohio worked to create a larger job market for graduating students, then we

can start talking.

Editorial: Pell Grants matter to students

College is not a right; it is a privilege. College attainment is unequally distributed throughout society because of the extensive financial requirements that going to college requires.

Because of this unequal distribution, the government of the United States of America created the Pell Grant program with the Higher Education Act of 1965. Pell Grants provide need-based government funding to qualified students.

Unfortunately, in President Donald Trump's proposed budget, according to USA Today, the Pell Grant program will take the devastating blow of a \$3.9 billion budget cut in the 2017 academic year.

The article also added that Trump's stated reason for the cut is to secure the program for the future.

At a meeting to discuss the future of higher education, U.S. Republican Representative Glenn Grothman made comments that surprised student financial aid experts. According to Inside Higher Ed, Grothman said that the Pell Grant program was encouraging people not to get married so they could have the lower income status required for the aid program. He also continued that Pell grants should not be gifted to first year students because freshmen waste money on "goodies and

electronics.”

These comments were not only unfounded but also put the problems that government officials seem to have with young people, and with the lower class.

But they also highlight the dangerous outcomes that befall society when we allow unfounded assumptions and hateful stereotypes into our politics. Some would think that Grothman is just one person and that his views do not represent that of the majority. But the truth is that most often, this unilateral views very quickly become the consensus—acknowledged or not—that drive the decisions that affect the lives of real people, most of who lack power to present their own narratives on these issues.

We cannot deny that the people that these severe budget cuts will affect are the young, especially low-income people for whom these type of support systems have been made.

Taking 2015-16 academic year for example: \$28 billion was spent on the program. The highest award given was \$5,645. This means that at least 5 million students received this grant. This is a big difference which could mean the difference between lower class students either staying in school or dropping out. That must mean something to the people entrusted with the responsibility of protecting Americans, particularly vulnerable Americans.

So, when the government starts to cut billions from a program whose only purpose is to send young adults to college and justify it by claiming that they are using these funds for anything other than their education, it is hard to not take it as a direct attack on the lower class.

The Pell Grant program is not just another government aid that gets brought up once a year by parents when they must pay their children’s fees. For a lot of students it is the reason they can read this newspaper today. It has a real impact in

people's lives.

As students, ourselves, we know appreciate the importance of this program. Ask the workers at the UT financial aid office and they will tell you how important this program is to many students here on campus. So why don't our elected representatives know this? Aren't they supposed to be representative of the diverse population within their districts or jurisdictions?

This level of blatant disregard for a subset of American citizens is appalling, and should not go through without being heavily scrutinized. This is where we stand on the issue.

Editorial: EPA budget cuts will affect Toledo

A leaked draft of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's 2018 budget proposal indicates that the Trump administration intends to suggest cutting the program from \$300 million annually to \$10 million. It would be part of an effort to slash \$2 billion from the agency and reduce its workforce by 3,000 employees.

Cutting down that far is sure to cause some sort of backlash. But from where? At our own university and in our own community.

The plan is to cut the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative that was launched in 2010. This would "essentially stop restoration efforts in their tracks in states like Michigan, Wisconsin and

Ohio,” as said by Chad Lord of the Healing Our Waters – Great Lakes Coalition to Cleveland.com.

The program’s action plan identifies four major focus areas: cleaning up the Great Lakes’ areas of concern, preventing and controlling invasive species, reducing nutrient runoff that contributes to harmful/nuisance algal blooms and restoring habitats to protect native species.

This program is helping to research a serious issue that plagues our area. It wasn’t too long ago that Toledo had its very own water crisis. Algae took over our water. Citizens were warned not to drink the water and even to avoid using it all at one point. For several of our editorial staff, arriving in Toledo for our first semester just as the algal bloom affected people was disconcerting.

Money from the initiative supports programs to fight algal blooms that have threatened drinking water in Toledo, protecting marshes along the lakes and cleaning up pollution in rivers that drain into the lakes.

It’s disheartening that people feel unsafe in drinking their own water. Flint, Michigan has been dealing with their own water crisis for over three years. Their situation deals with the contamination of their source of water supply with lead from corrosive pipes. The EPA just gave Flint \$100 million for water-crisis recovery.

The EPA is so very important to many in the United States. It’s hard for us to imagine a worse time for the president’s administration to abandon efforts to protect and restore the Great Lakes. Another algal bloom could happen. Flint is still struggling with obtaining clean water.

