

Data Matters: Strong National Support for Community Colleges

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How students and Americans in general grade community colleges.

A recent national survey by WGBH and Anderson Robbins Research finds strong support for community colleges among both two-year students themselves and the general population, particularly when it comes to value and affordability. Here's a look at the findings, which are of particular interest given the backlash against significant student debt and the cost of higher education.

Support for Community Colleges



Adults grade the value of education at community colleges highest.

- **Community colleges: 68%**
- Public universities: 60%
- Private colleges or universities: 52%
- Online universities: 35%

(A and B grades combined, on a scale of A to F)

56% of adults would advise a HS graduate considering taking out loans to go to community college.



"If a high school senior inherited \$200,000, what do you think would be better for him or her to do with that money?"

- Spend some on a community college education and save the rest:
 - 66% of community college students
 - 61% of Americans
- Spend it all on a 4-year college education:
 - 34% of community college students and of Americans
- Not sure/refused to answer:
 - 5% of Americans



Biggest factors in student decision to go to community college:

- **Affordability: 75%**
- Learning job skills: 51%
- Convenient location: 46%

Students and the general population agree on the three most important college benefits:

- Developing critical thinking skills
- Gaining specific, marketable job skills
- Getting a diploma or certificate required for a job