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Associated Students of Montana Tech

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# THE **T** MONTANA TECH'S STUDENT NEWSPAPER TECHNOCRAT



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## The Technocrat Staff

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Cover by Kyle Kankelborg

# My First Semester Experience

Technocrat Assistant Editor on first semester life at Tech

By Emmy Keenan

JUST OVER A YEAR AGO, I was undecided on where I wanted to go to college. There were many potential options and I had never really considered it much until my senior year of high school. It's hard for me to believe that a year has gone by since then, but I've realized over that time that I'm glad to have made the choices for my education that I did.

As a local and recent graduate, Montana Tech was a school that many people I knew had attended or were considering attending. Tech has the well-earned reputation of a quality school with high job placement and high rate of return. This is what attracted many of the people that I knew to Tech, but when I finally decided to come here, it was difficult to predict what life would be like as a first year student.

They say that the average college student will change their major at least a few times before deciding on one, but I hope to stay with and graduate in Professional and Technical Communications. As a freshman, I have quite a ways to go, but I've been told numerous times that it will be worth it and that this will prepare me for whatever I want to do in life.

As for classes, our teachers in high school will always tell you what college is going to be like; what you need to know, what the professors expect from you, etc., but so far I've found that many of these things aren't like what they say. It varies from class to class, and it's hard to generalize what the academic experience is really like, but it's certainly been different and more challenging than from what I had predicted going into college.

The same is true for dorm life. Last semester I knew many of the people in Prospector Hall, and it had a certain sense of community, probably due to all the activities that the Residence Life organized as well as just getting to know people by seeing them around. I often recognize people from either my classes or orientation. Freshman orientation was a time when I acquainted myself not only to other students, but to the college and its features as well. Attending the events of orientation helped me get to know my way around campus as well as the faculty and staff, plus just the college in general. Some of the people I met during this time are even friends that I still have today.

My experience here at Montana Tech has so far been a positive one and I hope to continue that. With only being a semester in, it's still very much a learning process, but just from my experience here these past several months I look forward to the years ahead.



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# Year in Photos: Montana Tech in 2014





# Building Butte for the 21st Century

Leaders aggressively tackle the export of Tech graduates

By Molly O'Neill

IT IS NO SECRET THE “Campus on the Hill” prepares its students for success in engineering and professional degrees. It is no secret that these students are packing their bags and heading every other direction outside of Butte, the state, and even the country. Can we blame these graduates? There’s a future and a hefty paycheck awaiting them – but not here on the Richest Hill on Earth, or so they say.

“Tech is a great resource for Butte but, 7 out of 10 graduates take jobs outside of Butte,” stated Chief Executive Matt Vincent. The very Butte-like grit and perseverance remain and our community does not lose hope. Keep Tech graduates here, we chant. Yet, how do we anchor its graduates?

“Start hiring more college graduates with internships,” stated Vincent, “cur-

rently St. James is the number one employer of Tech graduates in Nursing and Health Informatics.”

**“Tech is a great resource for Butte but, 7 out of 10 graduates take jobs outside of Butte”**

**-Matt Vincent, Chief Executive of Butte Silver-Bow**

Butte– people drink the water and they stay,” said Highlands College Dean, John Garic.

Highlands College has recently been granted a \$25 million resource program for Strengthening Workforce Alignment in Montana’s Manufacturing and Energy Industries, called SWAMMEI, which trains individuals in jobs in manufacturing or industrial related fields. It’s a rapid route to a guaranteed job in Butte, and is

One of the hidden gems of Butte, south of the city, is Highlands College, a vocational two-year school. As graduates are fleeing the north campus and Butte, the graduates from the south campus remain present.

“I don’t know what it is about

in high demand.

Workforce training programs include both manufacturing industry training and energy industry training; included in welding is an aerospace welding option that is only one semester and works in conjunction with Montana Precision Products Company which is owned by Tech graduates, Burt and Mike Robins. This is a route for one who might be dissuaded from a two or four year program, and you are guaranteed a job directly following completion of the program.

“We are filling the largest need in Butte, which is for these aerospace welders,” stated Garic.

Highlands College and the technical degrees it offers benefits our local economy. Kehli Hazlett is point of contact at the Highlands College and keeper of the grant at work there.

