

Globe Magazine

THE BOSTON GLOBE | MARCH 26, 2023

WHEN THE WAR
IN UKRAINE
COMES TO THE
CLASSROOM

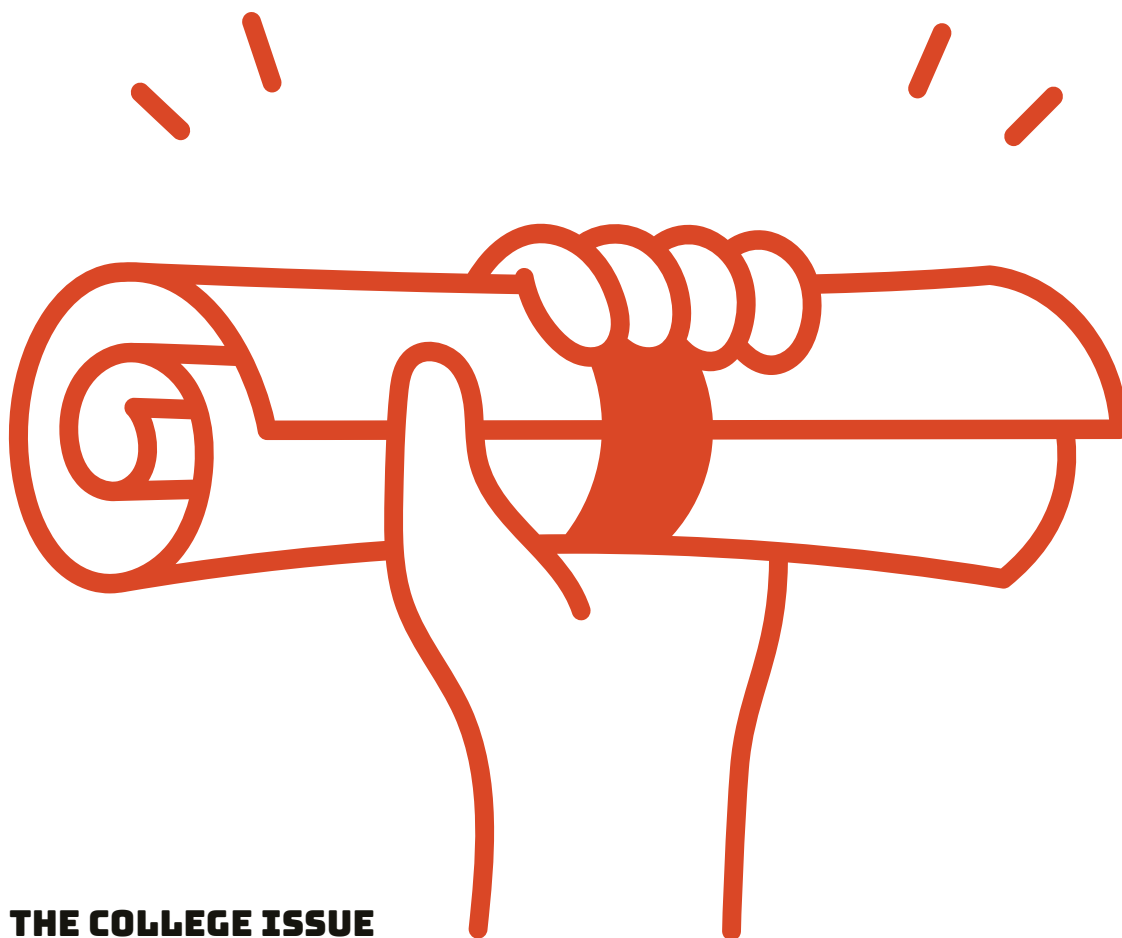
THE BOYFRIEND
WHO FED ME
PEACHES

THE
COLLEGE
ISSUE

AS GRADUATION
SEASON
APPROACHES,
STUDENTS ACROSS
GREATER BOSTON
REVEAL WHAT
MAKES THEM
OPTIMISTIC
—AND WHAT
HAS THEM
WORRIED.

NOPE





THE COLLEGE ISSUE

HIGH HOPES (AND BIG CONCERNS)

These stories were produced in collaboration with an Emerson College writing and publishing course led by associate professor Susanne Althoff, a former editor of the *Globe Magazine*.

AS COLLEGE STUDENTS PREPARE TO GRADUATE INTO AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE, WE ASKED: WHAT MAKES YOU OPTIMISTIC — AND WHAT HAS YOU WORRIED?

IMAGES FROM ADOBE STOCK;
ILLUSTRATIONS BY GREG KLEE/GLOBE STAFF

WORRY

Can We Afford Life After College?

BY LUKAS HARNISCH

The average monthly student loan bill: \$393. The average spent on food in a month: \$691. The median rent for a one-bedroom in Boston: \$2,720. Massachusetts college students, especially those hoping to work in Boston, are wondering how they'll afford all those expenses and more.

Wherever they live, Americans between 18 and 24 are increasingly pessimistic about their economic prospects, according to a 2022 McKinsey & Company survey. Of the survey respondents, 59 percent don't expect to ever own a home, and 23 percent believe they'll never be able to afford retirement.

