

Free

# AUMNIBUS

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Chronicling the Campus Community and Beyond Since 1971

## Don't take away my birth control

# The Cost of Contraception Under the Trump Administration

By Rachel Wallace

Many women fear the Trump administration will take away free contraception.

On Inauguration Day, women in Montgomery and all across the nation rushed to clinics for long-term birth control solutions that would outlast the Trump presidency.

"There was some panic after the election and there are some concerns about the future," says Della Fuller, a nurse practitioner and contraception advisor at OB-GYN Associates of Montgomery. Over the past few weeks, Fuller has seen many patients who fear the Trump administration will have a costly effect on women's health.

Under President Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act, contraceptives have been available without co-payments and deductibles to women under private health plans since 2012.

Studies have shown the percentage of women who paid nothing out of pocket for birth control rose from 15 percent before the law took effect to 67 percent immediately following its enactment. In 2013 alone, the Affordable Care Act saved women approximately \$483 million on contraception.

Fuller says the changes the Obama administration instated have been "a positive thing for women and for birth control, helping those who need assistance and enabling those who thought they couldn't afford it to become more responsible."

Fuller also points out that the availability of no-cost contraception has decreased both unintended

pregnancies and abortion rates by nearly 20 percent. Studies have shown a positive correlation between access to family planning solutions and economic outcomes such as labor force participation and family income. Fuller is hopeful that our new president will offer similar health care options for women, but big changes are taking place in Washington.

Trump has vowed to repeal the Affordable Care Act, which means the clause that has made birth control free could be weakened or removed altogether. Planned Parenthood and similar programs could lose federal funding, making affordable family planning solutions less accessible. More employee-sponsored health plans could be granted exemption from offering birth control coverage, as seen in the 2014 *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby* case.

"As of right now, there is no specific plan," Fuller emphasizes, "We will have to wait two or three more months before we really see what Trump wants to do." She assures the administration cannot suddenly withdraw accessibility to contraception, and that there will still be opportunities for women to get birth control.

Although it has proven beneficial for women's health, the Affordable Care Act has arguably created more issues than it has resolved. Many of these issues stem from the cost of insurance premiums, which are expected to rise by 25

percent in 2017 alone. Fuller believes President Trump deserves a fair chance to restructure America's health care system.

"I think he is a humanist that cares about people and about doing the right thing," she says. "He is very proactive and has very good advisors. With good research, they will lead him in the right direction."

Behind closed doors at OB-GYN Associates of Montgomery, it

matters little who the president is. Fuller says, "We are prepared to work on individual levels to accommodate every one of our patient's needs, and we will offer the same quality of care regardless of what happens."

## What's Inside:

- 1 [The Cost of Contraception Under the Trump Administration](#)
- 2 [Immigrants' Age of Arrival Does Affect Their Future / MJ Yoga](#)
- 3 [Fake News, Makes News / What You Should Know about Funding Yourself](#)
- 4 [The Online Extremist / Researching as a Psychology Graduate Student](#)
- 5 [Warhawk Squawk](#)
- 6 [Warhawk Squawk: Continued](#)
- 7 [Meet The Staff](#)
- 8 [Monthly Ad](#)



## Fake News, Makes News

By Lindsey Steele

Every day, we watch television, read news headlines, scroll through social media feeds and check e-mails. We do all of this behind a screen. Consider how much time we spend looking at screens; from television to computers to the almighty smart phone, we have become a society of screen watchers. After a while, everything we see on these devices can become blurred in our minds because we can no longer decipher where our thoughts are coming from.

We're mindlessly scrolling through social media while also engaged in some other medial task, we see a headline and BOOM, it sticks.

We swipe, click and share these stories without asking questions. Engaging in this can make us susceptible to falling for and spreading fake news. While fake news is currently a trend, it is nothing new. The National Enquirer and tabloids have been around for decades, but we all know that they're not reliable news sources. We see these news outlets in the grocery store and laugh because we are taught that the news reported in there is known to be fiction, but it is a lot harder to discern what is real

and what is fiction when we're looking at a screen.

Our trust is slowly dwindling because we're skeptical of everything. We don't trust news, we don't trust the government, we don't trust doctors and we most certainly don't trust people we don't know. But, we do trust our beliefs. Fake news separates us because we have different sets of facts. We lean toward the set of facts that fit our beliefs, but are what we believe actual facts or "alternative facts"? A small pizzeria five miles from the White House was the center of a fabricated news story that claimed the neighborhood business was a front for a child sex trafficking ring led by Hilary Clinton. The hoax had millions of shares and led 28-year-old Edgar Welch to the restaurant with a rifle where he fired a shot. Luckily, no one was injured in the Pizzagate incident, but this story proves fake news has real consequences.