“Highland two year technical is really growing,” said Hazlett, “People are retiring and leaving their shops closed because they don’t have anybody to replace them.”

“We are doing our best to put as many students as we can through machining and welding to ebb the curve of the loss of the specialized individuals who are retiring,” continued Hazlett.

“75% of our students at Highland College come from a 5 county area, 95% of our students come from Montana, so Highland College mission is different from the North Campus missions which is training engineers who go all over the world.”

Other things are in line for growing Tech, but it’s not only going to cater to engineering. According to Dr. Carrie Vath, Tech will be changing



Starting Top Left to Right: Chief Executive Matt Vincent, Kehli Hazlett, Highlands College Dean John Garic, Dr. Carrie Vath, and Commissioner Brendan McDonough

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**“75% of our students at Highland College come from a 5 county area, 95% of our students come from Montana, so Highland College mission is different from the North Campus missions which is training engineers who go all over the world.”**

### **Kehli Hazlett, SWAMMEI Workforce Navigator**

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to meet the need of the community. Vath is the director for the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) and also serves on the Committee of Retention Efforts (CORE).

“We aren’t going to just increase enrollment not just in engineering, maybe it’s looking at some of our programs where there’s lower enrollment and ask how we can grow enrollment in the smaller degree programs including, but not limited to, such as statistics and biology,” stated Vath.

Based off a study for the 2013-2014 academic year, Tech students who are out-of-state create a \$5,499,900 profit for our local economy. And, for out-of-county students there was a profit of \$10,708,200 spending over the course of 9 months from these students, totaling student spending in the local economy to be \$16,208,100.

Butte has the capacity for growth and providing jobs for Tech graduates and young professionals alike. Brendan McDonough, a commissioner for Butte Silver Bow County believes Tech has tremendous potential.

“We have tons of room for potential, tons of land and development opportunities and new infrastructure,” said McDonough.

“Continuation of relationship with Chancellor Blacketter, continue to grow and work with mutual beneficial solutions to goals for growth in Butte and our efforts in revitalizing uptown Butte,” stated Vincent, “Uptown Butte has the best urban atmosphere for youth to breathe life into.”

With the growth in Tech and ambitions of expanding the less popular degree programs and developing new technical programs, there is a future in Butte, but not one that should be confused with its past. It’s a place for advancement, not

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**Even though many graduates leave and face the challenges of the world, many find a home on the Richest Hill. Opportunity presents itself in Butte, and it’s not slowing down anytime soon.**

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just a history lesson. Montana Tech is truly a correlation to cultivating economic growth and retention. Even though many graduates leave and face the challenges of the world, many find a home on the Richest Hill. Opportunity presents itself in Butte, and it’s not slowing down anytime soon.

“There’s no reason a young entrepreneur can’t start here,” stated Vincent.

# The Problems with Social Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Future of America's retirement lies on the edge of despair

By Adam M. Hawks

**W**ITH THE 114<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS SWORN IN the issues surrounding Social Security still linger and its long-term problems facing the United States and the communities within it. The current and future problems of Social Security deal with the program's funding, which is set to run out of funds in 2033. Lawmakers struggle to solve the complex problem revolved around Social Security. Two critical questions for Tech students and citizens nationwide are, do Montana citizens sacrifice the future of the program for the retirees of today, or do we make adjustments to the program today that will hurt both the workforce and retirees?

When President Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act in 1935, its goal was to create benefits for retirees paid for by the current workforce. In a 2009 Washington Post article, there were 6 people on Social Security per 100 people in the workforce in the 1960s. In the same story from the Post, today there are 35 people on Social Security per 100 people in the workforce, and the numbers are

**The reform needed to be done will become a campaign issue for both political parties, but without a super-majority for either party in Congress, and the current polarization of American politics, it is unlikely reform will be addressed until after the 2016 elections.**

projected to increase.

In addition to the problems of less people in the modern workforce paying into the system compared to the 1960s and there is the issue of rising costs of living. Today, the average retiree benefit from Social Security is \$2,663. For the many retirees that depend on Social Security as their income, any changes or proposed cuts to the program can put seniors in a difficult spot. Social Security is currently solvent until 2033, meaning that it will pay full benefits to retirees. After Social Security becomes insolvent, only 77% of benefits will be paid to retirees, resulting in a reduction of a monthly benefit of \$2,663 to \$2,051.