There is still so much left to be done, and there is so much we can do to help.

- There are many protests across the country against the

Trump administration's proposed policies. A March for Science is planned for Toledo. Check out their Facebook page for event details.

- Find your local district representative and start calling, emailing or even visiting their office.

Editorial: Spending Spring Break on a budget

Everyone knows Spring Break is right around the corner. While some of us have big plans to travel to Myrtle Beach, Vancouver or even France with family and friends, not all of us get this chance. But who says that not going on a big trip means the end of Spring Break?

It doesn't have to be; The Independent Collegian has our top 10 things to do for Spring Break on a budget.

Ann Arbor

While this idea does require having a car you can use, we definitely recommend checking out some nearby cities you may never have realized were trip-worthy. Take for instance Ann Arbor, only about 40 minutes away from Toledo and the perfect place to spend all day window shopping, checking out the cool graffiti and getting to know the culture.

Plymouth

Another good idea for a day trip is a trip to Plymouth, which is also about 40 minutes away. Plymouth is less well-known than Ann Arbor but still has a lot to offer, including cool local shops, great places to get desserts, like Grand Traverse Pie Company and The Cupcake Station, and the Penn Theater,

which is showing “La La Land” and has \$3 tickets.

Value movie theater

But you definitely don’t have to travel all the way to Plymouth to see a cheap movie. In fact, the Maumee Indoor Theater has discount tickets every Wednesday for only \$4.50. You can also catch a ride to the Rave Motion Pictures in Franklin Park Mall on Tuesday for their discount days. Don’t forget your student I.D. for an even better discount!

Bar Louie

This isn’t a joke. Every Tuesday from 5 p.m.–close, Bar Louie has dollar-burger night! You can get a burger for a dollar with the purchase of any drink. So, if you’re looking to fill up on something cheap before you head to the theater or if you’re looking for a place to head on your night out, we highly recommend checking it out.

Frankenmuth

Frankenmuth is about two hours away and is known as “Little Bavaria.” This cute little tourist trap is filled with tons of shopping and great places to eat. For a more expensive experience, take a seat at Zehnder’s, famous for their chicken dinners. If you are looking for a cheaper option, check out La Crepe du Jour. For shopping, or window shopping, head over to the River Place Shops, to Bronner’s, a 361-day Christmas store, or to the Birch Run Premium Outlets. Frankenmuth also has a lot of activities you can pay for, like the Ultimate Mirror Maze, the Laser Vault Challenge, only \$7.99 for a day pass, or a day pass to Zehnder’s Splash Village Waterpark, starting at \$31.

Maumee Bay State Park

If you’re looking for a place to enjoy the outdoors on a day with good weather, we recommend you check out Maumee Bay State

Park. You can go swimming in the water, walk or bike on the trails and even go fishing. It's the perfect place to enjoy a little fun in the sun while you still can.

Toledo Museum of Art

We know, it's a little cliché. Students definitely don't need another reminder that the Toledo Museum of Art exists and that they have the ability to take a bus there for free whenever they want to.

But what a lot of people don't realize is that the museum also offers a bunch of other presentations that are also free and are actually pretty cool. They offer glassblowing demonstrations, musical presentations and much more.

Plus, students park for free with their I.D.'s; just make sure you park in Lot 3.

The Zoo

While the zoo can sometimes be a little expensive, it's definitely worth the trip this Spring Break. The Toledo Zoo offers discounts to groups larger than 20 (if you have a lot of friends), but they also have coupons available for smaller groups, including a coupon for 50 percent off of admission that's going on right now!

But if you're from Toledo and are sick and tired of the Toledo Zoo, we recommend driving an hour north to visit the Detroit Zoo. It's something different and fun to try at least once! However, make sure that if you do decide to take the trip to Detroit, you plan to leave at a time without a lot of traffic, since I-75 South is closed right now.

Imagination Station

The Imagination Station is a great place to spend a day in town that you have nothing to do on. It's totally free, and you can take the bus into downtown if you don't have a car or

can't drive. While a lot of the stuff available is centered around younger kids, it's still a great place to go with friends and embrace your inner child.

Editorial: UT cares about students' safety

During the Fall 2016 semester, there were three sexual assaults reported at University of Toledo. Earlier this month, within a single weekend, three rapes were reported at Ohio University.

According to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, one in five women are sexually assaulted while in college.

These sobering statistics have led us at the Independent Collegian to find out what the University of Toledo is doing to ensure student safety on campus and whether or not it is enough.

