



63% of employers say too many recent college graduates are not prepared to participate successfully in today's economy.

—USA Today

# what will they learn.com

*Find out what the college rankings **don't** tell you.*

Visit this free college-guide website to find out which universities make sure their students learn what they need to know.

Prospective college students and their parents are increasingly looking for institutions that provide real academic value in return for the dollars received. Since WhatWillTheyLearn.com was launched, students and parents—more than 400,000 of them—have thronged to our website to see for themselves what different institutions require.

**In What Will They Learn?™ our premise is simple: The core purpose of attending college is learning, and we examine what institutions actually require students to study.**

What have we found? That hundreds of colleges and universities, public and private, famous and not-so-famous, require very little of their students.

In this age of globalization, a staggering 87.3% do not require intermediate-level foreign language of their students. A full 81.9% do not require a basic course

in American history or government. At 40.6% of the institutions we examined, students can graduate without taking a college-level mathematics course, and at 18.3%, students can leave without that most essential career preparation—a basic course in English composition.

Students pay a price when their institutions fail to set meaningful academic standards. Recently, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) surveyed its member nations to determine the levels of quantitative and verbal literacy that adults demonstrate. While America spends substantially more per student on higher education than any other OECD nation, we are far from the top when it comes to performance. The literacy level of recent four-year college graduates is below the average of our international peers.

The original idea of a liberal arts education was one that would equip students with the knowledge needed by a free citizen. Centuries later, the importance of a broad-based general education has never been greater.

See what people are saying about [whatwilltheylearn.com](http://whatwilltheylearn.com). ➤

“‘Cafeteria-style’ curricula are all the rage. Such is not the stuff of which a competitive 21st-century workforce is made. . . . What’s the remedy? For starters, prospective students and their parents should consult ACTA’s *What Will They Learn?* when choosing a college. If students and their parents begin voting with their pocketbooks through enrolling only in serious schools, the rest of higher education might well become serious once again.”

—Tom Lindsay, former Deputy Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities

“Students have to work their way through a vast menu of general education requirements, and do their best to find courses that fit the various categories as well as their schedules. . . . I hope [*What Will They Learn?*] will help you find out which of the colleges you and your children are considering are taking care to provide an education . . . and which are just offering a menu.”

—Harry R. Lewis, former Dean of Harvard College

“Students are no longer taught the basics of literature, history, or science. . . . ACTA’s [whatwilltheylearn.com](http://whatwilltheylearn.com) website provides the grisly details for each school, together with the cost of tuition. Students and parents can see if they will get their money’s worth.”

—Michael Barone, *Washington Examiner*

“The ACTA review’s finding that historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) ‘demonstrate overall stronger general education requirements than other public and private institutions’ confirms the important role these universities continue to play in American higher education. We are also gratified by the overwhelming public support reported by the Roper survey for giving all students the rigorous education they need and that the nation needs them to have. The challenge now is for our colleges to set their sights higher: to give their students not just a good education but a great education.”

—Michael L. Lomax, President and CEO of the United Negro College Fund

“[ACTA’s *What Will They Learn?*] study and web site do fill a gap so that parents and students can make better choices. As a consequence, colleges and universities may be forced to examine their own responsibility in molding an educated, well-informed citizenry.”

—Kathleen Parker, *Washington Post*

“ACTA’s *What Will They Learn?* project calls attention to the urgent need for academic standards in postsecondary education. Students who graduate without a broad education in basic subjects such as math and science, American history and composition are unlikely to remain competitive in today’s competitive, rapidly changing global environment. Hopefully, this will spark a renewed commitment by institutions to high standards and quality education for all students.”

—Charles Kolb, former President of the Committee for Economic Development

“The *What Will They Learn?* study points to shortcomings in higher education that have a real impact on U.S. competitiveness. Too few schools require their students to develop a firm grounding in core subject areas, the foundation upon which later expertise can be built. This does a disservice not only to the students but also to employers seeking the capable, well-rounded employees they need to compete in the global economy.”

—John Engler, President of Business Roundtable and former Governor of Michigan

“Are students getting fair value in return? [ACTA] has been trying to help families answer that question for years. . . . The American Council of Trustees and Alumni . . . believes students should leave college with a broad base of knowledge that will allow them ‘to compete successfully in our globalized economy and to make sense of the modern world.’”

—William McGurn, *Wall Street Journal*