Student loans are part of the reason: The average public university student borrows \$31,410 to complete a bachelor's degree, according to the Education Data Initiative. Grace Mastroianni, a cultural anthropology major at Bridgewater State University, will graduate in the fall with her own mountain of debt. So as she planned to earn a master's in social work, she looked for a program that would allow her to work during the week, abandoned plans to study abroad, and decided to live at home in New Bedford. "It does freak me out a little bit," Mastroianni says about her debt. (She's less

LILA CAREY

SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY SENIOR STUDYING
LAW AND POLITICAL SCIENCE



"I don't see how these entry-level salaries are enough to provide for us. Just the process of seeing everyday things such as groceries and gas skyrocketing while wages are staying the same concerns me that I'll have to work five jobs to support myself. Which I'll do, but I don't want to."

WHEREVER THEY LIVE, AMERICANS BETWEEN 18 AND 24 ARE INCREASINGLY PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THEIR ECONOMIC PROSPECTS.



worried about living with her family. “The only issue is my cat tries to kill the dog,” she says with a laugh.)

Robin Kahn is program director at Babson College’s Financial Literacy Program, which teaches students how to budget and manage their debts. “We’re hearing that it’s really hard to have any sort of safety net,” Kahn says. Many of the students who take her workshops are worried about steeply increasing living costs such as rent, groceries, and gas.

Many students who don’t have loans feel exceptionally lucky, but even they worry about financial surprises. Maren Cork’s parents saved for years to pay her tuition, and she

ROBERTO RODRIGUEZ-PAZ

LESLEY UNIVERSITY JUNIOR STUDYING DIGITAL FILMMAKING



“One thing I’m concerned about is whether I will be able to find a job in my career that both financially and emotionally supports my needs.”

chose to study mechanical engineering at Worcester Polytechnic Institute not only because she likes science and is good at it, but because she hoped it would be easier to find work in a STEM field. The Seattle

native is graduating in May debt-free, and she already has a job at a Waltham construction company waiting for her. But she’s still had to lean on her parents to get a start, including for help with the car she needs for work and the pile of money she’ll have to fork over to rent her own place in this area.

Housing costs are especially high in Massachusetts. A 2022 report from the nonprofit National Low Income Housing Coalition showed that to afford life in a \$1,608 one-bedroom apartment in the state — a bargain relative to Boston prices — a minimum-wage earner would have to work 87 hours a week.

Cork says many of her friends are

BRITTANY WATSON

NICHOLS COLLEGE GRADUATE STUDENT STUDYING BUSINESS AND CYBERSECURITY



“I am hopeful that through my degree and networking with so many different people, I will be able to find a job in my field. I am optimistic that I will be able to pay off my loans, too. It’s just that whole layer of ‘what if?’”

planning to move home for a while to save money. “I’m really privileged and get to utilize the ‘Bank of Dad,’ but a lot of my friends don’t have that opportunity,” she says. As a generation, “It feels a little like we’ve been cheated.”

LUKAS HARNISCH IS PURSUING AN MFA IN CREATIVE WRITING AT EMERSON COLLEGE.

HOPE

We’re Better at Creative Jobs Than AI. Right?

BY BRANDON HILL

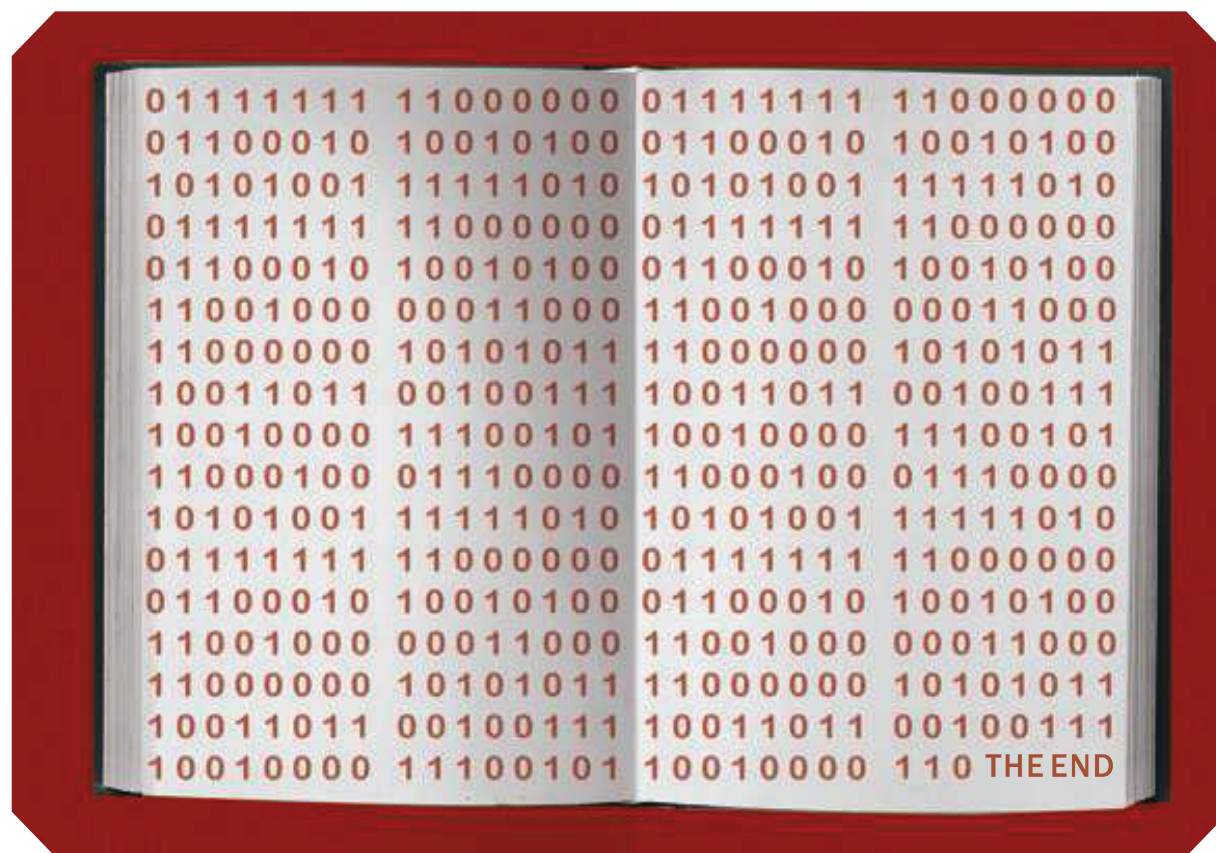
It takes a robotic determination to land a job, even one in a creative industry. Subscribe to every opportunity-sharing newsletter. Comb LinkedIn and Indeed. Write personalized cover letters. Send e-mails. Meet for coffee. Write thank-you notes. Receive automated rejections, after artificial intelligence kicks you out of the running.

