

(5) Colleges differ greatly in the financial aid they provide. Which colleges tend to offer the most generous financial aid packages? (Circle your answer)

- State universities
- Colleges with a high proportion of low-income students
- The most expensive and elite colleges

(6) Some students hope their athletic skills will pay off. Roughly what percentage of high school athletes actually win athletic scholarships to college?

9.9 percent 5.2 percent 1.4 percent

(7) For 40 years, the proportion of freshmen attending college within 100 miles of home has not changed much. What percentage of college freshmen stay close to home?

31 percent 53 percent 62 percent

(8) When applying to college, students often feel pressure to pick a major. Roughly what percentage of students change majors, however, at least once while in college?

80 percent 40 percent 20 percent

(9) In general, the most popular majors are also the ones that promise some of the top salaries after graduation.

True False Not sure

(10) As of the 2011–12 school year, what percentage of all undergraduate students were enrolled in public two-year colleges?

30 percent 45 percent 56 percent

(11) In 2013, the proportion of Americans ages 25 to 29 with a bachelor's degree was:

One quarter One third One half

(12) In 2011, young adults with a bachelor's degree earned 50 percent more than those without a high school diploma or its equivalent.

True False Not sure



COLLEGE-GOING QUIZ: WHAT'S YOUR GUESS?

ANSWERS

(1) College enrollments

In 2011, the number of students attending U.S. colleges and universities reached record proportions. (It has declined slightly since then.) What was this record?

Answer: 21 million

- **NOTES:** Enrollment in degree-granting institutions increased by 11 percent between 1991 and 2001—but between 2001 and 2011, enrollment increased a whopping 32 percent, from 15.9 million to 21.0 million. Much of the growth was in full-time enrollment: the number of full-time students rose 38 percent, while the number of part-time students rose 23 percent. (Enrollment increases can be affected both by population growth and by rising rates of enrollment.)

The percentage of American college students who are Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, and American Indian/Alaska Native has been increasing, too. From 1976 to 2011, the percentage of Hispanic students rose from 4 percent to 14 percent, the percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander students rose from 2 percent to 6 percent, the percentage of Black students rose from 10 percent to 15 percent, and the percentage of American Indian/Alaska Native students rose from 0.7 to 0.9 percent. During the same period, the percentage of White students fell from 84 percent to 61 percent.

SOURCE: http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d12/ch_3.asp

(2) First-generation students

First-generation students—defined as those whose parents did not receive education beyond a high school diploma—made up what percentage of the college population in 2010?

Answer: 50 percent

- **NOTES:** There has been a welcome surge of students who are the first in their family to attend college. A 2010 study by the Department of Education found that 50 percent of the college population is made up of first-generation students, or those whose parents did not receive

education beyond a high school diploma. Minority groups made up the largest demographic of students with parents that had a high school education or less, with 48.5 percent of Latino and Hispanic students and 45 percent of Black or African-American students included. The parents of students of Asian descent came in at 32 percent with a high school diploma or less, and Native Americans at 35 percent. Of students that identified themselves as Caucasian, only 28 percent were first-generation college students.

SOURCE: <http://diverseeducation.com/article/50898/>

(3) The opportunity gap

The total number of first-generation, minority, and low-income students on U.S. college campuses has increased. However, the *proportion* of low-income students enrolled in 2012 was about the same as that of middle-income students in:

Answer: The mid-1980s

- **NOTES:** College enrollment among low-income students has generally increased over the past several decades. But the Great Recession and weak recovery have eroded the gains of recent years, and middle- and upper-income students remain far more likely to go to college. In 2012, the most recent year for which figures are available, 50.9 percent of recent low-income high school graduates were enrolled in a 2- or 4-year college. That's down from the record-high 58.4 percent in 2007, and just half a percentage point higher than the rate in 1993.

But enrollment rates among middle- and high-income students also have risen, to 64.7 percent and 80.7 percent, respectively, in 2012. Looking at it another way, low-income students now are enrolled at about the same rate as middle-income students were in the mid-1980s.

SOURCE: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/01/15/college-enrollment-among-low-income-students-still-trails-richer-groups/>

(4) Scholarships and grants

Who doesn't dream of earning a full scholarship to college? What percentage of students actually receive enough scholarships and grants to cover all their college costs?

Answer: 0.3%

- **NOTES:** Very few students receive enough scholarships and grants (including state and federal need-based and non-need-based aid) to cover all college costs. Of the students enrolled full time at four-year colleges in the 2007-08 school year, only 0.3 percent (be sure you read that right: not 3 percent but 0.3 percent) received enough money to cover the full cost of attendance. Only about one in 10 undergraduate students in bachelor's degree programs wins a private scholarship, on average about \$2,800 a year. According to Mark Kantrowitz, a leading expert on college financing:
 - Good grades matter. But only about 19 percent of high school students with a grade-point average of 3.5 to 4.0 (on a 4.0 scale) get the awards.
 - Having a high SAT score does increase your odds. Still, only 13 percent of students with 1,300–1,400 scores get money.
 - Minority students are less likely to win scholarships than whites.

