

COLLEGES ARE FAILING US

The demand for a college degree continues to rise but the system is failing to graduate a proportionate number of students. The Business Innovation Factory's look at the journey illuminates why so few are making it through the post secondary education system.

Why does higher education need to change?

The world is rapidly changing and the education system is struggling to keep up. Cost, technology, culture and competition are reshaping the playing field for the government, students and educators.



COST

The cost of education is outpacing inflation and the price increase of healthcare every year. Colleges continue to receive less public funding forcing students to take more loans to cover tuition increases.



TECHNOLOGY

Technology is rapidly shifting the educational playing field by opening new options and lowering the barrier to access to information.



CULTURE

Schools must struggle to meet the needs of an increasing variety of student age, race and background. This variety of student greatly impacts the culture of education and the educational experience.



COMPETITION

The distribution of knowledge and wealth and speed of information transfer has made job competition a global issue. People increasingly must learn more skills more often in order to succeed.

What and who affects student success?

Many factors impact student success but students are telling us that teachers, personal relationships, educational institutions and the government have a huge impact based on our research. These entities shape the format of education, the way it is delivered and how students perceive it.

Teachers

- 1) In the 1970s 80% of faculty was tenurable. In 2009 only 20% were.
- 2) Adjunct educators often receive very low wages.
- 3) The teachers union wields an inordinate amount of power in public schools which often makes systems-level changes hard to implement.

Personal Relationships

- 1) Few counselors to support students.
- 2) Students require informal networks to get the right information to succeed.
- 3) Many students lack one strong personal relationship at school that would increase their chances of persistence and attainment.

Educational Institutions

- 1) Have overwhelming demand.
- 2) Little incentive to graduate students.
- 3) Have all the information about cost and quality while students have none.

Government

- 1) 61 accrediting bodies in the United States creating different credit standards.
- 2) No credit formula.
- 3) Little consumer recourse.
- 4) Little oversight of student lending practices.
- 5) U.S. is one of the few countries that doesn't have centralized education oversight.
- 6) Provides few consumer rights for students.

What happens on the way to college?

Despite what many may think, the path to graduation is anything but straight. Students are part of a system that tells them to go to college to be successful but provides them very little support to prepare them, select a school and transition to college.

1) Grade School

Even our youngest students get the message, "Go to college, get a job and have a happy life." It is not such a clear path to success.

2) Middle School

80% of 8th graders expect to get a four-year degree. For a lucky few, college preparation begins here by attending a preparation high school or by taking extra curricular classes.

3) High School

Most students begin thinking about college in the 10th grade but have little support since the ratio of counselors to students is commonly 1:500. School marketing materials and word-of-mouth are the most common sources of information on college.

4) Bridge

The richest and poorest students may attend a high school to college bridge program that supports student transition into the new learning environment they will find in college.

5) College

60% of students will transfer schools and many more will take classes when they can, rather than attending full-time, sometimes taking years off in between. These students are often referred to as stop outs. 33% of college students will leave school after their first year. They will take debt and disappointment with them.

5-6 years is the new standard for students to complete a four-year degree. Only 50% of college students will graduate. 14% at community colleges. Only 21% of Black students and 14% of Hispanic students will receive a credential. Over 30% of college students are over the age of 30.

What students are telling us

The Business Innovation Factory conducted interviews with more than 65 students from 40 schools across the country to discover the 9 major factors that impact the student experience. Students candidly shared their lives and challenges to help us identify those themes.

Nine themes of the current student experience

- Foundations:** Students need a strong foundation to support their transition to college.
- Chasing the Dream:** People going to college are chasing dreams of all shapes and sizes.
- Planning the Future:** Students must project themselves into an unknown future.
- Navigating the System:** Students often get lost navigating through bureaucracy.
- Managing Finances:** College is a big investment and students have trouble managing their finances.
- Institutional Fit:** Finding an institution that matches a student's needs is a huge challenge.
- Being in Class:** Matching the actual learning experience to the student is crucial to student success.
- Relationships:** Relationships that support students are critical to student success.
- Leaving:** Students can leave school in many ways including; stopping out, dropping out or graduating.

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