

According to the Wall Street Journal, 71 percent of university seniors graduated with average debt of \$35,000 in 2015. The term 'student debt' is one with which most American college students are painfully familiar, as tuition and student debt rates are currently at an all-time high. To address this issue, it's necessary to examine its underlying factors, one of which is the economics of college football.

Methods used to fund unsuccessful football programs can exacerbate student debt with mandatory student fees. Countless students involuntarily — and sometimes unknowingly — subsidize athletics while receiving nothing in return.

Eastern Michigan University is one such example, spending nearly \$34 million on athletics in 2014 despite extremely limited success in the field. According to sports and business author John U. Bacon, 80 percent of that total was taken from the general fund and could have been used for academic purposes and scholarships. He pointed out, "...the result is that about 10 percent of in-state students' tuition goes to the athletic department, whether they care about it or not."

This example, unfortunately, is no anomaly. Other schools that follow this pattern include the University of California-Berkeley, University of Akron, and Temple University, whose football departments have spent so much that they are now financially dependent on student fees and university funds.

Some may argue that college football generates revenue and school spirit, and that athletic fees and exorbitant spending are therefore worth it. While this may be the case for profitable college football teams, it is not for most. Deficits are far too common, and according to the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, public university football spending spiked to over \$1.8 billion annually between 2009 and 2013. For the programs that actually benefit students financially, this kind of spending is fine, but for those that don't, it's inexcusable.

Football is a sport beloved by many, but when it's funded by student fees, it must generate revenue rather than serving as a financial black hole. Most students are graduating with crushing debt for the sake of their educations and futures. In 10 years, they should not be bearing the burden of their schools' past expenditures on flashy, unnecessary stadiums.