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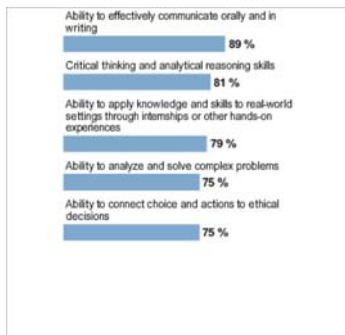
Group urges improved value, breadth of college degrees

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WHAT AN EMPLOYER WANTS

Nearly half of employers say they downsized in the past year, but nearly two in five expect to increase staffing in the next year, a new survey finds. They also expect college graduates to be able to do more.

When asked on which skills colleges should place more emphasis, employers said:



Source: Peter Hart Research Associates survey of 302 employers with 25 or more employees and 25% of new hires with 2- or 4-year college degree.

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BestValueColleges.usatoday.com



FIND THE RIGHT COLLEGE

This database by USA TODAY and the National Survey of Student Engagement shows how hundreds of colleges across the country scored in five "student involvement" benchmarks, including level of academic challenge, student-faculty interaction and other keys to



By **Mary Beth Marklein, USA TODAY**

In all the recent talk about boosting the number of Americans with college degrees, some worry that an essential element has been missing: whether the degree has value.

On Wednesday, a national association of colleges called for a "far-reaching national commitment" to improve "the breadth, level and quality of students' actual learning."

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The group stopped short of calling for quality-control measures. But it noted that President Obama and others have proposed a number of goals aimed at increasing college access and completion rates.

"If the administration is proposing to put billions into the renewal of higher education, we want to make sure there is clarity about learning outcomes," says Carol Geary Schneider, president of the Association of American Colleges and Universities. It outlined concerns in a statement, "The Quality Imperative."

The association, which advocates for the importance of broad-based knowledge, including exposure to diverse cultures, critical thinking and civic preparation, also released a survey that suggests most employers would agree.

Of 302 employers surveyed, just one in four said two- and four-year colleges were doing a good job preparing students for the challenges of the global economy. One in five said significant changes were needed.

Education Department undersecretary Martha Kanter, who previewed the statement, says administration officials "welcome the new determination to make learning outcomes a driving focus for campus effort and attention."

The group raises particular concern about "programs that provide narrow training or short-term credentials," which it says will "limit opportunity for better jobs."

Jim McKenney of the American Association of Community Colleges says such programs often meet students' immediate needs. "Many times students come to you asking for just the beef, if you will, because they're staring at a job" with particular requirements.

Gail Mellow, president of LaGuardia Community College in New York, says some programs may be better than others, but quantity must not trump quality.

"Any training program that was not part of a career ladder that could move people forward would be of concern to me," she says.

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you can continue to take at least one meaningful class per term that you will actually use in your career path there, while taking the other two or three classes at the University.

Yea, I think thats about it!. Follow those two simple pieces of advice and you will be ready for the world.

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mpmurphy (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 16h 25m ago

I agree with the employers that we need to leave college "more ready" to apply technology. That would also mean disagreeing with the a national association of colleges who are calling for a broader level of education. Thats the problem; to broaden your educational horizon is to spend less time on your concentration. I am a recent graduate from a pac 10 school in Computer Science and while my school prided itself on its mathematical and theoretical approach to solving computer science problems, and getting us to think outside the box, it did little or nothing to ensure we were capable software developers, and believe me, that is a useless situation. In addition, they also require 45 credits to be spent in Arts and letters, Social science and an additional unrelated science field(your broadened education). 45 more credits in computer engineering and software development would have made a world of difference for me. I estimate that I may have to work for a year on my own time to become a good enough software developer to be employable.

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cyclechick63 (9 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 1d ago

If you want your college education to actually be worth some money, then you better pick a degree where you actually LEARN to do an actual job - like doctor or nurse or dentist or lawyer or some other kind of real, concrete, money job. If you go for a "business" degree or a "liberal arts" degree or some other kind of vague degree, you're going to be in trouble once you get out and start looking for a job because nobody cares and they are a dime a dozen and you're going to have to start at the bottom (no money) and work your way up just like the next guy. And if he's more of a go-getter than you, then too bad for you. Go to college to learn a big money skill. Otherwise, save yourself a hundred grand and just go to a trade school. I promise you, they are earning more than a lot of college educated people.

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Phantomguy (1 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 1d 5h ago

Well, perhaps if college professors spent more of their time actually providing an education instead of using their classrooms to espouse their ultra-left wing, progressive, liberal agenda, then our graduates would be just a bit more well educated when they emerge from those 4-year brainwash clinics to become employees.

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theccur (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 1d 5h ago

Lets get real. Schools have bee failing to educate for decades. Graduation is considered a right. By the same token, in the 70's, a college education became a right and the universities actually began terminating professors who required that student actual lean something to get a grade. Now, a college degree is considered an entitlement.

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Bubba2 (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 1d 6h ago

Most "research" universities could care less if there were undergraduates on campus or not. Students are just an excuse to cry for more money. Community Colleges have a greater cost-to-benefit value than most universities.

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Rambler88 (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 1d 6h ago

Business has been whining for years that their new hires don't have skill in communications or thinking. It's largely their own fault. Hiring practices have had immense influence on educational practice for the past generation. The reality is that anyone with critical thinking skills is considered a threat to today's "professional managers", and anyone who can communicate such thoughts is a double threat. This is especially true of the gatekeepers of the hiring process, the HR people. No-one with thinking and communications skills can take HR people seriously, and the slightest whiff of such a negative attitude will disqualify a candidate before a hiring manager ever sees his resume.

If you have communications and thinking skills, and can produce something of value in the marketplace, you have two choices: you work for yourself, or you don't work.

The worst of it is that life and business are so insanely overregulated that small business is under a major handicap--much worse than is big business, which is handicapped enough. So more efficient

competitors don't arise--in the U.S.--nearly as often as is needed. And the jobs keep going overseas.


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Jane Six-pack (1 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 1d 8h ago

I shudder every time I have to read a fresh-from-college resume. Don't these children know how to spell?! You'd think, at the very least, they'd know how to use a spell-check.

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