We aren't naïve enough to believe that victims of sexual assault are typically assaulted by strangers. In fact, according to the NSVRC, in 8 out of 10 rape cases, the victim knew the perpetrator.

So what is UT doing to prevent sexual assault amongst students and acquaintances? Perhaps the first step begins in orientation class where new students are educated about what constitutes sexual assault.

UT requires incoming freshmen to complete a sexual assault education course called Haven. Many professors also require

their students to attend presentations aimed at preventing sexual assault. While some professors go above and beyond to dedicate two or three full classes to educate students about sexual assault, other professors would rather teach students only about proper study methods.

While these presentations are incredibly informative, they alone are not enough. All orientation classes should cover sexual assault because it is such a prevalent issue on college campuses, including our own. We understand that sexual assault can be uncomfortable for some people to talk about, but that's not a good enough excuse to avoid the topic.

Another safety measure at UT are the blue emergency phones located across UT's campuses. There are 120 of them. By activating one of these phones, the campus police are immediately contacted and aware of the caller's location.

Even with no words spoken, campus police are supposed to respond to these calls. Rumors abound on campus about whether these blue towers are even functional. Naturally skeptical as most journalists are, we decided to test the claim by using the phones ourselves. To our pleasant surprise, our call was immediately answered and we were connected with the authorities.

Students can use these emergency calls not only to report an assault but also to report a suspicious person or circumstance on campus.

Another service available to ensure student safety is the university night watch, which serves as an escort service for anyone walking alone on campus during the evening hours.

By calling 419-530-3024, a two-person team equipped with radios allowing them to be in constant contact with dispatchers will escort any student from building-to-building or campus-to-campus.

Though night watch is valuable service, the limited hours of contacting Night Watch are a concern. Night watch is available on Monday through Thursday from 7:30 p.m.-2:30 a.m. and Sunday from 10 p.m.-3 a.m. but only from 8:00 p.m.-12 a.m. Friday and Saturday.

According to NSVRC, sexual assaults are most likely to occur on Friday and Saturday between the hours of midnight and 6:00 a.m.—when UT night watch is off duty.

Also, night watch is a student job. They have to be cleared by campus police before being offered employment. They must also pass a background check.

The NSVRC states that students living in sorority houses and dorms are more likely to experience sexual assault than students living off campus. So what is being done to prevent sexual assault in dorms at UT?

A good start to preventing sexual assault is the required card access to enter residence halls. All visitors to the dorms must also register at the information desk. But, as students, we know that this is not often the case. Students don't check their friends in; some even give them their Rocket card to access the building.

Many dorms combat this lapse in student security by installing security cameras in stairwells. All dorms also have a 24-hour information desk with a panic button, and RAs must complete nighttime rounds. Self-defense demonstrations are also provided by professional staff for on campus students.

Clearly, UT does care about student safety. They send alerts and emails when sexual assault is reported, campus police are readily available for emergencies and extensive services are provided for victims.

As students, we just want to make sure that UT is doing all that they can to lower the sexual assault on campus

statistics. By watching out for each other, we can all fight off danger.

Editorial: What is love?

Love. It's a verb, a noun and a feeling. We all have experienced love in one way or another. It's a part of being a person. Our editorial staff knows a thing or two about love. So, friends, what does love mean to you? What does love look like? And do you believe in love at first sight/soulmates?

Jessica Harker, Editor-in-Chief: *"Love means being able to laugh and relax with someone doing any regular, daily thing and just thinking that you wouldn't want to be anywhere else in the world."*

Kristen Buchler, Copy Editor: *"Love means being more than willing to drop everything to bring happiness, comfort and security to someone else because their well-being matters more to you than your own. Additionally, love between two people requires mutual respect and admiration on both sides."*

Sam Williams, Sports Editor: *"Love is being able to trust someone with the aux cord in your car and knowing they won't play G-Eazy."*

Rachel Nearhoof, Associate Director of Photography & Webmaster: *"Love is being able to spend a night at Walmart shopping for groceries. It's being able to have fun while also doing the boring adult tasks."*

Philemon Abayateye, Opinion Editor: *"Love is like a walnut. It's hard on the outside but very soft on the inside. Often,*

it's not easy to discern it. It takes patience and, sometimes, tough situations to reveal it. Sadly, we don't have the patience to experience it."

