



**Inside  
Higher  
Ed**

# **Redefining Value in Higher Education: Prioritizing Equitable Access and Economic Mobility Over Selectivity**

**8.7.2024, 2 p.m. Eastern**

# Webcast| Redefining Value in Higher Education: Prioritizing Equitable Access and Economic Mobility Over Selectivity

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*Inside Higher Ed*

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University of Texas at Austin

**Jamienne S. Studley,**

President of the WASC Senior  
College and University Commission

# Postsecondary Value: Public Perceptions

● March 13, 2024

NEWS

RETENTION

## Doubts About Value Are Deterring College Enrollment

Survey data suggests that prospective learners are being dissuaded from college by skepticism about whether degrees are worth the time and money.

By [Jessica Blake](#)

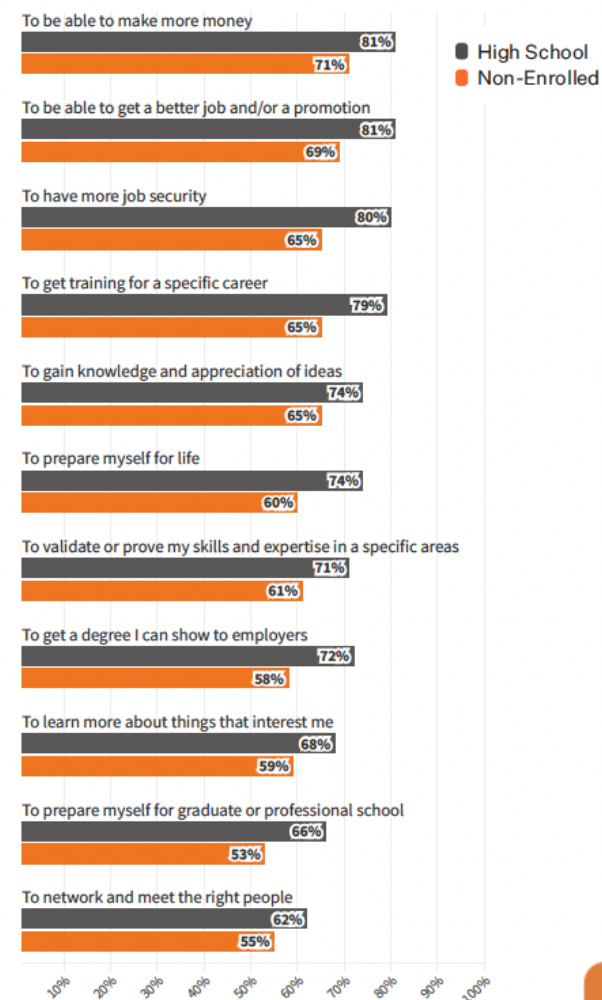


Higher education experts have been concerned about an “exodus” from higher education since long before pandemic-exacerbated enrollment declines.

ferrantraite/Getty Images

### Very/Somewhat Important as a Reason to Get a College Degree

All rates of confidence from non-college-enrolled adults are down from a similar survey released in 2022—some categories by as much as 6 percent.



Source: Edge Research, HCM Strategists

# Postsecondary Value: Public Perceptions (Cont.)

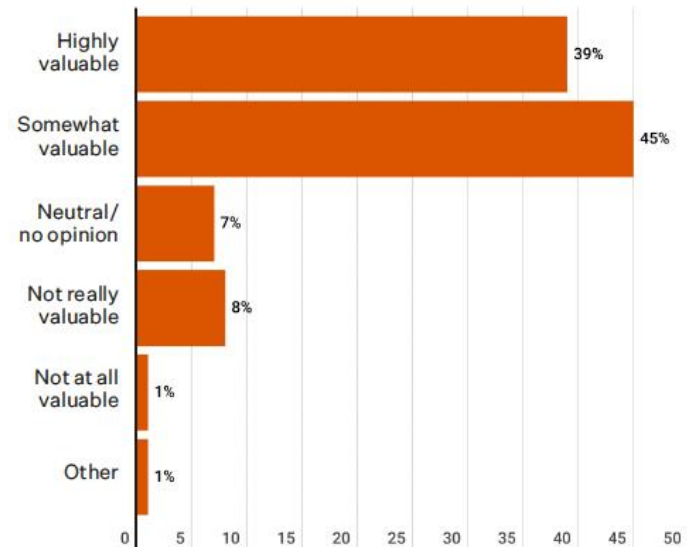
## Student Voice respondents on value and affordability:

- Most say they're getting a valuable education.
- Students have more favorable views of their own institution's value and affordability than they do of higher education as a whole—with room for improvement.
- Students want to see institutional innovation around lowering operational costs, not cuts to academics and student support services.
- Many see work-based learning opportunities and other curricular possibilities as a means of lowering the cost of attendance.

Source: "Students' Fresh Thoughts on Value and Affordability," *Inside Higher Ed*

### Educational Value

Share of students who rate their college education thus far as highly, somewhat, not really or not at all valuable, plus neutral responses



Source: Student Voice April 2024 flash survey • Student responses to the question, "Think about how much you are learning in college and how you think it will benefit your future relative to the cost of attendance. How would you rate the value of your college education?" n=1,206

