Data-Informed Advocacy for Independent Colleges

Transforming Numbers into Narratives Carolyn Sloane Mata, Ph.D.

About Me:

- 8 years as VP for Research at the Georgia Independent College Association
- Contracted with: <u>NC</u>, SC, VA, LA, GA, TX, OR
- 10 years as IPEDS Educator for NCES, frequent TRP invitee and moderator
- Taught 5 cohorts of Data Literacy Institute
- Working with CA and HI on SHEEO Basic Needs Academy
- Served in IR at multiple institutions
- Contracted with Lumina, SHEEO, NECHE, and SREB on data projects
- Assisted multiple institutions with accreditation self studies



Roadmap

Urrent higher education climate	
Why data –informed advocacy?	
3 key lessons in data advocacy	
Starting with why and the importance of storytelling	
Z Data that resonate – with examples	
Where's the data?	

Big Picture/Big Data

"why data" \rightarrow "how to use it" \rightarrow "where to find it."

Let's talk more about the current higher education climate...

CAREERS > DEGREES & CERTIFICATIONS Why Your College Degree Might Not Be Enough in Today's Economy

Table of Contents

The Bottom Line

Why a College Degree Isn't Enough? Desirable Skills and Training Next Steps





An advanced degree was once viewed as the best path toward job security. It's now proving to be a liability.



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NEW YORK POST

BUSINESS

Gen Z workers training to become plumbers, electricians as they lose faith in college degrees

By Taylor Herzlich Published Oct. 1, 2024, 11:37 a.m. ET

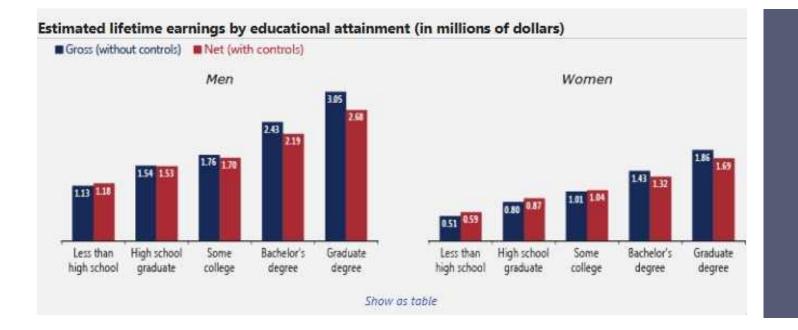
85 Comments

Is College Worth It?

As economic outcomes for young adults with and without degrees have improved, Americans hold mixed views on the value of college

BY RICHARD FRY, DANA BRAGA AND KIM PARKER







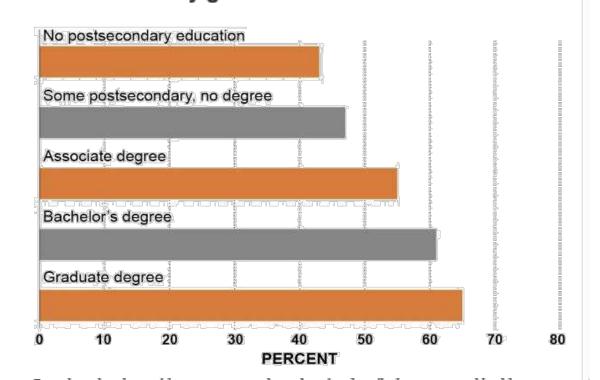
After controlling for key socio-demographic variables that influence earnings and the probability of college completion, the differences in lifetime earnings by educational attainment are reduced, but still substantial

Measuring Higher Ed's Benefits Beyond Earnings

A new report from Lumina Foundation and Gallup reveals a host of positive outcome associated with going to college. Researchers hope they will lead to a new perception higher ed's "worth."

By Johanna Alonso

Respondents who rate their current health as excellent or very good



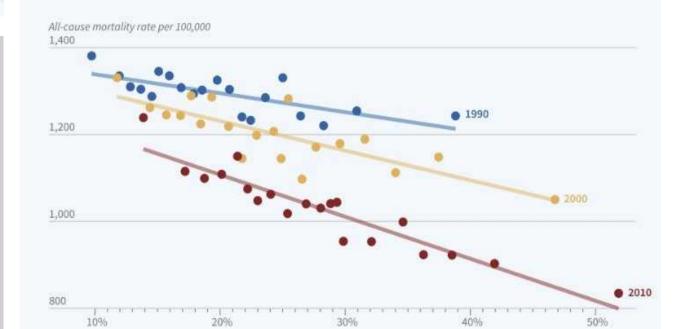
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The Bulletin on Health