Emily Schnipke, Managing Editor: *"When my grandpa puts the worm on the fish hook because I'm too squeamish. When my aunt saves me leftovers because she knows I'll be on campus late. When my friends share their daily funnies over texts. When guy in front of me at Starbucks buys me coffee. When I hold the door open for other students on campus. That's what love looks like. Kindness."*

Savannah Joslin, Director of Photography: *"Love doesn't have a look but rather a sound – a belly laugh. It brings joy to you and those around you and can be felt deep in your core."*

Emily Jackson, Community Editor: *"I believe in soulmates because I've already found mine. It wasn't love at first sight, but now we are best friends and I wouldn't want it any other way."*

Morgan Kovacs, News Editor: *"I do believe in love at first sight because that's how I fell in love with my dog."*

Jackson Rogers, Associate Sports Editor: *"I don't believe in love at first sight, but I think after you're with a person for a while, you get a feeling and you know they're the one."*

Hope you enjoyed our cheesy and sentimental moments. Happy Valentine's Day from your IC family!

Editorial: "He Will Not

Divide Us”

One of the defining characteristics of living in America is the right to free speech. The right of every American to use their voice in whatever way they please is one of the building blocks of this country. In the past year, that right has been utilized as well as it could be by our fellow citizens. Whether it be to gather and chant to show solidarity with refugees of Middle Eastern countries, as University of Toledo students did on Monday, or to come together in massive numbers at rallies across the country in support of the now 45th president of the United States, as many did over the past election cycle.

Whatever the reason, and whatever the voice, Americans have the right to disparage or commend anything they deem necessary. With the increasing tensions and widening gap between opposing political sides, it seems this right is becoming as important as it was when the Bill of Rights was first introduced. Learning to respect one another’s opinions in this tumultuous political climate will be necessary to avoid division.

This idea of anti-division has its roots set deep in post-Civil War America, with the famous Abraham Lincoln quote, “A house divided against itself cannot stand” often accompanying any discussion of division in America. These philosophies are being carried on today, most notably by actor and ever-controversial public figure Shia LaBeouf. On the day of President Trump’s inauguration, LaBeouf and two other collaborators launched their online performance art project “He Will Not Divide Us.”

The project consists of an empty lot outside of the Museum of the Moving Image in Queens, New York, a white wall with the words “He Will Not Divide Us” written on it and a camera that is livestreaming to the world for the duration of Donald

Trump's presidency. Watching the livestream while writing this gave us a snapshot of modern American life in the same way a Norman Rockwell painting gives us a snapshot of American life. We saw two friends talking. A lot of people just walking by the area. One guy did a bottle flip and then dabbed. Another person walked up to the camera and simply called out his friend for not liking the song "Nightcall" by Kavinsky, a mighty noble cause, in our opinion.

One of the most common things to do is to just look in the camera and say the namesake phrase "He Will Not Divide Us," which is a reassurance to those looking for stability in the currently unstable state of our country. This phrase, and other aspects of the project, have garnered criticism from various parties. Editor-in-Chief of Waypoint Austin Walker showed up to the livestream on the first day of the event and gave a short speech on how he feels the country is already divided, and how democracy works best when we acknowledge that we are already divided and confront that division intellectually and critically. Other criticisms are about the idea and overall message of the project (unity and peace), as participants in the project have been ridiculed and yelled at by LaBeouf when they use the camera to deliver rhetoric that aligns with white power groups like the alt-right.

In our opinion, what "He Will Not Divide Us" does best is provide a real time look on how we utilize our voices in the modern world. While this project doesn't necessarily set out to accomplish this task, it demonstrates it in spades. The ways people discuss their opinions, show support for one another and criticize others' ideas plays out like a real world representation of a Twitter feed, right down to the people shouting memes and random B-tier celebrities.

"He Will Not Divide Us" is not a perfect bipartisan protest, but it has a good message, despite missing the mark. What this project does do, however, is show how protest can unite us. The causes we care for and the people we want to defend gives

us a ground to stand on and defend these values in the face of those who oppose.

The day after Trump's inauguration, millions of women around the world came together in their opposition of the President Trump's treatment of women, and the day after, thousands gathered in Washington D.C for the annual March for Life. These events showcase people gathering to show their opinion and and having their voices heard. In a utopia, the need for protest would be non-existent, but until we live in that world, we should continue to voice our opinions as loud as we can, and you should fight for the right for others to do so, too.

Editorial: Can Betsy DeVos do the job?

