

# Diverging Perspectives on Higher Education: Challenges and Opportunities

Pre-Doctoral Leadership Development Institute  
Class of 2013

# Introduction to PLDI

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- Immersive orientation to higher education practices and challenges
- 2-year fellowship
- Fellows are PhD students across all disciplines.
- Multiple interaction with leaders at Rutgers
- Program involves classes and a semester shadowing a leader.

# Introduction to Project

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- Higher Education is changing. Some changes are welcome, some less so.
- Decreased public support
- Rising costs for students
- Economy has changed the job market, impacting graduates
- Online education is evolving.

# Introduction: Questions we aim to explore

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1. Who are the stakeholders in higher education?
1. What are each of their concepts and priorities for the purpose of higher education?
1. Among those concepts and priorities, what common themes tie different stakeholders together? What gaps keep them apart?
1. What strategies exist (e.g. internships, cross-disciplinary approaches, leadership training) to bridge those gaps?
1. What does this mean for higher education leaders? How should we move forward to best address global concerns?

# Stakeholders in Higher Education

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**Students**

**Employers**

**Policy Makers**

**Faculty and Administrators**

# Stakeholder Perspectives

# Stakeholder Perspective: Students

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*“There are two types of education... One should teach us how to make a living, And the other how to live.” J. Adams*

## Student Profile

- Student -> HS -> College -> ?
- Varies: Race, SES, High School, Age, Gender etc
- 2- & 4-Year Schools; Public / Private (Stats)

## Admission & Accessibility

- College Readiness (Preparedness) -GPA; SAT
- Diversity & Disparities
- Funding & Expenses (Cost)

# Stakeholder Perspective: Students

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## Learning

- Knowledge; Skills; Experiences; (Soft vs Hard)
- Changing Methods & Means (Technology)
- How To Live & How To Make A Living

## Retention & Graduation (Success)

- Social & Academic Support; Mentoring
- Personal & Professional Development
- Non-Traditional Students (Unique Needs)

## Post-College

- Pathways (Job; Service; Grad School; Other)



# Stakeholder Perspective: Students

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## Why Are Students Going To College? (Survey)

- To get a better job (85%)
- Learn about points of interest (83%)
- Training for a specific career (78%)
- Gain general education (72%)
- Ability to make more money (71%)
- Preparation for graduate school (60%)
- Become more cultured (50%)

The American Freshman: National Norms for 2010. Published by the U. of California at Los Angeles Higher Education Research Institute.

# Stakeholder Perspective: Students

**Ranking of Factors Considered by Students when Enrolling**

	Private	Public
Cost	3	1
Financial aid	1	2
Academic reputation	2	3
Geographic setting	7	4
Personalized attention prior to enrollment	4	5
Campus appearance	5	6
Size of institution	6	7
Recommendations from family/friends	8	8
Opportunity to play sports	9	9

Noel-Levitz, 2011.