That last step hurts, and it’s increasingly common.

An estimated two-thirds of companies now use software, some assisted by AI, to sort and rank applications, according to a 2021 white paper coauthored by Harvard Business School professor Joseph Fuller. Even though 88 percent of executives surveyed believe the process excludes good candidates, companies say they’re drowning in applications (some 250 per job, on average) and need the help.

If only robots are going to read

THE COLLEGE ISSUE



DENIZ BAGCI

BERKLEE COLLEGE OF MUSIC FRESHMAN
STUDYING ELECTRONIC PRODUCTION
AND DESIGN



"The music industry is not as safe from AI as we think it is. Hip-hop is geared on sam-

pling and on producers finding things and turning them into something else. If we find ourselves being policed and threatened by these corporations [using AI to identify samples], it's going to lead to a decline in people wanting to participate in that kind of music."

my cover letters, I figured, why not get a robot to write them? I logged into ChatGPT, feeling traitorous, and instructed the AI program to use my résumé to revise my cover letter for a particular job description. *Ding!* While it usually takes me at least an hour of anguish to write a cover letter, this one was finished in the time it took me to top off my coffee.

It wasn't as good as letters I've written — there was solace in that.

MANY CLASSMATES HAVE BEEN DISHEARTENED ENOUGH BY ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TO QUESTION WHY THEY'RE EVEN GOING TO SCHOOL FOR ART IN THE FIRST PLACE.

The tone was uncanny and stiff, and when I prodded the program to reference examples of my work, it simply made things up. I couldn't bring myself to submit the letter. But who knows? As the automated rejections pile up, job hunting has begun to feel like a numbers game.

In January, BuzzFeed's stock value rose 120 percent after the digital media company announced it would increase the use of AI in its content creation, just a month after laying off 12 percent of its human workforce. Venture capitalists have increased their investments in generative AI — the text-based ChatGPT and art-creators such as Midjourney and Stable Diffusion — by 425 percent since 2020, totaling \$2.1 billion in 2022 alone. And new class action lawsuits allege that the entire process behind the software is theft, because it can only create new content by mashing together existing works without credit.

Sabrina Daunch, a junior illustration major at the Massachusetts Col-

lege of Art and Design, says many classmates have been disheartened enough by AI to question why they're even going to school for art in the first place. But Daunch is optimistic that legal protections for artists will prevent AI from derailing her dream of creating concept art for video games. "It's a legal nightmare to try and copyright AI illustration right now," Daunch says. "It seems like it'd be way more hassle to deal with those legal [issues] than just hiring someone."

However, technology nearly always evolves at a rate that courts can't keep up with, so it's likely the arms race between artist and machine will persist. "Be good at what AI is bad at," Daunch tells herself. "How to light a scene, how to compose an image, the basics of human anatomy, are all really foundational things to making art the AI does not have a grasp of yet."

Signing my cover letters "Sincerely, Brandon Hill and ChatGPT" isn't going to make my job hunt easier, at

least not yet. I'll stick with meticulously rewriting and networking the old-fashioned way. Even if it does make me feel like a robot.

BRANDON HILL IS A GRADUATE STUDENT STUDYING MULTIMEDIA JOURNALISM AT EMERSON COLLEGE.

HOPE

Let's Make Sure College Is Worth It for First-Gen Students

BY ALEXANDRIA ALVARADO

The day the letter arrived, I knew I'd be able to leave my family's apartment in San Antonio for a new start. "Congratulations!" it read. "I am pleased to inform you that you have been accepted to Emerson College for Fall 2020." Despite dreaming about attending college since I was a kid, I didn't know anything about it, only that in my Latino family it meant being one step closer to a successful life.

I soon realized it wasn't that simple.

