



Published February 24th, 2013

Next time you skip class, consider how much money it's costing you

By Dan Reimold



By DigitalVision

How much are those couple of hours of sleep that you gained by skipping class worth in cold, hard cash?

Most of the chatter concerning the rising costs of a college education center on yearly tuition fees, room and board charges and loan rates. But what about the cost of a single session of a single class?

It is something to think about the next time you consider skipping.

As the University of Massachusetts student newspaper *The Daily Collegian* explains in summarizing a UMass professor's calculations, "Adding up the costs of tuition and then dividing the sum by the amount of credit hours enrolled in per week can show the value of each lecture attended or missed."

For example, this semester at California's Claremont McKenna College (CMC), a class costs between roughly \$130 and \$390 per session, depending on how often it meets.

As CMC students Nathan Falk and Katya Abazajian remind their peers in *The Forum* student newspaper, "For the cost of attending a [once-a-week] seminar class, you could buy a ticket to Coachella, fly round-trip to New York, get a suite at the Wynn hotel in Vegas, buy an iPad, or get 26 guest meals at [the campus dining hall]. For missing a twice-a-week class, you are throwing away a pair of Beats [headphones], a chance to go skydiving, or 10 handles of liquid courage. For the cost of missing a Monday/Wednesday/Friday class, you could see 12 movies... buy yourself a Kindle, or take a certain *Forum* writer on a very nice date."

Meanwhile, at the University of Louisville, each class session this semester costs \$31.25, according to *The Louisville Cardinal* student newspaper. Similar to the *Forum* piece, *Cardinal* staff writer Wes Kerrick asks students to consider that amount in a number of different contexts.

As he puts it, "What else could you do with \$31.25? You could buy a new shirt, take your boyfriend or girlfriend out for a modest dinner, or pick up about 10 Happy Meals. Or, with a few more bucks, you could sponsor a child in an impoverished country. But you're here, and that means you've decided to spend that money on your education, as have I. We made that decision because we've seen the value of education in today's professional environment."

The bottom-line value, according to Eastern

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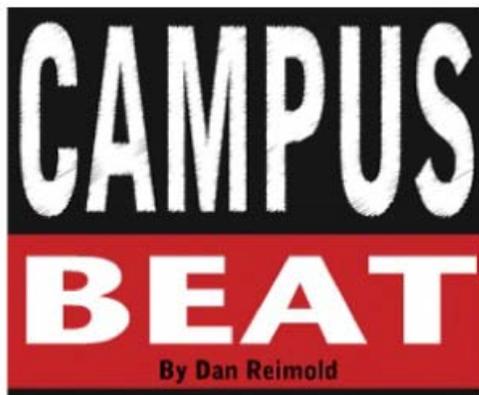
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As Holstrom writes in *The Daily Eastern News*, a constant desire to play hooky may speak to a problem larger than stereotypical student laziness.

"If you hate your classes, you're probably not taking the right ones," Holstrom contends. "I know each major has those few mandatory classes that everyone dreads, but if that's how you feel about every class, I'd suggest spending some time soul searching. After all, you only have four years to enjoy this place. Is it really worth it to miss out on potentially

intelligent lectures and debates to get an extra hour of sleep?"

Yet, worth it or not, almost every college student has at some point skipped at least a few classes — for a variety of reasons.

As Michigan State University junior Ron Kim confirms in a *State News* column, "It is pretty much safe to say coming in contact with a student who has yet to miss a single class is difficult to come by. Skipping class is an action many of us are quite familiar with. We justify our absences with an array of excuses that vary from being 'sick' to the temperature outside being too cold... It is almost inevitable to find something negative about going to class. We just need to realize how lucky we are to even have the option of not wanting to attend."

Dan Reimold, Ph.D., is a college journalism scholar who has written and presented about the student press throughout the U.S. and in Southeast Asia. He is an assistant professor of journalism at the University of Tampa, where he also advises The Minaret student newspaper. He maintains the student journalism industry blog College Media Matters. A complete list of Campus Beat articles is here.

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