# Stakeholder Perspective: Students

## Title IV programs include:

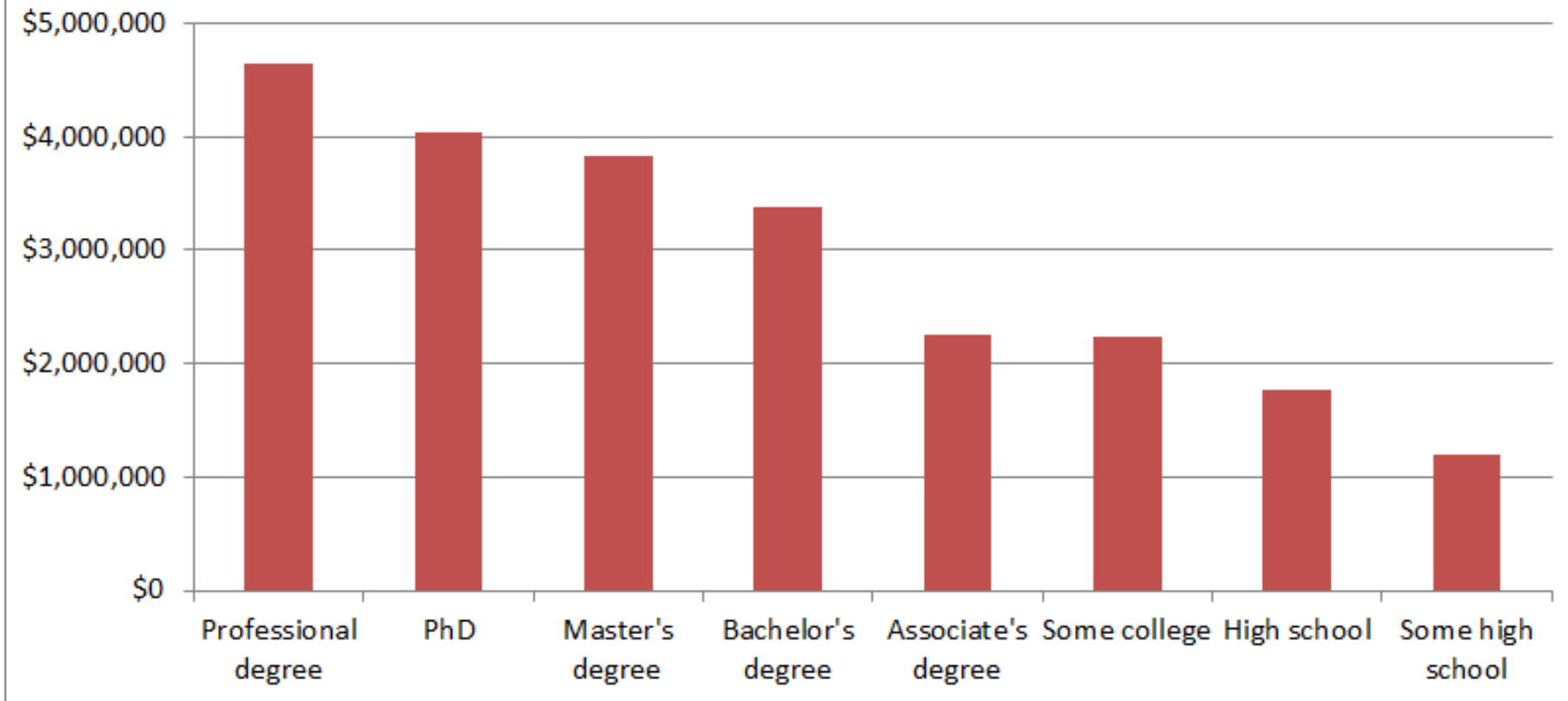
- Loans
  - Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL)
  - Direct Loan
  - Federal Perkins Loan
- Grants
  - Federal Pell Grant
  - Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG)
  - National SMART Grant
  - Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)
- Federal Work-Study (FWS)



Federal Student Aid Statistics:  
<http://federalstudentaid.ed.gov>

# Stakeholder Perspective: Students

Est. average lifetime earnings by education level



Carnevale et al., 2010.

# Stakeholder Perspective: Students

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## **BOTTOM LINE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS**

*"...Students are more likely to succeed when they find themselves in settings that are committed to their success, hold high expectations for their success, provide needed academic, social, and financial support, frequent feedback, and actively involve them, especially with other students and faculty in learning. The key concept is that of learning and educational community and the capacity of institutions to establish educational communities that actively involve all students in learning." (Tinto, 2005, p.5)*

Tinto, V. (2005, January). Taking student success seriously: Rethinking the first year of college. In *Ninth Annual Intersession Academic Affairs Forum, California State University, Fullerton* (pp. 05-01).

