

WHAT will they LEARN?™

The American Council of Trustees and Alumni Releases Ratings of Colleges Nationwide

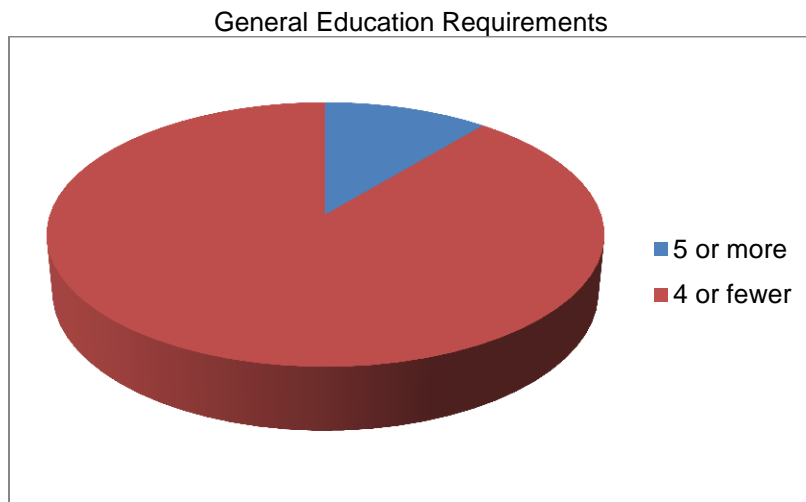
Colleges and Universities Flunk When It Comes to Strong General Education Requirements

Roper Survey Confirms College Graduates Have Gaping Holes in their Knowledge and Understanding:

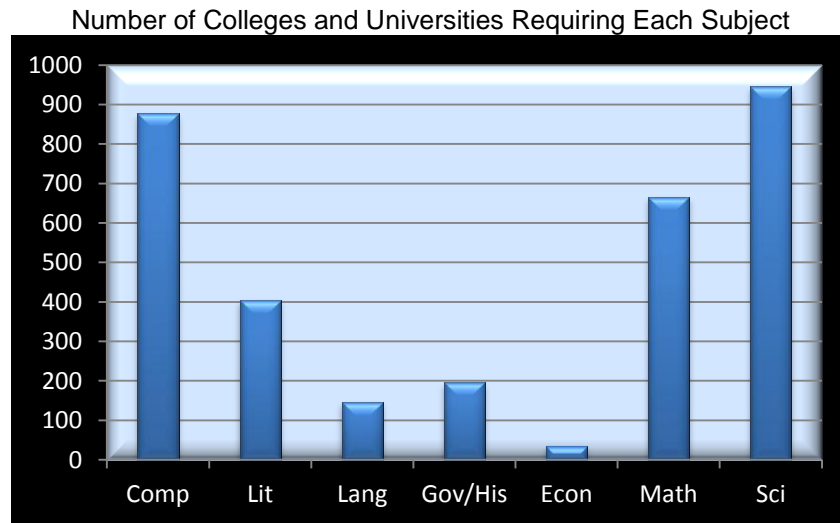
- *More Graduates Know Lady Gaga than George Washington at the Battle of Yorktown*
- *Less Than 20% Identified James Madison as the “Father of the Constitution”*
- *Little More than Half Understand the Constitution Established the Separation of Powers*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – As employers complain about a lack of skilled workers and record numbers of college graduates remain unemployed, the American Council of Trustees and Alumni released today the fourth edition of *What Will They Learn?* – showing that colleges and universities are to blame for failing to prepare their graduates for success after graduation.

The study graded 1,070 institutions with an “A” through “F” on the strength of each school’s general education curriculum. Colleges are evaluated on how many of seven crucial subjects outside the major they require of all graduates: composition, U.S. government or history, economics, literature, college-level math, science and intermediate-level foreign language. “A” schools require 6-7 courses, “B” schools require 4-5, “C” schools require 3, “D” schools require 2, and “F” schools require 0-1 courses. The results are troubling:



- Only 21 colleges and universities (less than 2%) earned an “A” rating for having at least six of the seven key courses.
- Most colleges (61%) earned a “C” or lower for requiring three or fewer courses.
- 89% of colleges and universities have four or fewer general education course requirements.