For first-generation college students like me, college can be seen as a chance to move up the economic ladder, provide for our families, and give meaning to years of hard work in school. But first-generation college graduates, in aggregate, see lower median incomes and wealth than graduates who have parents who also went to college, according to a 2021 report by the

SYDNEY MOOS

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON
JUNIOR STUDYING INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, ARABIC, AND HUMAN RIGHTS



"Recognition is the first thing that colleges need to do for first-gen students. By acknowl-

edging all the hard work we have done to get here, students can feel proud of their identity, and get to meet those with similar identities along the way"

Pew Research Center. The median household wealth of a first-gen graduate is \$152,000, compared with \$244,500 for a household led by a second-gen graduate.

Part of the way to address these disparities is through career training. “Many first-generation students are also first-generation professionals,” explains Martina Martin, director of expert guidance at National Association of Student Personnel Administrators. “Finances play a big role for first-gen students, so most will just pick the first job opportunity they see without knowing what is truly out there.” Martin says institutions need to provide resources that teach first-generation students how to network, navigate the job market, and weigh job opportunities.

It’s also been helpful, says Tufts University freshman Abigail Pineda, to connect with students from similar backgrounds. “It’s harder to find a community just naturally on campus,” says Pineda, who plans to major in child studies and human development. She found a community at Tufts FIRST Resource Center, which is dedicated to first-generation, low-income, and undocumented students. “I definitely had to seek out the resources myself,” she says, “but the FIRST Center has helped a lot with learning about school.”

ALEXANDRIA ALVARADO IS PURSUING A BACHELOR’S IN WRITING, LITERATURE, AND PUBLISHING AT EMERSON COLLEGE.

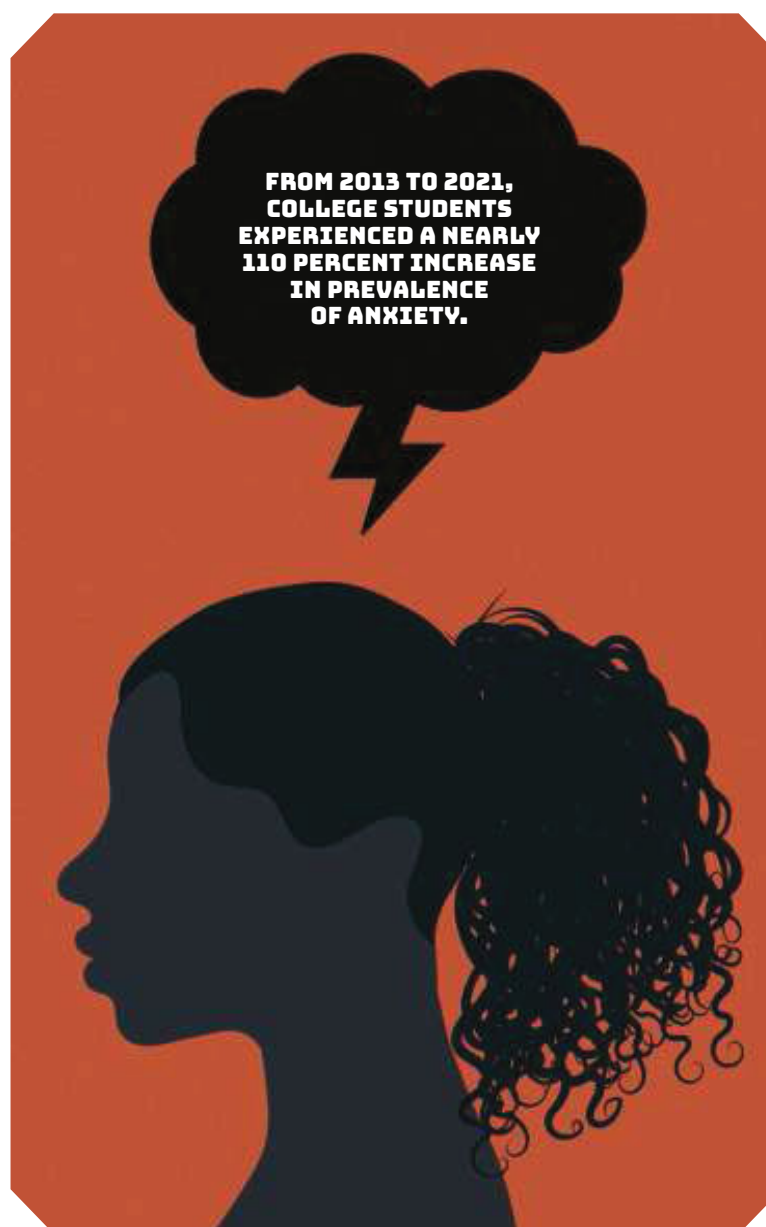
HOPE

We’ll All Get the Help We Need for Anxiety and Depression

BY KARISSA SCHAEFER

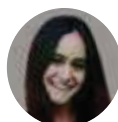
Across college campuses, the mental health crisis burns on, with the pandemic and a troubled economy adding fuel to the fire. I’ve felt it myself: living alone for the first time, balancing a full course load and unpaid internships, looking ahead to a shaky job market — it adds up.

