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FEBRUARY 11, 2014

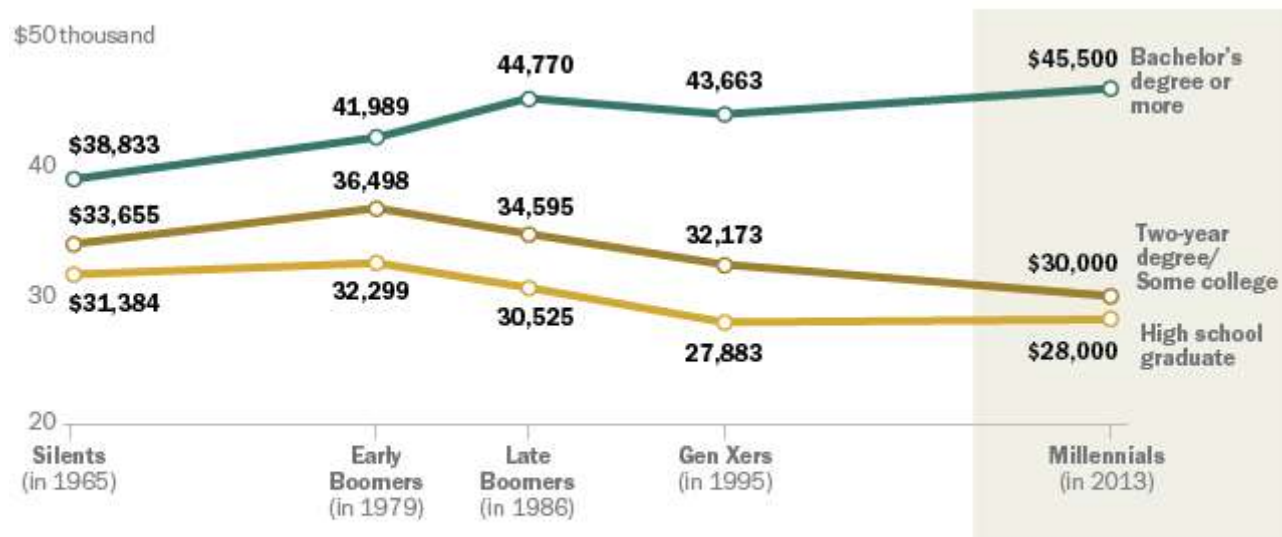
## 6 key findings about going to college

BY ANDREA CAUMONT ([HTTP://WWW.PEWRESEARCH.ORG/AUTHOR/ACAUMONT/](http://www.pewresearch.org/author/acaumont/))

A new Pew Research Center report on higher education (<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2014/02/11/the-rising-cost-of-not-going-to-college/>) contains a number of findings about the rising value of a college degree (as well as the rising cost of *not* going to college). College-educated millennials are outperforming their less-educated peers on virtually every economic measure, and the gap between the two groups has only grown over time. Here are six key findings that provide a compelling answer to the question: Is going to college worth it?

- 1 A college education is worth more today.** There's a wider earnings gap between college-educated and less-educated Millennials compared with previous generations.

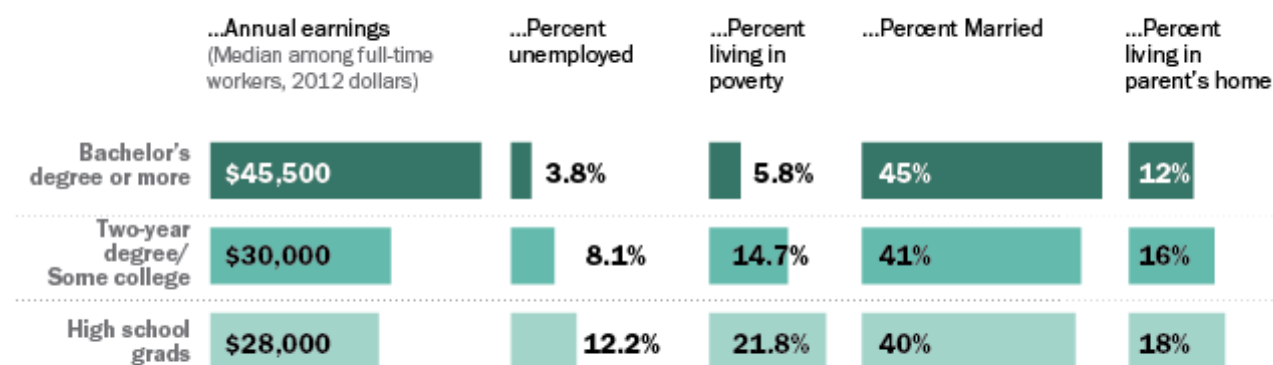
*Median annual earnings among full-time workers ages 25 to 32, in 2012 dollars*



Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of the 2013, 1995, 1986, 1979 and 1965 March Current Population Survey (CPS) IPUMS

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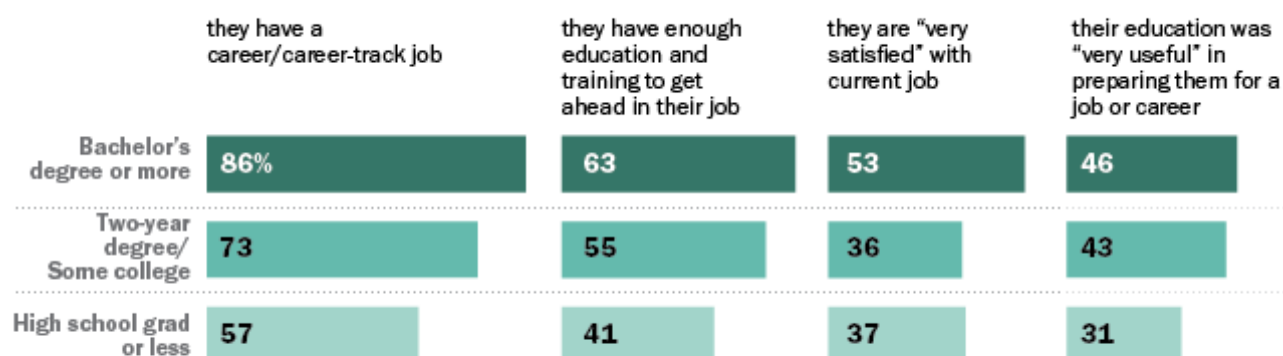
- 2 College benefits go beyond earnings:** In addition to earning more, college-educated Millennials also have lower unemployment and poverty rates than their less-educated peers. They're also more likely to be married and less likely to be living in their parent's home.

*Disparity among Millennials ages 25 to 32, by education level in terms of...*

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of the March Current Population Survey (CPS) IPUMS

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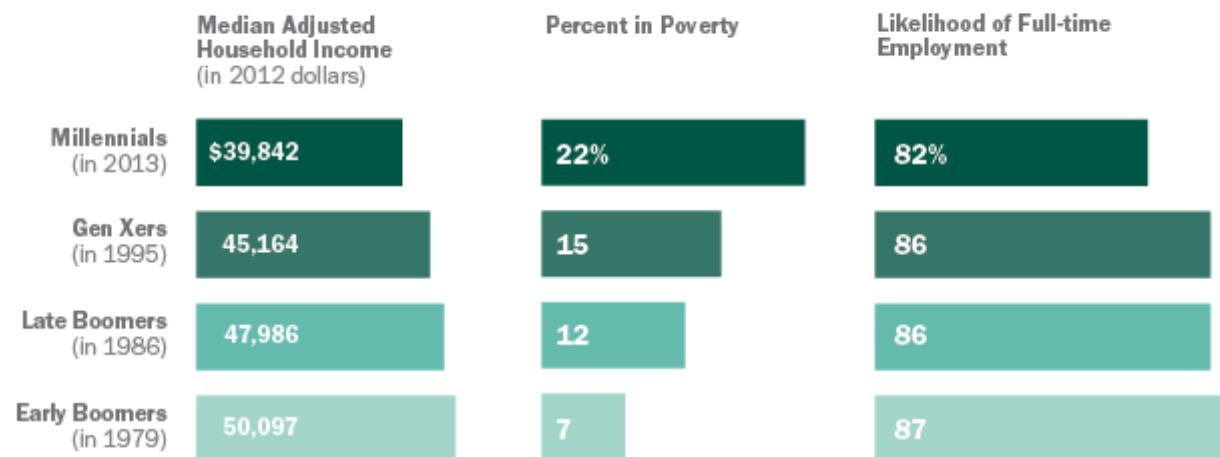
- 3 College grads are more satisfied with their jobs:** College-educated Millennials are more likely to see themselves on a career path, rather than just working at a job to get them by.

*Percent of employed adults ages 25 to 32 with each level of education saying...*

Source: Pew Research Center survey, Oct. 7-27, 2013, N=2,002

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- 4 The cost of not going to college has risen.** Millennials with just a high school diploma are faring worse today than their counterparts in earlier generations by almost every economic measure examined.

