



Most Americans Support Post-Secondary Education

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To : Interested Parties

From : Civis Analytics

This research was conducted by [Civis Analytics](#), a leading data science technology and analytics company. Civis helps organizations leverage their data, technology, and cutting-edge data science research to develop smarter strategy and make better decisions.

In August and September of 2017, Civis asked 5,647 Americans and 675 K-12 teachers whether they think post-secondary education is valuable and whether students should pursue it, as well as whether they are satisfied with two- and four-year degree programs. The margin of error on results is about +/-2% for the results among the general public and about +/-4% for the results among teachers.

Most Americans see some form of post-secondary education as worthwhile

The vast majority of Americans (86%) feel that higher education after high school enhances job prospects. Most (89%) also think high school students should pursue an education program after graduation from high school.

Similarly, the majority of Americans (53%) say college degrees are worthwhile investments overall. Forty-two percent (42%) of Americans say college degrees are not worthwhile due to student debt and poor job prospects.

While most Americans feel positive on the whole about the value of higher education, we do see some key differences by demographics.

- **Young people and those with lower educational attainment feel less optimistic about the value of higher education.** Specifically, those without a four-year college degree are less satisfied with four-year programs, while those with higher incomes are more likely to describe education as valuable.

- Partisanship isn't a major differentiator of optimism about higher education in general, with most Democrats and Republicans agreeing that higher education is worthwhile and that it should be pursued in some form by most students.

While satisfaction with higher education is high overall, the public is somewhat more satisfied with community colleges / two-year programs than four-year college degrees

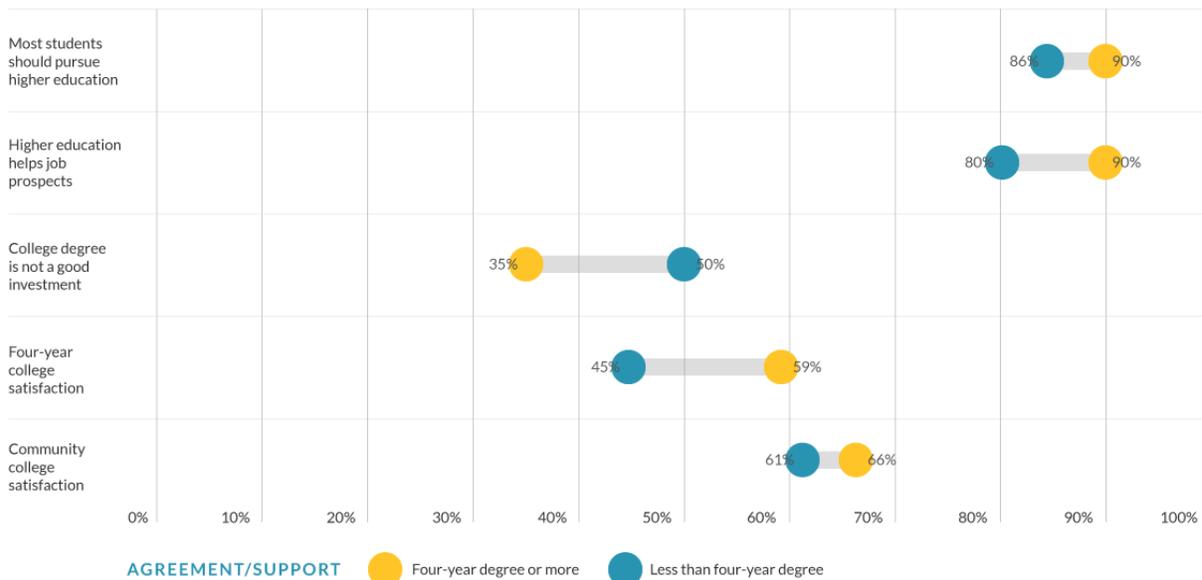
Satisfaction with two-year programs is higher than satisfaction with four-year college degree programs, but more than half of Americans are satisfied with both types of higher education.

- Nearly two thirds of Americans are generally satisfied with community colleges / two-year programs (63%), compared to just over half of four-year college degree programs (52%).

Satisfaction with four-year colleges is correlated with partisanship and education.

- Nearly two thirds of Democrats are satisfied with four-year programs (60%) compared to just under half of Republicans (49%).
- In addition to partisanship, personal educational attainment is a major predictor of four-year college satisfaction. We find that non college-educated Democrats have the same satisfaction (about 50% satisfied) as college-educated Republicans, whereas non college-educated Republicans are the least satisfied. College-educated Democrats are significantly more satisfied than the rest of the population.

SATISFACTION AND AGREEMENT BY PERSONAL EDUCATION



Concern about the cost of four-year programs is a primary driver of dissatisfaction with these programs

Among those who are dissatisfied with four-year programs, the **cost of four-year college programs** is a leading concern (39%), selected disproportionately by **Democrats, younger individuals, and people of color**.

We do see partisan differences in causes of dissatisfaction, with **concerns about schools imposing a political viewpoint** much more salient among self-identified **Republicans and those in counties that had more 2016 votes for Trump than Clinton**. However, these concerns are expressed by a minority of the population as a whole.

Teachers are especially supportive of higher education, with over 90% reporting that higher education is a worthwhile investment for most high school students

Teachers are highly supportive of higher education — even more so than the general public — with 92% reporting agreement with the statement that it's easier to get a good job with an education after high school than it is to find a good job without one and 91% saying that most students should pursue some form of additional education after high school.

Additionally, 65% of teachers say higher education is a good investment overall, even considering the cost of this education. Like members of the general public, teachers are generally very satisfied with the quality of higher education in the US. 75% report satisfaction with four-year programs, while 83% are satisfied with community colleges and two-year degree programs.

About Civis

Civis is a data science technology and consultancy founded in 2013 and made up of some of the leading data scientists in the country. Civis works with both private and public sector clients to apply cutting-edge data science to various business challenges, all enabled on the Civis's open, extensible data science platform.

Civis assists a fast-growing and diverse group of both public and private sector clients. Its data analytics products and services have spanned four continents and multiple industries including higher education institutions, retail, energy, entertainment, healthcare, as well as with major non-profits, political campaigns, and advocacy groups. Charitable organizations like the American Red Cross or the Robin Hood Foundation, as well as companies like AirBnB and Boeing, harness the power of their own data using Civis products and services.

In four years, we've grown from 13 employees to a team of over 140 engineers, statisticians, and solution-seekers with diverse backgrounds in Fortune 500 companies, international non-profits, Ivy League academia, and even actual rocket science. Our work has been featured in the *New York Times*, *Bloomberg BusinessWeek*, *Time Magazine*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *MIT Technology Review*; and we have been named one of "America's Best Consulting Firms" by *Forbes Magazine* two years running.