- Though composition and science are often required – 83% and 92% respectively – other subjects lag behind.
 - Slightly over one-third (34%) require no college-level math.
 - Less than two in five (38%) require literature.
- And some lag *really* far behind.
 - ¿Habla Español? Probably not. Less than 14% of institutions have an intermediate-level foreign language requirement.
 - Less than 5% of schools require basic economics.
 - Less than 20% require even a basic course in American history or government.

And it shows!

The study was paired with a multiple-choice survey of college graduates, conducted by GfK Roper, which tested knowledge of basic history, civics and economics.

- Abraham Lincoln’s most iconic speech – the Gettysburg Address – is largely unfamiliar territory for college graduates. Just 17% know the address is the source of the famous phrase, “Government of the people, by the people, for the people.”
- A little more than half of college graduates (58%) know the Constitution established the division of powers between the states and the federal government.
- Only 20% of graduates can identify James Madison as the “Father of the Constitution.”
- Less than half of graduates (48%) know George Washington was the American general at Yorktown. *None of the other options (Ulysses S. Grant, Robert E. Lee, and William T. Sherman) were Revolutionary War figures.*

- 17% of college graduates understood that the Emancipation Proclamation stated that slaves were free in the Confederacy, but not in the Union.
- Only about half of graduates (53%) can identify the right to a speedy and public trial as *not* part of the First Amendment.
- Even recent history is being forgotten. Barely two in five (42%) know the Battle of the Bulge was fought during World War II.

“This study shows that while students, parents and taxpayers are paying a lot, they’re not getting a lot in return,” said Anne D. Neal, president of the American Council of Trustees and Alumni. “Students are graduating into one of the most inhospitable job markets in American history and a time of challenging civic responsibilities; and they’re doing it with record debt. *What Will They Learn?* examines which schools are making a solid commitment to a broad academic foundation, and which ones simply don’t make the grade. Regrettably, too many do not.”

The following 21 institutions earned an “A” rating in this year’s study for requiring at least six of the seven subjects crucial to a solid core education:

- Baylor University
- California Polytechnic State University - San Luis Obispo
- City University of New York - Brooklyn College
- Colorado Christian University
- Gardner-Webb University
- Kennesaw State University
- Morehouse College
- Pepperdine University
- Regent University
- St. John's College (MD)
- St. John's College (NM)
- Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi
- Thomas Aquinas College
- Thomas More College of Liberal Arts
- United States Air Force Academy
- United States Coast Guard Academy
- United States Military Academy
- University of Dallas
- University of Georgia
- University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma
- University of Texas - San Antonio

“Businesses are struggling to find employees with the skills to succeed in today’s high-tech and dynamic global economy,” said John Engler, former governor of Michigan and president of the Business Roundtable, of the study. “Those abilities are built upon a foundation of math and science, but they also depend on students acquiring a wide range of general knowledge – including the ability to think and communicate clearly. This year’s *What Will They Learn?* report

highlights which universities are succeeding in this educational mission, and unfortunately, the large number of schools that are falling short.”

This project was directed by Michael Poliakoff, ACTA’s Vice President of Policy. Dr. Poliakoff is a former professor of classical studies at Wellesley College and a former Vice President for Academic Affairs and Research at the University of Colorado. Three panels of distinguished scholars and teachers advised ACTA on the criteria and standards used by the rating.

The American Council of Trustees and Alumni is an independent, non-profit organization committed to academic freedom, excellence, and accountability at America’s colleges and universities. Since its founding in 1995, ACTA has counseled boards, educated the public and published reports about such issues as good governance, historical literacy, core curricula, the free exchange of ideas, and accreditation in higher education. For further information, visit www.goacta.org or www.WhatWillTheyLearn.com.

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