President Bush proposed reforming Social Security in 2005 by giving Americans the option to allow for them to partially invest their funds, but both Republicans and Democrats did not engage in the president's plan to reform Social Security. However, since the failed attempt to reform Social Security by President Bush in 2005, the talk of reform has remained a political land mine for



President George W. Bush attempted to reform Social Security in 2005, but lacked support from Republicans and Democrats following Hurricane Katrina and the issue hasn't been addressed for 10 years

politicians nationwide. The proposed solutions from the Democrats include raising the opt-out option from \$117,000 to \$250,000 in order to increase revenue into the program. Now the payroll tax will increase by 1.7% to offset yearly spending increases. However, one solution proposed by Democrats, includes increasing the payroll taxes further to offset the number of retirees to worker ratio. The tax increase would hurt working Americans today to maintain the solvency of the program for the next 75 years.

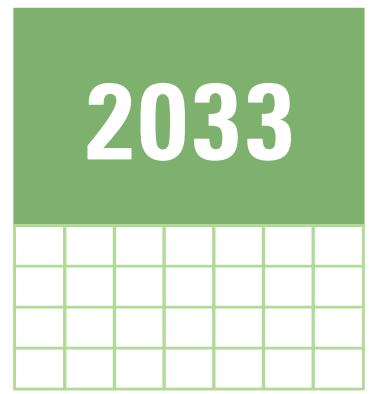
The reform needed to be done will become a campaign issue for both political parties, but without a super-majority for either party in Congress, and the current polarization of American politics, it is unlikely reform will be addressed until after the 2016 elections. The lack of real reform will hurt both today's workers and seniors. The question is, can Social Security be saved, or are people willing to take a quarter less from their benefits in 2033? For Montana Tech students graduating in the next couple of years, are they willing to pay higher payroll taxes to help today's seniors and a divisive entitlement program?

Feel free to let us know what you think, send us your Letters to the Editor to [Technocrat@MTECH.edu](mailto:Technocrat@MTECH.edu).

# What's going on with SOCIAL SECURITY?

in **2015**  
S.S. Tax will increase by **1.7%**

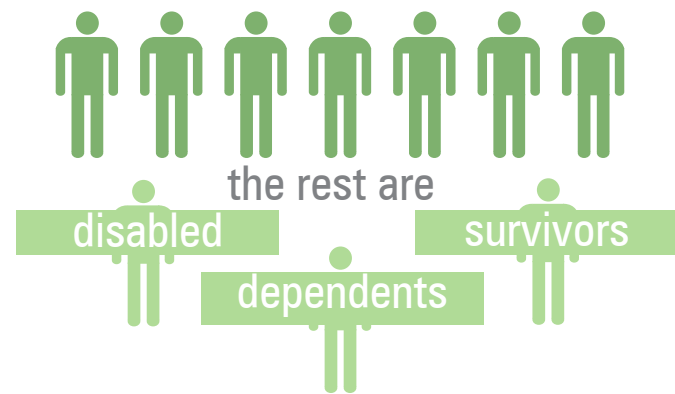
without reform,  
Social Security  
will only pay full  
benefits until



new retirees **65+**  
will receive an average of



**70%** of the **57 mil** retirees on S.S. are retired workers



**6.2%** of taxes \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
per paycheck, matched by employers,  
is put into S.S. while the self-employed  
pay **12.4%**

incomes up to **\$117,000** must pay into Social Security



# Book Review: "The Name of the Wind"

Rothfuss' novel an irresistible read for fantasy lovers

By Shyla Allred

**T**HIS FANTASY IS DIFFERENT Not for the originality in the type of story chosen, but for the methodical nature of the author. The novel makes a marvelous debut as Patrick Rothfuss' first book. Rothfuss writes in testament

"...to my father, who taught me that if I was going to do something, I should take my time and do it right the first time". And he did.