# Challenges: Students

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Main Mismatches & Gaps For Students Include:

- Student Funding & Debt vs. Rising Costs Of College
- College Readiness vs. Challenges Of The Academy
- Student Interests & Goals And School Mission
- Student Employability vs. Employment Opportunities
- Diversity Ideals vs. Uniformity Trends (Students & Faculty)
- Graduation & Retention Needs And Institutional Priorities & Practices
- Accessibility for Underrepresented Students & College Admission Policies

# Stakeholder Perspective: Employers

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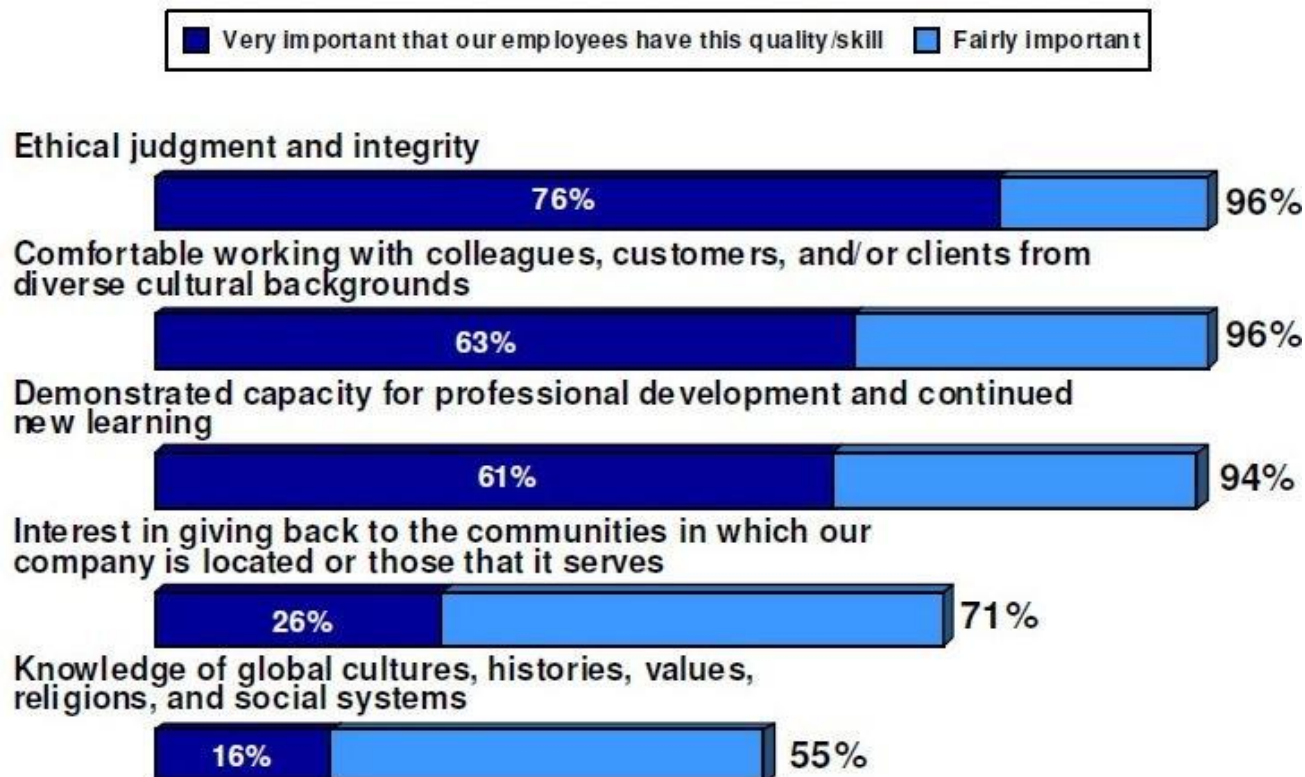
**95% of employers give hiring preferences to college graduates with skills that contribute to the innovation of the workplace**

- 1. Intellectual and interpersonal skills**
- 2. Critical thinking**
- 3. Communication**
- 4. Complex problem-solving**
- 5. Ethical judgement & Integrity**
- 6. Intercultural skills**
- 7. Professional development**