# Redefining Postsecondary Value

● May 16, 2024

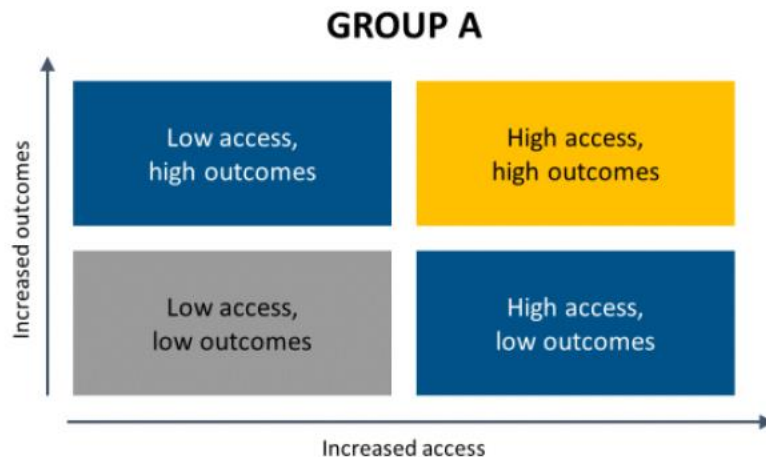
NEWS

CAREERS

## New College Classification Will Measure Socioeconomic Mobility

Proposed changes to Carnegie Classification would categorize institutions based on their enrollment of low-income and minoritized students and learners' post-college earnings.

By [Doug Lederman](#)



A proposed new classification would divide colleges into four categories based on access (enrollment of low-income and minoritized learners) and students' economic outcomes.

American Council on Education

**“There’s no perfect way to measure social and economic mobility, but the Carnegie Social and Economic Mobility Classification aims to be a more intentional way of measuring how colleges and universities are delivering on their fundamental promise of being socioeconomic engines that empower students to reach their fullest potential.”**

—*Mushtaq Gunja and Sara Gast, leaders of the Carnegie project for ACE, from their [blog post](#) about the new system*

# Redefining Postsecondary Value (Cont.)

## Strada's State Opportunity Index

Tracks and rates state's work on five education/opportunity indicators:

- Clear outcomes
- Quality coaching
- Affordability
- Work-based learning
- Employer alignment

Also includes % of grads in each state with positive ROI

### Clear Outcomes

Categorization of education-to-employment data systems

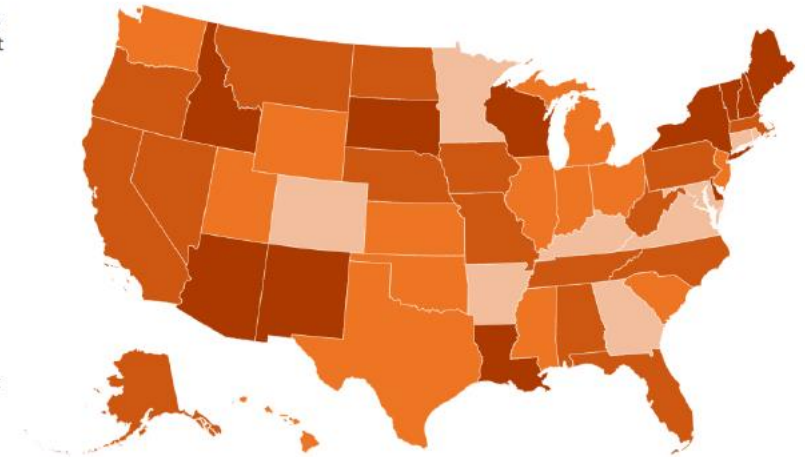
**Leading:** (>3.0) Demonstrates all expectations for the element through existing systems.

**Advanced:** (2.6–3.0) Demonstrates some of the expectations for the element, or has some systems for implementation/development.

**Developing:** (2.1–2.5) Has policies, plans or legislation in place to implement the element.

**Foundational:** ( $\leq 2.0$ ) Does not appear to have the element in place or policies, plans or legislation for implementation.

Leading    Developing  
Advanced    Foundational



Source: The Strada Education Foundation. [Read the article](#) to interact with the map.

Source: "Rating States' Work on Post-College Outcomes," *Inside Higher Ed*



# Postsecondary Value in Action

“

If we don't move forward to try and figure this out from a national kind of laboratory framework, the default setting for our sector is, 'We just hope it gets better.' And hope is an ineffective strategy when we're talking about persistent DFW rates that have really accelerated, especially on the heels of COVID.”

**Bridget Burns,**  
founding CEO of the University Innovation Alliance

”

● May 16, 2024

NEWS

ACADEMIC LIFE

## Scaling Up: Shrinking the DFW Rate

Georgia State's Accelerator Academy is inspiring 10 other institutions to help students pass key gateway courses they've previously failed or from which they've withdrawn. Initial success metrics suggest the solution is scalable, even beyond this group of universities.

By [Colleen Flaherty](#)



The pandemic only highlighted—and worsened—the DFW, or unproductive credit, problem across higher education as a whole. Now one group of universities is attempting to replicate and scale a promising intervention. Initial results indicate success.

hh5800/iStock/Getty Images Plus

# Postsecondary Value in Action (Cont.)

● May 28, 2024

NEWS

ACADEMIC LIFE

## Positive Partnership: Streamlining and Speeding Up Transfer Completion

A partnership between George Mason University and Northern Virginia Community College promotes timely degree completion among two-year college students through a seamless transfer process with guaranteed admission.

By Ashley Mowreader



While participating in the ADVANCE program, students attend Northern Virginia Community College and have the privileges of George Mason University students.

GMU/NOVA

“

We know that in the transfer space, students who earn an associate degree before they transfer are more apt to persist and complete a bachelor's degree, this whole idea of completion leading to completion.

**Jennifer Nelson,**  
director of university transfer and initiatives  
at Northern Virginia Community College

”



# Panel Discussion



**Jason Dodge**, Northern Virginia Community College and  
George Mason University



**Denisa Gándara**, University of Texas at Austin



**Jamienne S. Studley**, WASC Senior College and  
University Commission

# Audience Q & A

# Redefining Value in Higher Education

Prioritizing Equitable Access and  
Economic Mobility Over Selectivity



BILL & MELINDA  
GATES foundation



# Thank you!



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