



TCNJ Grad.JPG

Recent graduates cheer after the turning of the tassel ceremony during The College of New Jersey commencement last month.

By

on June 20, 2014 at 6:49 AM

A Stockton College Polling Institute survey of New Jersey residents brings a ray of hope that can help students get more bang for the buck by earning a college degree. Completing college faster, with more valuable skills to prepare them for good jobs, careers and a better life, were identified in the poll as the topmost desirable outcomes of attending college.

Specifically, the May-June poll, administered for the Higher Education Strategic Information and Governance (HESIG) project of Stockton and supported by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) Center for Advocacy and Philanthropy and the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy, found that approximately three-fourths of residents think that New Jersey colleges provide excellent or good education; and 90 percent of those who have had some college experience value college as worth the cost, despite continuing concern about college affordability.

These new findings, together with Stockton's 2013 HESIG poll on college affordability and completion, other New Jersey studies and recent comprehensive national research by Pew, Gallup and Northeastern University,

Some of the survey's significant insights for change are directed at colleges and universities. While colleges are viewed as high in quality and value, 86 percent of residents polled say that colleges need to change educational and financial practices "a lot" or "some," to provide better value. Some of the needed changes include:

- more practical, work-related experiences while in college, tied to job and career prospects;
- better academic and career counseling to help students make better choices;
- easier transfer of credits to reduce time to graduation and cost, and
- more content courses in the major to strengthen critical academic skills.

The Stockton findings suggest some important policy changes that would help add to the value of a college degree. These include:

- partnerships with schools to teach subjects and skills needed to succeed in college and the workforce, and

