

# UNACCEPTABLE OUTCOMES

## A Call to Action

American Legislative Exchange Council  
Academy on Higher Education  
October 21-22, 2011

**Michael B. Poliakoff, Ph.D.**

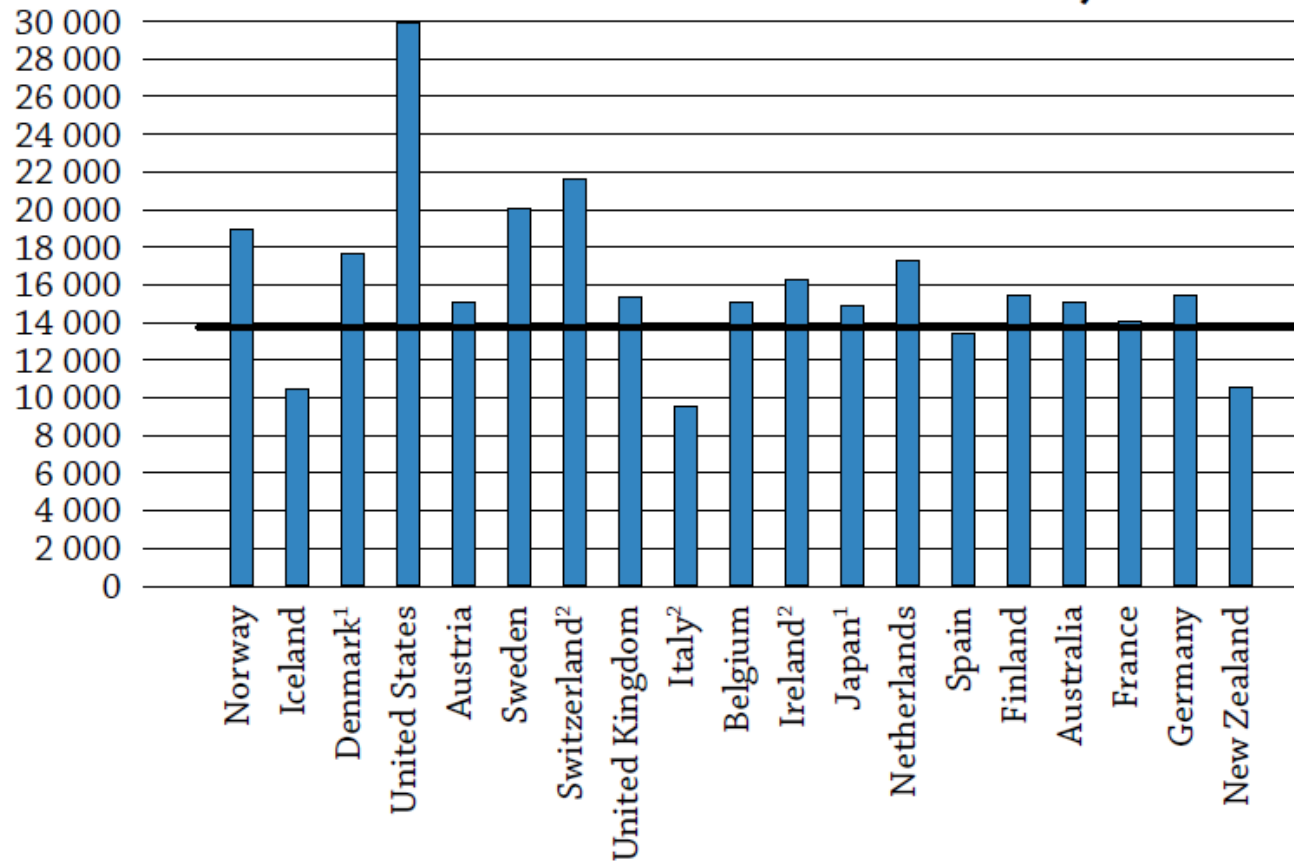
*Vice President of Policy, American Council of Trustees and Alumni*