From 2013 to 2021, college stu-



SARA VELAZQUEZ

TUFTS UNIVERSITY JUNIOR STUDYING CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY AND MUSIC



“There’s a spike in mental health needs and a therapist shortage, so it’s nice knowing I’ll be needed. It’s really important for people of color to be going into the mental health workforce, showing they belong in those fields and that it’s possible. It’s not just a white profession.”

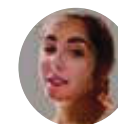
dents experienced a nearly 110 percent increase in prevalence of anxiety and a 135 percent in-

crease in depression, according to a study of more than 350,000 college students led by Boston University researcher Sarah K. Lipson. Meanwhile, Lipson’s study found, students of color can experience mental health problems at especially high rates — with a troubling lack of treatment options.

Ria Kiafoulis, a 20-year-old film and TV major at BU, saw her mental health struggles worsen at college. She sought help, but found herself trying to navigate what felt like a Byzantine medical system with few or no appointments available. Kiafoulis, a junior from New Jersey, says she reached out multiple times to a center on campus, only to hear back much later

ANGELA PILLARELLA

EMMANUEL COLLEGE JUNIOR
STUDYING BIOCHEMISTRY



“One of my biggest concerns is getting a job that’s going to pay enough, and also just my mental health when I’m moving back home. It’s not going to be realistic for me to get an apartment right off the bat, so I know there’s going to be that weird period of one to two years where I’m back home. And it’s just going to feel like taking a massive step back after four years of being an adult.”

that they don’t do referrals. “They weren’t able to put me in touch with a psychiatrist so it left me at a dead end,” she says. This is not a crisis unique to colleges: More than one-third of Americans live in areas with a shortage of therapists.

Gen Z is also less likely to seek mental health treatment than other generations, according to a 2022 survey by McKinsey & Company, likely due in part to concerns about affordability. Peer counseling may be able to fill in some of the gaps. “There is data that indicate students who might be less likely to show up and initiate counseling with a licensed clinician might be more likely to use a peer counseling service,” says Kaitlin Gallo, a psychologist and the chief clinical officer at Christie Campus Health, a mental health services company in Lexington. “It’s a way their mental health needs can be met and start a conversation about their mental health, and if they end up needing to take that extra step to meet a clinician, experience with peer counseling might make them feel more comfortable doing so.”

Cassidy Gallegos is assistant director for mental health and wellness at Boston College. Her office uses educational resources as the framework for what it calls a “mental health tool kit,” which provides access to resilience and mindfulness skills that students can use after graduation, too. “It’s a lifelong

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awareness,” Gallegos says. “People can learn ways to manage different experiences that maintain that positive health, to maintain that flourishing we’re all yearning for.”

KARISSA SCHAEFER IS A SENIOR JOURNALISM STUDENT AT EMERSON COLLEGE.

HOPE

We Can Make a Difference for Climate Change

BY ROBIN VAN IMPE

When I started college in Belgium, I was obsessed with living a sustainable lifestyle. I became a vegetarian and shopped for clothes at thrift stores. I bought food from bulk bins, swapped out my plastic bottles of shower gel and shampoo for soap bars, and replaced my toothpaste with those powders that come in glass jars. Believing that such small changes can make a difference can feel like magical thinking — and some have been harder to continue in the United States — but giving up would be worse.

A majority of people ages 13 to 39 believe their own behavior can help stop climate change, according to a survey by market research firm YPulse. “I do think that we can do things to mitigate the climate crisis,” says Grace Howard, a Northeastern

EVERETT SAPP

HARVARD UNIVERSITY SENIOR
STUDYING ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE
AND PUBLIC POLICY



“I am confident in the fact that this generation will find a way to give it our best shot at mitigating climate change. I think some effects will inevitably happen due to what’s already happened in our past. But we stand a really good chance now to mitigate those and improve our future, becoming greener and more sustainable.”

OUR HOPE FOR THE
FUTURE LIES IN
DOING THE BEST
WE CAN WITH
WHAT WE HAVE.



University graduate student focusing on environmental science and policy. “Our hope for the future lies in doing the best we can with what we have and maintaining those resources for as long as possible. I can’t worry too much about the resources we’ve already used.”

But younger people also know that individual changes alone won’t be enough. Gen Z and millennials are more likely than older people to feel anxious about climate change, according to a Pew Research Center survey conducted in 2021. But they are also taking more aggressive steps than previous generations, such as hounding elected officials, protesting, and donating money. (It’s not an issue of liberals versus conservatives, either: 49 percent of Gen Z Republicans and 48 percent of Millennial Republicans want action to help the planet.)

Individual changes are important, but so is aiming higher. “A lot of the things that have prevented the changes we need come from people who have too much money and too much power,” says PerinAnn Katrak, a graduate student studying sustainable international development at Brandeis University. “The one place where I do see hope, is where groups and

communities and larger numbers of people rally together to advocate for the things that we need.”

ROBIN VAN IMPE IS A STUDENT FROM BELGIUM PURSUING AN MFA IN CREATIVE WRITING AT EMERSON COLLEGE.

WORRY

The Persistence of Racism

BY ALEXANDRA LEISECA

Since we were raised on television shows that pictured and celebrated diversity — *Arthur*, *Dora the Explorer*, *Sesame Street* — it could be easy to assume we had left issues of racism in the past. We haven’t.

