



College Newsletter Spring 2010



You're telling me it's going to cost
\$50,000 per year for 4 years!?!?!

Focus on Finances

Sticker shock. That's what many families face when they begin to explore the cost of a college education. It is not unusual today to find the yearly cost of attendance at a private university surpassing the \$50,000 mark. Yikes! The good news is that, even without scholarships, there are several steps students can take to minimize costs.

The first thing that a college bound student should consider is earning college credit before they actually enter college. By taking AP (Advanced Placement) or IB (International Baccalaureate) classes in high school and earning an acceptable score on the exam, students can earn college credit. If a student has taken 5 AP classes in high school and earns college credit for each class, they can shorten time needed in college by a semester. Other tests such as CLEP (College Level Examination Program) and DSST (DANTES Subject Standardized Test) tests can be taken and allow you to earn credit for knowledge you have acquired outside of school – perhaps through a job, internship or independent study.

Once a student enters college, they need to be intentional about graduating on time. If a student changes majors, or doesn't create a four-year plan of coursework, college can take 5, 6 or even more years to complete. Last summer, MSN Money reported that colleges, on average, graduate fewer than 60% of their students in six years. If students are provided with guidance in course selection and career direction, a four-year graduation goal is attainable. Extra years in college are expensive not only because of the cost of the education, but also because of the cost of lost wages.

It may also be beneficial for a student to consider taking less expensive courses at another institution during the summers and transferring the credits. Community colleges and online courses provide many opportunities to help manage college costs while staying on track for graduation.

Finally, students should be encouraged to have an on-campus job during college. Recent research by Gary R. Pike found that students who worked 20 hours or less at a campus job saw a positive effect on their grades¹. Work not only provides an income for the student, it also appears to enhance academic performance.

The Project on Student Debt stated recently that the average debt for graduating seniors with loans is over \$23,000. With the expense of college escalating and student debt on the rise, it is important for students to have a game plan to manage college costs even before they arrive on campus.

Education Pays

Recent unemployment figures show that even in a recession, additional education pays dividends.

Unemployment Rate:

Bachelor's Degree or higher:	4.7%
Associate's Degree or similar:	7.9%
High School Diploma:	9.4%
Less than HS Diploma:	15%

- FoxBusiness 8/12/09

Facts to consider from www.finaidfacts.org

- On average, college tuition increases 8% per year
- 69% of all students at public colleges and universities receive financial aid
- 83% of all students at private colleges and universities receive financial aid
- In 2008-2009, the average cost for tuition, room and board was \$14,333 at a public institution and \$34,132 at a private institution

Check it out ✓

www.kathrynarch.com recommends the following websites: www.finaid.org, www.collegeresults.org, and www.nacacnet.org

¹ Published in the "Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice"



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