

Infographics

2013 KSPA STATE CONTEST

Description

You are a staff member of Ad Astra High School's The Star. Your newspaper is a monthly with the next edition to come out May 20. Your editor has asked you to create an infographic for the attached story, using charts, graphs or other visual elements to tell the story presented by the data you gather.

School Info

Name: Ad Astra High School
Location: Aspera, Kansas
Mascot: Box Turtles
Enrollment: 850 (grades 9-12)
School Colors: Green & Gold
Yearbook: The Honeybee
Newspaper: The Star

Contest Info

This is a carry-in contest.

Please attach your assigned contest number in the upper right-hand corner on the back of your photo.

Do not put your name on the entry. If you do, your entry will be disqualified.

Students are not to request help or advice from anyone other than the KSPA Executive Director. All work must be that of the contestant.

Assignment

Using the information provided in the attached story, design an infographic that is 5 inches wide by any depth. Entries should be computer-generated and may incorporate graphics to enhance the design. The graphic may be submitted in color or black and white, and should be printed on 8.5 x 11-inch paper.



Story

This column is scheduled to run in The Star's final issue of the semester, your traditional "Senior Edition." It is about the value of a college education.

There has been quite a bit of talk recently about the value of a college education. With decreasing salaries and increasing tuition, people are asking whether going to college makes sense financially. While there will always be exceptions to the rule, the numbers prove that a college education pays off in the short and long term.

The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) reported that those with bachelor's degrees have earned more than those without since 1995. In 2010, that difference equated to \$15,000 per year. But those with advanced degrees — master's, doctoral and professional — had the highest salaries and made almost \$40,000 more than those with bachelor's degrees. These graduates also had the lowest unemployment rates.

Let's compare three students who will graduate from Ad Astra this year:

- Adam will not go to college in order to make \$30,000 per year, on average, for a 50-year career.

- Belinda has decided to attend a four-year university.

- Christine will get a four-year degree, then earn a master's degree.

Over a 50-year career (until he is 68), Adam will make \$1.5 million.

Belinda took out a college loan that will cost her \$200,000. She will make \$10,000 working part time during those four years in college, for a total of \$40,000, or the same as Adam made in just one year out of high school.

Over the next 46 years, however, Belinda will average \$45,000 per year. So over those same 50 years (ages 18-68), Belinda will make \$2.11 million, minus the \$200,000 she will pay on her loan, so \$1.91 million, or \$410,000 more than Adam.

Christine took out a college loan and another for her master's degree, and those loans will cost her \$400,000. She will be in school for seven years, making only \$10,000 per year working part time, a total of \$70,000.

After her master's degree, however, Christine will earn an average of \$75,000 per year. Over 43 years, that \$3.225 million, plus the \$70,000 she made in school, minus the \$400,000 she'll make in loan payments —

that's a total of \$2.895 million, nearly a million dollars more than Belinda, and about \$1.5 million more than Adam.

So is it just the degree that leads to greater income? Of course not.

A degree is only as strong as the student wants it to be. Someone can go to the best school in the country and come out no more employable than he was before if he does not work hard and chooses to hang out for four years.

The benefits to the degree include utilizing the school's network, which can have a long lasting positive influence. Often, students are able to connect with employers because of the shared experience of attending the same school. Getting a foot in the door can many times be the hardest part of the job search process, and a school's network can help make that first step a little easier.

And, in the long term, the degree is valuable for reasons other than just its income-generating potential. The time students spend in any sort of educational environment increases their skill set, their ability to problem-solve and think critically, their network, and their social skills.

For many students, going to college is also a time to live independently, to handle personal finances, and to develop socially. These skills are fundamental to a person's success. The relationships that a student makes in college can last a lifetime. They might lead to personal relationships and/or professional relationships throughout one's life. And more importantly, the experience can give students exposure to the types of jobs they want to have and to the types of lives they want to lead.

College is not right for everyone and I am often the first to recognize that. But don't be misled into thinking that going to college is universally a waste of time and money. Like with any experience, you have to make the most of it. The degree itself is just a piece of fancy paper. The experience behind it represents your knowledge, your talent and your work ethic. Those are what actually have value. So think deeply about whether the college experience will enhance your life's goals. While you might decide otherwise, the process of contemplating it will show your ability to think critically -- the very skill that college is meant to enhance.