

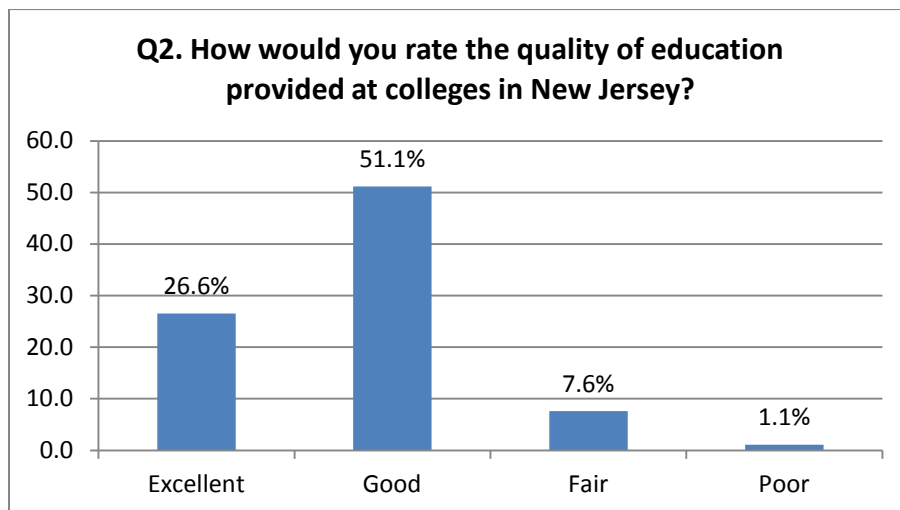
Stockton Poll: NJ Colleges and Universities Seen as High Quality, But Cost Is Major Barrier

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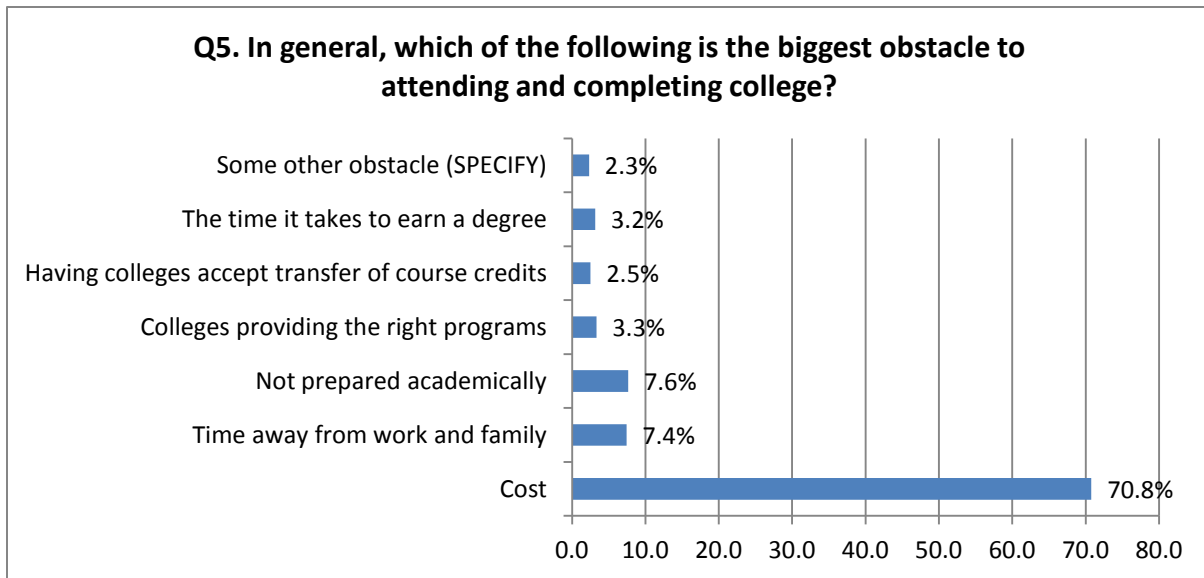
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Galloway, NJ – Adults in New Jersey view Garden State colleges and universities as having high quality and providing high value for the investment, with a majority saying colleges help in job and workforce development, according to a Stockton Polling Institute poll of over 1,000 individuals in New Jersey.



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"Cost is seen as a major barrier, and citizens expect state and college leaders to make needed reforms to boost college affordability and completion," said Dr. Darryl Greer, Ph.D., Senior Fellow at the Hughes Center and Director of the Higher Education Strategic Information and Governance Center. The poll is part of a larger project on higher education policy reform, "Building Public Trust in an Era of Change."



New Jerseyans are somewhat split over the affordability of college, with 47 percent describing college in New Jersey as affordable, while 40 percent say flatly that college is not affordable. A majority (54 percent) also believes it is unlikely that student financial aid will be available to them or their families.