***Employers recognize that capacities that cut across majors are more relevant than a student's choice of undergraduate major.***

# Stakeholder Perspective: Employers

## *What skills and qualities have more value when hiring a college graduate?*



(AAC&U, 2013)



# Stakeholder Perspective: Employers

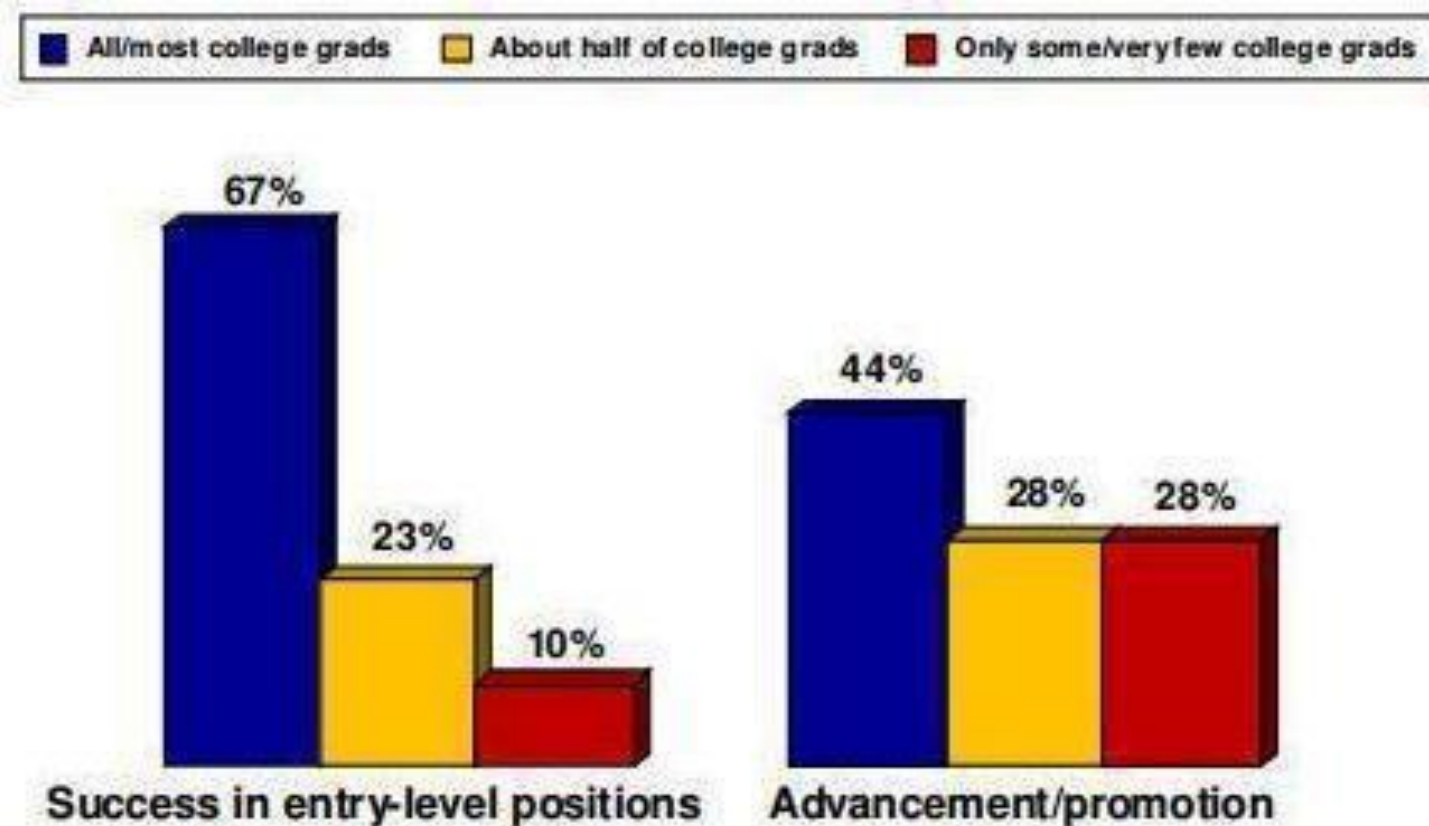
## Largest skill deficits are in "soft skills"