In the age where it is becoming more expensive and seemingly less worthwhile to get a college education, there are still Americans who believe in quality education being the proven road to their American dream. This is why we need people with the right qualification and mindset to manage how America's education system is run; the secretary of education has the most important power to affect education in this country.

This is why we think Betsy DeVos is not the right person to be America's secretary of education. There has been much objection to many of President Trump's Cabinet picks, but DeVos's nomination definitely stretches our imaginations.

In a pre-confirmation hearing letter to DeVos, Elizabeth Warren said about her qualification, "There is no precedent for an education department secretary nominee with your lack of

experience in public education.” DeVos did not attend any public school and neither did any of her four children. She is the first nominee in 35 years to have no experience with the public school system. And that’s a big deal.

Dealing with a public school system is a major part of the job as secretary of education. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, private school students made up just 9.7 percent of all elementary and secondary students in 2013. DeVos’s lack of experience in the public school system puts her that much further from understanding 90.3 percent of all students.

DeVos is a longtime supporter of charter schools. These schools combine features from both the public and private school system. They receive public funding but have great leverage in determining who gets to attend. This has raised concerns among politicians from both political persuasions.

When questioned if she believed guns should be allowed in schools (an idea unpopular even with many gun-friendly Americans), DeVos replied that guns may be necessary in some schools, where they might need “to protect from potential grizzlies.” Many people, including our staff, couldn’t believe her answer. The internet went amok over this suggestion. DeVos needs to have a strong stance on guns in schools, but it shouldn’t be the dangerous position of the National Rifle Association. It’s hard to recall when last a school was attacked by a grizzly bear.

The secretary of education also oversees the distribution of the department’s trillion-dollar financial aid program, a program that perhaps means more to low-income students than it does to “luckier” students, as DeVos said during the hearing. Trump has stated that he doesn’t want the government to profit off of hardworking students. It’s so important to have a secretary who agrees with that sentiment and be someone who will run the student aid program with the students in mind.

As college students, we want this as well, but it doesn't sound like what DeVos would do. DeVos has no record with higher education funding. Her only experience comes from what her friends shared with her. It shouldn't be surprising if DeVos ends up auctioning privatizing this program to student loan companies. At that point we'd know she cares more about these banks than students.

DeVos has never taken out a student loan or been on the receiving end of a Pell Grant. With 68 percent of graduates from both public and nonprofit colleges having student loan debt, it's hard to imagine those people who don't have any. In 2015, of those 68 percent, the average amount borrowed was \$30,100. For DeVos to never have experienced what many college students go through every semester, we wonder what her level of appreciation of these issues would be in order to make great decisions to benefit students.

During her hearing, DeVos stated that it was "premature" to commit to upholding the Obama administration's Title IX guidelines regarding campus sexual assault. Premature.

With this starkly inadequate qualification, it's hard to understand why the president nominated her in the first place. But maybe that's not difficult. After all, her family invested at least \$200 million in conservative/Republican causes. DeVos played a role in getting Trump elected to office, and that investment just paid off in an appointment.

Maybe she'll prove us all wrong that performance in office does not depend much on relevant experience. But is that really a bargain we want to make with the lives of our students, with entire generations of this country's future? America needs someone who will stand up for the rights of students and education, not someone who believes students need to be protected from bears.

Editorial Board: Living in a post-truth world

It's Since 2004, the Oxford dictionary has awarded "Word of the Year" to the word that attracted the most interest and importance in the year. This single word gives us a brief synopsis of the year. During the rise of social media in 2009, "unfriend," got the award and with the continued surge in digital narcissism in 2013, the word "selfie" received that award. In 2016, "post-truth" was awarded the honor.

Post-truth refers to a period when truth has become unimportant or irrelevant, which, unfortunately, is an incredibly apt choice for 2016. The year saw a rise of entire movements fueled in large parts by outrages that were later shown to be completely fabricated. Yet it seemed as if those who had been affected by the false stories and reports did not seem to care that they were false. So although it is only 18 days into 2017, this attitude sets a precedent for what we think is a strong frontrunner for Word of the Year 2017: Fake News.

Fake News is news published despite being fake. Examples include claims that Hillary Clinton had sold weapons to ISIS, that the Pope endorsed Donald Trump for president that Ireland was allowing American refugees into the country who were looking to escape Trump's presidency.

