

Today it's near impossible to work your way through college

By Svati Kirsten Narula, Atlantic

A lot of Internet ink has been spilled over how lazy and entitled Millennials are, but when it comes to paying for a college education, work ethic isn't the limiting factor. The economic cards are stacked such that today's average college student, without support from financial aid and family resources, would need to complete 48 hours of minimum-wage work a week to pay for his courses – a feat that would require superhuman endurance, or maybe a time machine.

To take a close look at the tuition history of almost any institution of higher education in America is to confront an unfair reality: Each year's crop of college seniors paid a little bit more than the class that graduated before. The tuition crunch never fails to provide new fodder for ongoing analysis of the myths and realities of the American Dream.

Last week, a graduate student named Randy Olson listened to his grandfather extol the virtues of putting oneself through college without family support. But paying for college without family support is a totally different proposition these days, Olson thought. It may have been feasible 30 years ago, or even 15 years ago, but it's much harder now.

He later found some validation for these sentiments on Reddit, where one user had started a thread about the increasing cost per course at Michigan State University. MSU calculates tuition by the "credit hour," the term for the number of hours spent in a classroom per week. By this metric, which is used at many U.S. colleges and universities, a course that's worth three credit hours is a course that meets for three hours each week during the semester. If the semester is 15 weeks long,

that adds up to 45 total hours of a student's time.

Read the whole story