

Example by StudyDriver

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Free College Education Example

Marcus Cicero once wrote, “The purpose of education is to free the student from the tyranny of the present.” An education that involves a college degree is essential for building a career, but at the same time, paying back for it feels like the tyranny that Cicero mentions. In today’s world, higher education comes at a higher cost. Because of its high costs, almost everyone in the United States believes that college should be more affordable. High school was a luxury around a century ago, but it eventually became a necessity; and now the same thing is happening with college. It is a necessity. Several other countries have already implemented free or low-cost college education. While some people in the US object to providing tuition free college for others, as shown in some of these countries, a college educated workforce improves the economy. Paying for college education is a struggle for most students. While some attempts to provide free education have been made in the US, more needs to be done. In fact, several presidential candidates are now proposing for some type of a nationwide free education program. Free education or low-cost tuition is something that should be implemented into the public colleges and universities of the United States as it seems to provide beneficial results in some of the countries. College education should be free or at least low-cost; because current tuition is too burdensome.

The term “free college education” is vague. When someone mentions ‘free education,’ he/she knows that it is not going to be totally free. There won’t be a college where people can graduate with a degree without spending a penny. There will always be hidden terms and conditions to it. No country or college has yet to provide completely free (\$0 out of pocket) college education.

There are several countries with very few fees and free tuition programs, but there is still some amount of money to shell out. Many countries in Europe and some in South America offer tuition free college programs, but the students still have to pay some fees and have certain restrictions. Norway, Finland, Sweden, Germany, Slovenia, France, Mexico, Denmark, and Brazil are some of the countries that provide very low to almost free college education. Doctoral students in Finland and Sweden pay no tuition at all while students with other major and international students are expected to pay approximately \$1700 a year or more in Finland. Students in France who enroll for programs offered in English usually pay a few hundred dollars more per year, than the French speaking students attending the same universities; the cost is still very minimal compared to that of US public universities. Brazil and Mexico also have virtually free tuition, but students still have to pay the registration fees. To sum up, all countries have their own terms and condition when it comes to providing free or low-cost higher education, but no country or college provides totally free higher education. (Citations)

Opposers of low-tuition systems argue that why does the wealthy have to pay more taxes for students to attend college. I would argue that it is not that just you are paying taxes, but you are investing for your nation’s future. Opponents of free tuition college education also argue that they should not have to pay for others to attend college. However, free college in Europe has proven to be a valuable idea as an educated workforce produced from their free college education system helped boost their economy. The European Union produced \$19.9 trillion in 2017 compared to the \$19.4 trillion produced by the United States, so there is somewhat of a correlation between the free education system and boosting the economy.

College tuition is just not affordable for an average US college student. Americans in 2019 are more burdened by student loan debt than ever. Forty-five million Americans owe over \$1.56 trillion in student loan debt according to

the National Center for Education Statistics. College debt in the United States has roughly tripled since 2006. It doesn't stop there as the number will keep increasing as more and more students take out loans every college semester and (former graduates who borrowed) borrowers struggle to repay their loans. Graduate students struggle to get their life started as they graduate with huge amounts of loans, and almost all their earnings are used up paying back the loans and its interest. Tuition fees demoralizes students; pressure of debts leads to dropouts, and if a student drops out after a year or two, that tuition money just goes to waste.

Several states in the United States have already initiated tuition-free college programs and low-cost public university programs. Not every college student is eligible to take benefits of this program as the applicants must meet requirements that differ state to state. In 2015, Tennessee became the first state to provide free community college to its residents. Many states have joined since then, such as Illinois, New York, Maryland, Hawaii, Oregon, Rhode Island, Montana, Minnesota, Kentucky, Arkansas and Nevada. Journalist Farran Powell from US News, furthermore adds, "In fact, the vast majority of tuition-free college programs provided at the state level are last-dollar. That means grant dollars are used to cover the remainder of tuition costs after Pell grants and state grants are exhausted. To qualify for a statewide promise program, students typically must meet certain eligibility requirements, such as qualify as low- or middle-income or meet a minimum GPA. Some state programs, like the Arkansas Future Grant, also require recipients to remain in the state after completing their qualifications" (citations)

Many of the current candidates for the 2020 US presidential elections support some type of free education or a low-cost college program. According to Forbes magazine, the names include: Kamala Harris, Pete Buttigieg, Kirsten Gillibrand, Cory Booker, Joe Biden, etc. Democrats Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren are two big names pushing for free college programs and having that idea as one of their major campaigns. Bernie Sanders, from Vermont, who ran for the 2016 US presidential election and is also running again for the 2020 US presidential election; one of his most important campaign is to push for tuition-free colleges in the United States. Mr. Sanders claims on his campaign website that the United States needs to have the best-educated workforce in the world. It is only possible if the students focus on their education and not worry about how they are going to

pay their tuition fees or pay off huge amount of loans after graduating. In addition, Elizabeth Warren, a presidential candidate for the 2020 US elections, wants to make debt-free college a reality for new students. She proposed a plan that would assist former and future college students. According to Vox News, "The plan would cancel up to \$50,000 in student loan debt for an estimated 42 million Americans and invest in debt-free college for students attending two- or four-year public institutions. It also comes with a hefty price tag of \$1.25 trillion over 10 years. Warren plans to pay for it with the ultra-millionaire tax she introduced in January, which would tax the 75,000 wealthiest families in America."

College education should be a right, not a privilege. Everyone in the United States should be encouraged to participate in the democracy and think a bit about investing into the country's future. Student debt and the fear of loan repayment is holding back millions of Americans from achieving the education they deserve. We, as a nation should be mindful of our nation's youth and participate in democracy to take the right steps for our country. We live in a democracy where the nation can stand together to demand rights such as free higher-education from the government. College education should be treated as a right for all the citizens of the United States, and therefore it should be funded by the government. If the other countries can do it, then why can't we?