

Just the Facts: The Promise of Higher Education

One part of a broader public concern about the value of college is a perception that students do not learn the right things in the right ways. As a Guardian of the public trust, you share responsibility for improving public awareness of the value of collegiate learning. Facts to know¹:

Fact: Colleges and universities are reorganizing the academic business around high-impact student learning experiences (*see p. 3*).

- A focus on mutual responsibility for learning, shared by teachers and students, is changing the way a new generation of faculty members approaches teaching.
- A revolution in student advising is occurring around predictive analytics, in which high-touch, timely guidance is tailored and promptly delivered to students who need it.
- Hundreds of nonprofit institutions, plus an 18-state coalition, are rapidly increasing key student experiences like internships, service-learning, and research.

Fact: Colleges and universities provide educational programs that students want, our economy needs, and will contribute to students' economic and personal success (*see p. 5*).

- Business and healthcare are now the top U.S. bachelor's degrees conferred. Together, these fields accounted for nearly 1/3 of all those awarded in 2016.
- Employers place high value on the outcomes of a broad-based education. Institutions are responding by infusing broader skills-building into popular fields of study.
- "Flipped" classes, "hybrid" and online courses, and technology-enabled lectures provide a distinctive twenty-first century class experience for many students.

Fact: Colleges and universities are deeply invested in meeting students where they are and smoothing transitions from high school to college, and between colleges and universities (*see p. 7*).

- Remediation, while sometimes necessary, is associated with slow-downs to degree completion and even dropping out of college, so institutions are finding creative ways to integrate remedial work with college-level classes and keep students on track.
- In several states, K-12 and higher education faculty have developed early interventions together to help students avoid the need for remediation in the first place.
- Over 1/3 of four-year college students transfer at least once; and about 1/5 of all transfer students change institutions more than twice.

Fact: Colleges and universities are innovating to promote degree completion (*see p. 9*).

- The percentage of young adults aged 25 or older with a college degree has increased from 33 percent in 2000 to 45 percent in 2017.
- Nearly 70 million Americans hold college degrees—a figure driving global competition.

¹ Outlined in *The Promise of Higher Education*