(The Springboard Project, 2009)

# Stakeholder Perspective: Employers

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(AAC&U, 2013)

# Stakeholder Perspective: Employers

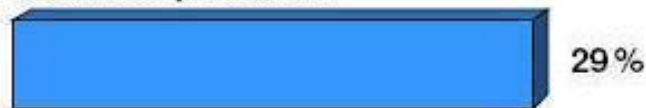
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***What's important for recent college graduates who want to pursue advancement and a long-term career?***

Having both field-specific knowledge and skills AND a broad range of skills and knowledge



Having a range of skills and knowledge that apply to a range of fields or positions



Having knowledge and skills that apply to a specific field or position



## Challenges: Employers

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- Employers' views diverge from other stakeholders.'
  - students focus on major whereas employers **also** value capacities cutting across majors
  - general public believes employers want technically trained employees while they want broad **and** specific knowledge and skills.



# Stakeholder Perspective: Policy Makers

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## **State Governments**

- Local economic/labor needs
- National competitiveness
- Efficiency and effectiveness

(Harper & Jackson, 2011)

# Stakeholder Perspective: Policy Makers

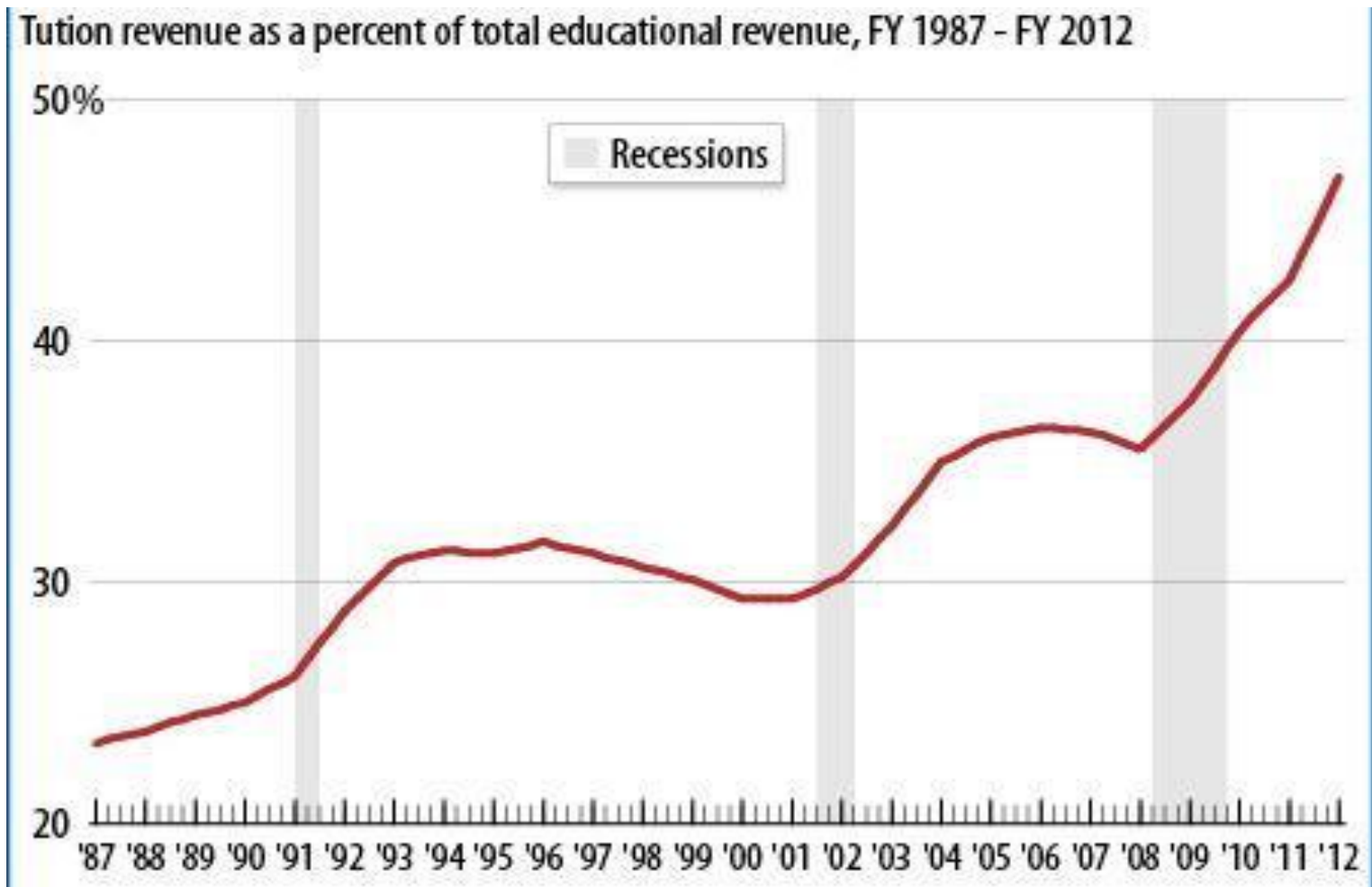
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## **Federal Government**

