

January 21, 2014

Daniel Greenfield shows how targeting the 1% is self defeating.

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The only liberal solution to the Detroit disaster is to expand its boundaries into the suburbs and tax the ones who got away. Similar regionalization proposals are being flirted with on a national level but they are nothing more than wealth redistribution schemes that only encourage the tax base to flee farther, destroying the city as a business center by transforming it into a regional financial plague instead.

In all its economic experiments, the left has refused to accept that there is no substitute for income generation and that when you kill the golden goose, you don't get an unlimited supply of golden eggs. ...

Since we are governed by mis-educated people, we will continue to question the efficacy of our education system. From The Atlantic, another article on student debt; not debt for professional schools like law or business, but the debt that is incurred by PhD candidates in the humanities.

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But when was the last time you heard anything about Ph.D. debt?

Unless you're an academic, my guess is you haven't. Doctoral programs still have a reputation for giving their students a (mostly) free ride by providing living stipends and teaching opportunities along with tuition breaks. And most of the time, the rep holds true.

But not always. In some cases, Ph.D.'s leave school with the same kind of mountainous loan bills we've come to expect for pre-professional students. This week, Karen Kelsky, a former tenured anthropology professor turned consultant and blogger, kicked off a conversation about this dirty little secret of the ivory tower by asking Ph.D.'s to report the debt they stacked up in grad school on a public Google doc and explain how they accumulated it. Hundreds responded—enough that the sheet temporarily appeared to crash from the traffic.

Thankfully, we don't need to rely solely on crowdsourcing to get a sense of how much debt Ph.D.'s take on during their studies. According to the National Science Foundation's annual (and comprehensive) Survey of Earned Doctorates, about 63 percent of Ph.D.'s completed their degrees in 2012 with no grad school-related debt. However, about 18 percent bookwormed their way to more than \$30,000 in loans. ...

From [A Commonplace Blog](#), the lament of one of those PhD's spit out by the higher education system.

Tomorrow I will step into a classroom to begin the last semester of a 24-year teaching career. Don't get me wrong. I am not retiring. I am not "burned out." The truth is rather more banal. Ohio State University will not be renewing my three-year contract when it expires in the spring. The problem is tenure: with another three-year contract, I would become eligible for tenure. In an era of tight budgets, there is neither money nor place for a 61-year-old white male professor who has never really fit in nor tried very hard to. (Leave aside my heterodox politics and hard-to-credit publication record.) My feelings are like glue that will not set. The pieces fall apart in my hands.

This essay is not a contribution to the I-Quit-Academe genre. (A more accurate title in my case would be Academe Quits Me.) Although I have become uncomfortably aware that I am out of step with the purposeful march of the 21st-century university (or maybe I just never adjusted to Ohio State), gladly would I have learned and gladly continued to teach for as long as my students would have had me. The decision, though, was not my students' to make. And I'm not at all sure that a majority would have voted to keep me around, even if they had been polled. My salary may not be large (a rounding error above the median income for white families in the U.S.), but the university can offer part-time work to three desperate adjuncts for what it pays me. A lifetime of learning has never been cost-effective, and in today's university—at least on the side of campus where the humanities are badly housed—no other criterion is thinkable. ...

And **Megan McArdle** says, "Read this before you apply to grad school."

If you're thinking about going to graduate school, read [this](#) before you apply. It's an open spreadsheet where graduates have posted about their debt levels, why they acquired so much debt, and how they're planning to pay it off.

Note that a lot of these people had funding. Before they go to grad school, people are warned that you shouldn't go unless you're fully funded (tuition paid, some sort of research or teaching stipend). And that's absolutely correct. If a Ph.D. program admits you without funding, it's telling you that it doesn't care whether you come; the program is willing to take your money, but not willing to invest in you. That means you won't have access to the opportunities and support required to have a viable career in academia.

But what the spreadsheet shows is that in many cases, that's not nearly enough. Some of the people with six-figure debt clearly shouldn't have been in academia -- one person writes that she took on debt because her stipend wasn't enough to support two children, which is undoubtedly true, and a good reason that someone with two kids and no second income should probably look elsewhere for a career. ...

Der Spiegel is not happy about it, but it looks like the EU is developing some common sense about green extremism.

The EU's reputation as a model of environmental responsibility may soon be history. The European Commission wants to forgo ambitious climate protection goals and pave the way for fracking -- jeopardizing Germany's touted energy revolution in the process.