# Spending *Twice+* the Average

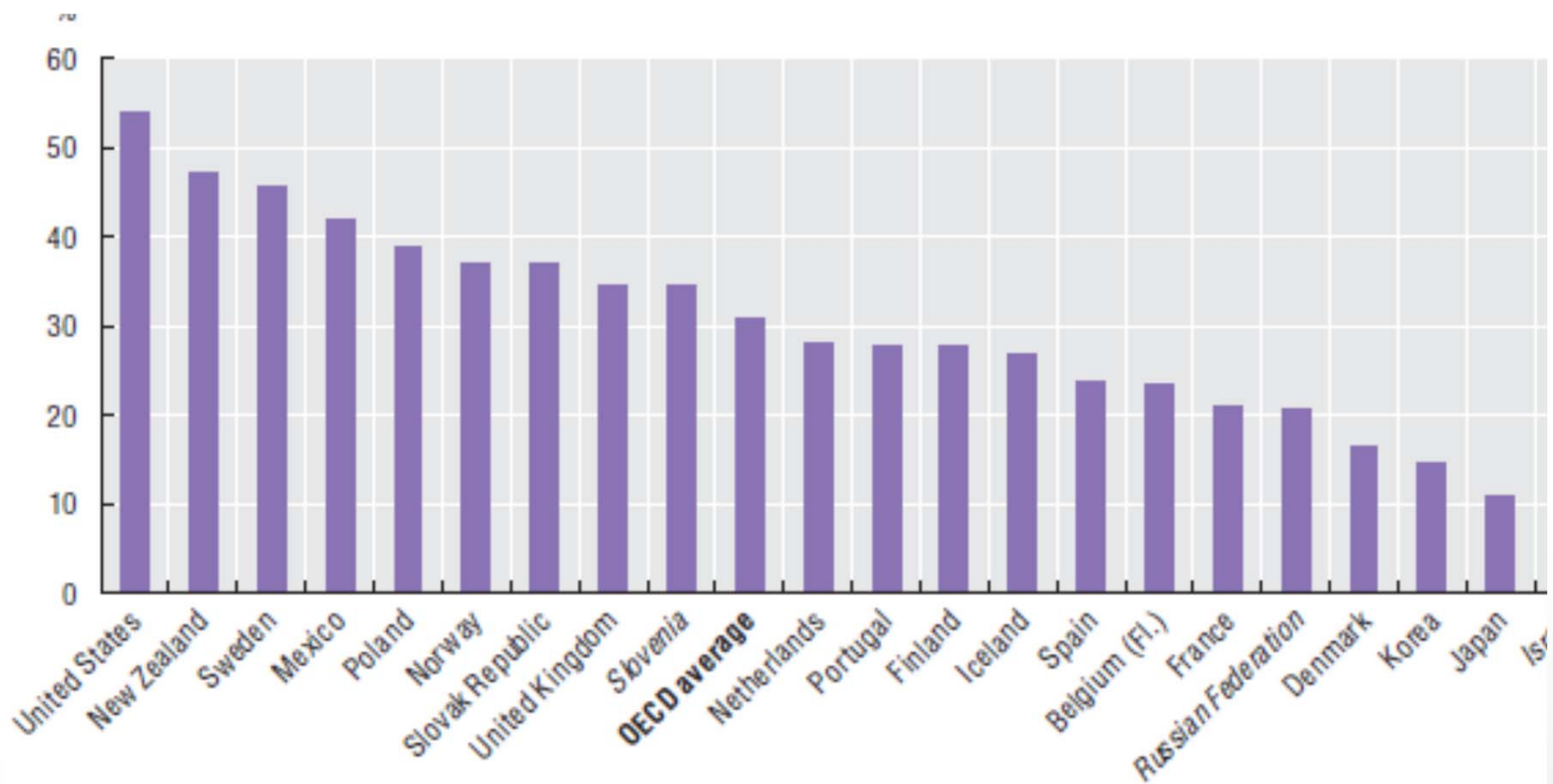
*In equivalent USD  
converted using PPPs*

