Women and Education in Utah

State Comparisons

Figure 1.1: Female Enrollment by State
2008 Data, Public Institutions
Solid Green Bar Denotes Utah Average
Percent of State’s Student Population that are Female

Number of States at Given Percentages

48\% 49\% 50\% 51\% 52\% 53\% 54\% 55\% 56\% 57\% 58\% 59\% 60\% 61\% 62\% 63\% 64\%
Purpose

The purpose of the two-year Utah Women and Education Project (UWEP) is to lead efforts within the state to understand and then motivate more young women to enter and stay in school long enough to obtain college degrees.

*May 2009-May 2011*
1. Primary research
2. Briefs and reports ([www.uvu.edu/wep](http://www.uvu.edu/wep))
3. Online resource database (*released October 4, 2010 on Utah 2-1-1*)
4. Dissemination of findings: conferences, other presentations, and materials (marketing)

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**Instrument and Data Collection**

- **Protocol**
  - Survey (quantitative)
  - Interview (open-ended; qualitative)
- **Participants spent between 45 minutes to 3 hours to complete instrument**
  - Average time was about 1 hour 30 minutes
- **In-depth study**
  - Many participants told us they had never thought so deeply about why they made the choices they made regarding college and what influenced them
Recruiting (1)

Live data collection sites:
- Snow College
- Center for Education, Business, and the Arts—Kanab (with Dixie State College)
- Box Elder High School
- Salt Lake Community College
- Southern Utah University
- University of Utah
- Utah Valley University

Recruiting (2)

Online recruits:
- Referrals (from college/university employees all over the state)
- Postcards (Community Action; DWS, LDS Employment Center, WIC)
- Online ads (Daily Herald, Craigslist, KSL, Survey Monkey)
- Blogs
- Cold calls from institutional lists
- UVU homepage
Utah Women and Education Summit

November 12, 2010

Disertation Outline

1. Participant Information
2. Value of Education
3. Behavior
4. Intentions
5. Aspirations
6. Values and Religion
7. Family Background
8. Individual Attributes
9. Schooling/Non-schooling
10. College Decisions/Influences
1. Participant Information

245 participants
- Age
- Marital status
- Race/ethnicity
- Religion
- High school type
- Parents estimated income
- Region/counties
- Years in Utah/family years in Utah

Ages

- 22-24 (22.4%)
- 25-28 (22.4%)
- 29-32 (12.2%)
- 18 (13.1%)
- 19 (11.4%)
- 20-21 (18.4%)
Religion

- LDS/Mormon (80.4%)
- None (13.1%)
- Catholic (4.1%)
- Christian (2.4%)

High School Type

- Regular Public (92.2%)
- Alternative Public (2.9%)
- Public Charter (1.6%)
- Private (1.6%)
- Home School (1.6%)
Parent's Estimated Income

- Over $100,000 (12.7%)
- $75,000-$99,999 (10.6%)
- $50,000-$74,999 (26.1%)
- $35,000-$49,999 (18.8%)
- $20,000-$34,999 (18.8%)
- Less than $19,999 (13.1%)

Counties/Regions

- **Counties**: Box Elder, Cache, Davis, Emery, Grand, Iron, Kane, Millard, Salt Lake, Sanpete, Sevier, Tooele, Uintah, Utah, Washington, Weber
- **Regions**:
  - Bear River (8.6%)
  - Central (7.4%)
  - Mountainland (32.4%)
  - Southeastern (0.8%)
  - Southwestern (14.8%)
  - Uintah Basin (0.4%)
  - Wasatch Front (34.8%)
Ancestors in Utah

- Pioneers (28.2%)
- 100+ Years (15.9%)
- 40+ Years (17.6%)
- Ancestors Did Not Live in Utah (25.3%)
- History Unknown (13.1%)

Study Limitations

- Lack of participants in minority populations
- Recruiting strategies (not random sample)
- Perceptions (past, present, future)
- Quantified qualitative data (coding)
- Use caution when generalizing
- Causality
2. Value of Education

- Informal hypothesis
- Brief: “The Value of Higher Education for Women in Utah”
- Utah young women do not generally understand the broad value of a college/university education
- More educated—more value they see
- All but three said that getting more education is important/wonderful
- Many benefits outlined in the brief were not mentioned by any young women

Value of Education (2)

- Nearly all women who do not attend or who drop out truly believe they will get their degrees in the future.
- Many believe that if their husbands get the education for the family, the children/family will get the “benefits” of having educated parents, and they will have a “better future.”
- Only four women see becoming leaders as a reason to go to college.
Value of Education (3)

• Many women stated that they do not need a college education because they “will not use it.”
• More educated women say it is important even if they don’t plan to “work outside the home for pay.”
• Many say they do not want to go to college (or return) unless they know “exactly” what they want to do. For example, one states: “I don’t want to waste my time or money.”
• Some participants assume that a number of their courses (GE primarily) are a “waste” because they do not teach them exactly what they think they need to learn.

Value of Education (4)

• “Three Cups of Tea” was very inspiring to five of the participants (broadened their understanding of the value of education).
• Getting a “good” job without a degree helped them develop the belief that they do not need postsecondary education (they think employment will always work out this way).
• Women with degrees feel much more “secure and prepared for the future.”
### Value of Education Categories (1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>96.3%</td>
<td>Economic, financial, and/or job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54.3%</td>
<td>Knowledge, learning, intelligence, and being smart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.8%</td>
<td>Self-esteem, self-worth, self-knowledge, accomplishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.2%</td>
<td>Better life, be successful, opportunities in the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>Self-development and self-improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.1%</td>
<td>Equity with men/respect for women</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Value of Education Categories (2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>Independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>Teach children or be an example to them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>Influence society/world, to make a difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>Social benefits and/or improving social skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>Helping others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>Competencies (critical thinking, problem solving, community, decision making, human behavior, tolerance of others)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Differences between Categories

More educated women see these educational benefits more clearly:

- Knowledge, learning, and intelligence***
- Teaching children and being examples to them*
- Competencies*
- Social skills and benefits*
- Self-improvement*

Correlations:

- * = >.05 p-value
- ** = >.01 p-value
- *** = >.001 p-value

### Broader Value

Young women who see the broader value of higher education are also those who:

- Attend college and graduate***
- Are more active in their religion***
- Are more committed to attend***
- Are more committed to graduate***
- Have parents who are more educated*
Takeaways

Young women need to be taught the broad value of higher education while young.