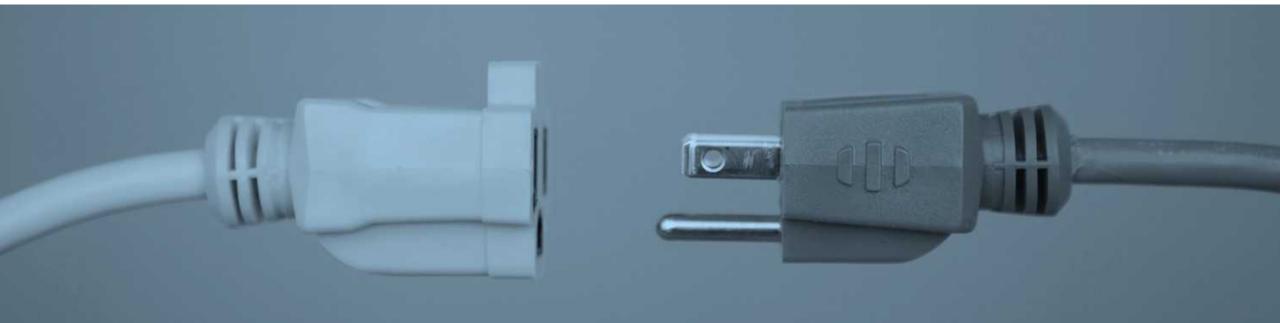
ent NBER Working Papers pertaining to health topics. It is dist

Community Education Levels and Mortality Rates

25



If the data is on our side, why do we struggle in getting others to make the same connections?



The Importance of Data-Informed Advocacy

Why Informed Advocacy?



Increased scrutiny and funding limitations threaten independent colleges.



Policymakers need evidence to support higher education initiatives.



Data translates mission into measurable impact.



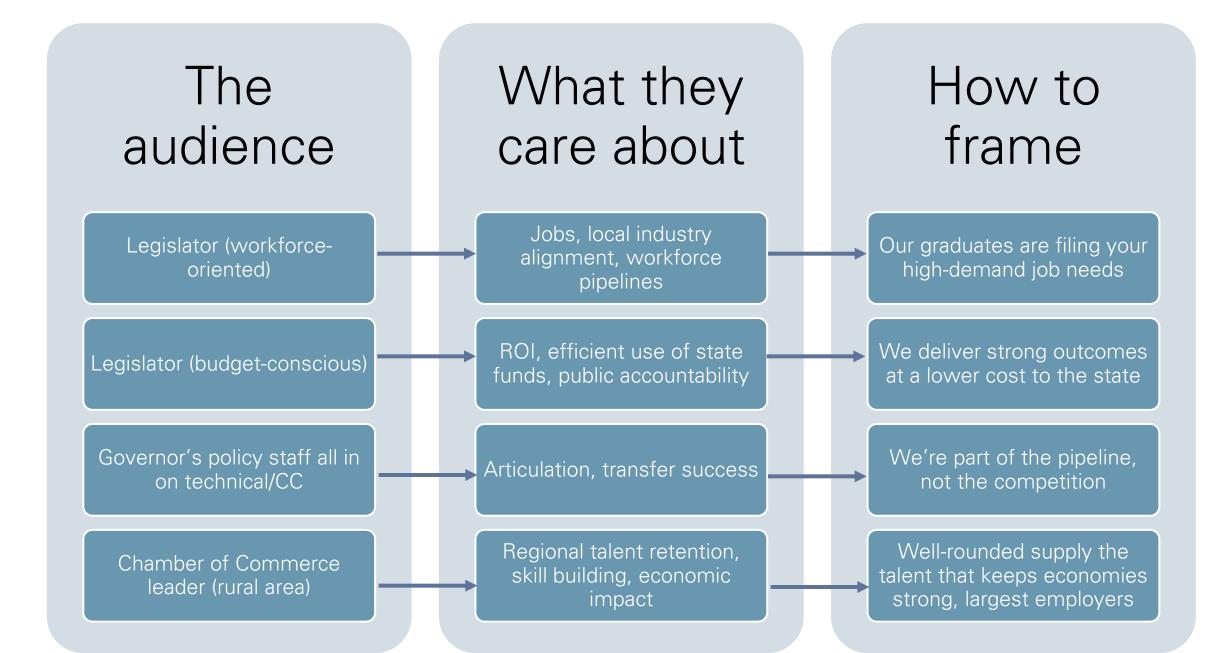
Advocacy is stronger when rooted in facts and narratives.

