2018 GREATER PHILADELPHIA COLLEGE RANKINGS

CRITERIA

AFFORDABILITY
GRADUATION & RETENTION
SOCIAL MOBILITY
CLASS SIZE

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OVERVIEW

We have learned that the best correlation for individuals to earn family sustainable wages is either a higher education degree or a vocational certificate tied directly to a trade[1]. Without a higher education degree, the average earnings for a family of four in Philadelphia is $42,000 per year, or $20 per hour[2]. Due to the fact that if they successfully recieved their earned potential their public benefit subsidies decrease at the same rate thereby keeping them poor in a recent study,[3] we learned that in order to move out of poverty an individual with dependents needs to earn the equivalent of $23 $25 per hour. Yet, persons earning between minimum wage and $23 $25 per hour for the most part continue to be considered poverty stricken. Without a higher education degree or a vocational certificate, the average person earning between $23 $25/hour can transition from being reliant on the system to becoming an independent contributor to society. Upon researching jobs that pay $23 $25 per hour we learned that most require a higher education degree or vocational certificate[4].

WHY COLLEGE RANKINGS

Understanding the above facts, we concluded that one of the most effective and sustainable models to address poverty is by helping individuals to earn a college degree. However, given that most impoverished or low-income individuals experience significant barriers to attending college[5] we ranked Greater Philadelphia's 20 accredited 4 year colleges based on 4 critical metrics we believe are critical to any education including: affordability, social mobility, graduation/retention, and class size. We weighted each criteria to importance as follows: affordability with a 35 percent weight; social mobility with a 30 percent weight; graduation/retention with a 25 percent rate; and class size with a 10 percent weight.

Publicly available data has allowed us to develop this new set of indicators to rank colleges more accurately in terms of their ability to serve the needs of low-income and impoverished students who seek to exceed the economic ladder. Colleges have a vital role to play in addressing inequities, and colleges that prioritize the following performance categories will play a vital role in addressing poverty in Philadelphia.

DEFINITIONS

Affordability data includes indicators such as annual tuition, average loan per student per year, and average annual net cost of attendance (including room and board).

Social Mobility data includes indicators related to a student's ability to increase their income above their parents' income, median early career income, and the percentage of low-income students attending a college who earn a Pell Grant. Raj Chetty, Emmanuel Saez, Nicholas Turner, and Danny Yagan, led by Raj Chetty, utilizes "big data" to demonstrate how well the top poverty colleges promote social mobility[6]. Additionally, new social-mobility-focused rankings have emerged[7], and even data science magazines[8] have begun to rank colleges based on social mobility. Our social mobility data and indicators made available from the aforementioned publicly available data, including the percentage of students in the top 80 percent of income earners whose parents were in the bottom 20 percent, the percentage of students who earn a median income above the median income for a family of four (their parents), median career earnings, and the percentage of low-income and Pell-eligible students.

Graduation data is the percentage of a school's first-time, first-year students who matriculate within 150 percent of the program time. For a four-year university, this is graduating within six years.

Class Size data is defined as faculty to student ratio.

COMPARISON LANDSCAPE

Most rankings, like the U.S. News and World Report (U.S. News), in our view, are not targeted to the average resident. At best, these ranking have created different factions of winners and loser, they perpetuate inequality and do more harm than good. These new rankings challenge the old criteria and ratings of U.S. News and World Report, which have been criticized for being a "beauty contest" that favors colleges for students who can afford elite schools that are too costly for the majority. U.S. News criteria such as undergraduate academic reputation, faculty resources, faculty salary, student selectivity, and financial resources rank high in their methodology, but none of these factors ensure that a school is providing excellence colleges to best serve the needs of the average student. Colleges can serve as effective points for social mobility, changing the trajectory of an individual's economic outlook. However, if college rankings continue to be based on the criteria of U.S. News and World Report, they cater to students and parents already sitting at the top of the economic ladder while eliminating opportunities for students seeking social mobility through higher education.

The following Greater Philadelphia area College Rankings are based upon college affordability, increased social mobility, graduation and retention rates, and class size criteria.

