

## Study Highlights Financial Value of Completing an Associate's Degree

While many high school students have their hopes pinned on four-year universities, a new report makes the case for the value of a community college education.

**Over the course of their careers, the median earnings for those with associate's degrees are about \$259,000 more than for high school graduates**, according to findings released today from Nexus Research and Policy Center, an independent research organization, and the American Institutes for Research. Researchers analyzed the graduation and income data for students attending 579 two-year institutions, covering more than 80 percent of the country's community colleges. **This is just another reason we must continue to educate students on the importance of obtaining a 2-yr degree before leaving WCC.** Since that goal is too far in the future for many to focus on, there are a couple of milestones along the way to the degree. The first of these would be a completion of all developmental courses, followed by completion of 15 (and then 30 credit hours) of college coursework. The focus around the nation is on the **first-year** experience, since this is the most important milestone before obtaining a degree. However, the most important part of that first year is the **first semester...** with the **first week** being the most important part of the first semester.... with the **first day** being the most important part of the first week... and with the **first 5 minutes of class** being the most important during that class period! You should have a very definite and focused plan for this first 5 minutes each and every class period. This is the time to capture the students' attention, while setting the tone for the remainder of the class period. Thank each of you for your efforts in this area!...you ARE making a difference!!

The return on investment was highest for graduates from community colleges in California and Texas. North Carolina, **Alabama**, Tennessee, Arizona, Illinois, **Georgia** and New York also had **graduates among the top income earners at community colleges.**

"On average, students with associate's degrees earn more income than high school graduates and are less likely to be unemployed, even in harsh economic times," according to the report. ...

[http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/college\\_bound/2013/10/while\\_many\\_high\\_school\\_students.html](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/college_bound/2013/10/while_many_high_school_students.html)

## Want your boss to like you? Two-year college system to pilot 'soft skills' program (chart)

It doesn't matter how impressive a worker's resume is, if he or she doesn't have the interpersonal skills to complement technical experience, a pink slip could be in the future.

In fact, says Alabama Community College System Chancellor Mark Heinrich, research shows that **85% of the time workers get the axe, it's because they lack the soft skills** to complement the hard skills that got them their jobs. This is why it is imperative **ALL** instructors include this training within the context of their courses. Teaching '*content only*' for the majority of CC's 21<sup>st</sup> century students will not effectively educate them to be successful in the workplace, life, or higher levels of education, as the research consistently shows. Involvement of 100% of faculty is crucial to providing the *constant and consistent* message related to 'personal responsibility', which is needed to offset the lack of responsible parenting, as well as government programs that seem to reward irresponsible behavior (neither of which are the fault of the student). Students must be able to set their feelings and past beliefs aside in order to recognize answers and solutions to problems that are '*logical and conform to principles of personal responsibility*'. The use of scenarios that involve the student personally can be very effective in getting students to see the common sense logic. I would like to thank each of you for your efforts in this area. "The soft skills piece is something we've been hearing from business and industry a good bit," he said.

For those who don't know, soft skills are the personal attributes that enable workers to interact effectively and harmoniously with others. ...

[http://blog.al.com/wire/2013/09/its\\_the\\_soft\\_skills\\_that\\_get\\_y.html](http://blog.al.com/wire/2013/09/its_the_soft_skills_that_get_y.html)

### **Parents must take responsibility for kids, and community must help, Cosby panelists say**

Bill Cosby and two panels of education and business experts at a "50 Years Forward" event today called for education reform, more parental involvement in the lives of children and higher expectations for young black students. Where is the accountability??...not just for minority parents/children, but ALL parents/children. Talk without a system of accountability leads to empty rhetoric.

Many young African Americans live their lives believing they can't succeed, and without role models to show them otherwise, said Alvin Darden, dean of the freshman class at Morehouse College. Hence, the need for CCs to offer equal opportunity through assistance and accountability.

"But in their confusion and in their doubt, I see hope," Darden said. The same students who arrive on campus disillusioned, perhaps even hostile, leave with degrees and a level of commitment to make their communities better, he said.

About two dozen panelists touched on topics including black celebrities' responsibility to their communities, the dearth of capital for black entrepreneurs and how young college graduates can control their own destinies in business. ...

[http://blog.al.com/spotnews/2013/09/parents\\_must\\_take\\_responsibili.html](http://blog.al.com/spotnews/2013/09/parents_must_take_responsibili.html)

### **How prepared for college are Alabama high school graduates?** Search the database to see who's struggling

New data from the Alabama Department of Education shows high school seniors may have some catching up to do to meet the more rigorous demands of the state's new college and career readiness standards.

The revelation comes as the state completes a shift in educational goals, adopting the new standards and assessments aligned with the ACT test that colleges use to determine student admissions.

The change is intended to more closely align students' education with the ACT, improving high school seniors' scores and enabling educators to track and predict how students in lower grades will eventually score on the test.

"If we want to work collaboratively with our two-year colleges, our four-year colleges, our technical schools and business and industry, we need to be assessing by what they assess," State Superintendent Tommy Bice said. ... This will provide the much needed assistance for our future students coming out of K-12, as they focus on preparing them for college instead of a 'graduation exam'.

[http://blog.al.com/wire/2013/09/alabama\\_students\\_struggle\\_to\\_m.html](http://blog.al.com/wire/2013/09/alabama_students_struggle_to_m.html)

## Why Students Study STEM

Exposure to math and science has a bigger impact on students' intent to major in a science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM) field than does math achievement, according to a study published in the October issue of the American Educational Research Journal. This is why our outreach programs in this area are so valuable (Groundwater Days, Robotics competition, summer programs for elementary children, etc., etc.)

While math achievement is a significant indicator of whether students enroll in STEM majors (and was once thought to be the best predictor of future STEM entrance), early exposure to science and math courses has a greater influence on high school students' interest in studying STEM fields, according to a study of nationally representative high school students entering college, "Why Students Choose STEM Majors: Motivation, High School Learning, and Postsecondary Context of Support." However, the largest indicator of whether a student declared a major in a STEM field was their intent to do so.

"Through their exposure to math and science they have room for developing their interests and experiencing the wonders and joys of math and science," said the study's author, Xueli Wang, an assistant professor of educational leadership and policy analysis at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. "It's speaking to the holistic experience rather than the one-shot test score." ...

<http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2013/10/01/study-finds-math-and-science-exposure-has-significant-impact-intent-study-stem#ixzz2gU8uGffD>

## Statistical note for the top ten enrollment courses this past academic year:

- If the success rates for each of the terms this past academic year ('12-13) were imposed on the academic year prior to our I-CAN initiative ('10-11), there would have been **1,416** more successful students during that '10-11 year!...and that is for the *top ten enrollment courses only*. During this same time period 100% of faculty indicated there was an increase in student learning, with the majority indicating a *significant* increase in student learning. Even though many of these students (1416) may have been duplicate headcounts due to the fact that they may have taken more than one of these courses during the year, the number itself conveys the importance of your efforts in the classroom, as well as the urgency with which you have reacted to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Report. As I have said before, you are changing the culture of instruction here at WCC!!...and our students, our college, our community, and the taxpayer appreciate it!