

# SECURING AMERICA'S FUTURE:

## THE POWER OF LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION

**DID YOU KNOW**



# A CALL TO ACTION

***A liberal arts education makes a difference***—for those who receive it and for the society we live in. Private colleges and universities have played a vital role in developing our country and its democratic institutions. Liberal arts education has strengthened America by educating generations of engaged citizens who have helped our nation keep its promise of personal growth and opportunity for all.

Private liberal arts colleges have the power to meet one of the nation's top priorities: increasing the number of college graduates who have the skills that employers want.

***Liberal arts colleges produce graduates who are among the best prepared for success*** in their personal, career, and community lives.

***The future for liberal arts graduates is promising***, too. Just ask the young alumnus who heads an expanding high-tech business—or the recent alumna who launched a foundation to help orphaned and abandoned youth in Kenya complete high school. Listen to the students at any of our nation's 700 small and mid-sized private colleges and universities, and you will hear excitement about what they are learning and confidence that their studies will help them achieve personal and career goals.

Yet, today, America's private liberal arts institutions face significant challenges. Many students and their families simply don't know what a liberal arts education is, how it benefits the students who experience it, and how it strengthens our country's economy and civic life. In recent years, widely reported myths have contributed to misunderstandings about liberal arts education. At a time when a liberal arts education and the benefits it offers are more important than ever, its real value may not become known to those who would gain the most from it.

## ***The Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) is taking action***

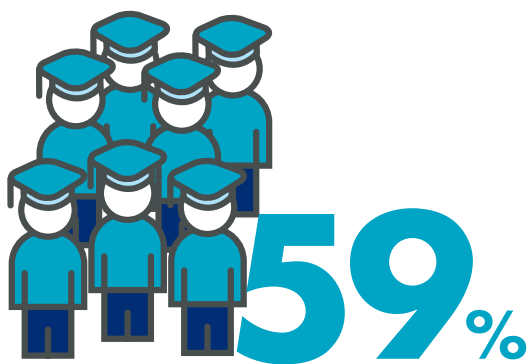
through a national initiative with the advice and support of more than 700 member colleges, universities, and educational organizations to promote understanding of the liberal arts and the effectiveness of independent higher education.

# 1. A liberal arts education prepares students for personal and professional success.

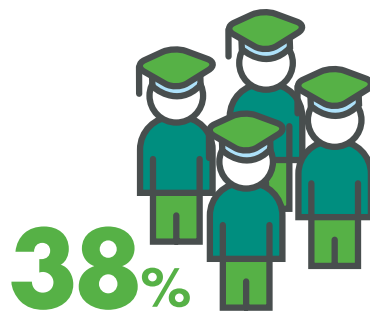
- Graduates who studied the liberal arts have the **broad knowledge** most employers—80 percent in a recent survey—say they want.
- The overwhelming majority of employers (93 percent) believe that a college graduate's ability to **think critically, communicate clearly,** and **solve complex problems** is more important than his or her undergraduate major.
- Workers who majored as undergraduates in the humanities or social sciences **earn more** (on average \$2,000) in annual salary during their peak earnings ages (56–60 years) than those who majored in professional or pre-professional fields.

**FACT:**

— PRIVATE COLLEGE GRADUATES —  
**FINISH ON TIME**



of graduates of smaller **private colleges** finish within four years



of graduates of regional **public universities** finish within four years

“Attending a liberal arts college...prepared me for my job as a photojournalist in ways I couldn’t have imagined at the time. I was exposed to an incredible amount of knowledge, and it made me more curious about the world around me.”

—Katie Falkenberg, Staff Photographer, *Los Angeles Times*,  
Warren Wilson College (NC), Class of 2003



What Liberal Arts Grads Are Saying...

- Students at smaller private colleges **graduate earlier** than those at other types of institutions—59 percent graduate within four years, compared with just 38 percent at public universities.
- Students in smaller private colleges are **more likely to volunteer**—64 percent versus only 22 percent of other 16- to 24-year olds—and thereby contribute more to the public good than their peers.