– Parents can teach this value.
– English teachers could give assignment to write about the benefits of a college education (GE included).
– Elementary school teachers can bring in guest speakers (parents) to talk about it and give assignments around this topic.
– Other

UWEP Model

Beliefs → Attitudes

Socio-Demographic
Family Background
Values
Normative Beliefs

Individual Attributes
School Experiences
Other Activities and Experiences
Subjective Norms

Aspirations
Intentions
Aspirations

Past Experiences and Behaviors

People of Influence

The Behavior
The College Decision

Perceptions of the Past and Present
3. Behavior: The College Decision

Category I (13 categories)
- No college (no firm)
- No college (firm)
- 1-2 semesters (no firm)
- 1-2 semesters (current/firm)
- Certificates (no firm)
- Certificates (current/firm)
- 3-4 semesters (no firm)
- 3-4 semesters (current/firm)
- Associate (no firm)
- Associate (current/firm)
- 5+ semesters (no firm)
- 5+ semesters (current/firm)
- Bachelor’s/master’s degrees

Category II (5 categories)
- No college (no firm)
- 1-4 semesters (no firm)
- Up to 4 semesters (firm)
- Associate degree/5+ semesters (no firm)
- Associate (with current and continuing status), bachelor’s degree, master’s degrees

UWEP Model

Beliefs \rightarrow Attitudes

$socio\text{-}demographic$

$family\text{-}background$

$values$

Normative Beliefs

Individual Attributes

School Experiences

Other Activities and Experiences

Perceptions of the Past and Present

Past Experiences and Behaviors

People of Influence

Intentions

Aspirations

The Behavior

The College Decision
### 4. Intentions

**Proactive College Activities Scale**
- Saved money for college
- Discussed financial aid with someone (scholarships, loans, grants)
- Requested information from a college
- Visited a college campus
- Applied to a college
- Accepted or admitted to a college
- Received a scholarship or grant to attend
- **Concurrent enrollment**
- **AP courses**

**College Preparation Activities**
- Saved money for college
- Discussed financial aid with someone (scholarships, loans, grants)
- Requested information from a college
- Visited a college campus
- Applied to a college
- Accepted or admitted to a college
- Received a scholarship or grant to attend

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All are linked to attending and graduating from college
Commitment to **Attend** College

- Saved money for college [1]
- Discussed financial aid with someone (scholarships, loans, grants)
- Requested information from a college
- **Visited a college campus** [2]
- Applied to a college
- Accepted or admitted to a college
- Received a scholarship or grant to attend

[1,2] = predictors from linear multiple regressions

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Commitment to **Graduate**

- Saved money for college [1]
- Discussed financial aid with someone (scholarship, loans, grants)
- Requested information from a college
- **Visited a college campus** [2]
- Applied to a college
- Accepted or admitted to a college
- **Received a scholarship or grant to attend** [3]
High School Courses

Commitment to Attend College:
1. Concurrent enrollment [1]
2. AP [2]
3. High level math [3]
4. Foreign languages
5. Mix of course types—primarily difficult courses
6. Core courses
7. Science, math, and technology
8. Fine arts
9. Social sciences
10. CTE
11. Mix of course types—primarily electives

High School Courses

Commitment to Graduate from College:
1. Concurrent enrollment [1]
2. AP [2]
3. High level math [3]
4. Foreign languages
5. Core courses
6. Mix of course types—primarily difficult courses
7. Mix of course types—primarily electives
8. Social sciences
9. Science, math, and technology
10. CTE
11. Fine arts
High School Courses

Attending and Graduating from College:
1. AP [1]
2. High level math [2]
3. Mix of course types—primarily difficult courses [3]
5. Foreign languages
6. Social science
7. Fine arts
8. Science, math, and technology
9. Mixture of course types—primarily electives
10. CTE

Takeaways

- Parents need to encourage and assist their children in saving money for college early in life.
- Influential individuals should provide opportunities for young women to visit college campuses throughout their high school years and even earlier.
- Young women should be encouraged to take concurrent enrollment, AP, and other college preparation courses during high school. The specific reasons for this should be explained clearly.
5. Aspirations

- College degree expected
- Level of degree expected
- Key finding
- Age of decision
- Commitment to attend and graduate
- Career aspirations and future lifestyle
- Life opportunities and goals
Analysis of qualitative results found that young women believe they are being encouraged to go to college or attend college—not necessarily to graduate from college.
Age of Decision

The age of decision is inversely correlated with

- Commitment to attend college and graduate
- Actively preparing for college
- Desire for a higher degree level
- Saving money for college
- Having parents who
  - Are willing to help pay
  - Discussed financial aid
  - Give higher level of overall support
  - Have a higher estimated income level

These correlations suggest the younger the decision the better!

Commitment to Attend College

How committed are you to attending college sometime in your life?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commitment Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong Commitment (8-10)</td>
<td>64.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None to Little Commitment (1-3)</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate Commitment (4-7)</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scale: 1-10
Commitment to Attend: Predictors

- Husband: 5.09
- Age: 4.19
- Number of Children: 4.09
- Religion: 3.84
- Marital Status: 3.64
- Religious Activity: 3.07
- Education: 0.48
- Race: 0.90
- Parent's Income: 0.64
- High School Type: 0.60

F-values

Commitment to Graduate

How committed are you to graduating from college sometime in your life?

