



2011 OVERVIEW OF KEY FINDINGS

WhatWillTheyLearn.com covers all the major public and private universities in all 50 states—a total of 714 four-year institutions that together enroll more than 6 million students. Institutions are assigned a letter [grade](#) ranging from “A” to “F” based on how many of the following seven core subjects they require: Composition, Mathematics, Science, Economics, U.S. Government or History, Literature, and Foreign Language.

FINDING #1: Colleges and universities have by and large abandoned a coherent content-rich general education curriculum, thereby allowing students to graduate with important gaps in their knowledge.

- More than 60% of all institutions receive a “C” or worse for requiring 3 or fewer subjects.

FINDING #2: The situation is particularly bleak at private institutions, where a “do-it-yourself” approach to education prevails.

- More than half (52%) of all privates receive a “D” or an “F” for requiring 2 or fewer subjects.
- More than half (54%) don’t require college-level mathematics.
- Only 55% have an English composition requirement.

FINDING #3: Public institutions are doing a relatively better job of ensuring students graduate with some of the basic skills and knowledge they need. And they’re doing so at a considerably lower price.

- A little under half (44%) of all publics receive a “B” or better for requiring 4 or more subjects.
- More than 90% of publics require composition.
- More than 90% of publics require science.
- Average tuition at the publics is \$6,500 (2009 figures).

FINDING #4: Universities—both public and private—are failing to ensure students cover critical subjects, most notably economics and U.S. Government or History.

- Less than 5% of all universities require economics.
- Less than 20% require a broad survey class in U.S. government or history.
- Only a third require intermediate-level foreign language.

FINDING #5: Paying a lot doesn’t get you a lot. Generally speaking, the higher the tuition, the more likely it is that students are left to devise their own general education.

- Average tuition & fees at the “A” schools is \$13,200 (2009 figures).
- Average tuition & fees at the “F” schools is \$28,200 (2009 figures).