Like adolescents who grow tall quickly, members of Gen Z and others have felt the growing pains of striving toward a multicultural, anti-racist future. We now see that systemically racist institutions are slow to reform, if they do it at all, and we detect some hesitation from older generations. A Pew Research Center survey reports that 62 percent of Gen Z believes that increasing racial and ethnic diversity is

positive for society, while only 52 percent of Gen X and 48 percent of boomers agree.

The Black Lives Matter protests of 2020 — which took place when many of this year’s graduating class were rising college sophomores — highlight this divide. Many young people used the nationwide demonstrations to voice their intolerance for injustice. But these protests were not universally lauded, and not even among a post-millennial generation that is the most ethnically and racially diverse in American history. Thirty-eight percent of Gen Z-ers still hold on to lingering prejudice, according to Pew.

Lauryn Blake, a woman of color and a marketing major at Suffolk University, says she is concerned about encountering racism in the next stage of her life. “Business is a lot of white men, and so I’m worried about going into the workplace and not getting jobs,” she explains. One in 3 Black women leaders has been denied opportunities in the workplace because of their race and gender, according to the Women in the Workplace 2022 study of corporate America from McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.Org. And even when she does get hired, Blake knows there are poten-

LYDIA THOMAS

BOSTON UNIVERSITY SOPHOMORE STUDY-
ING INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



"I'm optimistic about inclusion. I am happy that more women are being included in

male-dominated fields, even in fields I'm not a part of. I'm excited to see what people who are generally excluded will be able to bring to the table now that they are offered a voice."

tial land mines. She may encounter tokenism, for example — being included as the only person of color in the room as a show of diversity. Or colorism, in which her lighter Black skin works to her advantage. "I worry that I might be chosen for a job over someone who has darker skin," she says. "I do think I have privilege in that way."

Many college students are trying to receive diplomas as batons, joining the race toward a more just and racially diverse future. But we know that this journey will not be an easy one.

ALEXANDRA LEISECA IS PURSUING AN MFA IN CREATIVE WRITING AT EMERSON COLLEGE.

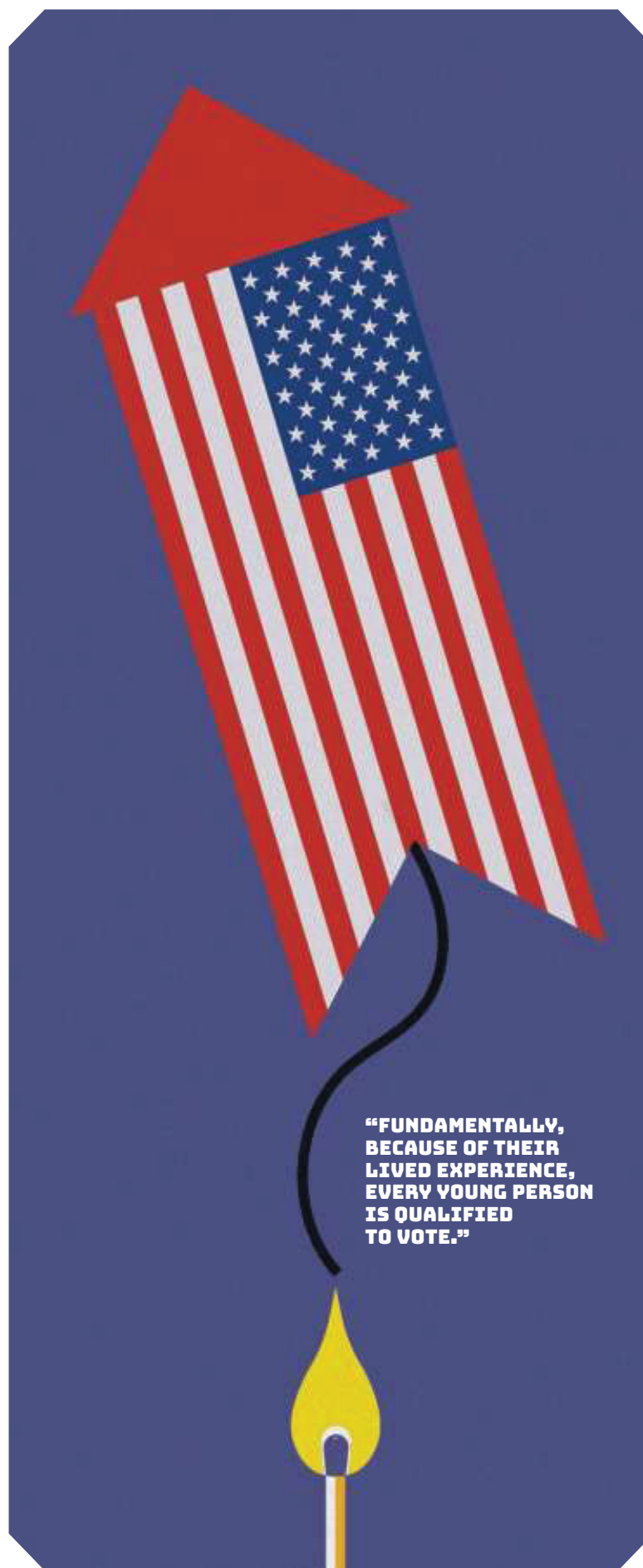
HOPE

We Can Make Our Voices Heard in Politics

BY LUKAS HARNISCH

The last several years have been big for young voters — although that comes with a big asterisk. The 2020 presidential election drew what is thought to be one of the highest levels of youth-voter turnout since the voting age was lowered to 18 in 1971. Then, the 2018 midterm then set a record for midterm turnout among ages 18 to 29, and the level reached nearly as high in 2022.