Citizens see state funding cuts, salary increases, and the cost of facilities and technology as factors driving college costs.

"College hiring practices and state-negotiated salary and benefit packages greatly influence cost," Greer said. "Clearly both parties need to partner on reform in this critical area."

Citizens take a balanced view of responsibility for state and college reforms to improve college affordability and completion rates, with about 42 percent indicating that more state funding or more student financial aid is needed. Almost an equal number (45 percent) say that better college cost control and tighter reins on tuition, such as tying tuition to the rate of inflation, would help families afford college.

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“Among possible reforms to improve affordability and completion, it seems as if the public expects state and college leaders to stick to basics and not get lost in the policy weeds of reforms that only marginally help with college opportunity and completion,” Greer said.

Regarding new modes of delivering college courses, it appears that the public has not fully embraced new technologies as a solution. Not only do citizens prefer traditional four-year colleges over online programs, but online delivery did not rank high (15 percent) as a fix for the affordability/completion challenge. Nearly 30 percent believe that only some New Jersey colleges should specialize in online degree programs, while 54 percent think that all colleges should offer online programs.

“This response, taken with the strong preference for traditional four-year college instruction, indicates that the public may favor a hybrid approach to college learning, not simply more technology,” Greer said.

Finally, regarding trust to take responsibility for improving college access, affordability and completion, citizens trust college leaders 2-1 over the governor and over the state Legislature.

“While colleges share responsibility for making college less affordable, it seems that the public continues to trust presidents and boards of trustees to continue to provide high quality service, and to make needed reforms,” Greer said.

Methodology

More than 1,000 adult New Jersey residents were interviewed by the Stockton Polling Institute for the Higher Education Strategic Information and Governance Center (HESIG). Both the polling institute and HESIG are components of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy. The poll has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.

Interviews are conducted at the Stockton Polling Institute by live interviewers calling from the Stockton College campus. The poll was conducted from March 15-31, 2013. Interviewers called both land lines and cell phones. All prospective respondent households in the source telephone list have the same chance of joining the sample because of the random digital dialing system (RDD). Data is weighted according to United States Census Bureau demographics for New Jersey voter age population.

About the Hughes Center

The William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy (www.stockton.edu/hughescenter) at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey serves as a catalyst for research, analysis and innovative policy solutions on the economic, social and cultural issues facing New Jersey. The center is named for Ambassador William J. Hughes, whose distinguished career includes service in the U.S. House of Representatives, Ambassador to Panama and as a Distinguished Visiting Professor at Stockton College. The Hughes Center can be found at www.facebook.com/Hughes.Center.Stockton.College and can be followed on Twitter@hughescenter.

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Weighted Frequencies
NJ statewide higher education poll

Q1 screened for adult respondents.

Q2. How would you rate the quality of education provided at colleges in New Jersey?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Excellent	272	26.6	26.6	26.6
Good	524	51.1	51.1	77.7
Fair	78	7.6	7.6	85.3
Poor	11	1.1	1.1	86.4
NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW	134	13.1	13.1	99.5
REFUSE	5	.5	.5	100.0
Total	1024	100.0	100.0	

Q3. What type of college do you think provides the highest quality educational experience?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid A four-year college	905	88.4	88.4	88.4
A two-year college	55	5.4	5.4	93.7
An online college	22	2.2	2.2	95.9
NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW	40	3.9	3.9	99.8
REFUSE	2	.2	.2	100.0
Total	1024	100.0	100.0	

Q4. Which of the following best describes your view of Internet-based courses and degree programs?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
All New Jersey colleges should offer online programs.	552	53.9	53.9	53.9
Only some New Jersey colleges should offer online programs.	301	29.4	29.4	83.3
New Jersey colleges should not offer any online programs because out-of-state institutions already offer enough.	75	7.3	7.3	90.6
NJ COLLEGES SHOULD NOT OFFER ANY BECAUSE OF ANOTHER REASON.	34	3.4	3.4	94.0
NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW	62	6.0	6.0	100.0
Total	1024	100.0	100.0	

Q5. In general, which of the following is the biggest obstacle to attending and completing college?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Cost	725	70.8	70.8	70.8
Time away from work and family	76	7.4	7.4	78.2
Not prepared academically	78	7.6	7.6	85.8
Colleges providing the right programs	34	3.3	3.3	89.2
Having colleges accept transfer of course credits	26	2.5	2.5	91.7
The time it takes to earn a degree	32	3.2	3.2	94.9
Or some other obstacle (SPECIFY)	24	2.3	2.3	97.2
NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW	28	2.7	2.7	99.9
REFUSE	1	.1	.1	100.0
Total	1024	100.0	100.0	

