

Community college argument



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Attending community college before completing your bachelor's degree at a four-year institution can save you a sizable chunk of change. Tuition and fees at public community colleges average less than half of those at public four-year colleges and about one-tenth of those at private four-year colleges, according to the American Association of Community Colleges. " I think my student loan was at least half of what I would have paid otherwise," O'Brien says.

Save Money by Living at Home

Room and board make up a significant percentage of college costs at four-year colleges. " Living at home also saved me a lot of money on living expenses ... that was an added benefit financially," says O'Brien.

Transferring won't be easy, but it may be a smart way to save money and achieve your academic goals. " The transition through the community college to a four-year institution can make the students educational pathways smoother, more enriching, productive and ultimately it can lead to more successes," Lyons says.

Pros

Cost of Tuition

The most obvious reason that students attend community college is for the financial advantage. Many junior colleges cost less than two thousand dollars each semester to attend full time. Attending community college gives students the chance to prepare for the financial demands of a 4-year university if they plan on transferring. Flexible Schedule

Many students don't realize that if they plan on working while attending school, community college is hands down, the best option. They offer far more night classes than other universities and more schedule options. The workload, unfortunately, is lighter than a state school or private university and attendance is not usually required. Give students an opportunity to explore major options

Instead of spending thousands of dollars at a private university towards a major that you are less than sure of, consider attending a community school while you are making your decision. Classes cost less, so you will have the opportunity to explore interests that you might not have otherwise pursued.

Smaller Classes

The class size is surprising to most students because the tuition is so reasonable. While classes aren't as small as those of a leading private university, many have as few as twenty students. In a smaller class, professors have the opportunity to learn more about their students. Likewise, students will find their teachers more accessible and can get assistance when they need it. Qualified Professors

Everybody starts somewhere. Some of your professors will be fresh out of a master's program, but many will be well-seasoned academics who carry an impressive resume. Community schools are just as flexible for the students as for the professors. Many accomplished instructors teach part-time at community schools to allow plenty of time to focus on their own pursuits and career goals. In fact, when I attended junior college I ran into one of the professors from the private university I had previously attended, and she was teaching a night class—case in point! Transitional

Countless numbers of college freshman transfer out after their first year of studies. Many return, some don't. Unfortunately, many of these students felt displaced and found that their expectations were not met by the university they attended. Attending community school gives students the opportunity to earn college credit while taking the time to select the 4-year institution that is right for them. Because there is little financial investment, most students are deterred from dropping their studies altogether.

Cons

Limited Curriculum

Typically, community colleges are 2-year schools. If you plan on obtaining a 4-year degree you will have to transfer to another university at some point. If you're looking for a permanent residence, this probably isn't the best place for you. Lighter Workload

The workload is significantly lighter than at a state university or a private college. The student body is largely composed of students who could not attend another university because of their grades and thus, the expectation for student performance is reduced. There is typically an air of frustration among the staff—mostly related to students neglecting homework and blowing off class. As a consequence, there is very little course work aside from major exams. Keep in mind that college is always what you make it. Putting in the time is entirely up to you. Uninvolved Students

This is probably the biggest deterrent for the junior college. Many of the students are uninvolved. Few have plans for an academic future outside of what they receive at the junior college level—and they study accordingly.

This causes tension in the classroom, particularly with more accomplished professors who are not accustomed to dealing with complacent students. Outside of the lecture itself, classroom discussions are rarely stimulating as they are carried on solely by the professor and one or two enlightened individuals. Good news for the dedicated student: the professor will recognize your potential and reward you accordingly. Campus life (or lack thereof)

Junior colleges do have clubs and organizations, but campus life is not an integral part of the atmosphere. For most students at community schools, their schedule revolves around work and classes are done in the mean time. If you are looking for a lively social scene, again, community college is probably not for you.