- Strong Commitment (8-10): 69.4%
- None to Little Commitment (1-3): 13.1%
- Moderate Commitment (4-7): 17.5%
Commitment to Graduate: Predictors

- Husband: 6.53
- Number of Children: 4.81
- Marital Status: 4.27
- Age: 4.26
- Religion: 3.52
- Religious Activity: 2.91
- Education: 2.16
- High School Type: .93
- Race: .48
- Parent's Income: .42

F-values

Interaction with Marriage

- Marital Status
  - Current effect: F(3, 241)=3.6353, p=.01354
  - Effective hypothesis decomposition
  - Vertical bars denote 0.95 confidence intervals

Commitment to Attend

Single | Married | Separated/Divorced | Living with partner/significant other
---|---|---|---
5.0 | 5.5 | 6.0 | 6.5 |
7.0 | 7.5 | 8.0 | 8.5 |
9.0 | 9.5 | 10.0 | 10.5 |

Vertical bars denote 0.95 confidence intervals
### Career Aspirations and Future Lifestyle

**Correlations:** Commitment to Attend and Commitment to Graduate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1=Not important; 4=Essential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Aspiration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>Raising a family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>Secure and stable future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>Work schedule with time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>Leave the world a better place***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>Helping others in difficulty***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>Being well-off financially</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>Being stimulated intellectually***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>Variety of work experiences and challenges***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>Freedom to schedule my own day* ( - )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>Doing creative or expressive work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>Working closely with people***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>Encountering a variety of people***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>Successful in own business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>Working for social change***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>Recognition from others in field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>Administrative responsibility**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>Influence political decisions*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1=Not important; 4=Essential
Critical Aspirations Question

1. How do you visualize your life in 10 years?  
   - e.g., family, education, work, location
2. What opportunities do you see for yourself in your future?  
   - (10, 20, 30 years)
3. What are your long-term life goals?

Snapshot of Aspirations

1. The top vocational aspiration was having a full-time professional career followed by being a stay-at-home mom.
2. Women want to volunteer and help people.
3. Lifelong learning and financial stability are important.
4. Approximately 8% were unsure about their aspirations, saw negative images in the future, or had no idea what to expect.
5. Aspirations did not always match reality in terms of educational goals or activities.
6. A small percentage have obtained their degrees, or plan on finishing school, yet aspire to be stay-at-home moms.
Family-Related Future Aspirations

- 82.4% Married with Children
- 8.6% Not Committed to Marriage and/or Children
- 9% Did Not Mention

Quotes on Family

- "I will be certified as a medical transcriptionist, so I plan to work at home with that while I can still be with the kids."
- "I would like to be able to be a stay-at-home mother. My mother stayed at home to raise us, and I think it made a big difference."
- "I plan on being successful in my career choice and helping those who need it whether I am married or not."
**Education Aspirations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Aspirations</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NA/in college/graduate</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No plans to go/continue</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go at future time</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get degree as back-up plan</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finish A.S./B.S.</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finish master's</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Quotes on Education**

My parents are financially stable, but neither of them finished college. It makes me want to be better and provide a bright future for me and my family.

I am currently studying social work and am one year away from receiving my bachelor's degree. I will pursue a master's out of state. However, ultimately, I would like to stay home and raise my family.

Education, education education!!! It is definitely taking me a while to get there, but I want so badly to further my education, not only just because I want to be financially stable but because I truly love learning.
### Work-Related Future Aspirations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspiration</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did Not Mention</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time Job</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time Professional Career</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time Job</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay-at-home Mom</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time Professional Career</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Quotes on Career Aspirations

**I plan to be an X-ray technologist, and then hopefully attend two more years of school to specialize in the field of radiology doing CTs and MRIs.**

**I’d like to be a counselor for children. I know that I want to be able to help as many people as I can every day of my life.**

**I want to be teaching in a high school and eventually get into administration or the school board. I would like to be involved in making education in Utah better.**

**My long term life goals are to be an anchor on the “Today” show or have my own talk show. I suppose those are more dreams than goals, but I try and keep them in the goals category.**
Aspirations

General Quotes on Aspirations

I want to be a strong and independent role model to my daughter, by showing her that even through diversities women can overcome obstacles and obtain their dreams.

The future is something I dread to look forward to because of the choices I have made.

Unlike me, I want my children to graduate from college so that they all can be a strong financial backbone to their family.
Findings

• The two aspirations that are correlated with attendance and graduation:
  – Involvement with religion/serve mission*** [1]
  – Learning outside college*** [2]

• The following aspirations are correlated with proactive college scale:
  – Community service*** [1]
  – Involvement with religion/missions*** [2]
  – Learning outside of college*

Takeaways

• Researchers and educators need to explore the disconnect between the quantitative and qualitative results on young women’s aspiration to attend and graduate from college.

• Approximately 90% of the young women (yes/no item) say they want a college degree in their lives sometime; however, in the qualitative results only 50% aspire to get an A.S. degree or higher.

• Either way, we need to support their aspirations and dreams to make them a reality.

• Religious community can support college aspirations, since religious involvement is correlated with proactive college activities.
Takeaways

• Many women aspire to be a mother as well as a professional. Educators can help prepare women realistically for dual roles (or lead change for working mothers).

• Educators should address the needs of the 60% who want to learn outside of classroom, e.g., online classes or off-site locations.

• Parents and other influential individuals should discuss college with children as young as possible.

• We should talk to young women about “graduating”—not just “attending”—from college early in life.

UWEP Model
6. Values

- Religion/religious teachings
- Most important values (open-ended)
- Three most important values
- Three least important values

Religious Teachings

What does your religion teach you about continuing your education after high school?

- Very Important: 55.1%
- Moderately Important: 18.4%
- Not Important: 20.4%
- Missing Data: 6.1%
LDS Church Teachings

I think, especially in the LDS church, religion greatly influences its members’ educational decisions. We have been taught the importance of an education and while part of that is spiritual knowledge, temporal knowledge is also considered extremely important.

I am LDS and my religion really advocates continuing your education after high school. Even though we are encouraged to get married and start a family, the importance of getting a college education is also emphasized.

Church Encouragement

I feel like my religion (LDS) strongly encourages continuing education after high school. Our church teaches that knowledge is the only thing you take with you when you die (not cars, homes, etc.). I believe this, and that is partly why I went to college. Women are also encouraged by our church leaders to earn a college degree. Family is extremely important in our church, but the top leaders strongly encourage women to gain an education so they can teach their children and help support their families.
Top Church Leaders

What messages do you think are given from your top church leaders (e.g., Pope, prophet) about women earning college degrees?

- Very Important: 51.8%
- Moderately Important: 19.2%
- Not Important: 22.9%
- Missing Data: 6.1%

Top Church Leaders

The Prophet teaches that education is EXTREMELY important. It is something that prepares us for the future and whether or not we use it for a career, we need to get one if at all possible. The Prophet also says that it is something that is okay to go into debt for.