## **Tertiary education**



# ... and Sub-Average Results

Figure 1.11. Proportion of students who enter tertiary education **without graduating**



Source: OECD (2010), *Education at a Glance 2010*, Table A4.1, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932310149>

# Graduation Rates

Full Time, First Time Students, 2003 Cohort

	All	Public
4-year graduation rate	36.7	30.7
5-year graduation rate	52.8	50.2
6-year graduation rate	57.4	55.7

[http://nces.ed.gov/das/library/tables\\_listings/showTable2005.asp?popup=true&tableID=7469&rt=p](http://nces.ed.gov/das/library/tables_listings/showTable2005.asp?popup=true&tableID=7469&rt=p)

6-year graduation rate	63.2	59.5
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2003 Cohort: Beginning Postsecondary Survey, U.S. Department of Education

# What Do Low Graduation Rates Cost?

For full-time students who started college in fall 2002 seeking a bachelor's degree but failed to graduate six years later, approximately

- \$3.8 billion was lost in income;
- \$566 million was lost in federal income taxes;
- \$164 million was lost in state income taxes nationwide

Schneider, M., & Yin, L. (2011) . The high cost of low graduation rates: How much does dropping out of college really cost? Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research. <http://www.air.org/highcost/>

# Some Guiding Questions

- What Does It Mean To Be a College Graduate?
- What Does It Mean To Be a Graduate of Public Higher Education in Your State?
- What Does an Employer in Your State Need and Expect from a College Graduate?

## Faculty Research on Student Learning

Two Years:

45% showed  
Minimal Improvement

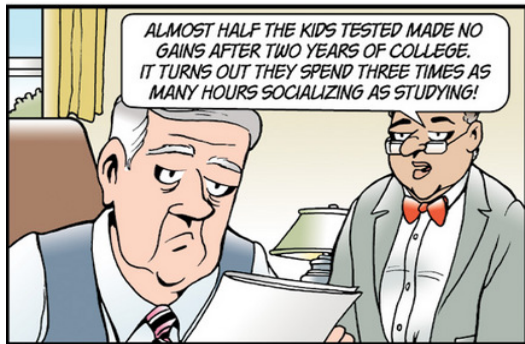
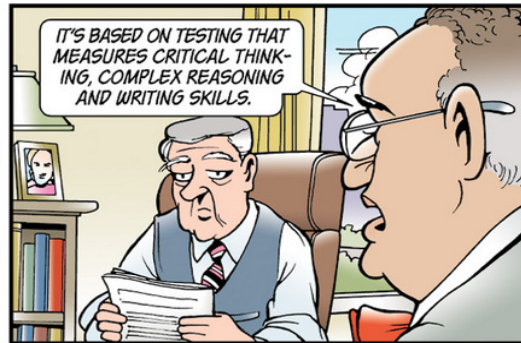
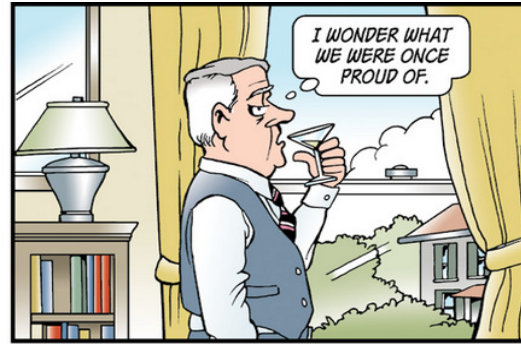
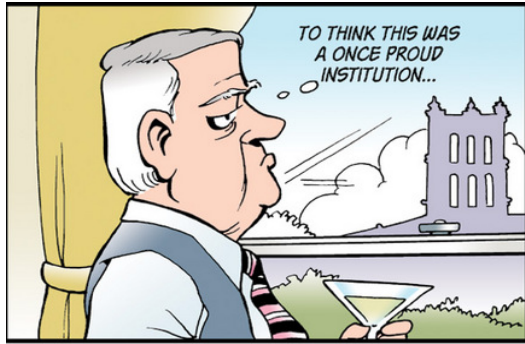