Q6. In general, how affordable are New Jersey's colleges, including tuition, fees, books and other expenses?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very affordable	23	2.2	2.2	2.2
Affordable	461	45.0	45.0	47.2
Unaffordable	327	31.9	31.9	79.1
Or very unaffordable	80	7.8	7.8	86.9
NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW	133	13.0	13.0	99.9
REFUSE	1	.1	.1	100.0
Total	1024	100.0	100.0	

Q7. What do you think is the major cause of increases in tuition and fees at colleges in New Jersey?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Funding cuts	266	26.0	26.0	26.0
The cost of new facilities and technology	157	15.3	15.3	41.3
Salaries and benefits	285	27.9	27.9	69.1
Improvements in quality	34	3.3	3.3	72.4
Valid Government regulation	73	7.1	7.1	79.5
Or some other reason (SPECIFY)	103	10.1	10.1	89.6
NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW	103	10.1	10.1	99.7
REFUSE	3	.3	.3	100.0
Total	1024	100.0	100.0	

Q8. Which of the following options do you believe would most help New Jersey families better afford college?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
More state funding	202	19.7	19.7	19.7
More student financial aid	229	22.4	22.4	42.1
Cap tuition at the inflation rate	230	22.5	22.5	64.5
Tighter college cost controls	226	22.1	22.1	86.6
Valid Reduce the time it takes to get a degree	35	3.4	3.4	90.0
Or some other option (SPECIFY)	64	6.3	6.3	96.3
NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW	37	3.6	3.6	99.9
REFUSE	1	.1	.1	100.0
Total	1024	100.0	100.0	

Q9. If anyone in your household were to attend a New Jersey college, how likely do you think it would be for your family to receive financial aid other than loans?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very likely	122	11.9	11.9	11.9
Somewhat likely	280	27.3	27.3	39.2
Somewhat unlikely	220	21.4	21.4	60.7
Valid Or very unlikely	338	33.0	33.0	93.7
NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW	56	5.5	5.5	99.2
REFUSE	8	.8	.8	100.0
Total	1024	100.0	100.0	

Q10. I'm going to read three options to improve college affordability. Please select the one that you think is the most important.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Managing college budgets better	418	40.8	40.8	40.8
More government funding	266	26.0	26.0	66.7
Valid Or more student financial aid	325	31.8	31.8	98.5
NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW	14	1.4	1.4	99.9
REFUSE	1	.1	.1	100.0
Total	1024	100.0	100.0	

Q11. I'm going to read a list of options for reducing the time it takes to get a college degree. Please select the one that you think is the most important.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	More information about program requirements	124	12.1	12.1	12.1
	Reduce the number of courses required	156	15.2	15.2	27.3
	More information about career and jobs	216	21.1	21.1	48.4
	More online courses	151	14.7	14.7	63.1
	Make it easier to transfer credits from another college	316	30.8	30.8	93.9
	NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW	55	5.4	5.4	99.3
	REFUSE	7	.7	.7	100.0
	Total	1024	100.0	100.0	

Q12. Has anyone in your household attended a New Jersey college within the past five years?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	YES	404	39.4	39.4
	NO	618	60.4	99.8
	NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW	1	.1	99.9
	REFUSE	1	.1	100.0
	Total	1024	100.0	100.0

Q13. Would you say that the value and benefits of that college experience made it a good investment of time and money?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	YES	322	31.4	79.8	79.8
	NO	49	4.8	12.2	92.0
	NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW	32	3.2	8.0	100.0
	Total	404	39.4	100.0	
Missing	System	621	60.6		
Total		1024	100.0		

Q14. In which area do you think New Jersey colleges help the state the most?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Jobs and the economy	271	26.5	26.5	26.5
	Helping businesses compete	87	8.5	8.5	35.0
	Workforce development	257	25.1	25.1	60.1
	Research	184	17.9	17.9	78.0
	Or some other area (SPECIFY)	84	8.2	8.2	86.2
	NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW	134	13.1	13.1	99.3
	REFUSE	7	.7	.7	100.0
Total		1024	100.0	100.0	

Q15. What is the most important way that New Jersey colleges help you and your family?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	Improve your lives	139	13.6	13.6	13.6
	Help find or keep a job	162	15.8	15.8	29.4
	Career development	263	25.7	25.7	55.1
	Keep people in New Jersey	126	12.3	12.3	67.4
	Some other way (SPECIFY)	28	2.7	2.7	70.1
	Or they do not help your family	257	25.1	25.1	95.2
	NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW	45	4.4	4.4	99.5
	REFUSE	5	.5	.5	100.0
	Total	1024	100.0	100.0	

Q16. Who do you trust more to take responsibility for improving college access, affordability and quality?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	Nonpartisan boards of trustees and college presidents	445	43.4	43.4	43.4
	The governor and state agencies	214	20.9	20.9	64.3
	Or the state Legislature	223	21.8	21.8	86.1
	NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW	128	12.5	12.5	98.6
	REFUSE	14	1.4	1.4	100.0
	Total	1024	100.0	100.0	