The Prophet loves to talk about education, whether you are in kindergarten or 80 years old. No matter where you are in life, continuing your education is vital to keep up your intelligence and up with your career field.
My religion (LDS) is very proactive on college and continuing education. We do biannual church-wide conferences and many of the talks are about education and the importance of it for men and women. I remember such a talk that was about women and how it is important to learn and grow in education for us [as women]. They push learning in every meeting I have ever been to.

My religion teaches education is not merely a good idea, it’s a commandment. We are to learn of things of both in the heaven and in the earth. They say it’s important to strive, learn and study in our lives and seek knowledge from the best books. They encourage getting education but do not expect us to get a degree.
Local Church Leaders

Do your local church leaders (e.g., youth leaders, bishop, rabbi, minister) talk to you about your education? If so, what do you think they are encouraging you to do with your educational and career choices?

- Very Important: 33.5%
- Moderately Important: 20.4%
- Not Important: 29.4%
- Missing Data: 16.7%

Church at Local Level

We always talk about college in my church classes; we even had a day where they helped us think of good colleges to apply to and how to save and manage money for college. We had a lady come talk to us about majors we could possibly go into. In our church we believe that is very important to achieve as much education in this life as possible, because we will be taking only our family, friends, and knowledge with us when we die.
Youth Leaders

My local church leaders, especially my youth leaders, talked quite a bit to me about my education. I remember after my first week of college I had a breakdown and wanted to quit. I went and visited one of my youth leaders and she shared a similar experience that her daughter had, and promised me that if I hung in there, it would get better. She gave me advice on things I could do to help make my college experience more enjoyable. I listened to her advice and she was right. I was fine after that.

Findings (1)

• LDS participants felt strongly that their religion supports women attending college.
• They are taught that learning, knowledge, and college are important.
• Some say if they were more active in the LDS faith, they would probably have attended college.
• Many talk of the importance of attending college, but not necessarily about graduating.
• Many see no urgency; they believe they will finish “someday.”
Findings (2)

- Family trumps college “absolutely” for many participants.
- Marriage (or sometimes when a child is born) is the end of college for many.
- Many believe that women need to “give up” or “sacrifice” their college for the family. It is their “duty” to drop out of school.
- Many cannot see a situation where they can be married, have children, and continue college. It is all or nothing. They cannot see a life of integration.

Findings (3)

- Education is the top priority for many until marriage, and then priorities change quickly.
- Education gets lumped together with “work”; a “faithful LDS woman” stays home with her children (that means no outside work or education).
- They do not see options (e.g., part-time school).
- There is a disconnect with “being prepared” or “having a job to fall back on” and not finishing with the degree.
Findings (4)

• **Quote:** “It is discouraged to have a sitter of any kind because we (as a mother) are not fulfilling our God-given role.”

• **Quote:** “But the main focus of my church is family. If education gets in the way and is paid more attention to than the family, then it is not worth taking part in.”

• Some participants struggle with understanding why education is so important before marriage and then why they must “give it up.”

Findings (5)

• Education doesn’t just slide to second priority—for some it falls totally off the priority list.

• Of the three categories mentioned, encouragement from “local leaders” is the most powerful predictor of commitment, proactive college activities, and attendance and graduation.

• All three religious variables show powerful correlations with commitment, proactive college activities, and attendance and graduation.
Religious activity is a strong predictor of the following (in various models):
- Attendance and graduation
- Proactive college scale
- Total leadership
- High school GPA
- Age of decision
- Father encouraged and/or supported
- Mother encouraged and/or supported

**Model**

- Age of Decision
  - .11*
  - .14*
  - .35***
  - .25**

- Career Aspirations Scale
  - .13**

- Proactive College Scale
  - .49***
  - .38***
  - .22***

- Attendance and Graduation

Adj. $R^2 = .44$

*=.05
**=.01
***=.001

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Utah Women and Education Summit
November 12, 2010

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**Takeaways**

- Local church leaders play a particularly important role in encouraging young women to attend and graduate from college.
- Efforts should be made to discuss how young women can integrate marriage, family, and college.
- Realistic data (e.g., divorce rates, economic challenges) should be presented in church settings so that young women understand the importance of completing degrees and the importance of family.

---

**Most Important Values**

What values are most important to you?

- Honesty/Integrity/Responsibility: 68.9%
- General Virtues: 53.9%
- Family: 46.1%
- Work/Self-Reliance: 30.7%
- Education/Learning: 28.2%
- Spirituality/Religion: 24.5%
- Service/Community Involvement/Charity: 19.5%
- Other Relationships (non-family): 14.9%
Top Values

Select the three values from the following list that are MOST important to you:

- Family (85.1%)
- Learning (40.7)
- Ethical Behavior (40.7%)
- Responsibility/Dependability (31.5%)
- Hard Work (31.1%)

Least Important Values

Select the three values from the following list that are LEAST important to you:

- Power/Influence (78.4%)
- Recognition (66.4%)
- Pleasure (38.6%)
- Challenge (29.6%)
- Achievement (28.6%)
7. Family Background

- Father
- Mother
- Siblings
- Relatives
- Paying for college
- Family responsibilities

Fathers’ Education

- Some High School: 10.4%
- High School Diploma/GED: 18.7%
- Some College: 26.6%
- Associate: 4.6%
- Bachelor’s: 22.4%
- Master’s: 14.5%
- Doctorate: 2.9%
Fathers’ Education

The higher the level of a father’s education, the more likely his daughter will
– Prepare for college attendance (proactive activities).
– Attend and graduate from college.
– Receive more encouragement and support to attend.
– Develop a love for learning.
– Have a father who reads to her, helps her with homework, develops activities, and attends learning and cultural events.
– Have a father who sets a positive example of gaining knowledge and learning.

Father Talked About College

- Often: 44%
- Sometimes: 37.9%
- Never: 18.1%
Provided Encouragement/Support

- Extremely 41.6%
- Some 18.1%
- Moderate 25.9%
- None 14.4%

Fathers’ Actions

What did fathers do to help their daughters learn?

- Read to them*
- Homework/school projects**
- Learning and cultural events/activities*** [1]
- Attended school events**
- Encourage learning but not necessarily college
- Set positive example*** [1]
- Set negative example—motivated them positively
- Helped them develop a love for learning***

*Correlations to Category II
[1] =Predictors of Proactive
Quote

My father has helped me develop a deep love for learning. I remember when I was in 2nd grade I had an obsession with reading; my dad would suggest books to me, and sometimes even read the books at the same time as me so that we could discuss the plots. I remember always trying to read as quickly as he would when we were reading books at the same time so that he wouldn’t have to wait for me to turn the page, of course, he didn't really mind waiting for me.