The climate between Brussels and Berlin is polluted, something European Commission officials attribute, among other things, to the "reckless" way German Chancellor Angela Merkel blocked stricter exhaust emissions during her re-election campaign to placate domestic automotive manufacturers like Daimler and BMW. This kind of blatant self-interest, officials complained at the time, is poisoning the climate.

*But now it seems that the climate is no longer of much importance to the European Commission, the EU's executive branch, either. Commission sources have long been hinting that the body intends to move away from ambitious climate protection goals. On Tuesday, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* reported as much.*

At the request of Commission President José Manuel Barroso, EU member states are no longer to receive specific guidelines for the development of renewable energy. The stated aim of increasing the share of green energy across the EU to up to 27 percent will hold. But how seriously countries tackle this project will no longer be regulated within the plan. As of 2020 at the latest -- when the current commitment to further increase the share of green energy expires -- climate protection in the EU will apparently be pursued on a voluntary basis. ...

FrontPage

Killing the 1% Golden Goose

by Daniel Greenfield

Two years before Occupy Wall Street's band of radical grad students set up their tents and cardboard signs in Zuccotti Park, Mayor Bloomberg warned the City Council against frivolous tax hikes. "One percent of the households that file in this city pay something like 50% of the taxes. In the city, that's something like 40,000 people. If a handful left, any raise would make it revenue neutral."

And then the 1 percent became the target of the left's answer to the Tea Party. It wasn't unusual to see bus riders wearing "We Are the 99%" buttons the way they had once carried I Heart New York bags.

New York City now has a radical leftist in Gracie Mansion, Bill de Blasio, a radical leftist City Council speaker, Melissa Mark-Viverito, and a radical leftist public advocate, Letitia James. The city is now run by the Working Families Party/ACORN and tax hikes will be used to finance generous payoffs to unions.

But the unions who rigged this election may never see those payoffs. New York City's [unfunded pensions are](#) estimated as being as high as \$136 billion. The crash may only be four years away.

The top 1 percent pay half the income taxes in the city and [the top 10 percent](#) pay 71 percent. Drive them away with tax hikes for municipal union goodies and the unions will have as much trouble collecting even basic benefits from New York as they do from Detroit.

On the other coast, the situation is even worse.

That 1 percent pays 41 percent of California's income taxes while half the state pays no income taxes at all. That's an even worse ratio than New York State where only 39 percent pay no state income tax.

California's [unfunded liabilities are estimated](#) at \$640 billion and the state is trying to dig its way out with taxes and spending sprees. Governor Jerry Brown is hoping to finance his \$68 billion toy train with nearly a billion in carbon "credits" which companies must buy in order to do business in California.

Meanwhile the 1 percent and the 10 percent are unaccountably fleeing California. "Go West young man," Horace Greeley advised. "Washington is not a place to live in. The rents are high, the food is bad, the dust is disgusting and the morals are deplorable."

These days California is a lot like Washington and the arrow of opportunity has flipped around from west to east as those young men with a future and the companies they work for are fleeing the state.

California lost 5.2 percent of its businesses in 2012. [A San Francisco Chronicle story](#) describes an emergency row on a flight crowded with emigrants from California and Texas neighborhoods filled with cars with California license plates.

Brown and the liberal elites have insisted that the wealthy won't leave because taxes go up, but it's the wealthy that have the means to leave. Or as a Californian quoted in the article said about taking a loss on his new \$2 million home, "I can make half of it back in one year of tax savings."

California is experiencing an exodus of the wealthy and the working poor who have the most mobility. It's the middle class that can't afford to walk away from homes and businesses and is tied down and crushed by the left's escalating war on the middle class.

The wealthy will weather Bill de Blasio and Jerry Brown or they will depart and take the tax base with them, leaving only the middle class to be squeezed dry to fund all the social workers, prisons, hospitals, schools and community centers of the welfare class.

Targeting the 1 percent kills the goose that lays the golden tax revenues and states and cities that are already close to the edge can't afford to drive away their tax base. The welfare class is taught to blame the rich, but without the rich its lifestyle implodes, its social dysfunction increases and in the final phase of urban collapse, the middle class abandon their homes block by block and retreat to the suburbs as the city collapses.

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base to flee farther, destroying the city as a business center by transforming it into a regional financial plague instead.

In all its economic experiments, the left has refused to accept that there is no substitute for income generation and that when you kill the golden goose, you don't get an unlimited supply of golden eggs.

