

Final Model Argument (Rogerian Draft)

Imagine not having to pay a penny for college, and collecting all the rewards of a degree and a college experience without having to worry about any debt afterwards. Now imagine a world where only the richest of the rich snag a college education and the rest of the population is left to compete over lower level jobs. The increase in college tuition costs is jaw-dropping to observe - "Average published tuition and fees at public four-year colleges and universities increased by 9% in 2016 dollars over the five years from 2011-12 to 2016-17, following a 29% increase between 2006-07 and 2011-12." (CollegeBoard). Because the cost of attending college is getting more and more pricey nowadays, the possibility of government-provided free college education needs to be brought to attention. Many have definite opinions on whether college should be free or not and there are certainly two opposing schools of thought and a lot of details and issues to both sides, but a solution needs to be implemented before the prices of colleges make education a rare luxury for most families. Both sides of the argument have legitimate rationales to their views and it'll take some serious negotiating if we want to get the ball rolling on a compromise.

First off, for those of us that are for free college, it seems obvious that a post-secondary education is necessary for success in today's competitive world and that free college for

everyone would help many people obtain the tools that they need for their future careers. Free college could also help kickstart a bunch of jobs and possibly stimulate the job market, and subsequently, the economy. College without pay would also allow for a lot of disadvantaged people to get a proper education and occupation, because most only have a high school diploma at best, and that doesn't count for much today, compared to the past. Complimentary college could also relieve the stress of student loan debt that plagues a vast amount of families. This would work especially in cases where a graduate has to work for years, sometimes even close to a decade or more to pay off loan debt, living with their parents before they have enough money to go out on their own. In addition, it's not like free college is an unprecedented concept in the world. Free tuition also seems to work for most of Europe, with the exception of England, with Germany being a notable case. Germany first started out as college tuition-free, but in 2006 they decided to start charging, which resulted in "large protests, but Germany kept the policy in place until [October 2014]" (Simmons). This just goes to show that other countries can make college free and have it work, and the ones that try it the American way end up changing back.

On the other hand, for the other side of our population that is against free college, the counterargument can be made that by making college free, the reallocation of all the money that comes from the cost of college now will go out to the masses in the form of taxes and other financial evils. In addition, colleges could become harder to maintain due to less money flowing into them, making it harder to pay knowledgeable professors, purchase essential equipment and technology, and pay for all of the other services and goods colleges have to provide to their students. This could result in worse education because of less resources. Probably the most

serious of problems free college would create is the over-saturation of degrees in the job market. Free college would allow almost anyone to get a degree, making it far less valuable, and therefore, most jobs more competitive since the playing field for those competing would be leveled. It is also worth noting that the motivation to do well in high school classes would drop significantly, since there would be less rewards for good grades if all college were free. Certainly students would have to keep their grades up to be admitted, but the pursuit of academic scholarships (and better SAT scores that would have translated into money if college weren't free) would decline. Since motivation is reduced at the high school level to excel, the consequences later on in life would be very detrimental.

Finally, on the grounds that both sides of the "great free college debate" definitively prove their points and establish convincing arguments, it is clear that a settlement must be made to effectively handle the situation. It is in the best interest for everyone to eliminate costs at community colleges, but not at most colleges, put into action work-study initiatives at public colleges, and increase financial aid for underprivileged and low-income students. Helping impoverished students directly (instead of indirectly by affecting almost everyone, rich and poor) would be the best course of action since they're the ones most in need, and leaving community colleges open for free would also allow middle-class or even upper-middle class students to also get a free education if so desired. This way, no one is overloaded with taxes from making college free in general, and the job market is kept safe from the over-flooding of degrees that free college would also bring about. And, to please those of us who are in favor of free college, a form of it would still be available to everyone, but with a slight focus on those that need it the most. While

other solutions are possible in theory, this is a more realistic and probable course for solving this great issue while remaining as neutral as humanly possible.

Works Cited

- "Tuition and Fees and Room and Board over Time." *Trends in Higher Education*. CollegeBoard, 2016. Web. 14 Nov. 2016.
- Simmons, Michelle. "The Benefits of Free Higher Education." *Quiet Mike*. N.p., 27 Mar. 2015. Web. 14 Nov. 2016.