It could be a response to a feeling that the country is in crisis. In 2022, 55 percent of young voters said the



**"FUNDAMENTALLY,
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country is heading in the wrong direction, according to a report from the Tufts University-based Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE). And that feeling crosses the aisle, says researcher and lead author Ruby Belle Booth. "It's not just that all Democrats think it's going the right way because they did more in 2022 to succeed in elections," she explains. "It's not all Republicans that are saying things are going the wrong way."

The record-setting levels of young-voter turnout are the good news. But the bad news is that even at its peak, estimated turnout of 18- to 29-year-olds in the 2018 midterm involved only 28 percent of eligible voters from the age cohort. By comparison, 66 percent of voters over the age of 65 cast their ballots.

The problem doesn't appear to be that young people don't believe their vote matters — CIRCLE found that 3 out of 4 young people believe they can make a change. And students like Luis Aldarondo know how essential it is to speak up. "With the world changing so fast, and having people so much older than us dictating things, it's a lot different than how we see things," says Aldarondo, a junior robotics engineering student at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. "We should be heard more."

The problem, instead, is that most younger people don't believe they're qualified to vote — 60 percent according to the CIRCLE survey. "There are a lot of issues that young people are passionate about," Booth says. "But they don't

CARLOS OSORIO

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON
SENIOR STUDYING POLITICAL SCIENCE



"Thanks to social media, more and more people are getting [politically] engaged. For example, when the Roe v. Wade decision was leaked, a lot of people realized, 'Oh, we should probably start paying more attention.'"

ELY BOYLE

WENTWORTH INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
SENIOR STUDYING CONSTRUCTION
MANAGEMENT

"My only real concern is how [construction] is going to change and adapt to climate change. The industry is already changing for the better with more buildings become LEED-certified—but... I imagine with the higher chance of weather disasters happening, it's also going to affect the industry in a negative way."

know how to connect them to elections and voting. That gap needs to be addressed through teaching." The lack of confidence is a barrier to civically engaging young people, and it's made more insurmountable when considering the socioeconomic barriers that marginalized students face.

"Fundamentally, because of their lived experience, every young person is qualified to vote," Booth says. "It's a matter of helping them to see that."

HOPE

Our Generation Can Bring Better Attitudes to Sex and Dating

BY LAUREN SURBEY

There is a complex plot twist to the sex lives of college students.

A Rutgers-SUNY Albany study found that adults age 18 to 23 are having less casual sex than in years past, a phenomenon that has led to headlines about "puriteens" and "sex recessions." Alarmist headlines aside, if college students are hooking up less it's thanks, in part, to growing into adulthood amid COVID and unprecedented technology.

"It makes sense that Gen Z is more careful about their sexual actions," says Kathryn Coduto, an assistant professor of media science at



GEN Z HAS "LEARNED A LOT ABOUT SMART PRACTICES AND WAYS TO PROTECT THEMSELVES BECAUSE A LOT OF THEM HAD TO FIGURE THAT OUT AT REALLY YOUNG AGES."

Boston University who studies the use of dating apps and sexting. "Gen Z is the first generation to grow up with phones. They've learned a lot about smart practices and ways to protect themselves because a lot of them had to figure that out at really young ages."

One of those smart practices involves Facebook groups for single women in multiple cities, including Greater Boston, called "Are we dating the same guy?" The group here, which has more than 44,000 members, is meant to be a forum where women post about experiences with the men they've matched with online, making sure they're not being used by partners who are just looking to hook up with many people.

Technology can offer even more advantage. Dating apps are "really good for women because it was always so socially acceptable for men to go out and have hookups, but for girls it was always looked down on," says Krista Murray, a senior

at the University of Rhode Island. "I think the more that it's talked about, the more that it's normalized, especially for women."

For some, safety and solace can be found on dating apps. Hollie Sullivan, a trans student studying ceramics at MassArt, says, "A lot of trans people are not super desirable, societally [speaking]. So finding a space where you are desired allows for this validation I can get that I wouldn't get otherwise."

Coduto notices that younger people aren't rushing into relationships. "I think it's awesome that we're in a time where people can really think about who they are and what they're comfortable with," she says. "I also think they're really good at thinking through how to communicate those concerns, whether it's in relationships or to friends."

LAUREN SURBEY IS PURSUING A BACHELOR'S IN WRITING, LITERATURE AND PUBLISHING AT EMERSON COLLEGE.

HOPE

We'll Get a Break From the Pressure to Marry and Have Kids

BY BRYNN O'CONNOR

When I was younger, the little girls I watched on TV or read about in books yearned for the day they got to grow up, get married, and have kids. I didn't share those same hopes. And now that I'm 22 and preparing to leave college, I see just how common my disinterest in the traditional path is.