Drive away the rich, destroy the middle class and all you're left with is Detroit. 8 million New Yorkers depend on 40,000 millionaires and billionaires. The same California voters who supported Proposition 30 depend on the taxes of the very people they are taxing into leaving.

Wealth is not a crime and it is not redistributable. Money can be taken and put into a common pot, but the ability to perpetuate it through wealth cannot. That is a skill like any other and the practitioners of that skill are the only reason that the Jerry Browns and the Bill de Blasio have any money to play with.

The only thing separating Bill de Blasio from Detroit's former mayor Dave Bing are those 40,000 of the 1 percent and if he kills the golden goose, the only egg will be on his face.

The Atlantic

Ph.D. Programs Have a Dirty Secret: Student Debt

Almost a fifth of students finish their doctoral programs with more than \$30,000 in loans.

by Jordan Weissmann



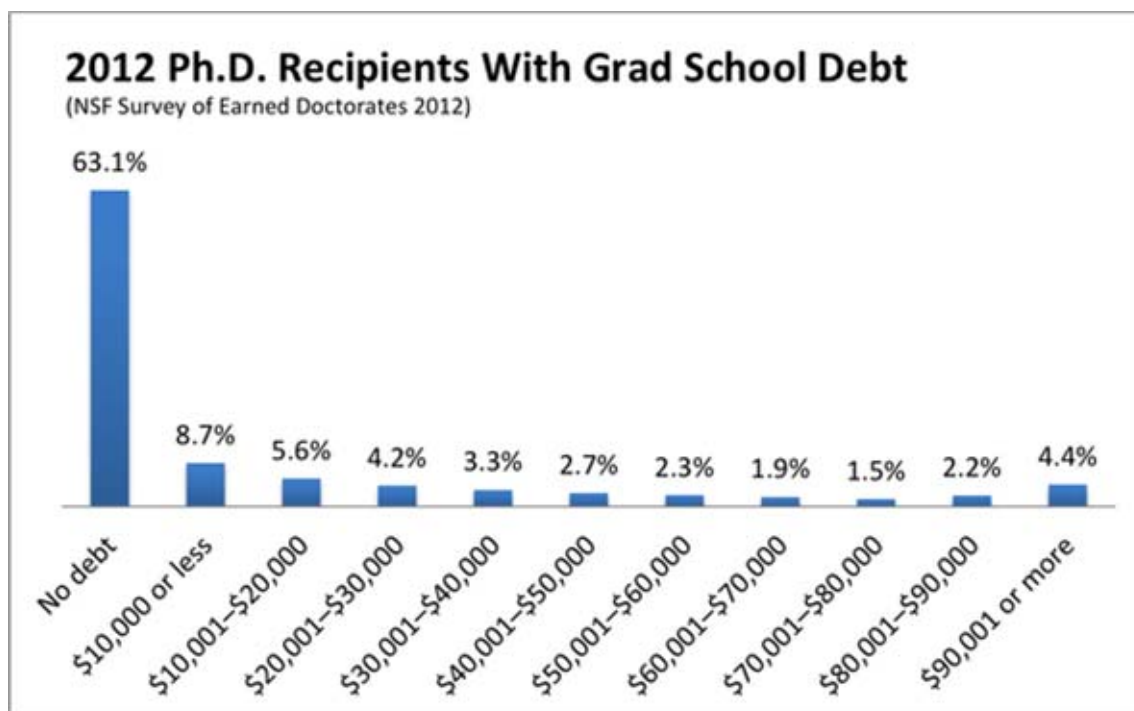
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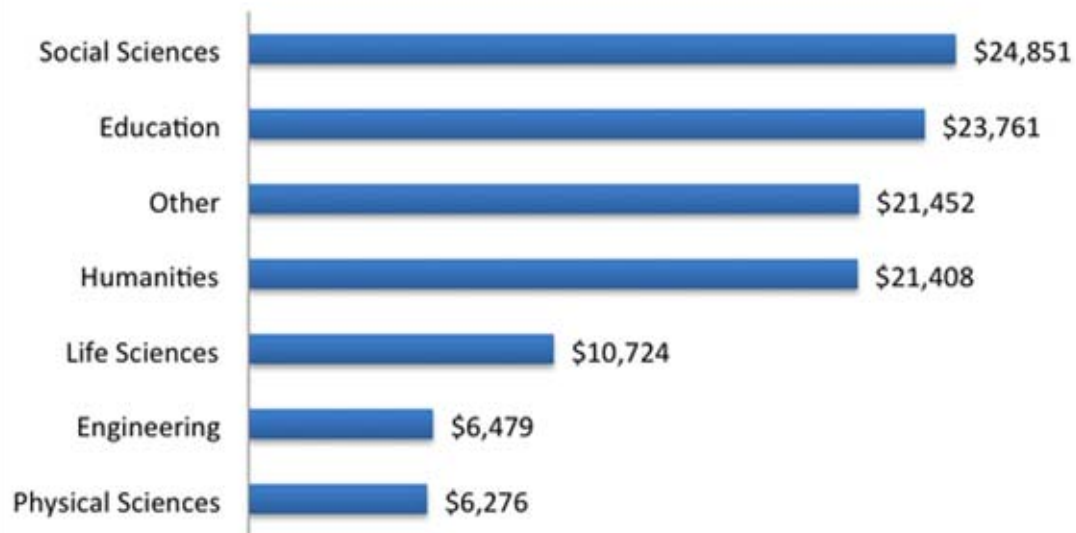