- Middle-income students are more likely to win scholarships than lower- or upper-income students. Among students enrolled full time at four-year schools, 10.6 percent of those with a family adjusted gross income of less than \$50,000 won scholarships compared with the 13.8 percent who won money in families with incomes of \$50,000 to \$100,000.

SOURCE: http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/get-real-on-scholarships/2011/03/08/ABM4LfR_story.html

(5) Variations among colleges with regard to financial aid

Colleges differ greatly in the financial aid they provide. Which colleges tend to offer the most generous financial aid packages?

Answer: The most expensive and elite colleges

- **NOTES:** The schools that are the most generous are also among the most expensive and elite. *U.S. News* compiled a list of schools that claim they meet the full need (<http://bit.ly/1geElhq>) of their students, and you can see by looking at the names that many of them are elite institutions. However, the vast majority of private and public colleges and universities can't provide the sort of sweet deal that the schools on the *U.S. News* list offer. In a recent higher education survey, only 32 percent of public institutions and 18 percent of private colleges said they met the full financial need of accepted students.

Since most students aren't going to qualify for elite schools with their awesome financial aid, what can they do? They should evaluate any college by asking two questions:

1. What is the average percentage of financial need that the college meets? While most schools can't come close to offering 100 percent of need, it's best to find schools that meet the highest percentage of need possible. The numbers for individual schools are all over the board.

2. What is the college's average breakdown of loans versus grants? As a practical matter, nearly all schools will use loans in their packages, which is why you will want to pay attention to the percentage of loans versus grants in the average aid package. You can find all these figures for individual schools on sites like *U.S. News* (<http://bit.ly/RTL8E6>) and the College Board (<http://bit.ly/1ikkb69>).

SOURCE: <http://www.usnews.com/education/blogs/the-college-solution/2011/02/22/how-to-measure-a-colleges-financial-generosity>

(6) Athletic scholarships

We hear a lot about athletic scholarships. Roughly, what percentage of high school athletes actually win athletic scholarships to college?

Answer: 1.4 percent

- **NOTES:** Although athletic scholarships are certainly worth pursuing, they are rarer than one thinks and smaller than one wishes. In 2007-2008, the average total institutional grant (including athletic scholarships in addition to need-based and non-need-based institutional grants) was \$10,257 for recipients of athletic scholarships, compared with \$6,278 for non-recipients, a difference of \$3,979. However, the average tuition and fees was \$12,616 for recipients of athletic scholarships, \$3,146 higher than the \$9,470 average for non-recipients. This suggests that the athletic scholarships

enabled the students to enroll in more expensive colleges, but also that the athletic scholarships might not represent a significant financial advantage for the students as compared with the institutional grants they might otherwise have received. (Individual student's experiences, of course, may vary from the averages.)

On the other hand, cumulative debt at graduation is lower for athletic scholarship recipients than non-recipients. The average cumulative debt at graduation was \$17,937 for students who received an athletic scholarship, \$5,236 lower than the \$23,173 average for non-recipients.

[ALSO: More men receive athletic scholarships than women; African-American students receive the greatest share of athletic scholarships among minority students; minority students receive athletic scholarships roughly in proportion to non-minority students; most undergraduate athletic scholarship recipients hold a B- to B average; most high school athletic scholarship recipients hold a B to A- average.]

SOURCE: <http://www.fastweb.com/student-news/articles/3197-athletic-scholarships-who-gets-them-and-how-many-are-there>

(7) Going away for college vs. staying close to home

For 40 years, the percentage of freshmen that attend college within 100 miles of home has not changed much. What percentage of college freshmen stay within this distance?

Answer: 53 percent

- **NOTES:** When it comes to going away for college or staying closer to home, the majority of U.S. college students, historically, have attended colleges nearby. In both 1971 and 2012, for instance, 53 percent of freshmen attended college within 100 miles of home. In the earlier year, 36 percent of students went to college from 101 to 500 miles away; in 2012, 32 percent did. Then and now, smaller proportions of students chose colleges very close to home (within 10 miles) or very far away (more than 500 miles).

The fact that students consistently opt for colleges not far from home may seem to contradict popular beliefs about globalization. "People like to be close to family, and they like to be in familiar places," says David A. Hawkins, director of public policy and research at the National Association for College Admission Counseling. "It takes a particular person to be willing, at such a young age, to strike out on their own in such a dramatic way." Even with more out-of-state recruitment by colleges these days, the distance students traveled hasn't changed much over all.

SOURCE: <http://chronicle.com/article/Ties-to-Home/136789/>

(8) Choosing a major

When applying to college, students often feel pressed to pick a major. What percentage of college students, though, end up changing majors at least once?

