

## **Poll: Higher Education is Very Important, Not Affordable**

By Don Sutherland

A Gallup-Lumina Foundation [poll](#) conducted between November 3-December 18, 2014 and released last Thursday revealed that Americans believe that a college degree or professional certificate is “very important,” but that education beyond high school is not affordable. The survey also highlighted factors related to the quality of a college or university, factors they felt colleges and universities valued the most, among others. Finally, the respondents felt that there was a large gap between colleges’ need to adapt to meet the needs of contemporary students and whether colleges were actually doing so.

Major findings included:

- A post-secondary degree or professional certificate: Very important: 69%; Somewhat Important or Very Important: 96%
- Future importance of a post-secondary degree or professional certificate to obtain a good job: More important [than today]: 69%
- Availability of post-secondary education: Yes: 61%
- Affordability of post-secondary education for everyone who needs it: No: 79%
- Most important reasons for selecting a college or university (percentage identifying factors as “very important): 1) quality of degree programs (82%); 2) financial assistance for college education (79%); 3) qualifications of the faculty: (75%); 4) percentage of graduates able to get a good job (73%); and, 5) average amount of loan debt upon graduation (70%)
- U.S. college graduates are well-prepared for workforce success (1= strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree): Agree or strongly agree (4 or 5): 36%
- Colleges and universities need to change to better meet today’s students’ needs (1= strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree): Agree or strongly agree (4 or 5): 80%
- Colleges and universities are changing to better meet today’s students’ needs (1= strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree): Agree or strongly agree (4 or 5): 42%