3 Key Lessons

Lesson 1: Know Your Audience



Tailor your data to what your audience values. Legislators may care more about job placement or ROI than academic accolades. Community leaders might prioritize economic development and local partnerships.

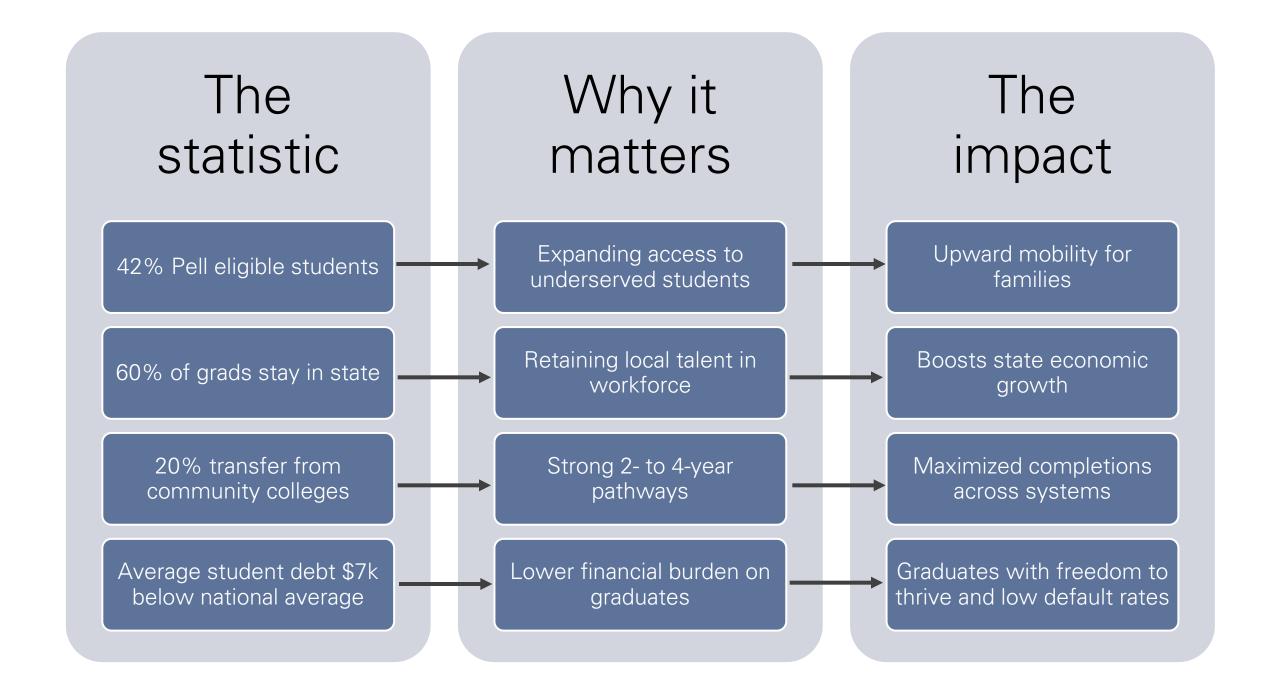


Lesson 2: Start the "Why"

2



Numbers alone won't move hearts or budgets Contextualize every data point with a story, trend, or community impact. Lead with purpose, then support with data.

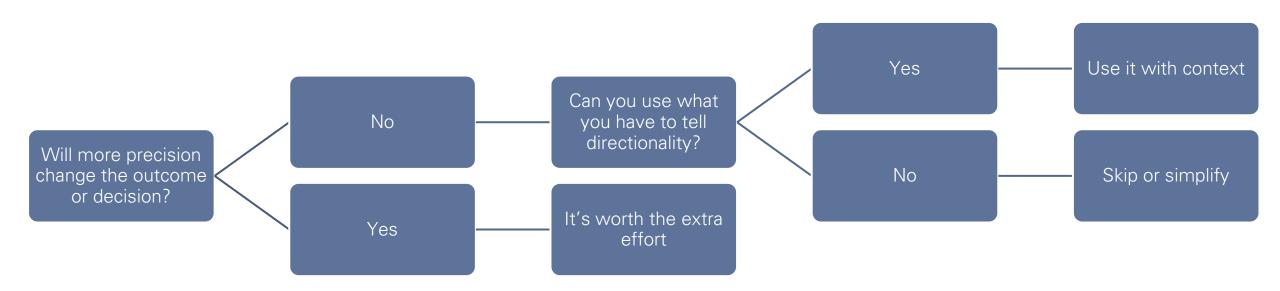


Lesson 3: Not All Data Is Worth the Squeeze



Complex or incomplete datasets can confuse rather than clarify. Consider time and effort required to extract meaningful insights. Focus on data that is timely, accurate, and clearly supports your message.

