Twitter Thread by Mattie Bowen



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Grad school app season is (mostly) over, and since academic twitter is going nuts about the idea of paying research assistants $15/hr...

Let's talk about how expensive it is to be a student applying to graduate school--especially for underrepresented students.

(1/14)

This fall, I spent $515 on applying to grad school. This might sound high, but in fact, the cost was ~4 times less than it would have been in a normal year for me. Why? Mostly, the GRE.

(2/14)

Since the GRE subject tests were cancelled bc pandemic, every school I applied to no longer required the GRE, general or subject. I also had application fee waivers to 2/3 of the schools I applied to through various programs like AISES.

(3/14)

The general GRE costs $205 and the subject tests cost $150. Sending scores to more than four schools will cost you $27 for each test.

(4/14)

If I didn't have fee waivers for 2/3 of my apps and if every school had required the GRE tests—which almost every grad school did before 2020—the estimated cost for me to apply to grad schools is well over $2000.

(5/15)

And that's assuming I didn't retake either GRE, and that the average fee is $75. Realistically, a lot of applicants take a GRE subject test twice, and depending on the schools, the average fee could be more like $80 or $90. In that case, the total cost is more like $2500.

(6/14)

I applied to 16 programs at 13 schools. Most people won't apply to that many, but many students I know applied to >10. And if you have a lower GPA than many of your peers who are applying, you may need to apply to more schools to have a chance of getting into one.

(7/14)

If you're, say, a lower-income student and/or BIPOC who has to pay your own way through college, guess what? You spend more time working than those of your peers who have known how academia works all their lives. You have less time/money/energy to get that perfect GPA.

(8/14)

At one point I held 5 jobs at the same time while taking 16 credits. You know which one paid me the least? My research assistant job, which is supposedly what's gonna get me into grad school. And I put less time into that job because I had to work the others to pay rent.

(9/14)

I am so sick of tenured professors making $100-$200k/yr talking about how you don't go into academia for the money. There is no clearer sign that that person has no idea what kind of privilege they have--or what kind of privilege their students may not have.

(10/14)

If by some miracle I am ever running my own lab or research group, you bet I'm paying my undergrads a living wage, AND PAYING FOR THEIR GRAD SCHOOL FEES.

(11/14)

Another fun fact—the GRE that costs students thousands of dollars each year? It's owned by ETS, a registered NONPROFIT that does not pay (most) federal taxes.

(12/14)

You know how much the CEO of ETS makes per year? Over $1.2 million. Their exec board makes $20 million a year. As a nonprofit under the guise of education. It's DISGUSTING.

(13/14)

Please check out some BIPOC accounts to hear more about their experiences in academia: @cosmojellyfish @ximenaccid1 @_Astro_Nerd_ @jenniferxnicole @keshawnrants @That_Astro_Chic @astrotoya to name a few!

(14/14)