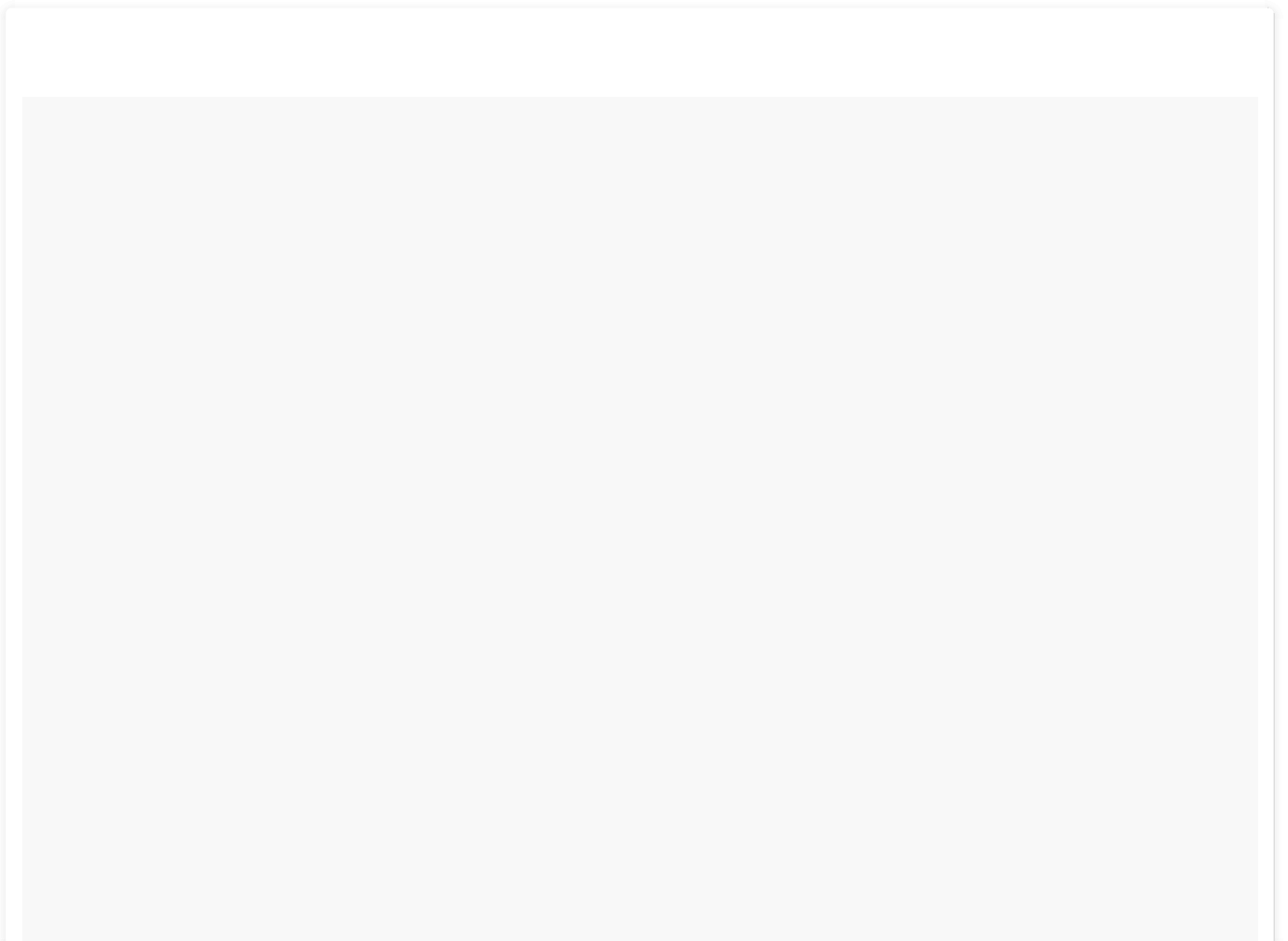


Does College Crush the Entrepreneurial Spirit?

The Washington Post recently [ran an article](#) about young Lena Geller, a newly enrolled student at George Washington University.

Like most freshmen students, Ms. Geller is learning the ins and outs of college life. But as the *WaPo* explains, she is also learning to juggle her studies with managing her [own business](#) as a baker and cake decorator extraordinaire. That business acumen was just raised a notch as she was inducted into the world of dealing with regulations and limitations.

According to the *Post*, Geller was told that she couldn't run a business from the dorm kitchen, a policy which she admitted made sense.



A post shared by l e n a (@lenalalalala) on Jun 27, 2017 at 1:53pm PDT

What's interesting, however, is how George Washington University handled her case. Instead of running her business out on a rail, advisors met with Geller to see how they could encourage her entrepreneurship and keep her business running during her tenure at the school:

“GW loves that spirit of innovation for our students,” said Peter Konwerski, vice provost and dean of student affairs. ‘Anytime a student comes – especially a freshman student – who’s really passionate about something, we want to support them. I think at the same time .??. there’s a teachable moment here.’

“

‘I’m the dean of students, so I’m inspired by students every day,’ Konwerski said. ‘I want to help them achieve their aspirations and dreams.’”

As most everyone will agree, such a helpful spirit is commendable... but it's also very rare, simply for the fact that not many young people come to college with the mindset of maintaining their own business while maneuvering classes. In fact, fewer individuals – whether college age or not – are

even attempting to start their own business. According to [a 2016 report](#), “Total entrepreneurial activity in the U.S. ... fell to 12% in 2015, from 14% in 2014.”

Decline in entrepreneurial activity is [usually chalked up](#) to an over-regulated environment or a struggling economy. But Geller’s experience raises the question: Is the decline of entrepreneurial activity also related to the tunnel vision we have when it comes to higher education?

Think about it. We’ve convinced most students that their goal in life is to get into a spectacular college and maybe even grad school. To realize this dream, they spend their high school years chasing after unique experiences, high grades, and extra credit to put on their college application. Although a part-time job may be involved for some, life in the working, real-life adult world certainly appears to [come much slower](#) for young people than it used to.

Instead of convincing students to wait to start their life or business until they finish their education, should we be finding more ways in which we can help them do both?