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Does College Have a Purpose?

What is the purpose of college? This is a complex question, and the answer might be different for everyone. Many may be questioning if it is even worth it anymore. It is worth it; the purpose of college is for political, economic, and personal development. First, this essay will discuss the history of college and what the old purpose was. Then discuss how its purpose is now to help people to be able to practice skills useful in politics which affects the entire country, help people gain higher paying jobs which will help our economy overall, and is a step towards adulthood for most people. Next, how some may believe the purpose is different. Lastly, how colleges should proceed towards this purpose.

To begin, Universities began as a group of scholars who got together to better their education. When they were first formed not many people attended, it was a few upper-class white males. As explained by Delbanco in "Ivory Tower" college began as a commitment to students that they could ward warcol(th)2 Lpđ and he a feh4 Tc 02(ba)4(nc3w {to)2(b)2(e(he)4(y c)4(l)-2(ba)4(r

waves of the Morrill Act constantly trying to improve these land-grant institutions. The second wave was in 1890 which granted access to black Americans, and the third wave in 1994 gave land-grant status to tribal colleges, but as stated by Fashel, the last two waves did not “benefit from the same opportunities” (Fashel p.1). This Act that was meant to bring equality did not fully meet its goal.

Moving forward in history the Higher Education Act of 1965 was passed which intended for universities to be all access and inclusive, education was meant for everyone. This worked for a while, but it was not sustainable with America’s changing economy. Pell grants were introduced to help lower-income families be able to still attain education. In the journal *Pell Grants and Student Success: Evidence from the Universe of Federal Aid*, written by Amanda Eng and Jordan Matsudaira published in the *Journal of Labor Economics* they state that one

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Ivory Tower by Andrew Rossi, Bennet Bergman, a second-year student at Deep Springs College, says “the college classroom is perhaps the best rehearsal for democracy” (Bergman). This describes how people learn how to properly engage in political ideas while in college and properly respond to others’ ideas if they don’t agree. College does not just help with adjusting to democracy and being able to express ideas, but also helps with critical thinking skills. In college, they teach how to pick out fallacies and process information given to you so you can make better decisions. This is how college will help you to make better political decisions that will overall affect the entire country.

Next, college helps better our economy. Studies show that people with college degrees make more money than those without one. Andrew Delbanco states in his article “3 Reasons college still matter” in *The Boston Globe* “Some estimates put the worth of a bachelor of arts degree at about a million dollars in incremental lifetime earnings” (Delbanco). Making more money is not only beneficial for the person but the country’s economy. America mostly runs on capitalism and our money running through the country. If citizens can make more money and be consumers, they benefit the flow of money through the economy.

Next, College serves to be a step into adulthood for most. A lot of people enter college right after graduating high school when they are around 18. This is usually their first step away from their parents and getting to live on their own. This is a critical step towards growing up because it allows you space from your parents and to have to start to learn things on your own while still being in a lightly controlled environment. While in college you are mostly surrounded by others around your age probably going through similar situations as you so this can be a good support system for your development. People grow and develop a lot in the year they are in college. It helps you to realize some things on your own and make new friends in a new

environment. Many people may not view college for this purpose, but this is an important reason to go. Delbanco says, “What he meant was that college had opened his senses as well as his mind to experiences that would otherwise be foreclosed to him” (Delbanco). This describes how attending college could shape you to be an entirely different person. You get presented with different scenarios and get to slowly grow rather than be pushed out in the world with no preparation.

Now, how the purpose of college could be viewed differently. Some people argue that the purpose of college is entirely for job preparation. Drew Faust, the president of Harvard, states in the film “Ivory Tower” “We aren’t educating students for a first job. We want to give them the abilities to think and reason and question for a lifetime” (Faust). This shows that college is not just meant to be job training and proves the point that it is for critical thinking skills. Many people also believe that college degrees are essential and feel forced to attend. This is not the case though, while for a while it seemed that you were likely to get a good job with a degree it is turning around. Written by Steve Lohr in the article “A 4-year Degree Isn’t Quite the Job Requirement

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Work Cited

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