Benefits of a Community College

Good Investment

For every dollar invested in higher education, society can expect a very real return:

- An average real return of $9.30. The cost-benefit ratio to society for a two-year associate degree is even higher at $10.52. Their analysis found that the state recovers its subsidy of higher education in sales taxes alone. This happens as more highly educated people earn more money and increase their spending, which yields more in sales taxes (Victor Ukpolo and Thomas F. Dernburg, working for the Tennessee Board of Regents, October 2002).
- A 2002 North Idaho College study found for every dollar invested, there is a return of $10.34 in higher future earnings over a student's working life (The Socioeconomic Benefits Generated by North Idaho College, CC Benefits, October 2002).
- A Florida study had similar findings with an average return of $13.37 in state output for every dollar of public support invested in a community college graduate with an associate arts or sciences degree (Center for Educational Performance & Accountability, Tallahassee, Florida, February 2006).

High Value Jobs

Research shows that education pays. Students who complete associate degrees and certificates are more likely to move into higher-status management and professional positions with higher earnings. An investment of a few thousand dollars now will likely pay lifelong dividends, as students who earn associate degrees average lifetime earnings of more than $250,000 to $400,000 more than people without degrees (AACC, National Profile of Community Colleges; Trends and Statistics, 3rd Ed.).
Idaho Department of Commerce Poster

Fast, Flexible Worker Training

Instructional programs offered at the community colleges are increasingly important for companies seeking fast, flexible worker training, and responding to community need. The programs may be original courses created by the community college or may be the application of programs recognized by local industry. This is especially poignant in Idaho where we are facing a shortage in healthcare, construction, computers/technology, and more.

Reduces Remediation Costs

According to the Idaho State Board of Education, one-third of college freshmen require remediation courses, costing the state $2 million in 2005. In the Treasure Valley, students currently pay $211 for a non-credit remediation course, far more than the average community college rate of $76 to $145 per course.

Catalyst for Community Development

Community colleges are becoming "magnets" for higher-income baby boomers and seniors seeking to retire to newly-formed "campus centered communities," where community colleges serve as the core of community life, including housing, retail, offices, public space, arts and farmer's markets.