1,004 U.S. adults ages 23 to 55 were surveyed about their perception of the value of higher education, the motivators and barriers for them to return to school, and the quality of online learning.

ADULT VIEWPOINTS 2017:
ONLINE LEARNING &
THE BACK-TO-SCHOOL
## DECISION

CHAMPLAIN COLLEGE ONLINE /

CONTENTS

SOURCE OF DATA

Champlain College Online fielded an online survey with Full Circle Research from November 17 to November 20, 2017, with a randomized, nationally representative sample of 1,004 US adults between the age of 23 and 55. The sample was designed to create equivalent segments by gender and region of the country in order to be able to make meaningful comparisons across subgroups. Respondents were screened to ensure that they had not completed a bachelor's degree, with all respondents having either completed a high school degree or GED, some college but no degree, or an associate degree.
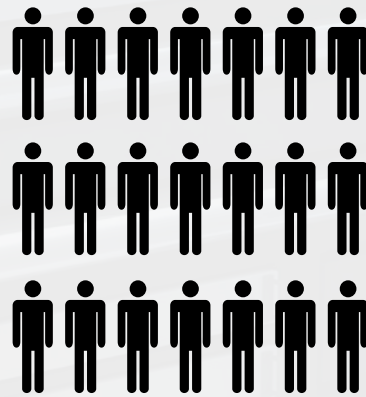
1,004 ADULTS
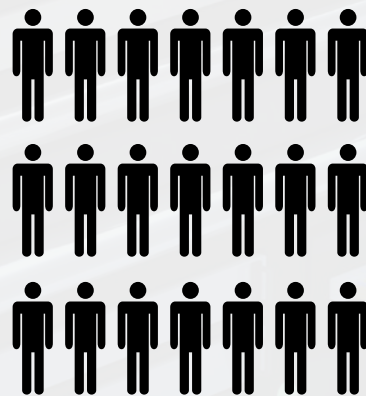
PURPOSE OF SURVEY

As higher education leaders committed to a quality experience for adult learners, we've long recognized that our student population has a unique set of needs and challenges that sets them apart from "traditional" college students – those being 17-22 year olds enrolled full-time in a face-to-face, campus-based setting. However, this so-called "traditional" student is no longer the norm in American higher education: in the last decade, the post-traditional student population – that is, adult learners, many of whom are in the workforce – has grown dramatically to 13.3 million (over 60% of all undergraduate students). Despite this enormous growth, this group is still underserved by higher education institutions.

Growing numbers notwithstanding, this population of adult students is consistently overlooked in national conversations when it comes to defining quality, accessibility, and success in a higher education environment. We commissioned and share this data to promote better understanding of this new majority of college-going students, their perceptions of higher education, and the obstacles they must overcome in order to pursue a degree. This survey illuminates the factors that play into adults' decisions to return, or not to return, to school, in order to complete a bachelor's degree.

Other timely topics covered within this survey include:

• The top barriers to pursuing a degree
• Key motivators for the back-to-school decision
• The overall effectiveness of higher education
• Perceptions of online vs. face-to-face learning
• The role of higher education in the future workforce

DEMOGRAPHICS

AGE

- 33% 23-35
- 30% 36-46
- 37% 47-55
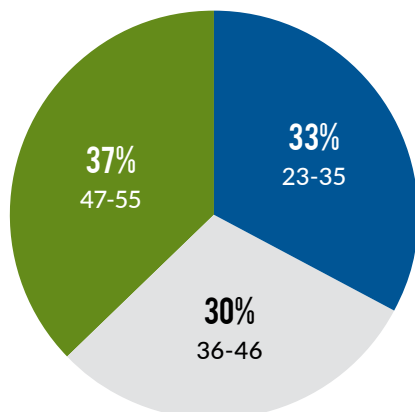
Age & Going Back To School

Those who have considered going back to school are younger. 40% of those who have considered going back to school are age 23-35, while 52% of those who have not considered going back to school are age 47-55.

EDUCATION LEVEL

- 23% Associate Degree
- 35% High School Diploma/GED
- 42% Some college, no degree
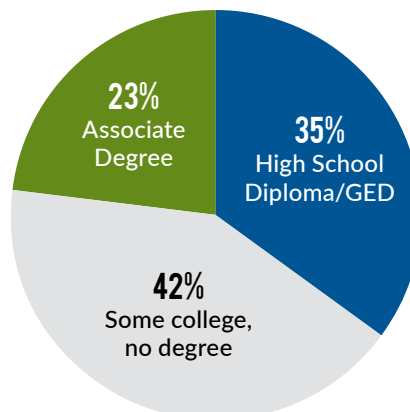
Education Level & Going Back To School

Respondents who have considered returning to school have significantly higher levels of educational attainment than their counterparts who have not considered returning, with 47% having completed some college and 25% holding an associate degree (as opposed to 33% and 20%, respectively, of respondents who have not considered going back to school).

