

What's the Value of Higher Ed: For Citizens

America's colleges and universities provide graduates with tools and skills needed to become not only effective workers, but engaged citizens. Trustees are uniquely positioned to demonstrate the value that college graduates provide to the nation as civic participants. *Use these facts and figures to share how truly important colleges and universities are to the country's democracy, and consider information you might add about the impact of your own institution's efforts.*

College graduates turn out to vote.

An educated citizenry is good for our democracy. Studies show a lifelong trend in every age category: **The more education someone has, the likelier he or she is to vote.** In fact, in the 2014 midterm elections, people ages 18–44 with at least a bachelor's degree were more than twice as likely to vote than citizens without.

This trend appears to be growing. In 1964, the gap between the voting rate of college graduates and high school graduates was only 12 percent. Today, it's 24 percent. 76 percent of college graduates voted in 2016 compared to 52 percent of people with a high school diploma.

College graduates run for office.

Despite the fact that only 27 percent of US citizens have a college degree, **roughly 50 percent of all candidates who run for local, state, or federal office have a college degree.**

College graduates get engaged in political life outside the polls.

Graduates are more apt to discuss politics a few times a week, write to lawmakers to express an opinion, and attend local civic meetings. They're also more likely to make purchasing choices based on social or political concerns.

College graduates give back to the community.

More than 70 percent of students perform some sort of service effort while attending college and continue to do so after they leave campus. College grads **volunteer within their community at double the rate of high school graduates**, and are more likely to participate in school, community, and religious groups. Not only do graduates participate in these community-focused groups, **they are three times as likely to assume leadership roles** within these organizations.

Colleges graduates are committed to their neighborhoods.

Data from the U.S. Census shows that college grads are more likely to work on a community-based project than those who have not attended college, and their participation sparks a sense of belonging. **64 percent of bachelor's degree holders say they trust their neighbors, compared with 51 percent of high school graduates.**