Answer: 80 percent

- **NOTES:** "Some colleges admit by major; the majority allow you to be undecided or change later. Most estimates say 80 percent of college students will change majors at least once. That flexibility is one of the best features about our education system. I had a college friend who was in the

hospital for a long time. Bored, he read the course catalog from cover to cover. When he got out, he changed his major from computer science to sociology, because those courses sounded most interesting. Having a major in mind is fine, but be open to new possibilities and be ready to change. Most estimates say 80 percent of college students will change majors at least once. That flexibility is one of the best features about our education system.” - *Ralph Figueroa, Director of College Guidance, Albuquerque Academy*

“High school students should not feel compelled to have their intended major selected for their college applications. Most college students declare their major toward the end of their sophomore year of college. This sense of ‘undecidedness’ or ‘undeclared’ can come from a strong interest in multiple fields, so you may want to speak to those interests or check multiple boxes on the application. Most faculty and departments in the liberal arts and sciences will encourage you to explore your interests by taking courses not even offered at most high schools and you may discover new fields of interest, even if you “know what you want to study.” Feel free to keep your mind open and work with advisers once you are in college to explore the curriculum.” - *Eric Furda, Dean of Admissions, University of Pennsylvania*

(9) Top majors

In general, the most popular majors among college students are also the ones that promise the top salaries after graduation.

Answer: False

- **NOTES:** Of the 1,716,000 bachelor’s degrees conferred in 2010–11, the greatest numbers of degrees were conferred in the fields of business (365,000), social sciences and history (177,000), health professions and related programs (143,000), education (104,000), and psychology (101,000).

SOURCE: <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=37>

In 2012, the average starting salaries for college graduates, from highest to lowest by discipline, were: engineering (\$60,600), computer science (\$60,000), business (\$51,500), communications (\$42,300), math & sciences (\$42,400), education (\$39,100), and humanities & social services (\$36,800).

SOURCE: <http://naceweb.org/s09042013/salary-survey-average-starting-class-2013.aspx>

(10) Community college students

As of the 2011–12 school year, what percentage of all undergraduate students were enrolled in public two-year colleges?

Answer: 45 percent

- **NOTES:** As of the 2011–12 school year, 45 percent of all undergraduate students were enrolled in public two-year colleges, or approximately 8.3 million students. Approximately 3.3 million students were enrolled full-time, and approximately 4.8 million students were enrolled part-time.

Forty-four percent of low-income students (those with family incomes of less than \$25,000 per year) attend community colleges as their first college after high school, compared to only 15

percent of high-income students. Similarly, 38 percent of students whose parents did not graduate from college choose community colleges as their first institution, compared with 20 percent of students whose parents graduated from college. The same study found that 50 percent of Hispanic students and 31 percent of African-American students start at a community college, compared to 28 percent of White students.

SOURCE: http://www.highereducation.org/reports/pa_at/index.shtml

According to a recent study by the National Student Clearinghouse, only 15 percent of students who started at two-year institutions in 2006 completed a degree at a four-year institution within six years. However, over 60 percent of students who transfer from a two-year college go on to complete a four-year degree.

SOURCE: <http://nscresearchcenter.org/signaturereport4/>

(11) Attainment

In 2013, the proportion of Americans ages 25 to 29 with a bachelor's degree was:

Answer: One third

- **NOTES:** In 2013, 33.5 percent of Americans ages 25 to 29 had at least a bachelor's degree, compared with 24.7 percent in 1995, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. In 1975, the share was 21.9 percent.

The attainment of bachelor's degrees has risen much faster for young women in the past decade than for young men. It has also risen among young whites, blacks and Hispanics, though relatively little among Asians, who already had the highest rate of college completion. The share of people with a college degree also varies tremendously by state, with 48.1 percent of people ages 25 to 34 in Massachusetts holding a bachelor's degree, but just 20.4 percent in Nevada.

Despite the recent improvement, U.S. college completion rates are still distressingly low. Only about half of first-time college freshmen who enrolled in 2006 had graduated by 2012. And the share of 24-year-old college graduates who come from low-income families has remained relatively flat over the last several decades. Only about 1 out of 10 Americans whose parents were in the lowest income quartile held four-year college degrees by age 24 in 2011; the comparable share for people from the highest quartile was about 7 in 10.

SOURCE: http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/13/education/a-sharp-rise-in-americans-with-college-degrees.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

(12) Economic payoff

In 2011, young adults with a bachelor's degree earned 50 percent more than those without a high school diploma or its equivalent.

Answer: False

- **NOTES:** In fact, in 2011, young adults with a bachelor's degree earned almost twice as much as those without a high school diploma or its equivalent (97 percent more).

About 71 percent of young adults with a bachelor's degree or higher in the labor force had year-round, full-time jobs, compared with 65 percent of those with an associate's degree, 59 percent of those with some college education or a high school diploma, and 48 percent of those without a high school diploma or its equivalent.

The median earnings for young adults with a bachelor's degree was \$45,000, compared to \$22,900 for those without a high school diploma or its equivalent, \$30,000 for those with a high school diploma or its equivalent, and \$37,000 for those with an associate's degree.

SOURCE: <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=77>