

Final Project Research Paper

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PSYC -1000

When given the question of, what social issues are currently affecting my local area? The first thing I could think of was the amount of people in my hometown who are enrolled in college. There are a handful here at Casper College and even fewer in Laramie at the University. It made me wonder, how many people are going to college after all of the changes in the last three years? After seeing the statistics for undergraduate schools, I realized there is a bit of a crisis with such schools' enrollment rates. But the interesting part was that many of those who are wealthy in the country are still going, and those who are underprivileged are going much less frequently. So what can we change and how does the picture for the current situation look?

It seems to me that COVID-19 was a huge factor in the drop in rates. Much of my statistics came from a website focused on the U.S. college enrollment decline. They say there was a 9% decline between 2019 and 2023. Roughly 1.4 million students opting to not attend classes. While graduation rates are actually getting better, much of the issue is getting people to go to school. Not only have trends changed in that aspect but many also have changed the way they say they would attend school. 32% of people said that they would now take different formats of classes. These statistics show a large change in the outlook on school. Something that was very surprising was the stress on the price of school along with current living conditions, on top of a recession.

Now, students' school issues are also rising. What I mean by that is, even though post graduate statistics look good; higher employment, higher salary, etc. There are still lots of issues with current students. First off, college statistically hasn't grown in popularity in a decade, and the cost has only risen. As well as the fact that there are declines in people transferring from a 2 year school to a 4 year. So less are continuing to go for a higher education. I believe much of this problem is ultimately because many cannot afford to not work or even work less in the current state of the country and its economy. According to one article, "56% of adults say 4 years is 'not worth the cost'"(Gellman 1). A quick fact as well, 15% less men go to college currently, 55% to a strong 70% of women. A great statistic for women but not so great for men.

What I've learned from this research is that much needs to be done to help those who are non wealthy or underprivileged. A few good ways to start of course would be lowering the cost. Possibly one day moving toward a free education idea, like in Europe. Another would be to focus on the people outside of highschool more often, many of those who still try going to school are adults already in the workforce. Most of all, more scholarships and financial aid. If the cost for school is going to be higher, than the amount of financial aid should be as well.