There were also vast variations between disciplines. More than three quarters of engineers graduated debt-free, and only 7.7 percent broke the \$30,000 mark. In comparison, just under half of humanities Ph.D.'s finished without the help of student loans, and 28 percent needed more than \$30,000 worth of them to support themselves. In 2012, 312 humanities students graduated more than \$90,000 in the hole.

So not only is a Ph.D. in English less likely to get you a job than a degree in, say, aeronautical engineering—it'll also leave you deeper in hock.

Average Grad School Debt by Ph.D. Field, 2012

NSF Survey of Earned Doctorates. Note: physical sciences include math and computer science disciplines.

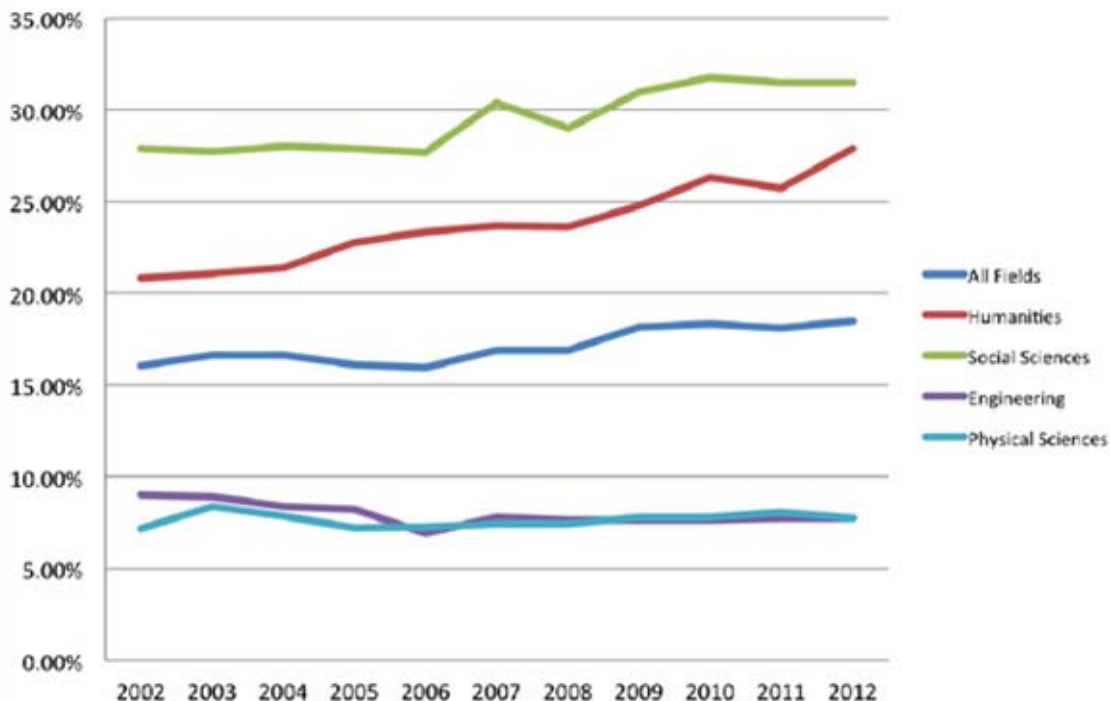


Note: According to the NSF, averages are based on "all valid responses to the debt item."