The story follows the hero Kvothe, 'pronounced nearly the same as "Quothe"', shifting between a third person narrative and then to Kvothe's own first person perception of events as he lived them. He tells his story to a man called the Chronicler, who tracked him down to record the truth. When Chronicler finally convinces Kvothe to speak to him, the protagonist begins by saying,

"I have stolen princesses back from sleeping barrow kings. I have burned down the town of Trebon...I was expelled from the University at a younger age than most people are allowed in... I have talked to Gods, loved women, and written songs that make the minstrels weep".

Despite the apparent heroics of the man, the start of the tale finds him wiping down the bar in an inn, calling himself by a different name. Rothfuss shatters the image of Kvothe as the perfect Mary Sue - a character who is simply good at everything - almost immediately. He writes

"... without willing his eyes fell on a chest at the foot of the bed...in a moment of looking, his face regained all the lines the simple pleasures of the day had slowly smoothed away...leaving nothing behind his eyes but emptiness and ache...Then they were gone, replaced by the weary face of an innkeeper, a man who called himself Kote".

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**...the young hero struggles his way through a fantastic world of love, loss, triumph, poverty, failure, music and near-misses.**

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Clearly, Kvothe hides behind his new name. This is a man who has failed and now slowly wastes away, his failure haunting him. Later, he even mounts the strange grey sword, named Folly, on display like a silent reminder to himself.

Throughout the novel, trouble around the Waystone inn with creatures odd and sinister contrast the troubles of a young Kvothe's life. From the concern of a boy who fears things will never be the same between him and his mentor, to the loss of those people and things closest to him, to the years on the streets of Tarbean, his surprising acceptance into the University, a restless women, a knack for acting and playing the lute, and his almost desperate search for answers - the story may be long, but it certainly never gets dull.

Rothfuss and Kvothe will capture you as the young hero struggles his way

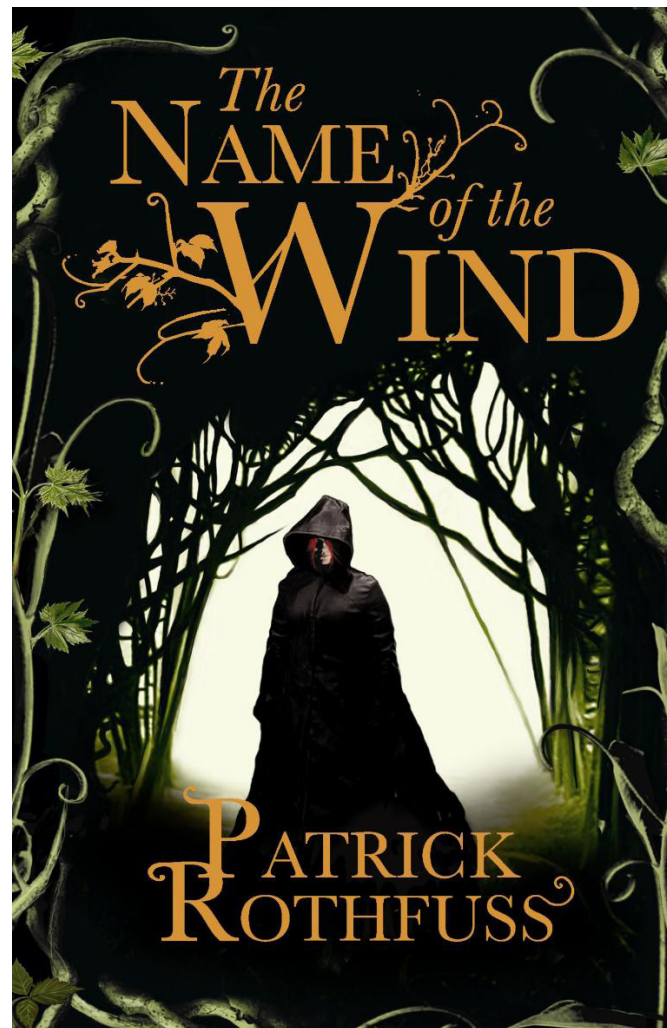


Photo courtesy of DAW Books

through a fantastic world of love, loss, triumph, poverty, failure, music and near-misses. Undoubtedly, you won't be able to stop once you've flipped the first few pages, staying up late each night to follow this incredible tale and searching for the next book before even finishing the first.

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**The next issue of the Technocrat will be published on**

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