Influence of Fathers

At dinner, my dad would ask each of the kids what we learned that day in school. We not only had to tell what we learned, but express understanding of the subject. I think my father tried to ruin learning for me. He made fun of me when I got put in a special reading class because I didn’t know how to read, and when I learned to love to read, he would take my books away. When I was in 5th grade, he grounded me for 4 months from doing everything but multiplication tables; he wanted me to be able to do them all in 30 seconds, 1-12. Which, I did, but now I can hardly remember any of them. I don’t talk to my father anymore, he was a jerk, and I don’t want anything to do with him.
### Fathers’ Wishes For Daughters

- **Attend College*** [1]** 76.0%
- **Have Success and/or Attributes for Success** 47.9%
- **Be Happy** 33.1%
- **Prepare for Job/Security** [2] 33.1%
- **Have More Than/Do Better Than He** 16.9%
- **Raise Family** 13.6%

### Influence of Fathers

- **My dad thinks that education is important, but college is a waste of money. He wants us to get paid well but is not willing to pay for us to get the education.**
- **I believe my dad wants me to be successful in life but doesn't necessarily think college is necessary to do so. It is expensive, and he didn't finish but things are alright for him so he thinks that it is possible.**
Fathers

He decided to take us to this country to have a good education like he didn’t have. His dream is to see me and my sisters go to college but I don’t know if that is going to be possible.

He was definitely disappointed when he found out that I was leaving school to become a stay at home mom and still tells me every day that I need to go back to school. I do finally realize that if I want a better life I need to go back.

My father wants me to be successful in life and do what makes me happy.

Qualitative Findings (1)

- Many spoke of their fathers “pushing” or encouraging them in school, but they didn't help with homework or do the kinds of things that helped their daughters know that they loved learning.
- Many fathers seemed to do surface level encouragement; they would say encouraging words and offer rewards or punishment for school performance.
- Many fathers “encouraged” but would not offer financial support.
Qualitative Findings (2)

- Participants did not talk much about their fathers wanting them to raise a family.
- Many participants spoke about their fathers teaching them “work ethic” as the main "teaching" and "learning" activity in the home.

Takeaways

- Efforts should be made to educate fathers regarding the critical role they hold in encouraging and supporting their daughters to be educated.
- Emphasis should be placed on helping fathers understand the importance of taking one-on-one time to read, do homework, and create learning activities with/for their daughters.
- To the fathers: Your daughters are watching and learning from you.
78% of mothers encouraged their daughters to attend college.
  - 6% did not encourage their daughters to attend
  - 6% appeared neutral about the topic

Most mothers wanted their daughters to have a career. 4% told their daughters to get a college degree to be a better mother or as a back-up plan.

14% of mothers regretted not attending college.

40% helped their daughters develop a love of learning.

21% served as educational role models by helping their daughters prepare for college or attending themselves.
  - Approximately 5% were disappointed when their daughters did not attend college or dropped out.
Influence of Educated Mothers

A mother’s education level was correlated with a daughter who:

- Actively prepared for college***
- Had a mother who attended college as a mom***
- Was encouraged to attend college**
- Talked with her mother about college**
- Received help with schoolwork**
- Developed a love of learning*
- Attended cultural and outside events*

Talking to Parents About College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mothers</th>
<th>Fathers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Provided Encouragement/Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Mothers</th>
<th>Fathers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extreme</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Education and Family

- **My mother wants me to get the highest degree possible before I get married and have children.** Even after I have children, she still wants me to go on and learn more about the world.

- **My mom encourages college but would rather have me be a good wife and mother.** She always demonstrated and taught me that family is more important.

- **My mother had very high expectations for me.** She strongly encouraged me to have a career and downplayed my desire to be a mother.
## Influence of Mothers’ Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Commit to Attend</th>
<th>Commit to Graduate</th>
<th>Prepare for College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provided encouragement</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talked about college</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was educational role model</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped with schoolwork</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped develop love of learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praised good work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stressed good grades</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended cultural/outside activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read to daughter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Levels of Encouragement

- **She was very supportive and wanted me to move out of the house to go to college so I could have a ‘college’ experience. She helped me decide where to go by traveling with me to various campuses I had an interest in.**
- **She has never discouraged me or my decisions to change my major, attend a college far away or just not to attend college. She knows that it is my life and my choice.**
- **Sometimes, all that nagging about college made me NOT want to go even more. I just didn’t see the fun in it. I think with the way my mom pushed schooling on me, it turned me off from learning.**
Thoughts about Education

When my mom went back to school and earned her Bachelor's Degree it just influenced and empowered me even more, and now I know that I can go back and accomplish that too.

She has been a seamstress her whole life. She often encouraged me to go to college, and was a living example of what happens when you do not get a good education.

My mom knows college is important, and every day she regrets not finishing so that she could accomplish her dream. She regrets that decision and knows that she would have chosen differently if her parents had shown more encouragement while she was growing up.

Takeaways

• Mothers could talk frequently to their daughters, starting when they are young, about attending college.
• Mothers could strongly encourage their daughters to attend college.
• Mothers could advise their daughters that there is value in both education and family life.
• Mothers who regret not attending college should discuss its impact on them with their daughters.
  • Mothers could help with homework and take an active interest in school and preparing for college.
## Percent Parents Agreed to Pay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of College Costs to Pay</th>
<th>Percentage of Women Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>53.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25% of college costs</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% of college costs</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75% of college costs</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% of college costs</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Financing College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What did parents say about financing college?</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Willing to help and encouraged grants, loans, and scholarships</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willing to help</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraged grants, loans, and/or scholarships</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not willing/unable to help</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talked but unknown outcome</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not mention topic in narrative</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Snapshot of Pay for College

- Deciding to attend college at a younger age, desiring a higher degree level, and saving money were three activities that correlated most strongly with commitment to attend, graduate, and actively prepare for college.
- 54% felt little or no financial and/or emotional support from parents and 35% felt moderate to strong support.
- About 27% did not talk to their parents about helping to pay for college. The most cited reason for this was knowing that parents were unable to afford it.
- About 45% of the women saved money for college expenses.
  - 58% of participants discussed financial aid.

