

# Tuition free college as an investment in the nation



## Tuition Free college: An Investment in our Nation

The ongoing debate about free college tuition has become increasingly popular, creating a divide amongst supporters and critics. Unfortunately, obtaining a high school diploma does not ensure that Americans will have the skills needed to obtain the great paying jobs they want. Still high tuition costs are making it difficult for students to obtain the degree's needed for these careers. The high costs of college tuition creates a financial hardship for many families. Students end up having to take on hefty loans to cover cost. With a transformation of our current aid programs, everyone can and will benefit from free college tuition now and for years to come. After gaining an understanding of the information, I believe attending college should be free.

The pursuit of a college degree should be based on a student's academics not their ability to meet financial guidelines. Free college tuition eases the burden of other costs student endure while in college. For example, families still have to pay for books, supplies, room and board and other basic living cost. In the article *America Wakes Up From Its Dream of Free College* by Adam Harris, Harris states, " These families would have to still pay room and board and other college fees on their own, but to have tuition covered surely alleviated at least some of their fears, and reduced the likelihood of these kids having to take on a lifetime burden of student debt."(" America" par. 3)

Some may argue that free college tuition doesn't guarantee students will graduate or even go to class. However, free college helps poorer students who have chosen not to go because they simply cannot afford it, have a chance at going to college. The fact is that with free college tuition, families

will have a huge reduction in college cost, ensuring their student will be provided with a great college education based on their grades and not their ability to pay.

Everyone can agree that free college tuition alleviates the burden of student loans and future debt. Many families do not have the luxury of being able to save for their student's college education. This means college cost usually fall on the students themselves. With the cost being so high, many students rely on funding their college education with student loans. However, this creates the uncertainty of being in debt for many years to come. College graduates leave school with an average of \$30,000 in debt, a number that has increased by 50% over a period of ten years. In the article *The Fallacy of Free College for All* by Alexander Astin, Astin states, "The Federal Loan program is a disaster, burdening the middle class and even some poor students with massive debt. More than a million people default on their student loans each year. With such a huge default rate, the loan programs are not really that cost-effective, so why not convert most of them into grant programs." ("Fallacy" par. 9) If college tuition was free, this would create a better outcome for college grads being able to begin their newly educated life without debt.

There is growing support for the notion that with free college we will see an increase in job opportunities and higher wage earnings. It has been said that "education is the key that unlocks the door of opportunity". With tuition free college, many more students will enroll and become educated. With a college education, students entering the workforce ensures that we will have well trained and educated professionals and which in turn creates a strong

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economy. “ The long-term payoff of these policies could be enormous. Considerable research shows that public and private benefits greatly exceed the costs when students are nudged toward obtaining a college degree.” (“ Tuition” par. 24) For the economy to achieve its full potential, we need to ensure people have the education needed for the jobs they want. Free college for all is the initial step into a successful future.

With a few tweaks and adjustments, free college tuition can and will be a reality. In the article *The Fallacy of Free College for All*, by Alexander Astin, Astin mentions that many of the existing college aid programs originated in the 1970’s. This indicates that these programs may be outdated and don’t fit what the students of today may need. He explains that financial aid consists of grants, loans and work study programs, all which are based on the individual students need. Since these federal aid programs were put in place, college cost continues to rise and the programs can’t keep up. As financial aid increases, so does tuition, and because of this so does student need. If the funding for a free tuition system was used from funds already available for higher education, this would alleviate most of the financial burden. Astin mentions that we already have the money to accomplish this, however it needs to be allocated in a different way to help fund this program.

We must make free college a reality for aspiring students everywhere. Free college will be a huge weight off the shoulders of families financially.

Through free college, college graduates will be able to start their adult lives without student debt looming over them. This gives way to great opportunities and ultimately a better future. The strength of our future economy is dependent on the professional prospects of higher education.

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Free college will grant our workforce with ample professionals who are eager to prosper. Investment in higher education will provide a remarkable return that will drive our nation forward. Presuming that we want to make sure that all Americans have an opportunity to achieve their full potential and contribute to our nations success, we need to make certain that higher education is not limited to students able to pay, but for all students everywhere.

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