- Innovation
- Global competitiveness
- Accessibility
  - Diversity
  - Student Aid
- Accountability
  - Accreditation

(Harper & Jackson, 2011)

# Stakeholder Perspective: Policy Makers



(Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2013)

# Challenges: Policy Makers

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- State and national priorities often conflict with each other and those of other stakeholders.
  - Jobs / Mission
  - Funding
  - Accessibility

"Most students, faculty, and administrators feel the effects of policies that influence higher education; and **most policy makers do not understand the complexities of higher education.**" (Harper & Jackson, 2011:379)





# Stakeholder Perspective: Faculty and Administrators

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- Sustaining higher education institutions despite increasing financial constraints
  - Increasing budgetary concerns causing "some" or "extensive" stress in **86.1%** of public-university faculty. (2010-2011 Higher Education Research Institute's Faculty Survey)
  - "Three-quarters of [the **public** polled] said college was **out of reach** for most people." (Pew Survey 2011)
  - A larger share of higher education **leaders** found college to be **within reach** for most Americans. (Pew Survey 2011)

# Stakeholder Perspective: Faculty and Administrators

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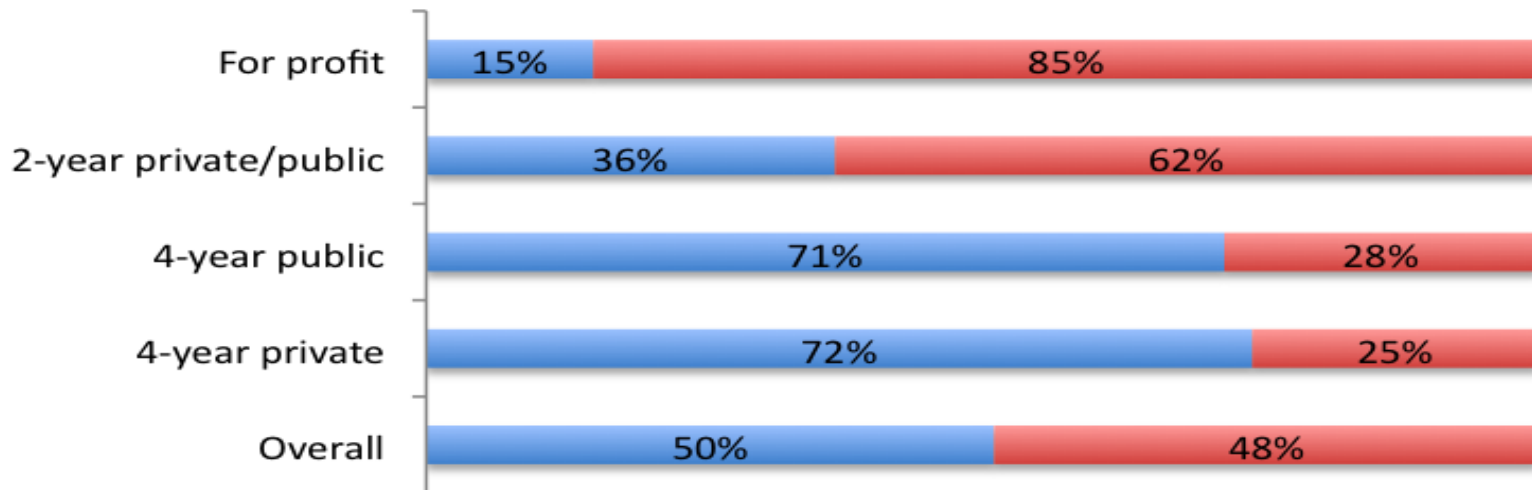
- Fulfilling multiple missions for higher education:
  - Promoting intellectual growth
  - Career preparation
- Different universities have different missions:
  - For-profit
  - 2-year private/public
  - 4-year private/public

# Stakeholder Perspective: Faculty and Administrators

## Perspectives among university leaders

**Which is the most important role colleges and universities play in the lives of their students?  
(Pew/Chronicle Survey 2011)**

- Promote intellectual and personal growth
- Provide knowledge and training for working world



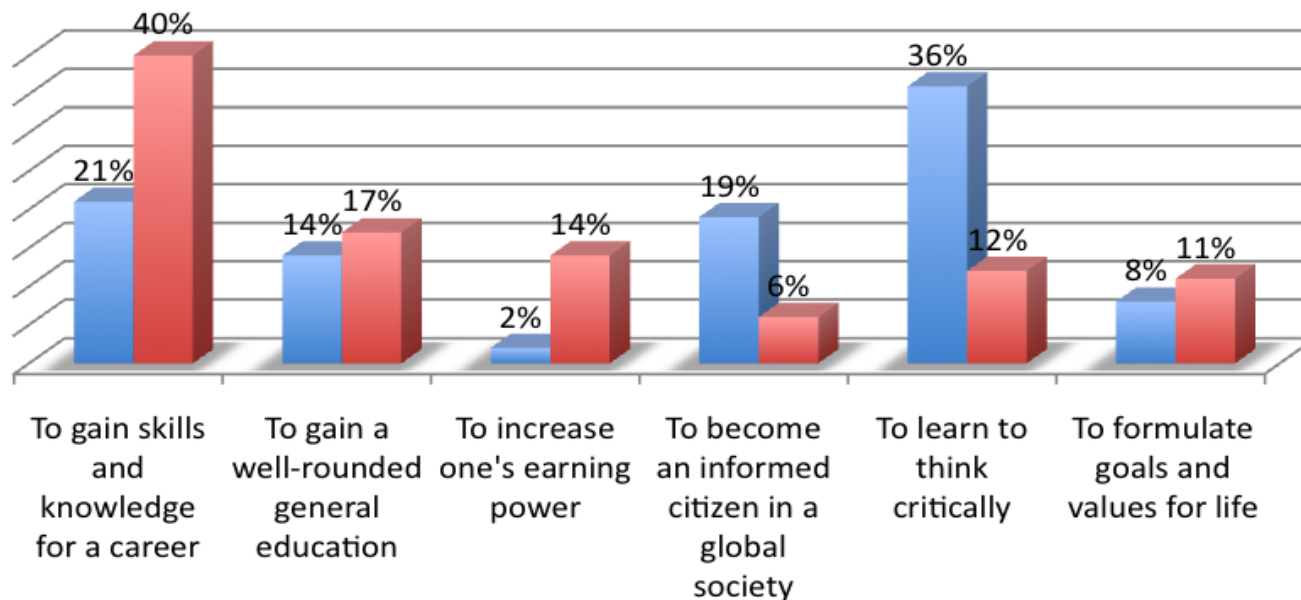
# Stakeholder Perspective: Faculty and Administrators