Levels of Financial Support

I have always known that there is absolutely no way my parents can pay for my college. It's up to me and good old financial aid. I have never even brought it up, because it is something that is already answered by our financial situation.

My dad even told me that he would help after I got married to be sure that I would finish and not drop out because I couldn't afford it.

My mother was so driven that I think she would find a way, no matter what, to provide the means for all of her kids to attend college if they desired.

I asked, and they said “no.”
### Pay for College Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Commit to Attend</th>
<th>Commit to Graduate</th>
<th>Proactive Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age of decision</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of college degree desired</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saved money for college</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed financial aid</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ willingness to help</td>
<td><em>[1]</em></td>
<td><em>[1]</em></td>
<td>***[1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of overall support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talked to parents about paying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents estimated income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Levels of General Support

- **My parents would even pay for new cars as graduation presents as an incentive to attend college.**

- **They let me know that all they could do to help was let me live at home, and that has saved me a lot of money.**

- **In hindsight, I wish they had told me what they were doing, so I might have been able to contribute or plan better.**
Discussing Financial Aid Helped

I knew there was no way they could afford it, but they helped me apply for many scholarships and grants.

It was always hoped that I would be able to cover college expenses with scholarships, grants, etc., and I did.

I always strove to get good grades, and I applied for every scholarship and grant that I could; I knew I would have to work really hard to get a scholarship, which is what I did.

Takeaways

- Educate the parents of young girls about financial aid, so they can discuss it with their daughters early.
- Encourage parents to discuss attending and paying for college with their daughters at a young age (e.g., saving money or financial aid options).
- Teachers could discuss college options with young girls and women and encourage them to have additional conversations with their family members.
- Inform parents that support can be financial, material (e.g., books), living arrangements, and/or emotional.
Siblings

• No statistical significance with number of brothers, number of sisters, or birth order.
• Young women in this sample were more likely to attend if they
  – had sisters who had or were attending
  – had brothers who had NOT dropped out
• What did siblings talk to them about?
  – expenses/cost, fun, hard/difficult, good experience and important, need to be an example to others***

Relatives

• Relatives can be powerful influences on decisions young women make to attend college.
• Relatives who are most influential are those who have attended college, discussed it with them, and encouraged them to attend.
• Young women with involved relatives
  – Are more committed to attend and graduate from college (aspirations)
  – Participate in more proactive college activities (intentions)
  – Attend and graduate from college (behavior)
Family Responsibilities

Describe any extra family responsibilities you may have in your home that may have influenced your decisions related to college attendance:

– Mother with child**(-)
– Parents need care
– Siblings need care***[2]
– Other family members need care
– Family/home chores
– Financial provider**(-) [1-]

[1,2]=predictors of category II and proactive

UWEP Model

Beliefs
Normative Beliefs

Attitudes
Subjective Norms

Socio-Demographic
Family Background
Values

Past Experiences and Behaviors

Aspirations
Intentions

The Behavior
The College Decision

Perceptions of the Past and Present

Aspirations

Individual Attributes
School Experiences
Other Activities and Experiences

People of Influence

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8. Individual Attributes and Health

- Locus of control [C]
- Learning (confidence toward and lifelong)*P [B]
- Self-esteem/self-efficacy
- Depression/anxiety** [2]
- Personality (extravert/introvert) [1]
- Overall health** [3,A]
- Heath behaviors
  - dieting, eating healthy***, exercising*, medical condition, smoke pot***(-), other drug use***(-), smoking cigarettes, social drinking***(-)

[1,2,3]=predictors of category II
[A,B,C]=predictors of proactive

9. Schooling/Non-Schooling

- College preparation during high school
- High school leadership
- High school activities
- Time spent in high school
- GPA
- Schooling experiences
- People in school (counselors, teachers, administrators)
- Friends and peers
- Other influential individuals
College Prep During High School

Qualitative results outline the most influential college preparation activities during high school:

1. College fairs/career fairs (individual conversations with people from colleges)
2. Field trips to colleges/universities
3. Presentations in classes (e.g., English)
4. Assemblies
5. SEOP
6. Published information (e.g., brochures, pamphlets)
7. Assessments (comment about middle school)

High School Leadership

- Manager/supervisor at work [2-]{6%}
- Student government* {10%}
- Sport team or music group {16%}
- Church youth group *** {18%}
- Multiple leadership positions** {20%}
- Extracurricular club ** {25%}
- None*** [1-] {47%}
**High School Activities**

- 60% Religious youth organizations***[2]
- 45% Music
- 40% High school athletics/sports*
- 39% School clubs or associations***
- 38% Volunteer service***
- 38% Club or community sports
- 28% Honor society***[1]
- 20% Drill/cheer
- 19% Drama/theater
- 12% Student government*
- 9% Literary or other magazine
- 9% Newspaper
- 8% Debate/speech
- 5% Professional organizations/associations
- 3% Political groups
Time Spent in High School: GPA

A higher **GPA** is linked to...

- More hours exercise/sports [1]
- More hours participating in clubs [5]
- More time studying and doing homework [2]
- More time volunteering in the community
- Less household or childcare duties [4-]
- Less time partying
- Less time socializing face-to-face with friends [3-]
- Less time watching TV

Similar to ACT scores and attendance and graduation.

---

Time Spent in High School: Club

Higher number of hours spent in high school **club-related** activities correlates with...

- Attendance and graduation from college [4]
- Better grades
- More exercise/sports
- Less household chores [2-]
- More studying or homework
- More time talking to teachers
- More volunteer work [1]
- Less time watching TV [3-]
Higher number of hours spent working for pay in high school correlates with:

- Lower attendance and graduation from college
- More partying
- More socializing with friends (face-to-face)
- More time watching TV
Takeaways

- Schools can host college fairs and provide opportunities for students to take fields trips to campuses.
- Efforts can be made to emphasize a strong high school GPA, with college as a goal.
- Efforts can be made to encourage participation in activities that provide leadership opportunities.
- Young women can be encouraged to join school clubs and volunteer in their communities.
- Working too many hours for pay may result in less likelihood of attending and graduating from college.

