

College can be tough  
– dropping out can be  
tougher

Business



Abstract College dropout rates are on the rise and America should take action in order to ensure an increase in degree completion.

In order to prevent students' from dropping out of college, we need to derive the cause of the problem. Three significant contributors to the high rate of college dropouts are: low income and status, a lack of parental education, and excessively unprepared academic capabilities prior to college entrance. These issues stem from circumstances unable to be decided upon by potential college graduates and preventive actions should be taken to ensure these students' success. Keywords: College dropout, higher education?

College Can Be Tough – Dropping Out Can Be Tougher College – it's a new school, new life, new residence, friends, environment, and a new everything! Sometimes change can be a positive thing, other times, change can be too overwhelming – so overwhelming that failure begins to appear to be the only option. In the article, "\$4. 5 Billion in Earnings, Taxes Lost Last Year Due to the High U.

S. College Dropout Rate" the author describes America's graduation rates with numerical representations. The author states, " As students across the country have started their freshman year of college, more than 40 percent of them will not graduate within six years" (\$4. 5 Billion in Earnings, 2011, p. 31).

Fortunately, these students have the possibility of potentially graduating, regardless of their overdue graduation date. On the other hand, according to the U. S. Department of Education, " Attrition remains a critical problem for colleges and universities, as roughly 50 percent of students who enter

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postsecondary education do not complete a degree” (as cited in Yeh, 2012, p. 50).

Attending college seems to be America’s main concern; however, the actual completion of a degree is far more important than the simple admittance and short-lived attendance at a four-year university. The United States’ high college dropout rates might be caused by low income and status, lack of parental education, and prior inadequate academic preparation. Students’ entering college from a family deprived of economic status and wealth are more likely to decide on a future void of a college degree. Numerous factors spawning from poverty affect dropout rates – these factors include: the availability of resources and mentors, the quality of neighborhood conditions, and the fulfillment of a supportive family dynamic (Vartanian, & Gleason, 1999, 9). Vartanian and Gleason, two research professors from East coast universities, discovered that neighborhoods have an effect on students’ probability of degree completion.

They affirm, “ Neighborhood effects are driven primarily by the effects on the probability of dropping out among disadvantaged individuals” (Vartanian, & Gleason, 1999, 9). Conversely, Vartanian and Gleason resolved high wealth and status to decrease the likelihood of dropping out. “ Neighborhood conditions are positively and significantly related to graduating from college only among those families with high incomes and where the household head is a high school graduate” (Vartanian, & Gleason, 1999, p. 9). Another study conducted a decade after Vartanian and Gleason’s confirmed the same results.

Vignoles and Powdthavee, professors of Economics, affirm, “ Students with higher socioeconomic backgrounds who live in less materially deprived and more educated neighborhoods have lower dropout rates” (Vignoles & Powdthavee, 2009, p. 18). When students are raised in a financially stable environment they are more likely to succeed and vice versa. Pair a disadvantaged childhood with parent’s who lack a college education, and that student’s graduation chances decrease just that much more. Personally, I came from a low income family, low class neighborhood, and my mother never finished more than a single month at university, while my father never attempted a single day in high school.

According to the disturbing evidence I’ve found, my risk of dropping out is greater than I ever thought it would be and I hope the extra mentoring service provided by my Obama Scholars scholarship will reverse the odds back into my favor. Two Engineers and a Statistician from the University of Granada conducted a vast study on several different possible factors that affect a student’s likelihood of not completing a degree. Among the multitude of possible factors, the professors found the level of completed education by students’ parents to be a considerable cause. Francisco, Concepcion, and Alberto state, “ The risk of abandoning [college] is approximately 2. 4 times bigger for the students whose mothers have no studies than for those students whose mothers have a degree” (2009, p. 570).