FACT:

— LIBERAL ARTS-BASED PRIVATE COLLEGES —  
**PREPARE FUTURE SCIENTISTS**

20%

of PhDs in STEM fields graduated from smaller private colleges



12%

of PhDs in STEM fields graduated from regional public universities



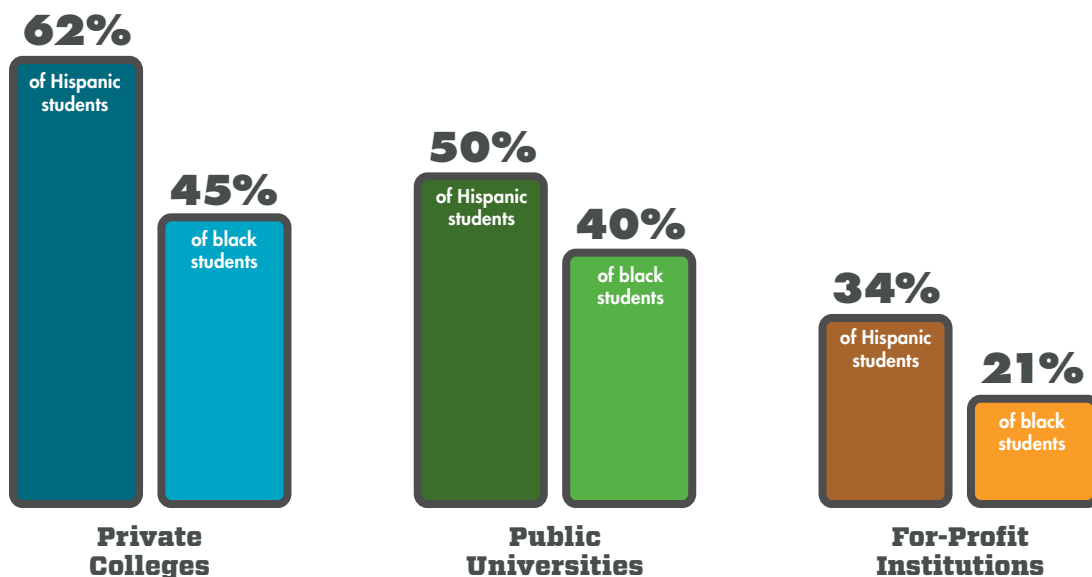
## 2. Diverse students enroll in and excel at smaller private colleges.

- Private colleges enroll a similar proportion of minority students as public universities—about one-third of the student population. But **students of color graduate at higher rates** from private colleges and in a shorter average period of time. For example, the graduation rate for black students at private colleges is 45 percent (compared with 40 percent at public universities), while the graduation rate for Hispanic students at private colleges is 62 percent (compared with 50 percent at public universities).
- Low-income students** (Pell Grant recipients) are **more likely to graduate** from a private four-year college than a public university—a 68 percent graduation rate compared with 61 percent at public universities.

### FACT:

## STUDENTS OF COLOR

— AT PRIVATE COLLEGES ARE MORE LIKELY TO —  
GRADUATE



“My liberal arts education has equipped me with the flexibility, adaptability, and ability to ‘think on my feet’ and find ways to come out ahead when Plan A is no longer an option.”



— Paula Hayes, Founder and President of Hue Noir (a cosmetics line for women of color), Lewis & Clark College (OR), Class of 1992

### What Liberal Arts Grads Are Saying...

- Students from ***all financial backgrounds enroll*** at smaller private colleges. Slightly more students at smaller private four-year colleges (16 percent) are from low-income families (income less than \$25,000) than those at public research universities (15 percent). Middle-income students enroll in smaller private colleges in about the same percentages as they do at public universities.
- ***At-risk students are more likely to succeed*** at private colleges. In fact, students with four or more risk factors graduate from private colleges at almost twice the rate of their peers at public institutions. Risk factors include no high school diploma, part-time enrollment, having dependents, single parent status, or working full-time while enrolled.

