



ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

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NEWS RELEASE

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Investment in Catholic Higher Ed Pays Dividends

In a national survey of return on investment in higher education, Catholic institutions perform well, especially in the long term

Washington, DC — The pivot to online learning by colleges has amplified public critique of the value of a college education. Now, a study of the return on investment (ROI) that students can expect from 4,500 liberal arts colleges in the United States underscores the value of Catholic higher education.

Analysis by the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU) of data published by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce (CEW)¹ found that students who graduate from Catholic institutions earn a higher ROI than their peers in nearly any other sector, particularly over the long term.

ACCU examined the CEW data for 190 Catholic colleges and universities in the United States and found that Catholic institutions offer students a higher ROI just 10 years after degree completion than other private and liberal arts colleges, outpacing them by at least \$15,000. Then, just five years later, Catholic colleges begin to increase their lead in ROI over all other types of institutions, including public colleges and universities. The Catholic edge becomes pronounced in the long term (40 years after degree completion), showing the highest median ROI among all types of higher education institutions — 16 percent higher than private non-profits and 27 percent higher than public institutions.

“The data show that enrolling in a Catholic college is a good investment, particularly over time,” said Anthony P. Carnevale, director of CEW. “It’s important for students and their families to take advantage of data on costs and earnings by institution to make more informed financial decisions about where to attend college.”

(more...)

¹ Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, *ROI of Liberal Arts Colleges: Value Adds Up Over Time*, 2020; <https://1gyhoq479ufd3yna29x7ubjn-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/Liberal-Arts-ROI.pdf>.

The **Figure** below displays the median ROI of Catholic four-year colleges and universities compared to other types of institutions.

Figure. Short- and Long-Term ROIs of Higher Education Institutions, by Net Present Value

Type of Institution	10-Year NPV	15-Year NPV	20-Year NPV	30-Year NPV	40-Year NPV
Catholic	\$80,000	\$273,000	\$445,000	\$739,000	\$973,000
Liberal Arts	\$62,000	\$241,000	\$405,000	\$686,000	\$918,000
Private Non-profit	\$65,000	\$230,000	\$375,000	\$633,000	\$838,000
Public	\$137,000	\$268,000	\$388,000	\$595,000	\$765,000
All Institutions	\$107,000	\$236,000	\$356,000	\$558,000	\$723,000

Source: ACCU analysis of CEW data.

Even when compared to nine other categories of higher educational institutions using the Carnegie system, the long-term ROI of Catholic colleges and universities continues to measure up well. Only the most selective doctoral research universities exhibit a higher ROI.

Success Stories

One Catholic university shown to deliver a high ROI is Manhattan College. The school boasts that less than a year after graduating, on average 90% of alumni report that they are employed or in graduate school. Manhattan also lands high on lists of college value by *Money Magazine*, *Forbes*, and Payscale, pointing out that factors like teaching quality, student ambition, and alumni networks contribute to its rankings.

“I firmly believe I would not be where I am today, without having had the benefit of going to Manhattan College. It gave hope to a kid from Queens that anything was possible with hard work, dedication, and accountability,” noted alumnus Stephen J. Squeri, chairman of the American Express Company.

Other findings from the ACCU analysis include:

- Nine Catholic institutions are ranked in the top 100.
- Close to 40% of Catholic institutions are ranked in the top 500.
- 43% of Catholic colleges and universities have 40-year ROIs of \$1 million or more.
- Catholic colleges with higher returns are strongly linked to geographic areas with a higher cost of living. These colleges also have higher graduation rates.

More information, including details about the Georgetown University Center on Employment and Work (CEW) study on which the ACCU report is based, are available. Contact [Paula Moore](#) at ACCU to arrange an interview.

The **ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**, founded in 1899, serves as the collective voice of U.S. Catholic higher education. Through programs and services, the association strengthens and promotes the Catholic identity and mission of its member institutions so that all associated with Catholic higher education can contribute to the greater good of the world and the Church.