Flowchart: How much juice to squeeze?



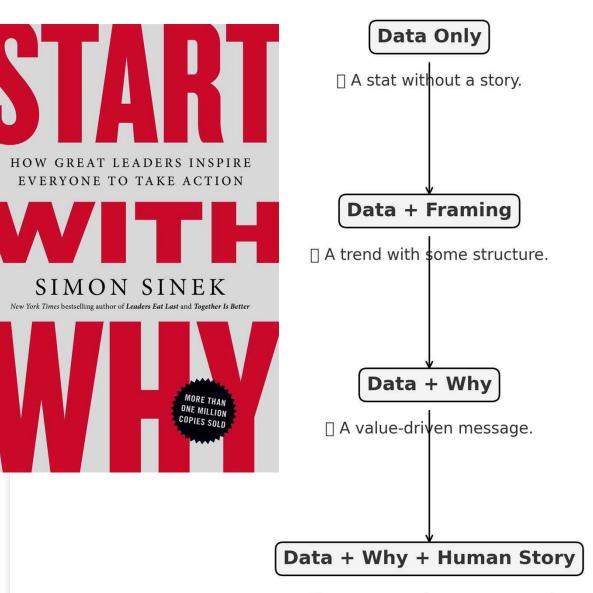
The Power of "Why"

The Power of 'Why'

Framing data around values builds emotional connection.

Helps policymakers and the public connect to your institution's mission.

Elevates statistics into a compelling story.



The message that moves people.

Starting with "Why"

"People don't buy *what* you do-they buy *why* you do it"

Emotions drive decisions—data justifies them

Purpose > policy details

Start with values, end with validation

Why Data Matters in Advocacy

01

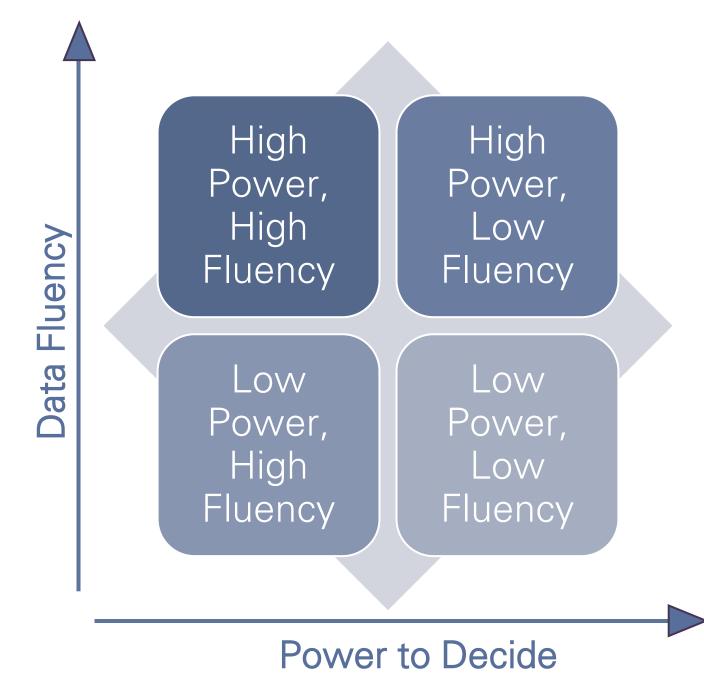
Data is crucial for highlighting the value of independent colleges. 02

It helps in crafting narratives that resonate with stakeholders, especially amidst budget challenges. 03

We know our story – they don't.

04

Even when people don't care about data, they care about data.



What resonates?

Types of Data That Resonate

Enrollment trends and demographic shifts

Student success metrics (retention, graduation rates, completion)

Employment outcomes

Workforce alignment

Access and equity (Pell, first-gen, race/ethnicity)

Savings to the state

Affordability and cost transparency

Institutional and state-level economic impact

Does the Tuition Equalization Grant Really Make a Difference?



