

What's the Value of Higher Ed: For Communities

America's colleges and universities contribute to the sustainability and vibrancy of their communities in many ways. Their impact is vast, their value immense. Trustees, as civic and community leaders, are in unique position to highlight this news. Here are some helpful points to share in op-eds, remarks, and conversations on the value that higher education brings to our communities. *Consider the ways your own institution benefits its community and how to communicate these contributions effectively.*

Colleges and universities drive local economies.

With **20 million enrolled students** and **\$1 trillion in annual economic activity**, U.S. colleges and universities make a significant contribution to the American economy. By comparison, federal, state, and local investments in higher education total \$160 billion.

Colleges and universities employ their neighbors.

Universities and university hospitals are the **largest private employers in 13 states**. Nationwide, colleges and universities are major employers within their cities and throughout their regions. Combined, colleges and universities **employ almost 4 million workers**. Many schools also make important contributions by incubating new start-ups and sustaining businesses with a skilled workforce.

Colleges and universities enrich their communities.

Many colleges enhance their communities by operating museums, libraries, lecture series, and sports events, as well as providing access to the arts, dance, and theater. Campuses are truly anchors for community life, especially in rural areas.

Colleges and universities serve their communities.

In 2015, more than **three million undergrads volunteered** in their communities, providing a total of **286 million hours** of service at a collective market value of **almost \$7 billion**. Today's colleges and universities regularly connect students, faculty, and staff with service projects that make an impact far beyond their campus boundaries.

And, college and universities advance their communities.

Colleges and universities work to address the most pressing challenges in their regions, investing time, money, and manpower in research projects that tackle critical issues like public safety and environmental protection. The community benefits from these efforts in many ways.