In general, the NSF reports that Ph.D. debt levels have stayed stable even since 2002—but again, not for everyone. Engineering and physical sciences students? Things haven't changed much for them. But aspiring social science and humanities professors? Their debt levels are on an upswing.

Ph.D.'s With More than \$30,000 In Grad School Debt

(NSF Survey of Earned Doctorates, 2012)



Why do some Ph.D.'s accumulate so many loans? Part of the answer is that some programs don't actually offer full funding for all of their students, or might cut some funding over time. And often times, stipends just don't cover the cost of living, especially for students with families. Kelsky's [spreadsheet](#), which is worth a visit, is replete with these kinds of stories, such as this one from an English Ph.D. who racked up \$102,000 in loans.

I got zero funding from my MA/PhD program--no stipends, no cost of living, no guaranteed teaching assistantships, no paid service work, and only minor conference travel reimbursement (< \$300/year). I had to adjunct 1-2 courses per semester while writing dissertation, in addition to working PT at a bookstore.

I was routinely frustrated to see new students get cushy stipend packages, only to leave after a year or less in the program--while I was told my GRE scores weren't good enough to get a funding package.

And of course, some students simply make poor decisions. Take this recollection from an anthropology Ph.D. who finished without loans while his classmates accumulated six-figures worth:

I tutored, worked 5 jobs, never bought drinks or ate on campus. I had several craigslist tutor jobs up. I also had a 6 years of Research Assistant to an administrator in which I published a lot. I got 3 years fellowships. I played the game and it was okay for the tuition payoff. I don't regret it but do not recommend it for anyone unless you are rich and want to get a "vanity PhD."

I have several friends who owe over 100K and are very bitter and they have a right to be. I want to say I was lucky but I worked my ass off!

There were over 14 of us when we started and only 4 graduated. There are 3 more that have over 100K debt and are still in the program. They let some of the people "hang themselves with their own rope" by not funding them and those people withered away. The older grad students were left to fend for themselves and also died on the vine. I also saw just plain bad decision making like some grad students living by themselves when they should have got a roommate or buying a new mac computer every 2 years and attending every conference on credit card debt.

Some students thrive in grad school, finishing in fine financial shape. And some "die on the vine."

A Commonplace Blog

Academe quits me

by D. G. Myers

Tomorrow I will step into a classroom to begin the last semester of a 24-year teaching career. Don't get me wrong. I am not retiring. I am not "burned out." The truth is rather more banal. Ohio State University will not be renewing my three-year contract when it expires in the spring. The problem is tenure: with another three-year contract, I would become eligible for tenure. In an era of tight budgets, there is neither money nor place for a 61-year-old white male professor who has never really fit in nor tried very hard to. (Leave aside my heterodox politics and hard-to-

credit publication record.) My feelings are like glue that will not set. The pieces fall apart in my hands.

This essay is not a contribution to the I-Quit-Academe genre. (A more accurate title in my case would be *Academe Quits Me*.) Although I have become uncomfortably aware that I am out of step with the purposeful march of the 21st-century university (or maybe I just never adjusted to Ohio State), gladly would I have learned and gladly continued to teach for as long as my students would have had me. The decision, though, was not my students' to make. And I'm not at all sure that a majority would have voted to keep me around, even if they had been polled. My salary may not be large (a rounding error above the median income for white families in the U.S.), but the university can offer part-time work to three desperate adjuncts for what it pays me. A lifetime of learning has never been cost-effective, and in today's university—at least on the side of campus where the humanities are badly housed—no other criterion is thinkable.

My experience is a prelude to what will be happening, sooner rather than later, to many of my colleagues. Humanities course enrollments are down to seven percent of full-time student hours, but humanities professors make up forty-five percent of the faculty. The imbalance cannot last. PhD programs go on awarding PhD's to young men and women who will never find an academic job at a living wage. (A nearby university—a university with a solid ranking from *U.S. News and World Report*—pays adjuncts \$1,500 per course. Just to toe the poverty line a young professor with a husband and a child would have to teach thirteen courses a year.) If only as retribution for the decades-long exploitation of part-time adjuncts and graduate assistants, nine of every ten PhD programs in English should be closed down—immediately. Meanwhile, the senior faculty fiddles away its time teaching precious specialties.