"Fake news is just one symptom of declining distrust in institutions and information," said Dr. Matthew Killmeier, Head of the Department of Communications and Theatre at AUM. "Trust is a basic lubricant of society." So, if we don't trust our news and each other, what is to come of our society? Fake news and how rapidly it spreads can be contributed in part to how it is "pitched to our partisan biases." Killmeier explained that the founders of this country believed that we would reach reasonable conclusions that are based on factual information to

“ It is a lot harder to discern what is real and what is fiction when we're looking at a screen. ”

make informed decisions. But, I don't think the founders took fake news in to account.

So, can we stop fake news? Probably not. It has always been around and has reached a new height in recent years. We have so much information that we're plowing through it and taking less time with it. This is part of the problem. Dr. Killmeier says we consume so much which can lead us to be less critical and essentially less knowledgeable and that we could all benefit from being careful about how much and what kind of news we consume. After all, the well-being of our society depends on it.

## What You Should Know about Funding Yourself

By Saporsha Riley

I looked at her across the table. It was obvious the topic was making her uncomfortable. "Maybe, I am the wrong person to ask," she said, "I don't know anything about student loans." Arielle Carter is not an irresponsible borrower. She just doesn't have a reason to know. She is fortunate enough to have enough resources to graduate from AUM debt free. This makes her a minority.

Even with scholarships, family assistance and other types of financial aid, over 70 percent of all US college students take out loans, according to the Children and Youth Services Review.

Many students at AUM fall into this category. During the 2015-2016 academic year, undergraduates borrowed over \$8.31 million in student loans to help meet their needs, according to AUM's common data set. To help their student-borrowers, universities are required to provide entrance and exit counseling courses to explain student loan risks, obligations and management skills.

But, if you're anything like me,

regular future planning sometimes takes a back seat to more immediate needs, like studying for the exam next week. Unfortunately, the borrow now and worry later strategy does not always yield the best result. These tips can help make planning for the future a part of your daily life.

### Be Informed

If you are receiving loans from the U.S. Department of Education's William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program, there are four types of loans. Don't just assume repayment for all of them is the same. For example, the U.S. Department of Education pays the interest on Direct Subsidized Loans while you are in school and during the grace and deferment periods. But, you are responsible for all interest incurred for Direct Unsubsidized Loans.

### Put your extra money to good use

That extra \$10 a week spent at the drive through may not seem like much, but applying it to your loans, instead of a quick meal, could make a big impact on your future. Paying on your loan or its interest while in school helps to reduce the cost of future payments and the amount of time it takes you to complete repayment. Plus, it will help you get use to the idea of budgeting and saving, which is never bad.

### Don't neglect your credit score

Maybe being a little late on your phone or credit card bill won't make or break you, but make it a habit and it could have long term consequences, namely hurting your credit score. A good credit score

“ Don't minimize your degree by not managing your debt. ”

makes it easier to reach important financial milestones like buying a car or home, even with student loan debt. Your credit score is determined by your credit history, collected by Equifax, Transunion and Experian. It can be viewed for free once a year. Take advantage of it.

In a study on student debt, the Pew Research Center found the household income of someone with a bachelor's degree is two times more than someone without, regardless of debt. Education is still worth it. Don't minimize your degree by not managing your debt.

# The Online Extremist

By Blake Hunter

Six minutes. That's the amount of time it took 21-year-old Dylann Roof to kill nine black people in the waning hours of a mid-June day. After being arrested, Roof explained that he was hoping to start a race war and that he had been enlightened to white supremacy after reading about the shooting of Trayvon Martin and researching black-on-white crime online. His research further led him to the website of the Council of Conservative Citizens, which according to the Southern Poverty Law Center, "opposes race-mixing... while referring to black people as a 'retrograde species of humanity.'" With this knowledge, Roof crafted his world narrative: one in which white people were the obvious victims and the violent black oppressor was being wholly ignored. Roof had his own, now defunct, website in which he explained his actions: "I chose Charleston because it is [the] most historic city in my state... We have no skinheads, no real KKK, no one doing anything but talking on the internet. Well someone has to have the bravery to take it to the real world, and I guess that has to be me."

Less than two years after

Roof's mass murder, 27-year-old Alexandre Bissonnette would walk into a Québec mosque on a chilly January night and leave only twenty minutes later. Behind him were six dead Muslims, 19 of them critically injured. Much like Roof, the internet gave Bissonnette a platform in which extremism was but a mouse click away. After a visit to Québec by France's far-right presidential candidate Marine Le Pen, Bissonnette slowly became known to Québécois activist circles as an online troll, harassing feminist and pro-refugee groups on Facebook. Notably, Bissonnette was also an avid supporter of President Trump, who quickly became a symbol of victory for white nationalists. As Bissonnette's case develops, his use of the internet and communities he may have joined will surely be a topic of discussion.