**FACT:**

## FIRST-GENERATION

— STUDENTS ARE MORE LIKELY TO —

## GRADUATE

— FROM PRIVATE COLLEGES —

70%

graduated from **private colleges**  
within six years

57%

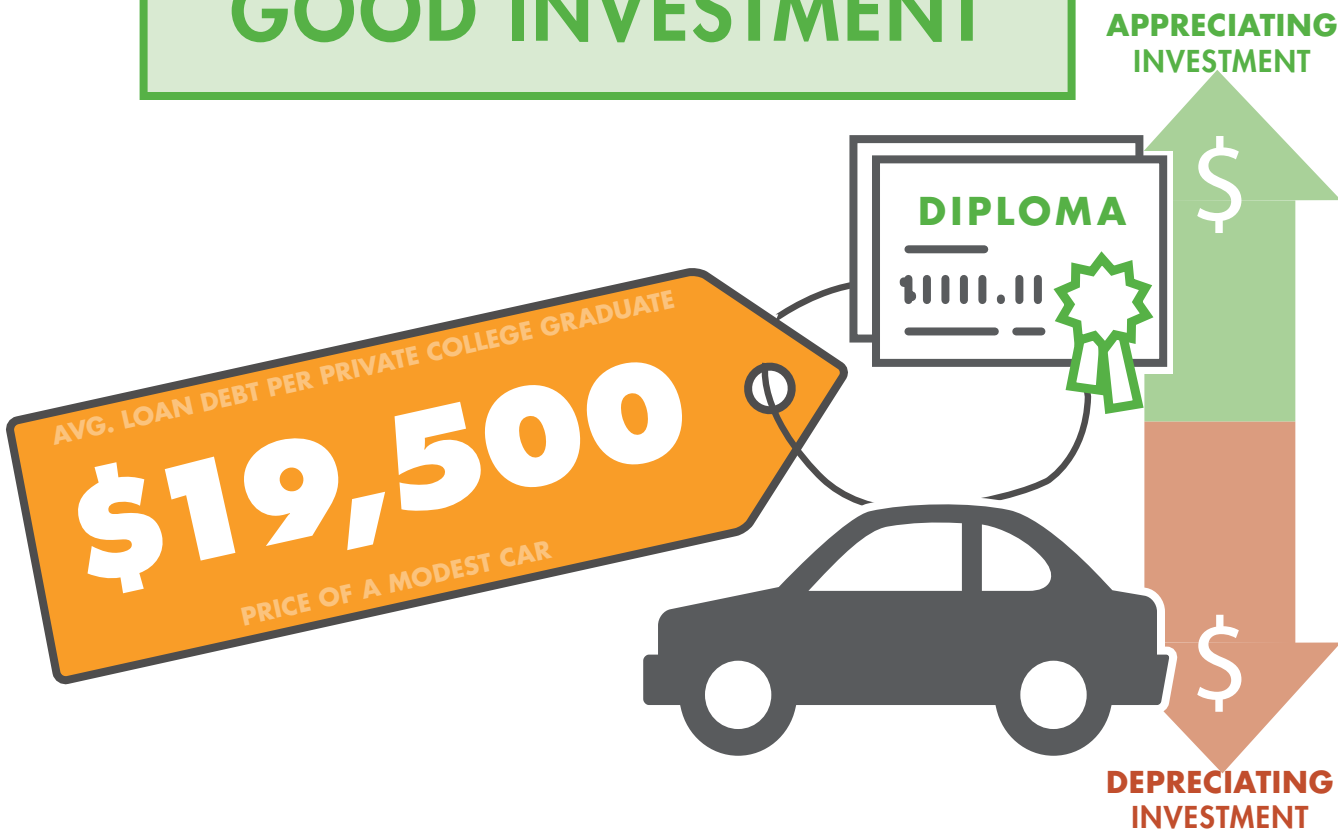
graduated from **public universities**  
within six years

# 3. Private colleges help students and their families keep the price of college low and return on investment high.

- A larger percentage of students at private colleges receive financial aid than those at public universities. In fact, they are *twice as likely to receive grants* from their colleges as students at public institutions, and the average institutional grant is three times larger at private colleges than at public universities.
- More than one-third of the graduates of private colleges have less than \$10,000 in student debt—or no debt at all. The *average loan debt* that students at four-year private colleges owe after they graduate (2011–2012) is \$19,500—about the *price of a modest automobile*.

FACT:

— A LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION IS A —  
**GOOD INVESTMENT**



“In my career in financial services, the research skills I honed in my history courses and the in-depth understanding of behavior I gained in my psychology course have been invaluable to me.”

— Edward R. Collins, Founding Partner and Wealth Advisor, Artisan Wealth Management, LLC, Caldwell College (NJ), Class of 1998



### What Liberal Arts Grads Are Saying...

- Smaller private colleges **work hard to reduce costs** and raise substantial private support to offset costs. For example, although the average published tuition and fees at private four-year colleges and universities is \$30,090, students pay only \$12,460 on average.
- Students at private colleges **graduate much sooner** (ten months earlier) than do their peers at public institutions and nearly five years earlier than students at for-profit institutions—which means fewer years of paying tuition and a quicker start at earning a salary.
- Private colleges give students nearly **six times as much grant aid** as the federal government provides.