## College leaders vs. General population

**What is the most important reason people should go to college?**

(TIME/Carnegie Corporation of New York Poll Oct. 2012)

■ College Leaders ■ General Population



# Challenges: Faculty and Administrators

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- Institutional missions are not quantifiable according to job training and salary scales.
- With state funding decreasing, tuition costs must increase to sustain the institution.
- Lack of student and parent awareness of actual college costs, what accreditation processes do, and the different missions of different institutions
- Institutions do not recognize and address these misconceptions and concerns.
- Misunderstanding of what universities do WELL

# Common Themes and Gaps in Perspectives on Higher Education

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- **Mission & Transparency**

- What is the aim of higher education/how is it being achieved?
- Do parents/students understand it? Do the institutions communicate it well?

- **Accessibility**

- Is higher education obtainable or reachable?
- Funding for students to attend from state and federal government

- **Outcomes**

- Do the resultant products of higher education reflect the needs and demands of other stakeholders?
- Job market not absorbing graduates

What are the  
opportunities to bridge  
these gaps?

# Opportunities: Mission and Transparency

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- Bolster accreditation standards and make institutional evaluations transparent, regardless of political risk.
- Address “why is college expensive?”
  - Frame value of undergraduate degree in terms of initial earnings, lifelong student goals, and career potential
  - Communicate what universities do well and where to improve
- Acknowledge and communicate variety of missions across institutions effectively
  - DePaul's Office of Mission and Values (2010 survey)
  - James Madison University (2007 survey)



# Opportunities: Accessibility

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- Continue to fight for more or sustained government funding.
- Position county/community colleges and vocational training as viable alternatives to traditional four-year institutions.
- Offer merit-based financial incentives to students who-- after earning an Associate's Degree-- would like to continue their undergraduate studies.
- Empower institutions to collaborate with private partners; encourage private investment in higher education.

# Opportunities: Outcomes

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## **Students**

- College Preparedness (HS; Admissions; Financial Aid; Graduation, etc.)
- S.T.E.M & Other Opportunities (Global)
- Be Employable (Match Interests, Skills With Labor Mkt. Realities)

## **Colleges (Faculty & Administrators)**

- Collaborate With Employers (Work Study; Internships etc)
- Student Support: Funding; Academic; Social; Career; Graduation)
- Proactively Address Diversity & Retention Challenges
- Backwards Design (Improve Learning & Transfer Of Knowledge)

## **Policy Makers**

- Implement Policies That Clearly Make Higher Education & Alternatives A Priority. (Not Dispensable)
- Ensure Public Schools Get Needed Support For 21st Century Curriculum, Knowledge & Skills

# Opportunities: Alternative Models for Higher Education

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- **Harper College (IL)** A "hybrid model" - community college working with local corporations to simultaneously cross-train students academically and on-the-job. (Fain, 2012)
- **Warren Wilson College (NC)** A "triad" of classroom instruction, workplace experience, and community service (Solnick, 2012)
- **Bill Gates** argues for a "flipped classroom" where students use class time for projects and other interactive activities and watch videos from superstar professors as homework (Young, 2012).

## Conclusion

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- General public's understanding should line up with the thinking of the Faculty and Employers.
- Joint effort and innovation is needed (no "one-size-fits-all").
- Stakeholders should appreciate each others' problems.
- Analyzing and communicating what has been learned from what works and what doesn't work.

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# Questions

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