Schooling Experience

Middle and High School Experience

- Missing data: 4%
- Only enjoyed middle school: 11%
- Did not enjoy either: 13%
- Only enjoyed high school: 22%
- Enjoyed both middle and high school: 50%

Overall experience in school is linked to commitment to attend/graduate from college.
Many felt awkward in junior high but became more comfortable in high school, often because they got more involved in activities and developed friendships.

“High school was a lot better, because I moved to a smaller school, got into sports, and had friends.”

Some disliked high school because their friends had graduated, they became involved with the wrong crowd or they experienced difficulties at home.

“High school was horrible. I started getting into drugs really bad, I was promiscuous, I sluffed, and I cheated.”

### Best Schooling Experiences

- **52%** Socializing
- **36%** Extracurricular activities
- **35%** Academic accomplishments/learning
- **17%** Great teachers
- **6.5%** Favorite course(s)
Influence of Involvement

Ah, in high school it was all about the fun, friends, social gatherings, clothes and makeup. If I didn't make Rockettes, I don't know where I would have been in high school. It changed my life and did nothing but make me pick the right things in life.

The most fun by far was the social aspect. I loved being around my friends, running with my cross country team, and being part of a choir. I don't like to be alone, and those things helped me to feel like a part of something better and enjoy company of people I liked.

The best part of school was playing sports. That was also where my motivation came from for keeping good grades. If I didn't get good grades, I didn't play.

Worst Schooling Experiences

30% Fitting in/making or changing friends
24% Mean peers, cliques, and drama
16% Ineffective/useless teachers
15% Struggling academically
9% Family and health issues
8% Homework/tests

Students who had an overall good experience in school have less of (1) and more of (2).
Difficulties in School

I despised and abhorred middle school. It was difficult for me because I was a nerd, and I was short. I did well in all subjects that I applied myself to. I couldn't wait to leave that accursed place of despotism and pain.

The worst part of middle school was how everybody was changing, so there was just a lot of drama and switching friends and boyfriends.

I hated high school because of the vice principal. They singled me out, because no one knew who I was, and I was kind of different than everyone else. I felt more bullied by the administration than my own peers.

I think the worst part about high school is that no matter what you can't escape the drama. It's everywhere and it doesn't go away.

Takeaways

• Get young women involved with extracurricular activities early.
• School officials must stop meanness.
• Teachers and/or counselors can have a meaningful influence.
• Support students with family/health issues.
• Make learning matter and be engaged (no boring classes!).
People in School

- Administrators
- Counselors
- Teachers
- Coaches
- Friends and Peers

Quotes about Administrators

My principal really made me feel excited about the idea of going to college. He encouraged me to do my best, and to keep going. I think one of the biggest things that made an impact on me was that he was willing to learn who I was by name, my situation, and he took the time to give me advice.

My assistant principal told me that I basically couldn’t be a teacher someday because it was a very difficult job.

My school’s administrators were apathetic towards me and felt like there was no point in talking with me since my attitude was so discouraged.

Not a lot of administrators had interest in my education.
High School Counselors

- Very strong influence (12%)
- Good influence (20%)
- Moderate influence (22%)
- Some influence (18%)
- No influence (25%)

Influence of Counselors

My high school counselor was a great source. She was always encouraging me to apply for different scholarships and to get my FAFSA application filled out. She was always reminding me of deadlines and due dates.

My biggest influence was my high school counselor. He wanted me to get a good education and to really apply myself to the best of my abilities. He was supportive and wrote me many flattering and helpful recommendations for my Sterling Scholar and was in part a reason that I have succeeded thus far.
Influence of Counselors

Our school counselor did not do much of anything; I know the counselor did give me papers for financial aid, but I did not know where to start because I did not get any opportunities to explore options. I don't know if it was because I wasn't the BEST student, but I did have a B average and wish he would have helped me more.

The person who’s talked to me the most would be the ETS/college advisor sort of person. She’s always pushed me to go to college and get as far as I can. She’s always telling me, 'You're my doctorate person. You’re not going to just get your associate’s or bachelor’s. You’re smart enough to go all the way.' To say she's my advocate is kind of an understatement.

Fun Quote

The career counseling I remember was in junior high, and they asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up, and I said a dancer (I had never danced a day in my life). They wrote it down and put me in classes to help me get there (PE). The next year I switched to zoology so they put me in science classes... much more up my alley. But really what was I supposed to know about careers at thirteen and fourteen... Yikes...a dancer?
Disturbing Quote

The counselor in High School talked about my goals for college (with my mom there). He asked what I wanted to be, and I told him veterinarian. He then pulled up my grades (3.4 GPA average) and told me that I should not waste my time being a veterinarian because I did not have the grades for it. That was devastating to hear, and I believed him.

Counselor Findings

- Counselors specifically assigned (e.g., ETS, school or career) were particularly influential.
- One-on-one (outside SEOPs) are most powerful influences.
- Correlations and predictors:
  - Commitment to attend college
  - Commitment to graduate from college
  - Proactive college activities [1]
  - Attending and graduating from college
Quotes about Teachers

The most influential person at school for me was a teacher I had. He told me that I could go to any college I wanted, and they would be lucky to have me. He really motivated me to do well in school and reach for my potential. I didn't really have anyone talk to me about college except one teacher.

I had one teacher who was really influential about college. She wanted us to go and learn so much. I felt like it was her passion to teach us and let us know what we could have. I loved her because she cared so much for us.

Influence of Teachers

The only teacher I ever had who expected me to do more with my life than simply graduate high school was my band director. He always taught us that it was essential to leave the world a better place than you found it.

I did have one teacher when I was in the tenth grade who told me that I was a good writer and that I should go to college to pursue it. I would have to say out of any of the high school teachers I met he was the only one that ever gave me hope that I could do what I wanted with my life.
The worst part of high school was when I had more than one teacher tell me that I would never go anywhere in life, never amount to anything and never succeed. I know they say sticks and stones will break your bones but words will never hurt you, well, they do, and they totally hurt me. It took a while to shake off those hurtful things that were said to me, but I powered through everything and then ended up getting super good grades my junior and senior year.