The internet is famous for being used by the Islamic State as a recruiting and propaganda tool and for the new alt-right movement, it has become their golden ticket. The open nature of the internet has allowed dozens of these far-right communities to form, with tens of thousands of anonymous members who feed on each other's vitriol and discomfort with the current "liberalness" of the world (e.g. feminism and critical race theory). In a 2012 report, the Bipartisan Policy Foundation explains that as people immerse themselves in an extremist community, that community becomes an echo chamber "in which all moderating influences are removed



Dylann Roof poses with confederate flag in a photo posted on his personal website.

and violent voices are amplified," and that "extreme ideas come to seem normal because of constant interaction with people who hold similar and similarly extreme views."

While one could argue that the two aforementioned attacks were simply lone wolf extremists, time has shown that there are people who are not afraid to turn to violence in support of their beliefs. As the internet continues to be an important tool to radical groups, education on the dangers they pose and how to combat them is more imperative than ever.

# Researching as a Psychology Graduate Student

By Rachel Wallace

Behind closed laboratory doors on the second floor of Goodwyn Hall, the Department of Psychology's faculty members and graduate students are conducting research worthy of international recognition.

Last year, an investigative study on seasonal affective disorder, conducted by Professor Steven LoBello in collaboration with Associate Professor Sheila Mehta and graduate student Megan Traffanstedt, was featured in the Australian *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Britain's *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Huffington Post*.

Although Steven LoBello conducts his research in the Health Psychology and Epidemiology Lab, the department is host to five other labs, specializing in clinical psychology, legal psychology, peer interaction, social cognition and social development. The projects in each lab are designed and monitored by faculty members, but are open to any psychology students who are interested in participating.

Most research opportunities,

however, are reserved for graduate students who are completing a thesis. This semester, Erica Van Overloop is working in the Social Cognition Lab on a project that will examine the relationship between adverse childhood experiences, especially sexual abuse, and depression experienced as an adult.

"I wish to contribute to the knowledge base of treatment outcomes and interventions for those suffering from mental illness," Van Overloop says. She discovered her passion for psychological research at an early age, and is driven by a constant curiosity in the many gray areas of the field. "Of course there will always be unknowns," she says. "but I just plan to try to fill those gaps as I continue my education."

Including Van Overloop, LoBello currently has three students working on theses. The psychology graduate program is small by design to allow professors a time to offer quality mentorship. They aim to attract the best students possible, so only those with a 3.0 GPA or higher, competitive scores on the MAT or GRE and multiple letters of recommendation are considered.

Because only a small number of students who receive their undergraduate degrees at AUM are accepted to the graduate program each year, many of the graduate students are from other universities. Van Overloop, for example, attended the University of South Florida.



Dr. Bridgette Harper (right) with graduate students. Photo courtesy of the Department of Psychology

Though she was unsure of moving to Montgomery at first, Van Overloop says the faculty won her over and she is now very happy with her decision to study here. "The psychology department has made this experience much better and less stressful than I had anticipated," she says.

However, gaining acceptance to the program and beginning life in a new town were only the first steps of Van Overloop's challenging journey through graduate school. "They say the first semester is supposed to be the most difficult," she explains, "but I disagree. I'm currently in my last semester and I find it to be much more demanding now as I'm completing a thesis and practicum on top of the course load." She says that graduate students are expected to show mastery and application of information, whereas undergraduate students are only expected to

regurgitate information for exams.

Van Overloop admits she has struggled the most with time management. "Unlike a class where a professor makes the due dates and deadlines, when conducting research for your thesis, you are the one who has to give yourself deadlines to make sure you don't fall behind," she says. In spite of the obstacles she has faced, Van Overloop will be completing her degree soon and could not be more proud of herself for proving she can persist the tedious research process.

To undergraduate students who are considering attending graduate school—at any college and in any department—she says: "Shoot for the stars! No one can stop you from reaching your goals except you. At times it gets rough and seems like it may not be worth it, but if it's something you are truly passionate about, it's 100 percent worth it!"

# WARHAWK SQUAWK

SGA elections are approaching quickly and students will be responsible for electing a new face for their student body. What are some qualities that you find important in an SGA president?



## Dana Horton

Junior  
Communication

“Someone who is open-minded and goal oriented.”



## Kennedy Quick

Junior  
Political Science

“Dedication to AUM and the student body.”



## Joshua Easley

Senior  
Communication

“Leadership skills and good communication skills.”

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