



Should free college be part of education?

Updated 4d 12h ago

Plain Talk By Al Neuharth, USA TODAY Founder

Sunday starts "American Education Week," observed annually in the USA since 1921. It was started then by the [National Education Association](#) and other groups concerned that 25% of World War I draftees were illiterate.

The stated goal is to provide every child "a quality public education from kindergarten through college." That goal generally is being met from kindergarten through high school, because tuition is free. But not in college, where the cost of attending has skyrocketed, and in most states faces further increases. Is it time to make tuition free in public colleges and universities? Of course. Here's why and how:

- Families are spending an average of \$64 billion in tuition a year to send 13.9 million students to public colleges and universities.

- For the last 10 years, we have spent \$1.1 trillion on the wars in Iraq and [Afghanistan](#), an average of more than a \$110 billion annually.

Get it: \$64 billion annually for higher education; \$110 billion annually for wars.

In addition to that staggering money cost, those two wars have cost us 5,663 military lives. Many of those killed in the wars were college-age men and women.

The war costs are paid for through some present taxes and mostly debts piled up for future generations.

The college costs are paid for by parents and/or longtime debts for graduating students.

Can you think of any reason why NEA and the education-related institutions should not work for free college tuition?

So should college and university officials!

Can you think of any reason why anybody should not want to substitute higher education for our young men and women to ensure their future rather than military service in futile nation-building efforts abroad?

So should President Obama and congressional leaders!

Feedback: Other views on free college

Free tuition is laudable. Keeping college within reach is the more attainable goal in today's fiscal climate. Assistance with tuition, books and needs-based grants are ways to make college more affordable.?

—Dennis Van Roekel, president, National Education Association

Competing for paying students makes our colleges world-leading, while our "free" schools are mediocre. Having to earn customers' business is the key to success.?

—Neal McCluskey, associate director, Cato's Center for Educational Freedom

Advertisement

Mom Dilemma #36:
Your daughter insists on wearing her princess costume to the grocery store. Allow it or not?

YES, at least she's dressed!

NO, I have some rules!

momslike.me.com
where Local moms meet

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™