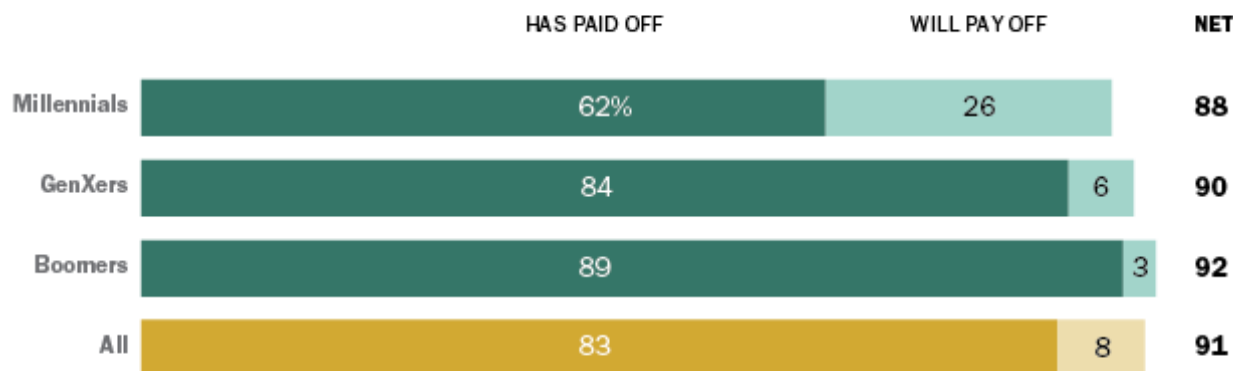
*Economic well-being of 25-to 32-year-olds with only a high school education, by generation*

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of the 2013, 1995, 1986 and 1979 March Current Population Survey (CPS) IPUMS

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## 5 College grads say college is worth it: About nine-in-ten college grads in every generation say college has been, or will be, worth the investment. Despite a steep rise in college tuitions, Millennials agree.

*Percent of college graduates in each generation who say that considering what they and their family paid for their undergraduate education, it ...*

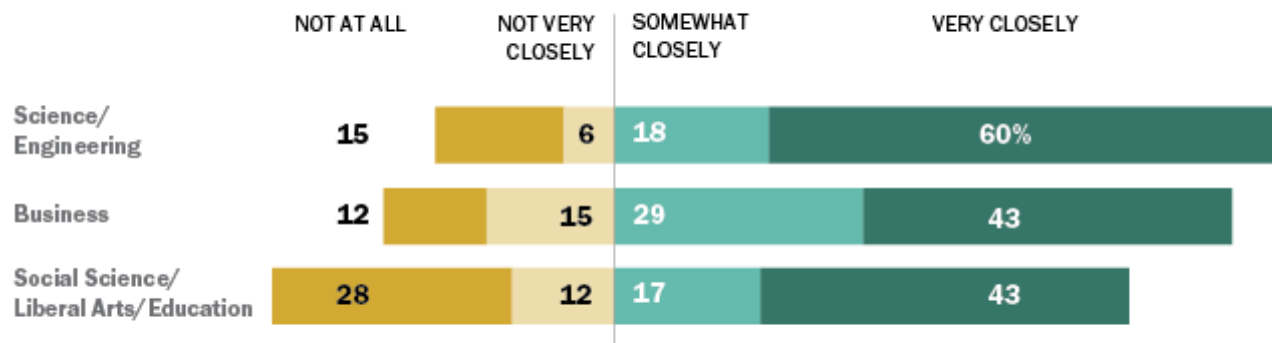


Source: Pew Research Center survey, Oct. 7-27, 2013, N=2,002

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## 6 College majors matter. Among all grads, science or engineering majors are the most likely to say their current job is very closely related to their field of study and the least likely to say that a different major would have better prepared them for the job they really wanted.

*Percent of majors in each area who say their current job is ... related to their major in college or graduate school*



Source: Pew Research Center survey, Oct. 7-27, 2013, N=2,002

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**Read the full report:** The Rising Cost of Not Going to College (<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2014/02/11/the-rising-cost-of-not-going-to-college/>)



Andrea Caumont (<http://www.pewresearch.org/author/acaumont/>) is the social media editor at Pew Research Center.

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## 54 Comments



**christian jerick Go** • 2 years ago (#comment-662979)

Fantastic suggestions ! I was fascinated by the information ! Does someone know where my business would be able to get ahold of a fillable IRS 941 document to fill in ?



**Jill Colet** • 3 years ago (#comment-649176)

I teach jr. high ESL. I can't tell you how difficult it is to get many of my students thinking about college or, worse, interested in attending college! They struggle with the language and reading and writing. They begin to fail and accept that as the "norm."

I printed this article and we broke it down — vocabulary, annotation, peer discussions, summarizing. It's amazing what information can do to change a person's attitude. All I had to do was present the facts (that you presented beautifully) and I could feel a change coming our way. Thank you! There's nothing more rewarding than knowing you may have changed the direction of someone's life in a positive way. I know college made all the difference for me. I didn't begin until my mid thirties. I worked full time as a secretary (at the same school where I now teach) and attended school at night for 11 years. It was worth the grind. I love my job and it seems that each year I love it more (I was hired as a teacher here at Sierra Vista in 1996.)