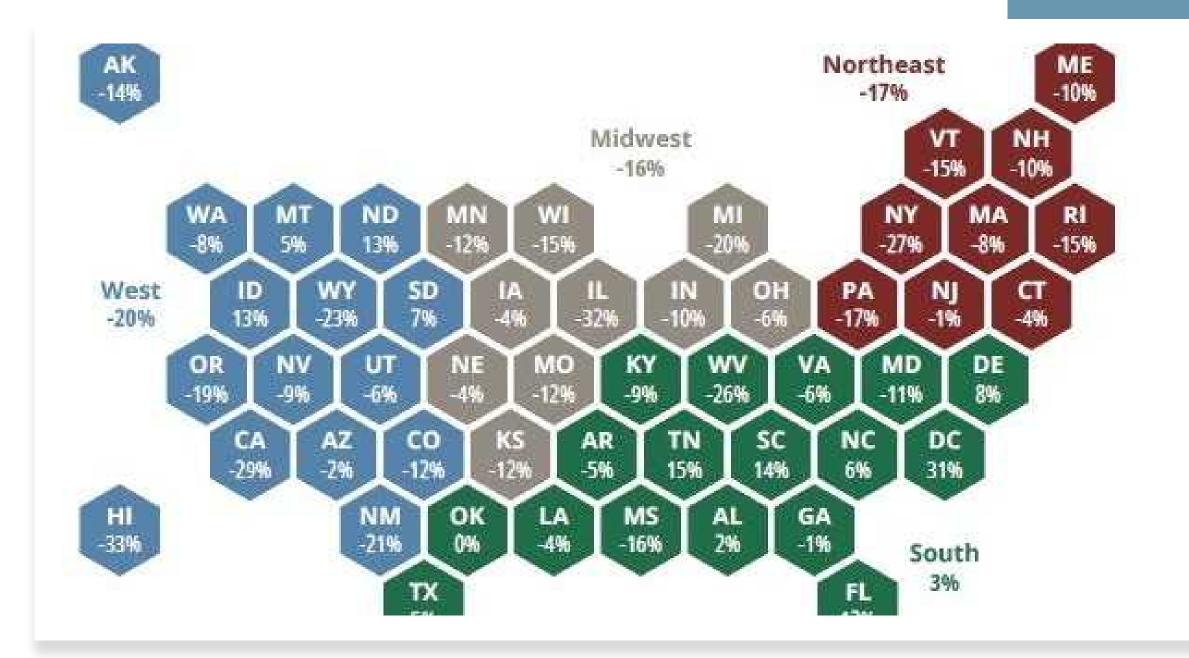
" The Tuition Equalization Grant may only \$750, but to me that is a lot. I am a full-time student taking 15 credit hours a semester, working as a waitress at a local restaurant, and I also have a work-study job. While it would be an understatement to say that life is stressful, I know that if the TEG didn't exist, it would take me months to save up that \$750 from tips. In total, I have received over \$2,000 and I am very thankful. I just want people to know that the money, as small as it may seem, does help students like me that are in need, and that the support is greatly appreciated."

Jamie Ledford Young Harris College Student, Waitress, and Taxpayer

YOUNG

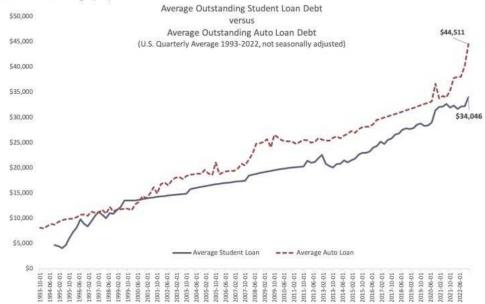
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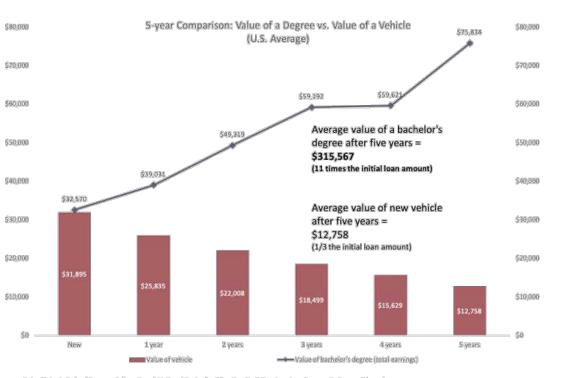


Debt Levels in the U.S.