Four Years:

36% showed  
Minimal  
Improvement

Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa, *Academically Adrift. Limited Learning on College Campuses* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011)







# National Perspectives on Historical Illiteracy

## ACTA, Losing America's Memory (February 2000)

*Survey of 556 college seniors at the Top 25 National Universities  
and the Top 25 National Liberal Arts Colleges.*

- Beavis and Butthead 99%
- Snoop Doggy Dog 98%
- George Washington as general at Yorktown 34%
- James Madison as Father of the Constitution 23%
- Abraham Lincoln as author of the words:  
“Government of the people, by the people,  
for the people” 22%



*CSRA: The Center for Survey  
Research and Analysis at the  
University of Connecticut  
December 1999*

# How does this happen?

- Waste, Mismanagement, Bad Results
- Lack of student preparation (NSSE 2010 )
- Lack of core curriculum

# Waste, Mismanagement, Bad Results



The University has **invested heavily** in both the construction of classroom and laboratory facilities and the renovation of existing facilities. ...Too often, **these facilities are not fully utilized**—and the University constructs additional facilities—because of lack of use outside of certain “prime time” class periods or times of the day. Classroom space at University Park, for example, is near fully utilized between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. on a typical day, but much capacity is under-utilized at other times of the day. **While a notable reduction in classroom utilization has occurred at 8:00 a.m., in response to student (and some faculty) preferences, mid- and late-afternoon scheduling remains significantly lower.**

Priorities for Excellence. The Penn State Strategic Plan 2009-2010 through 2013-2014

# NSSE 2010 and Student Learning

Hours spent preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities)

	First-Year Students	Seniors
1-5 Hours	14%	15%
6-10 Hours	24%	24%
11-15 Hours	22%	20%
16-20 Hours	18%	17%
21-25 Hours	10%	10%

# WHAT will they LEARN?

A guide to what college rankings don't tell you.

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The search for the right college can be overwhelming. So many guides, so many rankings. There is one thing none of them will tell you: which universities are making sure their students learn what they need to know.

This free resource does just that, focusing on seven key areas of knowledge. It's designed to help you decide whether the colleges you're considering prepare their graduates to succeed after graduation.

To locate a school, choose a state from the map on the left or use the form below.

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## SEE WHICH COLLEGES REQUIRE THESE CORE SUBJECTS



COMPOSITION



LITERATURE



FOREIGN LANGUAGE



U.S. HISTORY



ECONOMICS



MATHEMATICS



SCIENCE

# ACTA'S Study of the Core Curriculum, What Will They Learn?™

## **1007 Colleges and Universities:**

95% Do Not Require an Introduction to Economics

80.1% Do Not Require Foundational Study of American History  
or Government

84.7% Do Not Require Intermediate Level Foreign Language

34.2% Do Not Require College-Level Mathematics

16.6% Do Not Require English Composition

# Why does this matter?

- Graduates unprepared to navigate job market
- Dissatisfied employers



# Bureau of Labor Statistics Findings

- Individuals born from 1957 to 1964 held an average of **11 jobs** from age 18 to age 44.
- ... 2.6 while ages 28 to 32.
- ...2.4 jobs while ages 33 to 38 and 2.0 jobs ages 39 to 44.
- Among jobs started by 39- to 44-year-olds, **33 percent ended in less than a year**, and 68 percent ended in fewer than 5 years.