When my generation looks to millennials, an interesting picture emerges. A Pew Research Center report from 2020 showed that millennials, those born between 1981 to 1996, are less likely to be married, have children, and live with a spouse or child than previous generations did when they were the same age. These shifting practices, along with the fact that birth rates dropped 4 percent from 2019 to 2020, have led to headlines crying out a crisis: *It's the end of the family as we know it!*

Those of us uninterested in adhering to expectations are getting used to the increasingly panicked questioning. At family cookouts, the burgers aren't the only things that get grilled. *You just haven't found the right person*, relatives insist. *When you get older, your mind will change*.

But will it? When we envision something as simple as finding an affordable place to raise a child, some members of Gen Z are concerned. Sai Smaran, a 26-year-old engineering graduate student at Northeastern University, says having children will depend on whether he remains in Boston, a place he finds too expensive to start a family. (Marriage is a real possibility, though; it means having somebody to split rent with.)

Then there are the environmental considerations. "Considering the direction we are going with climate change... it's really hard to picture a happy life for that child,"

**MILLENNIALS ARE LESS LIKE-
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MARCOS RIVERA

MGH INSTITUTE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS
GRADUATE STUDENT STUDYING NURSING

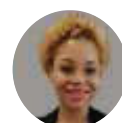


"I want to be a dad and have a lot of kids. I want to have kids basically as soon as I

can afford it, because I want to be young while I raise them so that when they're old enough I'm still young enough to live my life, travel, and have the time and energy to do what I want."

SHURYL ANGEL RICKERSON

ROXBURY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
FIRST-YEAR STUDENT



"I don't think [climate change] would stop me from having more kids. However, I'm

more cognitive of how I'm raising my children, and preparing them for the future. As the world changes, you have to change in order to adapt."

says Mae Blackwell, a 23-year-old studio-art student at Simmons University. "It would be really hard to explain why you're seeing this animal in a book, but it doesn't exist in real life anymore."

But even as millennials and Gen Z defy traditional expectations of marriage, they are embracing more inclusive definitions of family. They are the generations more likely to live with someone they're not married to, and more likely to support same-sex marriage, according to the Pew Research Center. Blackwell finds flaws in the traditional ways of doing things — but believes in love and the value of relationships. "The commitment of marriage does not really sit well with me," she says. "Rather than marriage, maybe a life partner, [someone] we're committed to, but we don't have to get married to feel secure in that."

We want to walk out of graduation into a world that acknowledges the old way of doing things isn't

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MARRIAGE AND KIDS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

the only way. We don't want to be judged if our roommate, who is also our partner, isn't our spouse. Or if we decide in the end not to continue the family lineage. Sorry about that, Grandma.

BRYNN O'CONNOR IS A JOURNALISM STUDENT AT EMERSON COLLEGE.

HOPE

We Can Find Work With Purpose

BY JORDAN REANIER

College students heading into the job market, like employees everywhere, are invested in doing work with purpose. But pandemic-era health and economic concerns have heightened the importance of this goal for young people, according to a Harvard Business School survey of 1,300 full-time students by assistant professor Ashley V. Whillans and her postdocs. Earlier research showed students were most interested in job flexibility, free time, and opportunities for advancement. Now, Whillans wrote, the "single highest job priority for the college students we studied was 'to have a job that allowed them to help other people.'"

The trends in the survey, published in 2020, are still playing out on campuses now. Abby Roberts-

EUNICE HAM

BOSTON COLLEGE JUNIOR STUDYING
POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY



"I'm a little unsure [of] being able to find what I am truly passionate about. Another thing is fi-

nances, practically speaking. Just making sure I'm able to make enough money and provide enough funds for myself to survive."



Cryts, a Lasell University freshman studying psychology, says conversations around COVID, Black Lives Matter, and other prominent social movements have influenced her and her peers to become more engaged, drawing them into professions that can create a difference. "I like social work and human services because it gets me involved with that work personally," she says. She's also a one-to-one aide at an elementary school and has worked with chil-

dren with developmental disabilities. "It's so rewarding to see that progress up close."

Anthony Rieves, a junior from the University of Massachusetts Boston studying English, started his college career focused on computer science, only to make a change after growing frustrated that the field was mainly "advertised to me as a way to make money," he says. He attributes his passion to help people to having

CASSIDY DEMALIA

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL
SENIOR STUDYING CRIMINAL JUSTICE



"My biggest concern is that I won't be happy in my career. We have to pick our majors

so young and we base it off our interests alone, rather than our strengths and experiences. My advisers tell me that in my field everyone burns out easily, and because it is a competitive field I'm nervous I won't be successful."

KARLA RODRIGUEZ

SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY SENIOR
STUDYING PSYCHOLOGY



"My ideal field of work is working with immigrants, refugees, and/or children in either

a social work or non-profit/public policy setting. My concerns with this field [regard] a sense of burnout I may experience helping out these marginalized individuals... if I'm not properly equipped to help them out with what they need."

helped raise his siblings without a father figure. He hopes to one day work with elementary school students, being a positive male role model. "As a younger generation, we need to make sure those after us aren't struggling," he says. "A lot of people have this mentality that because they've struggled, everyone else needs to struggle." ■

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Send comments to magazine@globe.com. As-told-to interviews, which have been edited and condensed, conducted by Alexandria Alvarado, Lukas Harnisch, Brandon Hill, Alexandra Leiseca, Brynn O'Connor, Karissa Schaefer, Paulina Subia, Lauren Surbey, and Robin Van Impe.