

Standardized comprehensive sex education critical for young students



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Awkward experiences are commonplace during a person's early teenage years. Just because something is awkward, however, does not make it bad.

Sex education could possibly be one of the most awkward experiences for a young adult navigating the maze of puberty. But these courses teach us about the information, habits and relationships that can help us become healthy adults. Not every student in the U.S. receives the same kind of sex education, and without the proper curriculum, we risk raising future generations that could harm their own health and the health of others.

There are typically two types of sex education curriculums: comprehensive and abstinence-only. Comprehensive sex education courses tend to cover a more holistic set of ways for people to avoid STDs, STIs and unintended pregnancies. Additionally, these courses can include broader discussions regarding sexuality and relationships.

Abstinence-only education courses only discuss abstinence as the way of preventing STDs,

STIs and unintended pregnancies. These kinds of courses also teach students to refrain from expressing sexuality outside of marriage. We can accept that, everyone will be better off.

Different schools handle sex education curriculums in their own ways, and each state has its own laws for what can and cannot be taught in sex education courses. If each state does not allow schools to offer comprehensive sex education, then it is less likely teenagers will learn how to have healthy and mature sexual relationships as they grow up.

This notion is especially pertinent in Louisiana, a state that has officially only encouraged abstinence-only education since the 1990s. In recent years, Louisiana has had some of the highest rates of pregnancies and STD or STI contraction in adolescents. With abysmal rates like these, it is clear that abstinence-only education is not effective.

A majority of parents surveyed in Louisiana, including in New Orleans, have said they would prefer comprehensive sex education. The issue received so much attention that a bill mandating comprehensive sex education in schools was introduced to the Louisiana House of Representatives on April 4. Despite the efforts of comprehensive sex education advocates, the State House voted against this bill.

If states like Louisiana do not offer comprehensive sex education, they will not allow for future generations to learn about their bodies or their relationships with other people. This makes college

resources more pertinent than ever.

If different states offer different kinds of sex education, with some offering none at all, then that could lead to miscommunication and misperceptions as to how to engage in a healthy sexual relationship. College students must have the resources necessary to help fill in any gaps they might have from their middle school or high school sex education courses.

Tulane students have access to The Well for Health Promotion at the Student Health Center for information on sexual health and access to various forms of contraception. Students can also schedule GYT, or "Get Yourself Tested," appointments to get tested for HIV/AIDS and other STIs, or they can schedule appointments just for STI testing. These are resources that should be available at all colleges and universities.

As colleges expand sexual health resources, Louisiana and other states that promote abstinence-only sex education must help ensure the sexual health and safety of students by making sex education classes comprehensive.

Talking about sex in schools does not have to be awkward. If we can accept that, everyone will be better off.

This is an opinion article and does not reflect the views of The Tulane Hullabaloo. Daniel is a senior at Newcomb-Tulane College. He can be reached at dhorowi@tulane.edu.

Community colleges serve essential function in current education climate



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President Trump has repeatedly made disparaging comments about community colleges in the United States, claiming they are inferior to vocational schools. This opinion is both ill-informed and incorrect. For many years, the community college system has played a vital role in providing post-secondary education for students, and it continues to promote socioeconomic mobility and economic growth.

President Trump said that he did not know what the term "community college" meant and said people ought to "call it vocational and technical. People know what that means." He has made similar remarks in the past, even at a White House forum on education in March. Trump's misunderstanding of the function of community colleges is unfortunate, as these institutions are key to creating the very jobs he promises.

Community colleges were established after World War II to educate workers for America's growing economy. There are currently 1,100 community colleges across the United States, and more than 40 percent of undergraduates are enrolled in a community college. For these 9 million Americans, community colleges

offer low tuition and more open admittance practices. In this way, community colleges are able to educate millions of Americans who cannot afford or access four-year universities or who may not require that level of education for their desired career paths.

degree or work in a variety of fields. In contrast, vocational school focus on teaching students the skills and knowledge necessary for more specific careers, such as those in manufacturing or cosmetology.

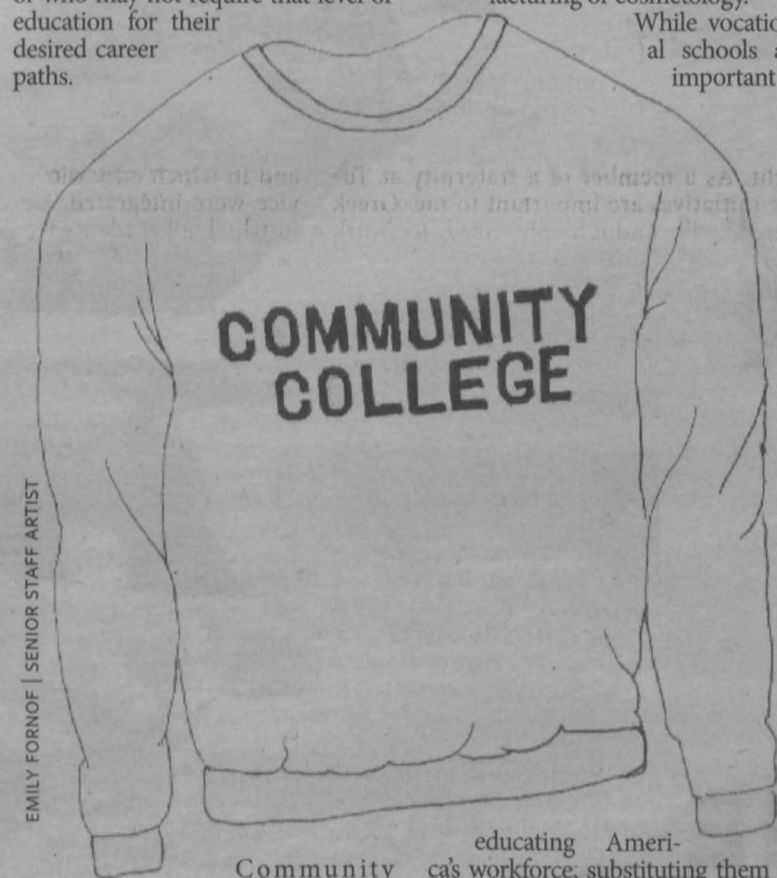
While vocational schools are important in

By closing community colleges, Trump would be closing a pathway for millions of low-income and first-generation college students to enter the middle class.

This can be seen on a local scale here in New Orleans. While the average annual tuition at Delgado Community College is \$4,300, the average cost of tuition and fees at a public four-year university in Louisiana is more than \$8,000. Moreover, attending a community college like Delgado is tens of thousands of dollars less expensive than studying at a private university like Tulane. For students looking to earn an associate's degree or save money in earning their bachelor's degree, access to courses at community colleges is crucial to their academic and professional futures.

The ability of low-income students to receive a high quality education is vital to the nation as a whole. Earning an associate's degree can significantly increase earnings over one's lifetime by opening up new fields and professions to them. Given that community colleges serve low-income and first-generation students more than four-year universities do, this growth in earnings can also serve to reduce income inequality and support the growth of the middle class, which benefits all Americans. While Trump seems to find the community college system confusing, the positive results it generates are clear, and its role in the American economy is undoubtedly important.

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Community colleges differ from vocational schools in that they offer a broader education with a basis in liberal arts that is meant to prepare students to pursue a bachelor's

educating America's workforce, substituting them for community colleges would greatly limit students' possibilities and deprive them of the knowledge needed to enter a four-year university or the diploma needed to pursue a lucra-

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