**FACT:**

— PRIVATE COLLEGES —

**AWARD LARGER GRANTS**

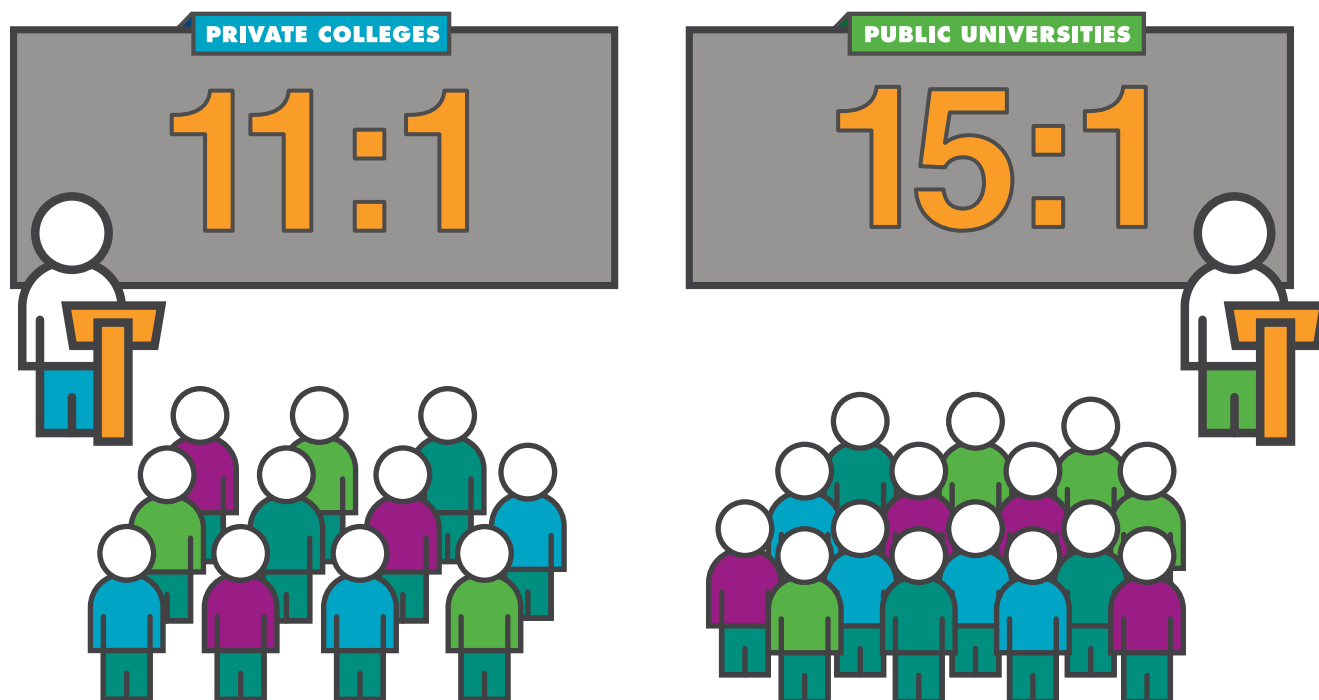


# 4. Private colleges offer top-quality teaching, small classes, and activities that engage students.

- At smaller private colleges, students are more likely to have *supportive relationships with faculty members*, receive prompt feedback on their academic performance, and continue discussions of course material with faculty members outside of class.
- A liberal arts curriculum encourages broad and *creative thinking*, not rote learning. Students at private colleges are regularly asked to synthesize their coursework and apply theories to practical problems. Moreover, students at private colleges are more likely to engage in active and collaborative learning approaches.

## LOW STUDENT-FACULTY RATIO — AT PRIVATE COLLEGES —

FACT:



## LEARN MORE

More information about Securing America's Future: The Power of Liberal Arts Education is available at [www.LiberalArtsPower.org](http://www.LiberalArtsPower.org). Visit this site to access links to data, op-eds, articles, speeches, blog posts, and videos that highlight how liberal arts and smaller independent colleges produce graduates who are among the best prepared for success in their personal, career, and community lives.

