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DAILY BRIEFING

Tuesday, May 25, 2021

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Media Outlets Confirm President's Budget Request Will Not Include Student Loan Forgiveness

Last week, several media outlets confirmed that the White House Office of Management and Budget will not include any proposals to provide federal student loan forgiveness in the President's budget request for Fiscal Year 2022. The detailed request is expected to be released on Friday. As a candidate, President Joe Biden called on Congress to forgive up to \$10,000 of student loan debt, though his

administration is currently reviewing whether the U.S. Department of Education has authority to provide student loan forgiveness through executive action. Progressive groups have said that they see the absence of student loan forgiveness policy in the budget as another major setback for cancellation. For more coverage, see these articles from [CNBC](#), [Forbes](#), or [The Washington Post](#).

New America Releases "Varying Degrees" Report

Today, New America released a new report titled, [Varying Degrees: Five Years Later](#), which examines the results of its annual survey on how Americans feel about educational opportunities after high school. The report marks the fifth year of data collection on the topic. The report shows that Americans believe in the value of education after high school, and they want it to be more adequately funded by state and federal governments. But the report also found that, while many Americans have maintained consistency in their views about educational opportunities after high school over time, there are signs that this past year has revealed some simmering pessimism. In early 2020, 69 percent of Americans said that colleges and universities were having a positive effect on the way things were going. Just one year later, that view had fallen to 58 percent. Key findings include the following:

- Education after high school continues to offer a good return on investment and prepares a strong American workforce. Approximately three in four Americans believe that higher education offers a good return on investment, and about 80 percent believe that public colleges and universities prepare a strong American workforce.
- The quality of online education is questionable compared to in-person instruction and should be less expensive. Over half (61 percent) of respondents believe that the quality of online education is worse than in-person instruction, and four in five Americans believe online programs should be less expensive than in-person programs.
- Americans are mixed about whether students have affordable access to education after high school. They are also divided on whether someone can get a high-quality education after high school that is also affordable (48 percent agree).
- Americans want colleges to be transparent about their outcomes, and they want them to be held accountable for taxpayer investment. Overwhelmingly, 93 percent of Americans say it is important for institutions to provide publicly available data on student outcomes.
- Americans believe President Joe Biden and Congress should prioritize free community college when it comes to higher education policy. While no one policy of those listed were prioritized by the majority of Americans, two in five Americans (41 percent) backed some form of tuition-free college (either two- or four-years) as the most important priority.
- A majority of Americans think that those colleges and universities that decided to hold in-person classes in the fall of 2020 made the right decision. Just over half (57 percent) of Americans believe that it was the right decision for some colleges to bring back students for in-person learning for the 2020–21 academic year.
- Americans do not believe standardized test scores should figure prominently in admissions decisions. Approximately 66 percent of Americans agreed with the decision of many colleges and universities to go test blind or test optional this year. Only 7 percent of those who agreed with going test optional this year want standardized test scores to be a critical piece of information in admissions decisions moving forward.
- Americans widely support discharging student loan debt for those students who attended schools that misrepresented their programs or outcomes. A majority of Americans (79 percent), across party lines, agree that borrowers should have their student debt canceled if their college or university misrepresented information about their programs of study or student outcomes.

U.S. Department of Education News

For today's *Federal Register*, click [here](#).

The following announcement was posted to Federal Student Aid's Knowledge Center:

- [Memorial Day Federal Holiday Processing and Customer Service Hours \(EA ID: GENERAL-21-33\)](#)

General News

[Newsweek](#) reports that Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) continues to urge her supporters to push President Joe Biden to cancel \$50,000 of student loan debt per borrower.

[Business Insider](#) reports on a California community college's graduation gift to its students: forgiving their grads' student debt. Contra Costa Community College forgave all remaining student debt for its May 2021 graduates.

[SHRM](#) reports that employers' student loan assistance is tackling the college debt crisis. Relief measures let employers make pretax loan contributions, for now.

[NPR](#) reports on the growing racial divide in millennial wealth.

[Inside Higher Ed](#) reports that a new initiative aims to bring back 4,000 students who dropped out of private Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and guide them to graduation with one-on-one coaching. Public HBCUs are doing similar outreach to students, especially those who left during the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Diverse Issues in Higher Education](#) reports that a year after the murder of George Floyd, institutions of higher education are reflecting on systemic changes that followed.

[Higher Ed Dive](#) reports that Senate lawmakers have seemingly backed off a proposal that would have given a federal oversight body the power to scrutinize large gifts and contracts between U.S. colleges and foreign entities.

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