These stories sound absurd, mostly unreasonable and, above all, downright false. Yet, despite all of these factors, people still believed. BuzzFeed reported that the Pope's endorsement story garnered 960,000 clicks on Facebook and was the most popular story on the social media site three months

to election day. The story about Hillary Clinton selling weapons to ISIS alone 789,000 clicks. Fake News gets the same attention as any real article. This makes it hard to distinguish truth from falsehood. The trend is even more troubling when you consider that soon-to-be president of this democracy seem to be its chief architect. Trump's approach is to label news outlets publishing critical stories about him as fake, and thus to discredit them. Journalism and investigative journalism have always been key aspects of maintaining an informed electorate since the start of this country. Thomas Jefferson said that "wherever the people are well-informed they can be trusted with their own government." This emphasizes the need for multiple and reliable news outlets in a democracy.

The internet age brings with it an overwhelming amount of information, and with that comes a lot of undesirable information. It's human nature to only want to see things that we like or make us feel safe and comfortable. So instead of taking in all the information, recognizing different opinions and learning to respect them, we choose chauvinism.

With the rise in fake news we are not just chauvinistic but also actively seek out and support people whose views on issues are similar to ours, even if those opinions are utterly fabricated. This scheme has been used by many important political figures in 2016, most notably, the president-elect.

Trump has called CNN, Washington Post, and the New York Times fake news and untrustworthy. But while doing that he also calls TV and radio shows, like Alex Jones' Infowars after his electoral victory, to thank them for their support during the elections. Jones is known for his conspiracy theories about both the 9/11 and the Sandy Hook school shooting describing them as hoax and claims that Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton are demons. Literal demons.

The issue is that this attitude is creating a vacuum only to

be filled by the stories and news outlets that support him. That attitude alienates all other outlets which he, and the majority of his supporters, consider fake. We wonder how people would react if any other candidate or political figure had used this approach? Would the outcome be different if Hillary was first to report her email scandal to the public? Would people believe her? Or would people believe Nixon if he was the one who reported on Watergate? After all, he did end up to be “not a crook.” Does the storyteller affect the story’s acceptability?

With the inauguration Friday also comes another change in America; a new media landscape. Similar to how the internet and social media changed the way news operates, a new president so vehemently against the media will change the way we operate and interpret news. Maybe the fact that this editorial criticizes Trump’s approach will make it lose all credibility among some readers. For others, it may do the opposite. Maybe the Word of the Year won’t be “fake news,” and instead we’ll revert back to the fun, lighthearted internet words, and “dab” will finally get its due. But regardless of what happens, to fight the epidemic of “fake news” and return to a standard of journalistic integrity and facts, we need to learn to accept the facts as they are, respect divergent opinions, and call out organizations that violate journalistic standards regardless of our political leaning.

[Editorial Board: Parking survey incites](#)

As last semester wrapped up to a close and students were hastily preparing themselves for final exams, one last email

slipped into their university inboxes: an email the students wouldn't soon forget and one that the department where it came from would most likely regret sending. As University of Toledo students, we can easily recognize when there is a problem on campus. This is a problem we've talked about many times and even wrote an editorial about early last fall. UT has a serious problem, and its name is Parking.

All commuter students complain about parking. What else are they supposed to do? UT is a commuter school and the number of parking spaces available to students doesn't add up; there are just few too parking spaces on campus. When you have to arrive 30 minutes early in order to circle the parking lot 16 times before giving up, only to drive to a farther-away lot to park, the frustration begins to mount. The issue lies within a student's desire to park somewhat near their classes. There are several different sections of commuter parking, but the number of spots compared to the demand is nowhere near equal.

Student (and probably staff) frustrations continue to grow as the semester goes on, and the daily struggle to find a parking spot endures. This all came to a very angry end last semester when UT's Parking Services sent out an email containing a survey for students, faculty and staff to fill out. The email contained only three sentences, but it was enough to provoke many students across campus.

"As a student, faculty or staff member at The University of Toledo, we value your opinion as we work to implement a new approach to on-campus parking for the 2017-18 academic year. The new demand-based model aims to ease frustrations and congestion by redistributing parking around campus and provide students and employees with options for different levels of parking permits. Please help Parking Services by providing your input regarding parking on campus by completing this survey by 5 p.m. Friday, Dec. 16."

Instantly after starting the survey, our own personal anger at

the situation began to grow. The survey stated that parking services were considering providing parking permits at a higher price for specific lots during peak times. To us and many others, this solution is insane. UT shouldn't be trying to profit off those students who can afford to pay for a reserved spot. UT's parking, while the amount of it is lacking, is based on a first come, first serve basis. This model is how the world works.