Parents and students should be advised to look at both the overall ranking and the category (affordability; social mobility; graduation and retention rates; or class size) that is most relevant to their needs. For example, if a student is a commuter student who is not concerned about campus life, dorms, the college campus, or the room and board costs associated with living on campus, however, there is a student who is concerned about affordability, the cost associated with a college, the lower the graduation rate. Many affordable colleges can manage to outcomes around increasing graduation rates and matriculating students with higher-paying employers. Colleges that rank high in social mobility can demonstrate that they are committed to increasing the income of their students, but may have challenges in Greater Philadelphia residents wanting to attend such colleges. Students and their families should balance these tradeoffs to support opportunity for future economic mobility.

[1] www.pennahec.org/wp-2015/2015-11/the-median-cost-of-one-year-at-college/
[2] www.philadelphia.gov/Wage/Pages/Wage.aspx; http://www.dhs.pa.gov/citizens/waiverpeopleeligibleforhomeandcommunitybasedservices/index.htm
[3] www.nbc10.com/news/local/50-percent-philadelphia-families-struggle-survive-study-says-300-year-one-parent-family-needs-to-survive-study-says-300-year-one-parent-family-needs-to-survive-study-says-300-year-one-parent-family-needs-to-survive-study-says-300-year-one-parent-family-needs-to-survive-study-says-300-year-one-parent-family-needs-to-survive-study-says-300-year-one-parent-family-needs-to-survive-study-says-300-year-one-parent-family-needs-to-survive-study-says-300-year-one-parent-family-needs-to-survive-study-says-300-year-one-parent-family-needs-to-survive-study-says-300-year-one-parent-family-needs-to-survive-study-says-300-year-one-parent-family-needs-to-survive-study-says-300-year-one-parent-family-needs-to-survive-study-says-300-year-one-parent-family-needs-to-survive-study-says-300-year-one-parent-family-needs-to-survive-study-says-300-year-one-parent-family-needs-to-survive-study-
[4] www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_pa.htm#00-0000
[5] www.pew.org/content/search?cx=partner-pew%3ajqqqqqqqqqq&q=college+high+school+graduate+percentage&sa=Search&ie=UTF-8&cof=FORID:11&siteurl=www.pew.org%2F&ref=www.google.com%2Fsearch%3Fq%3Dcollege%2B%2Bhigh%2Bschool%2Bgraduate%2Bpercentage%26ie%3Dutf-8%26oe%3Dutf-8%26aq%3Dt%26rls%3Dorg.mozilla:en-US:official%26client%3Dfirefox-a
[6] www.nytimes.com/?q=raj+chetty
[7] www.forbes.com/sites/ryanmccarthy/2017/08/23/college-rankings-that-reward-social-mobility/#1d0d7d7d7d7d
[8] www.washingtonmonthly.com/college_guide/rankings/liberal_arts_colleges.php

2018 GREATER PHILADELPHIA COLLEGE RANKINGS

1 UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA	1	34	1	1
2 DREXEL COLLEGE	2	29	36	36
3 LINCOLN UNIVERSITY	3	9	29	36
4 AUTOMOTIVE TRAINING CENTER	10	7	26	36
5 PRISM CAREER INSTITUTE	11	20	7	41
6 MONT CLARE COLLEGE	8	18	22	18
7 MANOR COLLEGE	N/A	11	34	3
8 LASALLE FAMILY UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA	20	12	12	37
9 THE ART INSTITUTES OF PHILADELPHIA	23	14	37	34
10 MONT COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN	30	23	14	2
11 MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE	38	4	36	37
12 CABRINI UNIVERSITY	43	17	34	23
13 WITCOLLEGE	32	25	38	31
14 COMPUTER INSTITUTES OF PHILADELPHIA	35	12	38	40
15 THE UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS	40	38	17	3

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael (Mike) Clark, MPA, is a systems entrepreneur based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He has researched, published, and worked in the areas of collective impact, financial inclusion, impact investing, and social entrepreneurship. Mike is the lead researcher and policy analyst regarding the social impacts of paying direct services workers low wages forcing them to be reliant on the public assistance system. Mike's work has led him to do field work in Haiti to high staff turnover and increased crisis levels. Mike also served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Bulgaria. He holds a Bachelors degree from the University of Scranton, and a Master of Public Administration from the University of Pennsylvania's Fels Institute of Government.

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