The data below show that average student debt and average auto loan debt tracked closely until 2018. As the cost of most products has increased over time, so has the cost of earning a college degree and buying a car. Beginning in 2001, average debt for each of the two assets (education or a car) diverge where the average car loan becomes increasingly higher than the average student loan. By the third quarter of 2017, average outstanding student debt begins to level off while automotive debt is still increasing rapidly.



Data: St. Louis Federal Reserve, College Board, National Center for Education Statistics, American Community Survey, Edmonds.com Analysis: Michigan Independent Colleges and Universities



Data: 51. Louis Federal Reserve, College Board, National Center for Education Statistics, American Community Survey, Edmonds.com Analysis: Michigan Independent Colleges and Universities



Who is defaulting on loans?

Defaulting on a loan is not in any student's financial plan. But, it happens less often than many assume and defaults are more prevalent among certain borrowers. Most loan defaults are for less than \$8,600. In fact, 35 percent of borrowers that default owe less than \$4,000. These borrowers are those who spent a year or two in college and did not complete a degree. The average default rate for students who attended 4-year public and private, nonprofit colleges and universities is 5 percent. To put this in context, the average auto loan default rate is also close to 8 percent but the average amount of auto debt defaulted on is \$36,000.

Borrowers who do not graduate are three times more likely to default that those that complete a degree.



Average default rate for students from 4year colleges & universities



Average default amount



Increased likelihood of default if a student does not graduate SIN



Michigan Tuition Grant Recipients by Zip Code

Total Students: 17,000

At least 1 Student 2-5 Students 6-15 Students 16-49 Students 50 or more Students 96 percent of Michigan communities are home to a Michigan Tuition Grant recipient. Of these 17,000 students:

Lake

Huron

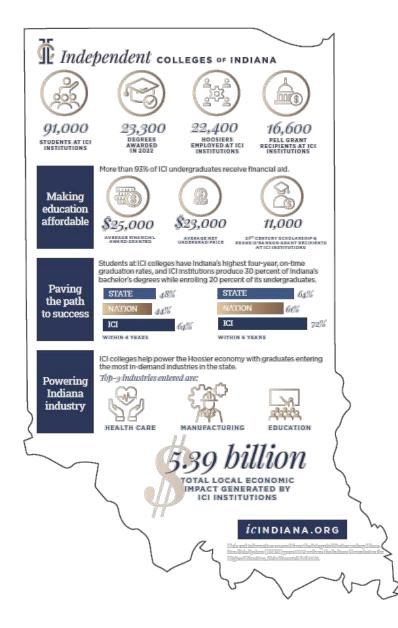
- >6,000 are the first in their families to go to college
- 5,650 are adults over age 25 earning a bachelor's degree
- >200 are veterans

29 COLLEGES. ONE PURPOSE:

INDIANA.

Independent colleges of Indiana

ANDERSON UNIVERSITY I BETHEL UNIVERSITY I SUTLEB UNIVERSITY I CALUMET COLLEGE OF ST. JOSEPH DEPAUW UNIVERSITY I EARLHAN COLLEGE | FUANKLIN COLLEGE | GOSREN COLLEGE BRACE COLLEGE | MANOVER COLLEGE | HOLY CROSS COLLEGE | HOLTHSTON UNIVERSITY INDIANA, INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY I INDIANA WESLETAN UNIVERSITY | MANCHESTEB UNIVERSITY MARIAN UNIVERSITY | MARTIN UNIVERSITY | GALARMO CITY UNIVERSITY DOSE-ULLANI INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY | SAINT MARTOR. THE WOODS COLLEGE SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE | TAVLOR UNIVERSITY | TAINE UNIVERSITY UNIVERSITY OF EXANSVILLE | UNIVERSITY OF INDIANADOLS | UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME UNIVERSITY OF CANASVILLE | UNIVERSITY OF INDIANADOLS | UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME UNIVERSITY OF CANASVILLE | UNIVERSITY OF INDIANADOLS | UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME





INDEPENDENT COLLEGES OF INDIANA (ICI) REPRESENTS THE STATE'S 29 PRIVATE, NON-PROFIT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES. ICINDIANA.ORG

Frank O'Bannon Grant: Fueling Student Success and Indiana's Future



73% freshmen-to-sophomore retention rate

48% on-time (4-year) graduation rate

55% extended-time (6-year) graduation rate 5-year averages, 2014-2018, 20 XCI institutions reporting

SUCCESS FOR UNDERSERVED STUDENTS



(02/

of economic impact.