The story of liberal arts education needs to be told—and retold—especially by those who have benefited from a liberal arts education. You can advance the campaign by sharing your successes with us and with your fellow CIC members. Here's how:

- Follow the campaign's Twitter feed, [@SmartColleges](https://twitter.com/SmartColleges). If you see a tweet you like, retweet it!
- Send your own tweets using [#LiberalArts](https://twitter.com/hashtag/LiberalArts)—we encourage you to adapt our Twitter topics to your needs and interests.
- Link to [www.LiberalArtsPower.org](http://www.LiberalArtsPower.org) from your website.
- Write op-eds or letters to the editor.
- Speak at civic clubs and community events.
- Provide powerful, transparent, and truthful information about liberal arts education—and challenge misinformation whenever you see it.

Working together, we can communicate and expand the positive power of liberal arts education.

### Meet Libby and Art on Twitter @SmartColleges

Libby offers student insights while counselor Art tweets the facts.

Troy D. Hammond @PrezHammond

CIC's [@SmartColleges](https://twitter.com/SmartColleges) campaign is telling the story of the value of a [#LiberalArts](https://twitter.com/hashtag/LiberalArts) education. [@northcentralcol](https://twitter.com/northcentralcol) [#LifeLongLearning](https://twitter.com/hashtag/LifeLongLearning)

Mitchell Salerno @wkndDisney

[@smartcolleges](https://twitter.com/smartcolleges) Keep up the great work. Read about you in [@pittsburghpg](https://twitter.com/pittsburghpg)  
As an educator and a [#LiberalArts](https://twitter.com/hashtag/LiberalArts) product, LA are worth every penny.



Tina Hertel @serendipitina

This happens: "Can you please open the library on Saturday to show our football recruits?" [#LiberalArts](#) [@Muhlenberg](#) [#awesomesauce](#)



Alison Byerly @alisonbyerly

[@SmartColleges](#) supports CIC's Liberal Arts Campaign by debunking myths about liberal arts education. Got myths? Factcheck 'em here



Libby and Art @SmartColleges

Pathway from a Liberal Arts Education to a Job at Google - Higher Education [diverseeducation.com/article/61179/](http://diverseeducation.com/article/61179/) via [@twitterapi](#) h/t [@marykboyd](#)



Kaylie @3d\_sunshine

I thoroughly enjoy [@SmartCollege](#)'s twitter. It's very encouraging to see other liberal arts students succeed. We're a close-knit community.



Data supporting the statements found in this brochure can be found on CIC's liberal arts research-focused website at [www.cic.edu/LiberalArts](http://www.cic.edu/LiberalArts).

Sources include: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, *Humanities Report Card* (2013); Association of American Colleges and Universities, *How Liberal Arts and Sciences Majors Fare in Employment* (2014) and *It Takes More Than a Major: Employer Priorities for College Learning and Student Success* (2013); College Board, *Trends in College Pricing 2013* (2013) and *Trends in Student Aid 2013* (2013); Council of Independent Colleges, *A Special Report on Independent College and Student Engagement* (2011) and *Strengthening the STEM Pipeline: The Contributions of Small and Mid-Sized Independent Colleges* (2014); Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (2011); National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, *Independent Colleges and Universities: A National Profile* (2011) and *Private Colleges: FactFile* (2014); and National Center Education Statistics, *2008-09 Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study (B&B:08/09): First Look* (2011), *Beginning Postsecondary Students (BPS:04/09)*, *Digest of Education Statistics 2012* (2013), *Digest of Education Statistics 2013* (2014), and *National Postsecondary Student Aid Study 2011-12 (NPSAS:12)*.

## ABOUT CIC

The **Council of Independent Colleges** is an association of more than 700 nonprofit independent colleges and universities and other organizations that work together to strengthen college and university leadership, sustain high-quality education, and enhance private higher education's contributions to society. To fulfill this mission, CIC provides its members with skills, tools, and knowledge that strengthen aspects of academic quality, leadership, financial management and performance, and institutional visibility. In addition, State Funds coordinate programs and generate contributions and grants in support of private colleges and universities. The Council is headquartered at One Dupont Circle in Washington, DC. For more information, visit [www.cic.edu](http://www.cic.edu).



THE COUNCIL OF  
INDEPENDENT COLLEGES

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