Consider some of the undergraduate courses being offered in English this semester at the University of Minnesota:

- Poems about Cities
- Studies in Narrative: The End of the World in Literature & History
- Studies in Film: Seductions: Film/Gender/Desire
- The Original Walking Dead in Victorian England
- Contemporary Literatures and Cultures: North American Imperialisms and Colonialisms
- Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Literature: Family as Origin and Invention
- Women Writing: Nags, Hags, and Vixens
- The Image on the Page
- Bodies, Selves, Texts
- Consumer Culture and Globalization
- The Western: Looking Awry
- Dreams and Middle English Dream Visions

To be fair, there are also four sections of Shakespeare being offered there this semester, although these are outnumbered by five sections of Literature of Public Life (whatever that is). Maybe I'm missing something, but this course list does not make me salivate to enroll at Minnesota the way that Addison Schacht salivates to enroll in classics at the University of Chicago in Sam Munson's 2010 novel *The November Criminals*:

I could study the major texts of Latin literature, to say nothing of higher-level philological pursuits, all the time. Do you know how much that excites me? Not having to do classes whose subjects are hugely, impossibly vague—like World History, like English [like Literature of Public Life]. You know, to anchor them? So they don't dissolve because of their meaninglessness? I've looked through the sample [U of C] catalog. Holy fuck! Satire and

the Silver Age. The Roman Novel. Love and Death: Eros and Transformation in Ovid. The Founding of Epic Meter. I salivated when I saw these names, because they indicate this whole world of knowledge from which I am excluded, and which I can win my way into, with luck and endurance.

That's it exactly. The Minnesota course list does not indicate a whole world of knowledge. It indicates a miscellany of short-lived faculty enthusiasms.

More than two decades ago Alvin Kernan [complained](#) that English study “fail[s] to meet the academic requirement that true knowledge define the object it studies and systematize its analytic method to at least some modest degree,” but by then the failure itself was already two decades old. About the only thing English professors have agreed upon since the early 'seventies is that they agree on nothing, and besides, agreement is beside the question.

[Teaching the disagreement](#): that's about as close as anyone has come to restoring a sense of order to English.

In 1952, at the height of his fame, F. R. Leavis entitled a collection of essays *The Common Pursuit*. It was his name for the academic study of literature. No one takes the idea seriously any more, but nor does anyone ask the obvious followup. If English literature is *not* a common pursuit—not a “great tradition,” to use Leavis's other famous title—then what is it doing in the curriculum? What is the rationale for studying it?

My own career (so called) suggests the answer. Namely: where there is no common body of knowledge, no common disciplinary conceptions, there is nothing that is indispensable. Any claim to expertise is arbitrary and subject to dismissal. After twenty-four years of patiently acquiring literary knowledge—plus the five years spent in graduate school at Northwestern, “exult[ing] over triumphs so minor,” as Larry McMurry says in *Moving On*, “they would have been unnoticeable in any other context”—I have been informed that my knowledge is no longer needed. As Cardinal Newman warned, knowledge really is an end in itself. I fill no gap in the department, because there is no shimmering and comprehensive surface of knowledge in which any gaps might appear. Like everyone else in English, I am an *extra*, and the offloading of an extra is never reported or experienced as a loss.

I feel the loss, keenly, of my self-image. For twenty-four years I have been an English professor. Come the spring, what will I be? My colleagues will barely notice that I am gone, but what they have yet to grasp is that the rest of the university will barely notice when they too are gone, or at least severely reduced in numbers—within the decade, I'd say.

Bloomberg

[Read This Before You Apply to Grad School](#)

by Megan McArdle _

If you're thinking about going to graduate school, read [this](#) before you apply. It's an open spreadsheet where graduates have posted about their debt levels, why they acquired so much debt, and how they're planning to pay it off.

Note that a lot of these people had funding. Before they go to grad school, people are warned that you shouldn't go unless you're fully funded (tuition paid, some sort of research or teaching stipend). And that's absolutely correct. If a Ph.D. program admits you without funding, it's telling you that it doesn't care whether you come; the program is willing to take your money, but not willing to invest in you. That means you won't have access to the opportunities and support required to have a viable career in academia.

But what the spreadsheet shows is that in many cases, that's not nearly enough. Some of the people with six-figure debt clearly shouldn't have been in academia -- one person writes that she took on debt because her stipend wasn't enough to support two children, which is undoubtedly true, and a good reason that someone with two kids and no second income should probably look elsewhere for a career. But others got married and had kids while they were finishing, which is probably going to happen if it takes 10 years to get a degree.