Frank O'Bannon (FOB) Grant recipients at ICI institutions graduate on time at the same rate as all students statewide and outperform the national averageall while coming from underserved backgrounds.

HIGH RETURN ON INVESTMENT

For every dollar that the state provides to ICI

institutions, the state of Indiana gets \$70 worth

73% of Frank O'Bannon Grant recipients at ICI institutions return for their sophomore year, and 48% graduate on time, outperforming the national average.

48% state of Indiana

64% all ICI students

(03 /

48% FOB grant recipients at ICI Institutions

bachelor's-seeking, full-time, first-time students, 2014-2018 cohorts



TRACK RECORD OF EXCELLENCE

ICINDIANA.ORG



PROFESSIONAL DEGREES

NCICU campuses award:



90% of Physician Assistants degrees

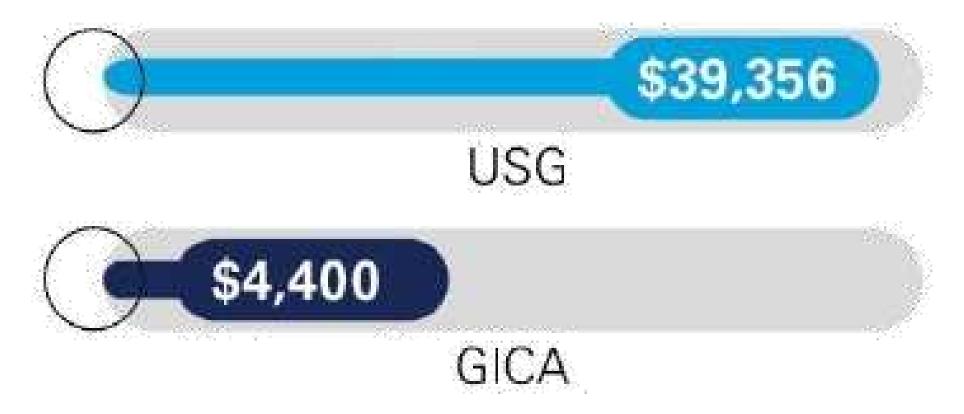
71% of Law degrees

62% of Pharmacy degrees

60%

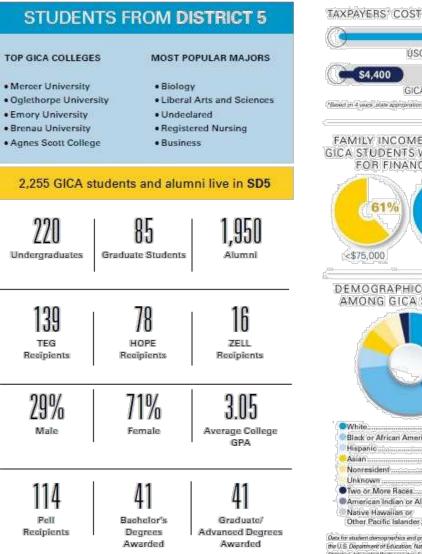
of Medical degrees

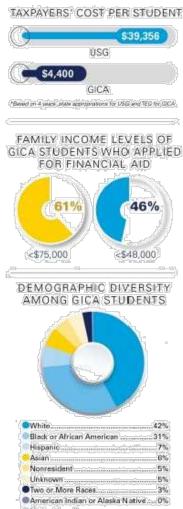
TAXPAYERS' COST PER STUDENT



*Based on 4 years' state appropriations for USG and TEG for GICA

GICA IMPACT STATEMENT





SD5 Sen. Sheikh Rahman

Data for student demographics and graduation rate comes from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (PEDS).





The Georgia Independent College Association is comprised of 24 private non-profit colleges and universities which enroll more than 72,000 students from every county in the state. Nearly all of GICA scolleges heave been serving Georgia students and communities for over 100 years.



Posterroldan, Education Bath System (PEDS), and the Georgia Student Pitance Compassion (GSRC FXS

GICA private nonprofit colleges and universities vary in type and

- · baccalaureate institutions or
- Historically Black Colleges and Universities
- Title III Strengthening Institutions Program

50%

GICA

60%

GICA

43%

53%

50%

focus on health and medicine

Where's the data?