<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/nlsoy.pdf>

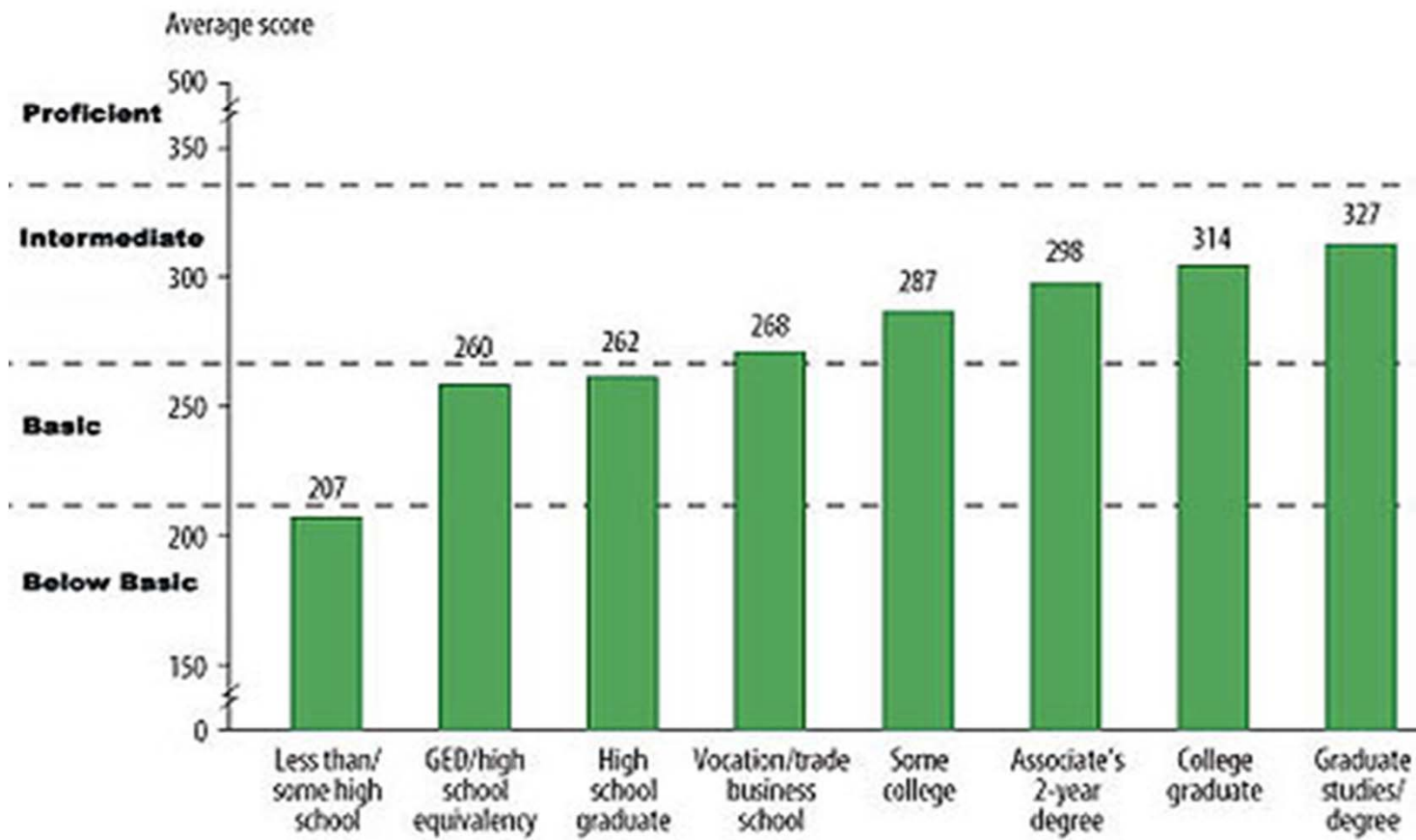
# National Perspective: The View Of Employers

- 23.9% find graduates overall preparation “excellent.”
- 64.5% say “adequate.”
- 26.2% find their writing skills “deficient”

Linda Barrington and Jill Casner-Lotto, *Are They Really Ready to Work? Employers' Perspectives on the Basic Knowledge and Applied Skills of New Entrants to the 21st Century U.S. Workforce* (The Conference Board, Corporate Voices for Working Families, The Partnership for 21st Century Skills and the Society for Human Resource Management, 2006)



# National Assessment of Adult Literacy



# “What Do We (They) Mean By Proficient

*Proficient* indicates skills necessary to perform more complex and challenging literacy activities.

