



Introduction

The Complicating Question of Value

“Is college still worth it?” It’s a question asked with increasing regularity by everyone from parents to policy-makers in recent years. By any meaningful measure, higher education has never been more essential: incomes are higher, job security is greater, health is better and civic engagement is stronger for college graduates than for those lacking education beyond high school.

And yet, the value of college—both in Indiana and across the U.S.—is complicated by legitimate concerns: disparities in graduation rates, unprecedented student loan debt and nagging questions about whether graduates are equipped to meet the demands of a 21st century economy. These realities are the backdrop of the Indiana College Value Index.

The Indiana College Value Index

The value of higher education can be gauged in many ways, including such essential measures as college completion rates, labor market returns and alumni satisfaction. The Indiana College Value Index brings these quantitative and qualitative data together to help Hoosiers answer some of the most fundamental questions in higher education today:

- **Will I graduate?**
- **Will I learn what I need to know?**
- **Will I find fulfilling employment?**

Ensuring that every Hoosier student can answer these questions with a resounding YES is the ultimate goal of the Indiana College Value Index. As the Index continues to evolve in the years ahead, each iteration will strive to provide a fuller and more instructive view of higher education outcomes for both students and the state.

The Commitment to College Consumers

The Indiana Commission for Higher Education’s *Reaching Higher, Delivering Value* strategic plan is built on a commitment to using compelling data to increase transparency, inform practice and drive change with a clear focus on: 1) closing the college completion achievement gap and 2) increasing the number of Hoosiers with quality education and training beyond high school to 60 percent of the state’s population by 2025.

The Indiana College Value Index is the latest in an ongoing series of consumer-friendly reports that spotlight progress at each stage of the state’s postsecondary pipeline:

- **College Readiness Reports** that show where Indiana high school graduates go to college, whether they’re prepared for college-level coursework and how they’re performing.
- **College Completion Reports** that show how many Indiana college students graduate, how long it takes them to earn their degrees and where there are gaps in student achievement.
- **Return on Investment (ROI) Reports** that show how much college costs by campus, the average student debt, and the job prospects and earning potential associated with different degrees.

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