Others simply got caught in a common bind: the money didn't last as long as required to actually complete and defend their dissertation. Or they had to pay for extensive travel (a particular problem among archaeologists, apparently). Their undergraduate loans piled up interest while in deferral. Or their school was in an expensive city, with a stipend that didn't match the local cost of living.

Obviously, this isn't a representative sample; people who put their entries in the spreadsheet may be (probably are) more likely to be folks who are having debt problems. But they still offer a valuable caution to people who are applying to graduate school: it's not enough to have funding. You also need to have a time frame, and a budget, that fits the funding on offer.

Der Spiegel

[Green Fade-Out: Europe to Ditch Climate Protection Goals](#)

by Gregor Peter Schmitz in Brussels



- *Europe may be backing away from its ambitious climate protection goals.*

The EU's reputation as a model of environmental responsibility may soon be history. The European Commission wants to forgo ambitious climate protection goals and pave the way for fracking -- jeopardizing Germany's touted energy revolution in the process.

The climate between Brussels and Berlin is polluted, something European Commission officials attribute, among other things, to the "reckless" way German Chancellor Angela Merkel blocked stricter exhaust emissions during her re-election campaign to placate domestic automotive manufacturers like Daimler and BMW. This kind of blatant self-interest, officials complained at the time, is poisoning the climate.

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Climate Leaders No More?

With such a policy, the [European Union](#) is seriously jeopardizing its global climate leadership role. Back in 2007, when Germany held the European Council presidency, the body decided on a climate and [energy](#) legislation package known as the "20-20-20" targets, to be fulfilled by the year 2020. They included:

- a 20 percent reduction in EU greenhouse gas emissions;
- raising the share of EU energy consumption produced from renewable resources to 20 percent;
- and a 20 percent improvement in the EU's energy efficiency.

All of the goals were formulated relative to 1990 levels. And the targets could very well be met. But in the future, European climate and energy policy may be limited to just a single project: reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The Commission plans also set no new binding rules for energy efficiency.

Welcome, Frackers

In addition, the authority wants to pave the way in the EU for the controversial practice of fracking, according to the daily *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. The report says the Commission does not intend to establish strict rules for the extraction of shale gas, but only minimum health and environmental standards.

The plans will be officially presented next Wednesday ahead of an EU summit meeting in March. Observers, however, believe that a decision is unlikely to come until the summer at the earliest. But action must be taken this year: At the beginning of 2015, a climate conference will take place in Paris at which a global climate agreement is to be hashed out.

The European Parliament is unlikely to be pleased with the Commission's plans. Just at the beginning of January, a strong parliamentary majority voted to reduce carbon emissions EU-wide by 40 percent by 2030 and to raise the portion of renewables to at least 30 percent of energy consumption.

Germany's Energy Goals at Risk

The Commission's move further isolates Germany. Merkel's government, a "grand coalition" of her conservatives and the center-left [Social Democratic Party](#) (SPD), seeks to increase the share of renewables in the country's energy mix to 60 percent by 2036. As reported in the latest issue of SPIEGEL, [Sigmar Gabriel](#), SPD chair and minister of energy and economics, recently urged Climate Commissioner Connie Hedegaard and Energy Commissioner Günther Oettinger to put forth mandatory expansion targets for renewable energy in the EU by 2030. Europe "can't afford to pass up this opportunity," Gabriel wrote.

But within the Commission, the ambitious project has long been controversial. The same goes for EU member states, as Gabriel recently discovered. Prior to Christmas the minister, together with eight colleagues from throughout the EU, called for a "renewables target" in a letter to the Commission. But some countries, such as France, joined the appeal only hesitantly at the time. Paris might prefer instead to rely more heavily on nuclear power in order to meet stringent carbon emission requirements.

Energy Commissioner Günther Oettinger, a German from Merkel's [Christian Democratic Union](#), has also shown reluctance. Rather than setting clear goals for the share of renewables, he wants fixed targets only for the reduction of carbon emissions -- and he is skeptical even of the 40 percent target proposed by Climate Commissioner Hedegaard.

The Berlin-based German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) writes in a recent study that more moderate EU climate goals and less support for renewable energies could have a real impact on Germany's so-called [Energiewende](#), or energy revolution. "In such a context," writes the nonpartisan think tank, "it will be increasingly difficult for Germany to successfully carry out pioneering policies."



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