The group ran statistical analyses for fathers’ education levels, as well, they declare, “ The risk of abandoning [college] is two times bigger for students whose fathers have no studies than for those students whose fathers have

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completed secondary school” (Francisco, Concepcion, & Alberto, 2009, p. 570). Similarly, the professors found this risk to be even greater when compared to students’ with well educated fathers, they assert, “ The risk of abandoning is three times bigger for the students whose fathers have no studies than for those students whose fathers have a degree” (Francisco, Concepcion, & Alberto, 2009, p. 570). In conclusion, Theresa Ling Yeh, a professor at the University of Washington, conducted her study on the two aforementioned factors, low income and status and lack of parental education, in a combined cause she identifies as, “ LIFG” or “ Low Income First Generation” (2012, p. 50).

Yeh, states, “ Low-income first-generation students – whose parents are not affluent and did not go to college – consistently drop out of postsecondary institutions at higher rates than middle- to upper-income students with college-educated parents” (Yeh, 2012, p. 50). These broad studies need a deeper understanding of the psychological motives behind the correlation of childhood experiences within a family of uneducated parents and the probability of dropping out of college; however, there is certainly a connection. People in America spend a specific amount of time every day getting ready for school, work, play, or any outing due to the physical preparation necessary to fit into the situation at hand. As much as we need that time every morning to prepare for the outside world, we also need time and adequate tools and knowledge before entering a four-year university. Francisco, Concepcion, and Alberto, from the University of Granada attest to these necessary tools in their wide study on decreased graduation rates and their causes.

The trio declare, “ Another factor that has been identified in the student body is the deficiency of capacities or abilities to face up to the demands of university studies”, these deficiencies including, “ previous inadequate knowledge, inappropriate attitudes toward learning, and low psychological resilience” (Francisco, Concepcion, & Alberto, 2009, p. 564). Similarly, Kim Clark, an education journalist from the U. S. News and Report, states, “ Students who earn at least a 3.

0 grade-point average [in high school] are far more likely to graduate from college than students just under that mark” (2010, p. 55). Clark expands her point, asserting, “ Advanced Placement scores tell colleges more about a student’s ability to complete college than other tests” (2010, p. 56). Clark’s research discovered AP test scores as a formidable factor considering the fact that, “ Advanced Placement courses directly match the curriculum for entry-level college courses” (2010, p.

55). Students’ challenging themselves in AP courses and completing these course with a 3. 0 GPA or higher are greatly preparing themselves for the rigor experienced in college. Conversely, students underperforming in these courses or, even worse, underperforming in regular high school classes are more likely to drop out of college than their counterpart. Overall, Clark affirms: High school grades are the single best gauge of how well a student will do in college... [Because] they reveal qualities of motivation and perseverance—as well as the presence of good study habits and time-management skills—that tell us a great deal about the chances that a student will complete a college program.

(Clark, 2010, p. 55) Poor high school education and or poor academic performance in high school results in a high probability of not completing a degree program in college. What students' put into their high school career, is the direct result of what they get out of their college experience. Leaving college for the fall is a daunting task for all incoming freshman no matter how excited or ready students' may feel about the experience. College may not be for everyone, but those who attempt a college degree should have a better chance of graduating; however, the causes related to dropout rates stem from experiences related to uncontrollable circumstances on behalf of the potential graduate.

In addition, the factors affecting graduation rates develop before a student even applies to university. Entering college as a student from a low income family and neighborhood, a first generational college household, and a student from an underperforming high school, increases the probability of dropping out. Given that these issues are not necessarily driven by the direct choice of the aspiring graduate, a solution or buffer needs to be implemented in order to counter the results from these three issues.

Additionally, alarming income gaps existing between high school graduates and college graduates is illustrated in the anonymous article, \$4. 5 Billion in Earnings. The author states, " The lifetime earnings of a college graduate can exceed those of a high school graduate by as much as a half-million dollars" (\$4.

5 Billion in Earnings, 2011, p. 31). Earning a degree is earning the stability these endangered students' needed to ensure their own success.

Preventative action at home and in the high school classroom will increase <https://assignbuster.com/college-can-be-tough-dropping-out-can-be-tougher/>

America's graduation rates - graduation rates that should be increasing in the future, not remaining stagnant or decreasing even further. References \$4.

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