Score ranges for *Proficient*:

Prose: 340–500

Document: 335–500

Quantitative: 350–500

- reading lengthy, complex, abstract prose texts as well as synthesizing information and making complex inferences
- integrating, synthesizing, and analyzing multiple pieces of information located in complex documents
- locating more abstract quantitative information and using it to solve multistep problems when the arithmetic operations are not easily inferred and the problems are more complex
- comparing viewpoints in two editorials
- interpreting a table about blood pressure, age, and physical activity
- computing and comparing the cost per ounce of food items



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# Who's Afraid of Assessment?

And why?

# Assessment as a Tool for Benchmarking Progress

*Before CAAP (Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency), we really did not have the mechanism other than anecdotes to show that our universities have increased the knowledge of students. But if you want to use data-driven decision making, anecdotes just don't do it.*

Lesta Turchen,  
South Dakota Board of Regents  
Chief Academic Officer

# Three Instruments for Measuring Student Learning

- Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA): Council on Aid to Education
- Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP): ACT, Inc.
- Proficiency Profile (former Measurement of Academic Progress and Proficiency): Education Testing Service



# A Professor's View: Assessment for Curricular Improvement

The key is whether the numbers shake you out of your complacency. We all thought we were good before, but the numbers convinced us that we needed to make changes in the curriculum and in the way we designed student questions and assignments

USA Today, Feb. 2, 1987

# Assessment as a Tool for Teaching and Learning

The principal goal of the CLA (Collegiate Learning Assessment) is to assist faculty in improving teaching and learning.

Roger Benjamin,  
President of the Council on Aid to Education

# A Warning from *Education Sector*

If higher education has the courage to take responsibility for honestly assessing student learning and publishing the results, the measuring stick will be a tool. If it doesn't, the stick could easily become a weapon. The time for making that choice is drawing to a close.

Kevin Carey, Policy Director of Education Sector

# College Portraits: Univ. of Nebraska (Omaha)

College Portraits - University of Nebraska at Omaha

www.collegeportraits.org/NE/UNO/learning\_outcomes

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### Performance Task Results for First-time, Full-time Students

**The increase in learning on the performance task is well above what would be expected at an institution testing students of similar academic abilities.**

Freshman Score: 1111  
Senior Score: 1239  
CLA score range: 400 to no maximum score.

*Average EEA scores for tested students*  
Freshman Score: 1156  
Senior Score: 1085

### Analytic Writing Task Results for First-time, Full-time Students

**The increase in learning on the analytic writing task is well above what would be expected at an institution testing students of similar academic abilities.**

Freshman Score: 1055  
Senior Score: 1198  
CLA score range: 400 to no maximum score.

*Average EEA scores for tested students*  
Freshman Score: 1156  
Senior Score: 1085

[University of Nebraska at Omaha](#) [Contact UNO](#) [Contact the VSA](#) [More VSA Info](#)  
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“The increase in learning on the [performance task / analytical writing task] is **well above what would be expected** at an institution testing students of similar academic abilities.”

# A Broken Academic Reward System

## Modern Language Association

*Report of the Task Force on Evaluating Scholarship  
for Tenure and Promotion.* (1339 departments in 734 universities reporting)

**Percentage of departments ranking scholarship  
more important than teaching:**

**35.4% in 1968**

**75.7% in 2005.**

# Taking Action: Governing Boards

*“Change in institutional strategy can only come from trustees. ... Reviewing an institution’s academic strategy and deciding whether change is called for is a trustee’s most important responsibility.”*