I was a statistician for the wrestling coach who was also my English teacher. He was another great influence on me. During my MATC schooling my senior year we had to prepare a career packet which consisted of a resume and a referral letter from an adult. He was obliged to provide the letter for me and after reading it, I realized how much confidence he had in my abilities to learn, and be a wonderful contributor to society. This one letter provided me with the confidence and self-worth I had been struggling to find for years.
Findings

- Lack of teacher influence is obvious with many participants (not one teacher talked to them even once about college).
- Those who felt they had “great teachers” in high school were more likely to attend and complete college.
- Many students feel teachers have not prepared them for college.
- Some young women not viewed as being “on the college track,” found counselors and teachers didn’t discuss college with them.
- Young women do not know their strengths; they are much more aware of their weaknesses.
- They get “evaluated” but many never get accurate “feedback.”

Friends and Peers

Did your friends and peers talk about college? Are your friends going to college now or planning to go to college?

- Many—Encourage 40.0%
- Some—Encourage 20.4%
- Many—Don’t Discuss 11.3%
- Some—Don’t Discuss 20.8%
- None in College 7.5%
Encouragement to Apply

I had/have encouragement from friends to apply for college:

- Strongly Agree: 26%
- Agree: 35%
- Neutral: 27%
- Disagree: 5%
- Strongly Disagree: 7%

What Did They Say?

What did they tell you about college?

- Independence, Future: 55.8%
- Social, Fun, Party, Good: 38.8%
- Stressful, Hard, Scary: 20.6%
- Money, Finances: 17.7%
- Regret Not Going: 10.5%
- Expected to Attend: 8.8%
- Not Important to Go: 3.9%
- Self-Development: 3.3%
Friends

They never really encouraged me to go. It was more like only the really, really smart kids were going to college.

My girl friends all wanted to marry someone that went to college, but it wasn’t as big of a deal to attend ourselves.

While most of them didn’t go to college after that, there were still a couple who managed to continue their education however they were able to. That really inspired me because they have a lot of extra responsibility now and are still able to go to school. If they can do it than so can I!! I have brilliant, amazing friends.

Because it’s so expensive they stopped going to support their husbands.

Friends and Peers

• The more a young woman has friends going to college and encouraging her to attend, the more she
  – Is committed to attend and graduate from college***
  – Is proactively preparing for college***
  – Will attend and graduate from college***

• The most important conversational points her friends make about college include
  – Social, fun, party, good experience**
  – Independence*
  – Not important to go*(-)
Influential People

1. Local church leaders*** [2]
2. Teachers*
3. Friends* [3]
4. Mother* [5]
5. Relatives
7. School counselors [1]

1+=predictors of Category II
[1,2,3,4,5]=significant predictors of proactive

Other Influential Individuals

Describe how others (examples: neighbors, employers, community members) have influenced your ideas and decisions about college:

– 37.3% Many outside people influenced me
– 31.1% No influence from others***(-) [1]
– 22.0% Influence from employers*
– 14.5% Influence from neighbors*
– 10.8% Influence from church/community members*[2]
– 9.5% Influence from family friends [3]

[1,2,3]=predictors of proactive college preparation
Questions about College

- Neighbors (16%)
- Church leaders*** [2, B] (34%)
- Teachers* [D] (38%)
- Relatives [E] (40%)
- Siblings (41%)
- High school counselors (50%)
- Parents*** [1, A] (72%)
- Friends/peers*[C] (77%)

Takeaways

- Counselors are integral to helping students with proactive college activities.
- Teachers and administrators should be more aware of the powerful influence they can have on the college decision.
- Many people should be involved in creating the support system for college (e.g., parents, siblings, relatives, teachers, counselors, administrators, church leaders, community members, neighbors, employers).
10. College Decisions/Influences

- Influences to attend college
- Influences not to attend college
- Influences to return to college
- Reasons they did not continue
- Reasons they may attend in future

Attending College

- Did you ever consider attending college?
  - Yes; everyone considered
- What were the most important factors influencing your decision?
- If you have decided not to attend college now, do you anticipate wanting to attend in the future?
- What factors might influence your decision?
1. Influences to Attend College
2. Influences Not to Attend College
3. Influences to Return to College

Analysis

Influences to Attend College

- Enjoyment, Goals, Being Educated: 46.0%
- Influence from Family and Friends: 45.5%
- To Become Better/Create a Future: 31.3%
- Economic Reasons: 29.0%
- Schooling Experiences: 10.8%

Of those who responded (28% did not)
To Become Better—Create a Future

...because my mother didn't finish college, she always encouraged my siblings and I, (it seemed especially my sisters) to go to and finish school.

My parents did not have a college education and I grew up seeing how an education would improve their situation.

My parents did not attend college and every day I hear them say they wish they had.

Influences Not to Attend College

- Time/Balance: 11.4%
- Health Issues: 16.1%
- Negative School/College Experiences: 21.5%
- Lack of Direction/Goals: 26.8%
- Family Issues: 40.9%
- Economic: 53.7%
Influences To Return to College

- Available School Format: 5.9%
- Life Settles Down: 15.3%
- Raise Kids: 15.3%
- Concern for the Future: 28.2%
- Money: 28.2%
- Transformative Experience/Looking for Something Better: 38.8%

Transformative Experience

When I graduated from school in 1995, I thought it would be great to go to college. My dad was more focused on me getting a job and paying bills and helping around the house. I regret making that decision because I could have been in a different situation...Now my dad wants us to continue our education so we can get better and high paying jobs.
Why Did You Not Continue?

- Finances: 86.0%
- Unprepared, Uncertain, Attitude: 82.3%
- Family Priorities: 80.5%
- Other Career Opportunities: 32.7%
- Dissatisfied with College: 26.0%
- Health: 16.0%

113 who fit into this category

Attend College in Future (1)

Which of the following might influence your decision to attend college in the future?

- 83.8% To develop skills
- 75.1% To be able to get a better job
- 71.0% Make more money
- 68.9% To be a better person
- 57.3% To gain a general education
- 56.4% More cultured person
- 46.1% To improve study skills
- 44.4% Spouse/partner influence
Attend College in Future (2)

Which of the following might influence your decision to attend college in the future?

– 36.9% Couldn’t find a job
– 30.3% Role model encouragement
– 22.8% Parents wanted me to go
– 18.7% To be with my friends
– 13.3% Get away from home
– 9.1% To find a husband

UWEP Model
Conclusion

Formal postsecondary education is a critical foundation for Utah girls and women of all ages to be able to fully develop themselves toward reaching their inherent potential. All of us can assist in some way to help more young women in Utah do just that!

Utah Women and Education Project

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