Enrollment trends and demographic shifts	Student success metrics (retention, graduation rate, completion)	Workforce
Employment outcomes	Workforce alignment	Alignment and Outcomes Student Success Finance, Cost and Affordability
Access and equity (Pell, first-gen, race/ethnicity)	Savings to the state	
Affordability and cost transparency	Institutional and state-level economic impact	Enrollment and Demographics

Enrollment and Demographics

- IPEDS/NCES: https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data
- IPEDS Net Migration: <u>https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/search/viewtable?tableId=36099&returnUrl=%2Fsearch</u>
- WICHE Knocking at the College Door: <u>https://www.wiche.edu/knocking/</u>
- Census: https://www.census.gov/topics/education/educational-attainment.html
- Pell Institute: https://www.pellinstitute.org/
- SHEEO SHEF State Profiles: <u>https://shef.sheeo.org/state-profile/georgia/</u>
- SREB Fact Book: https://www.sreb.org/fact-book-higher-education-0
- National Bureau of Economic Research: https://www.nber.org/
- NCES DataLab: https://nces.ed.gov/datalab/

Finance, Cost and Affordability

- State Appropriations: Varies by state
- NACUBO: https://www.nacubo.org/Research/2024/NACUBO-Tuition-Discounting-Study
- NCES DataLab NPSAS: https://nces.ed.gov/datalab/
- IPEDS: <u>https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data</u>
- CATC: <u>https://collegecost.ed.gov/</u>
- FSA Federal Student Aid Data Center: <u>https://studentaid.gov/data-center</u>
- College Scorecard: <u>https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/</u>
- TICAS: <u>https://ticas.org/ourwork/student-debt/</u>
- CollegeBoard: <u>https://research.collegeboard.org/</u>
- CollegeBoard Trends in College Pricing: <u>https://research.collegeboard.org/trends/college-pricing</u>
- CollegeBoard Trends in Student Aid: <u>https://research.collegeboard.org/trends/student-aid</u>
- FSA Data Center: <u>https://studentaid.gov/data-center</u>
- InformedStates: <u>https://informedstates.org/data</u>
- College Scorecard: <u>https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/</u>
- SHEEO SHEF: <u>https://shef.sheeo.org/data-downloads/</u>

Student Success

- IPEDS (Graduation Rates & Outcome Measures): <u>https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data</u>
- National Student Clearinghouse: https://nscresearchcenter.org/
- NSC PDP: https://www.studentclearinghouse.org/solutions/ed-insights/pdp/
- College Scorecard: https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/
- Lumina Foundation Stronger Nation: <u>https://strongernation.luminafoundation.org/credentials-of-value</u>
- TICAS Quick Facts: <u>https://ticas.org/wp-</u> <u>content/uploads/2024/08/Postsecondary-Attainment-Quick-Facts-August-</u> <u>2024.pdf</u>

Workforce Alignment/Outcomes

- State high demand job lists map the SOC code to CIP codes of IPEDS Completions
- College Scorecard: https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/
- Census PSEO: https://lehd.ces.census.gov/data/pseo_experimental.html
- State SLDS Systems
- Bureau of Labor Statistics: <u>https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm</u> and <u>https://data.bls.gov/oesmap/</u>
- CollegeBoard Education Pays: <u>https://research.collegeboard.org/trends/education-pays</u>
- NACE First Destination Survey
- O*Net OnLine: <u>https://www.onetonline.org/</u>
- Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis: <u>https://fred.stlouisfed.org/</u>
- SREB Fact Book on Higher Education: https://www.sreb.org/fact-book-higher-education-0

What does this all mean?

Tell the Story

Advocacy = Facts + Framing + Feelings

- Use data to:
 - Clarify your value
 - Support your ask
 - Humanize your mission
- Advocacy works best when:
 - You start with why
 - You show outcomes
 - You center the student/community impact

Develop your Data Action Plan

Put what you've learned to work.

- 1. Identify your audiences (state lawmakers, boards, local media, etc.)
- 2. Pick your data domain (enrollment, affordability, workforce)
- 3. Choose 2–3 key data points
- 4. Frame the "why it matters"
- 5. Prepare a short, visual-friendly brief or graphic



Our Voice. Our Value. Our Data.

- Independent colleges have a powerful story—and the data to prove it.
- Our mission-driven education changes lives.
- Our graduates fuel state economies.
- Our institutions are agile, local, and essential.

Let's keep telling that story —with facts, with clarity, and with heart.

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