**Benno C. Schmidt**

**Chair, CUNY Board of Trustees**

**President, Yale University 1986-1992**



# Taking Action: You Have the Power

## THE CHRONICLE of Higher Education

October 12, 2011, 12:32 pm

### **Appeals Court Affirms That Florida Legislature Has Tuition-Setting Authority**



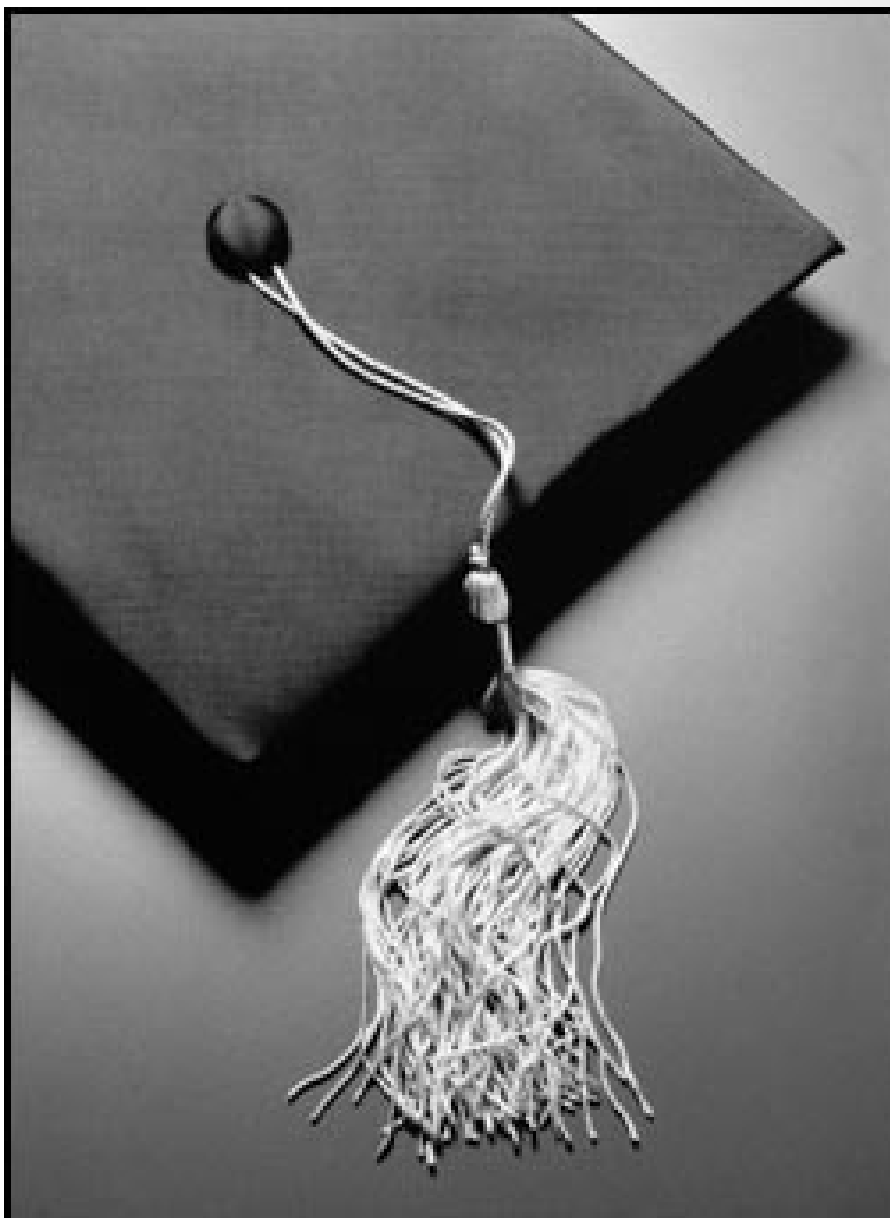
# Taking Action: Model Legislation

1. Make course requirements - and academic standards therein - clear for students, public, and policy makers to see.



## **Higher Education Transparency Act**

2. Make the data on how much teaching goes on in college classrooms clear. And how much happens on Friday. And Monday. Before a new classroom building goes up, hold public discussion that includes examination of classroom usage.
3. Make learning gains data clear and public. Are students gaining college-level skills? Make the evidence plain and clear.



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