

Is College the Answer? A Look at Higher Ed Landscape

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Just how involved the government should be in “creating a nation of college graduates” was the topic of The Brian Lehrer Show’s series, “30 Issues in 30 Days” on Tuesday.

Useful for high school students embarked on the college search and their parents, the discussion was a sobering examination of rising tuitions, burdensome student debt and poor job prospects upon graduation. The guests included Tamar Lewin, the higher education reporter for The New York Times, Neal McCluskey, associate director at the Center for Educational Freedom at the Cato Institute, and Anya Kamenetz, senior writer for Fast Company magazine and author of “DIY U: Edupunks, Edupreneurs, and the Coming Transformation of Higher Education” and “Generation Debt.”

Some callers and comments posted online reflected opinions that more young people should pursue opportunities outside the traditional college offerings. One caller from Brooklyn who teaches at a New York college suggested the government do more to steer high school students into vocational programs if they are unsuited for the academic rigors of college.

An online commenter said students should be learning skills that lead to employment. “So much of this nonsense could be avoided if parents and advisers forced students to answer one simple question during college enrollment: How are you going to make a living with this major?”

Look at the interactive graphic that allows you to compare how much your college alma mater costs now, compared to when you attended. Check it out, and listen to the full discussion above.