By allowing those who can afford to pay for a \$200-\$400 parking pass per semester to do so, UT is putting all other students at a disadvantage. All commuter students would pay the higher cost if they could, if it meant they would have a guaranteed spot on campus. UT's current price of \$125 per semester doesn't even allow us to have parking near main campus during peak hours.

The current parking situation turns us off from wanting to pay more for nothing more than a promise, especially when your seemingly only option is to continue circling another lot 16 times in pursuit of another 'promised' spot, if your previously sought-after lot is full.

UT students took to Twitter to voice their disappointment and anger at UT's parking. "UT Parking just released a survey and I don't think they understand the savagery they just subjected themselves to," said one student. Another stated, "Only survey I'll ever fill out for UT is this parking survey, if we don't have 5 new parking lots next fall I'm quitting." Obviously, students feel as though UT does not or will not listen to their frustrations and simply fix the problem.

Another part to the survey listed a possibility for a student hotline to call in tips about parking violations. Even though we could name eight vehicles in the parking lots right now that obviously don't have a parking permit, this solution isn't the way to fix the problem. Tattling on each other will just make more work for parking services and will pit students

against each other, when they should be focusing most of their time and energy on classes and other important responsibilities. Students can be petty. We know that we've wanted to call in on that truck who takes up two spots, or that Michigan license plate that purposefully backed into a spot. But snitching on each other will not solve the issue at hand. And we all know that one kid who will take the power upon themselves, reporting each and every violation just so they can seem powerful and make a point about horrible parking jobs. Creating a hotline to call in and tell on each other for parking violations is not a feasible option for the university.

It makes us students happy to see that UT has tried to find a solution for what we believe is one of their largest faults. At the same time, we can't believe that this is what they believe is the best fix. UT's students deserve better. They deserve to spend more of their time focusing on classes and not getting discouraged by the daily battle of parking.

Editorial: How to survive your holiday break

It's that time of year again: Students stress out over final projects and exams and then, suddenly and blessedly, it's all over. The semester ends and allows for a small reprieve from daily life before the spring term begins. The holiday break is a sigh of relief for many students, and they get to head home for a few short weeks. We at the IC wish you all a happy holiday, but we also want to leave you with a few tips on how to survive your winter break at home.

1. Don't pick fights with your siblings. We all know that holiday break is one of the few times during the semester in which you see your younger siblings. Don't spend your break angry with your siblings for getting into your room while you're away. It's time for you to spend as much time as possible with them before they grow up to be teenagers and adults. Gross.

2. Let your mom do your laundry. All of it. You know that that huge pile of laundry isn't going to magically do itself over break. Bring all of it home and let your mom (or dad) do it for you. That is one washing machine that doesn't take quarters. In the same note, strip your bed and bring all that home to wash too. Your sheets and blankets probably haven't been washed since school started (gross, we know), so it's a good time to freshen those up as well.

3. Make a schedule of what you want to get done over break. It's the same story every year: You get home, full of expectations of what you'll do over break, but you only end up watching Netflix from 5 p.m. to 5 a.m. and sleeping the rest of the day. Make a schedule of what you want to do: Go out with friends from high school or college, finish your Christmas shopping or even be proactive and file your 2017-2018 FAFSA. If you have a list, you will get stuff done and won't feel like your break was wasted.

4. Take time to absorb in your hometown. Graduation suddenly doesn't seem that far away. Whether you know exactly what you'll be doing after college graduation or not, use your holiday break to get reunited with your hometown. You might not be going back home during next summer because of an internship or a study abroad. Go visit all of your old favorite hangouts and eat at your favorite restaurants. Chill with your parents. Play with your pet. Absorb that feeling of home because you might not have it again for a while.

5. Leave your room. Don't spend all of break watching Stranger

Things in your room by yourself. Also, it might feel like you need a week's worth of sleep right now, but don't sleep your break away. Go play Monopoly with your Mom. Let your dad finally teach you how to cook his world-famous Mexican lasagna. Take your siblings to the movies. It might be tempting to lock yourself away from the world for three weeks, but you'll have a much better time outside in the real world.

