

Is High Education Worth it?

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The value of a college degree has changed significantly over time. College used to be seen as a ticket to financial stability and success. The thought of skipping out on college meant a life of searching for jobs and drowning in bills and debt. However, nowadays it's quite the opposite. With student tuition costs rising, people wonder whether student debt is worth the price of higher education, especially with new alternatives such as online certifications and trade programs. With all these new variables, the question "Is higher education worth it?" isn't as simple as it used to be. It depends on your values, desired career, and how you define success.

Those who support higher education will argue that those with a college degree generally earn more money and experience lower unemployment rates than those with only a high school diploma. "It's how the system works: the degree brings you the skills you need to get a high paying job. It is the logical next step after high school." Alfredo Cruz ('27) said. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data, the average worker with a bachelor's degree earns nearly twice as much as someone without one. Beyond income, college can offer a space for intellectual growth, independence, and personal exploration.

College also offers various networking opportunities and internships while still allowing students to live on campus, meet new people from diverse backgrounds, and join clubs. This builds maturity and lifelong connections.

College can act as a space of exploration and development where you can experience new things away from home and learn more about yourself. "College is worth it because of how many opportunities it can give you from today's world. Truthfully, if you're smart there's not much you can learn from classes but going to a good college gives you really good alumni and networking opportunities that you should use to the advantage" Dhruv Hill ('24), a sophomore at Northeastern University said.

However, critics argue that the traditional college path can no longer guarantee success. Tuition prices have skyrocketed over the past few decades, leaving college graduates burdened with overwhelming debt. This financial burden could slow down or prevent the process of buying a house, starting a business, or even just feeling financially stable. College isn't the only thing that has changed, the job market is a lot different from the way it used to

be. Nowadays, many positions that once required a college degree now prioritize practical experience or specific skills. On top of this, many high-paying trades such as electricians, plumbers, and mechanics often require only a short training program or apprenticeship. They can lead to stable, well-paid careers without the financial burden of college. "It's important if you see yourself going into roles that require you to do more education. But it's not the only option." Ms. Midy, one of Westhill's guidance counselors said.

Ultimately, the value of college depends on the individual, their goals, and circumstances. For those pursuing careers that require professional credentials, such as medicine, engineering, or education, a college degree is essential. But for others with entrepreneurial drive, technical interests, or financial constraints, skipping college or attending a trade school may be a smarter option both financially and personally. Education should not be one-size-fits-all; what truly matters is choosing a path that aligns with your skills, values, and future ambitions, and remembering that higher education isn't the same as it was decades ago.



WESTHILL'S 2025 GRADUATION. Photo taken by Tamara Hill ('26).