6. Pretend to like your presents, even the white socks from great-aunt Ruth. It's like one of our favorite Vine videos. The kid opens a wrapped avocado, puts on a brave face and thanks his mom for giving him an avocado. That's exactly what your go-to plan should be. When your uncle Steven hands you a present shaped like a book and you open it to see *Fifty Shades of Grey*, just grin and thank him. Be kind. You'll get nowhere if you act immature in front of your family members.

7. Don't talk about politics. Just don't do it. Even if you know exactly who everyone voted for, just keep your opinions to yourself. Don't ruin your family ties over something that will just be changed in four short years. If you find yourself struggling to relate to your liberal uncle or being grilled by your conservative cousin, go hide in the kitchen. Help cook the food. Volunteer to sit at the kiddy table for this family holiday. It'll make your life so much better.

8. Get into the holiday experience. It doesn't matter if you celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa or something else entirely; go ahead and get really into the holiday. Drink eggnog, light the menorah and dance the days away. Even if you aren't religious, embrace your inner Cindy Lou Who and not the Grinch. The holidays are a time to be with family and celebrate the happiness in our lives. Aim for that and you'll be golden.

In the end, it doesn't matter if you follow this list or not. All that matters is that you spend your break doing what you love and not spending it stressing about school. So take a

step back, chill and do what you do best.

Editorial: New Media Communication major raises more questions

The University of Toledo's Department of Communication has seen a lot of changes in the last couple of years. With two college name changes in just the last two, it is our hope that the department has finally found a good home within the College of Arts and Letters. Change is often seen as a good thing, and just this last semester, the department started to make the changes once more as they offered a new major in Media Communication.

But is this new program a step in the right direction? The truth is, we at the Independent Collegian believe it is more of a lateral move.

The new major was created to with the goal of allowing our students to study all areas of media and learn how to use the media in a multifaceted way. While this may be true, the new major's focus on video production and broadcast journalism we feel is really only preparing students for a job in the field of broadcast communication.

It seems that the new major was created specifically for students interested in broadcast communication. Both the Communication and the Media Communication majors have the same university core curriculum courses requirements, as well as the same classes required for graduation from the College of Arts and Letters. For major requirements, both require Mass

Communications and Society, as well as Media Writing. But where the original Communication degree requires general communication classes such as Public Presentations and Group Communications, students with the Media Communication major are required to take TV Production 1 and Media Performance and Presentation.

While a major that focuses on broadcast students is not a bad thing (and we encourage programs with focuses on the arts), we are concerned that there seems to be a disconnect in what the students are interested in this year and what the Department of Communication's professors wish to teach.

Maybe it's because there is a stereotype against radio and newspaper writing as dying fields. Maybe it's a fluke and next year we will see a huge push in broadcast again. Maybe because we are the student newspaper and we are blind to our own bias. But we don't think so.

All we want is to be sure that no one loses perspective. The only thing that should be taken into consideration when we look at reorganizing departments, creating new majors and offering or not offering certain classes at UT should be what the students want and need. We know we want to see more writing and reporting classes and we know we are not the only ones.

So what's the solution? If the University of Toledo took a step back and engaged students more about what interests them most, they would be able to gain a clearer picture of what needs to be changed. This is particularly useful if the department asked graduating seniors about what they felt was missing from their experience here at UT.

Apart from asking, you also have to take action. Steps need to be taken to work towards having classes these students want and need. If you put the power in the students' hands, not only will the current students be happier, but you can create

a program that draws students in from every corner.

This division of the regular Communication major is a good idea. We believe this major should be the first of many specific majors created for the Department of Communication to help students interested in these fields focus their interests and really help them grow their skills. All we ask for is balance and to not be forgotten.

The line two department name changes was altered to read two college name changes

“According to Jacqueline Layng, a professor of Communication at UT who had a major role in the creation of the Media Communication program,” was removed from the story.

The names of the classes TV Production 1 and Media Performance and Presentation were corrected.

The lines “This past semester, UT:10, the UT student-run news show and class, was cancelled due to a lack of interest. According to Layng, the class will be available for students to take next spring. UT:10 is the class that the new major is centered around and is required in order to graduate. Additionally, some Communication students have put together a petition for the creation of an additional audio class, called Audio 2. At the same time classes such as Storytelling in Public and Private Places, which was predicted to struggle to be filled for the upcoming spring semester, now require waiting lists. This shows UT students have more of an interest in writing and radio, not broadcasting. So why did we create a new major specifically for broadcast students?” were removed from the story due to lack of clarity.

The line “When you start to fight over other petty issues, you are doing your students and your university a disservice.” was removed from the story.