GENDER

50% Women	50% Men

REGION

25% Northeast	25% South	25% Midwest	25% West

RACE/ETHNICITY

- Other - 1%
- Multi-Ethnic - 1%
- Caucasian, Hispanic - 11%
- Caucasian, non-Hispanic - 71%
- Native American or Alaska Native - 1%
- Black, non-Hispanic - 10%
- Asian or Pacific Islander - 4%
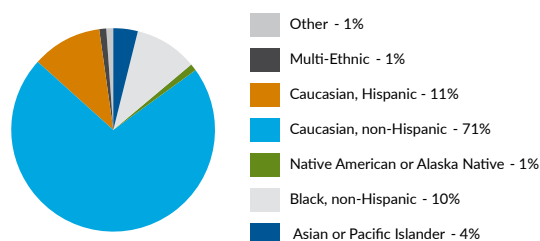
Race/Ethnicity & Going Back To School

Black/Non-Hispanic respondents (78 percent) and Caucasian/Hispanic respondents (74 percent) are significantly more likely than Caucasian/Non-Hispanic respondents (55 percent) to have considered going back to school.

WORKFORCE STATUS

- Other - 5%
- A stay-at-home-parent or caregiver - 12%
- Disabled - 14%
- Retired - 3%
- Not working, but seeking work - 13%
- Employed part-time for pay - 15%
- Employed full-time for pay - 39%
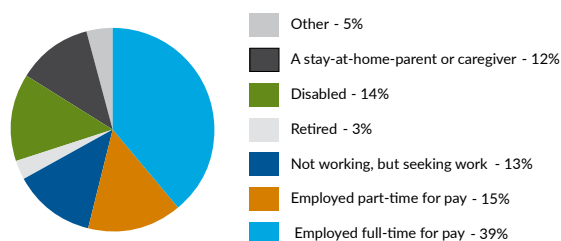
Workforce Status & Going Back To School

Those who were employed full-time were significantly more likely to have considered going back to school, at 44%.

KEY
SURVEY
FINDINGS

THE MAJORITY OF ADULTS ARE INTERESTED IN RETURNING TO SCHOOL.

60%

Six out of ten respondents said that they have personally considered returning to school to complete a certificate, associate degree, or bachelor's degree.

72%

More than seven out of ten of those who have considered going back to school have completed some college or an associate degree.
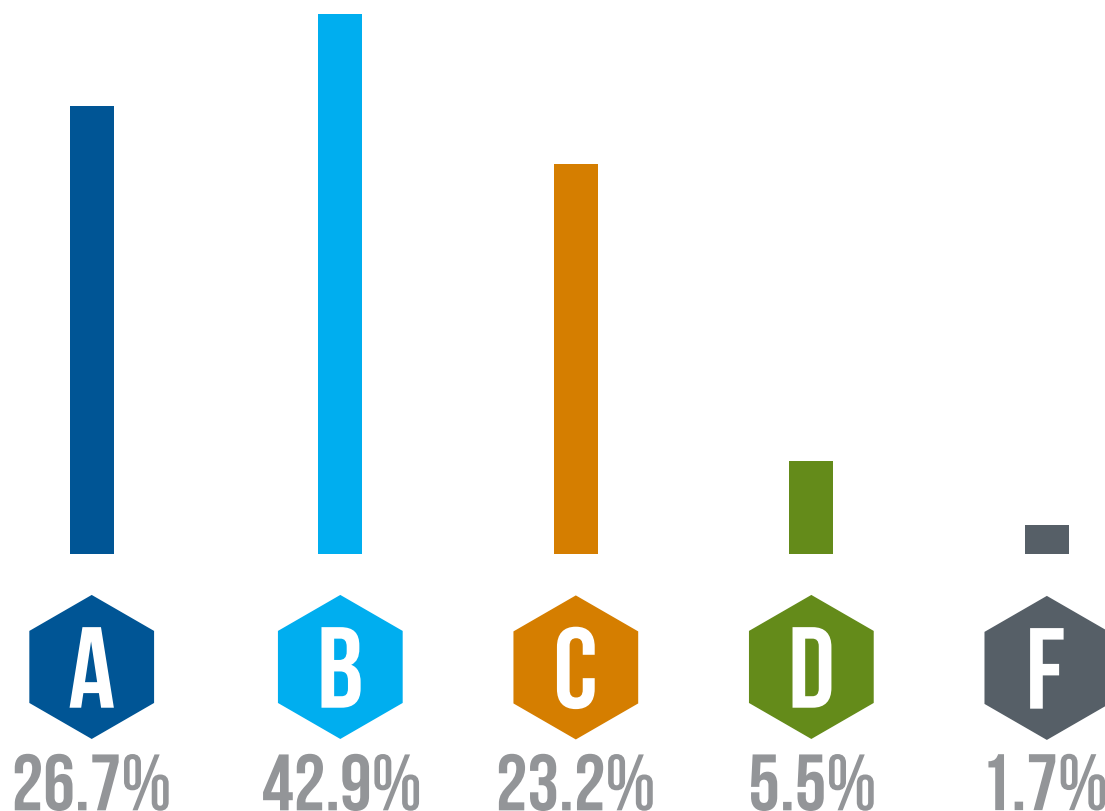
HOW DO ADULTS PERCEIVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HIGHER EDUCATION?

LETTER GRADES

Respondents were asked to assign a letter grade to represent the effectiveness of higher education in preparing adults with the necessary knowledge and skills to succeed in the workforce.

A 26.7%   **B** 42.9%   **C** 23.2%   **D** 5.5%   **F** 1.7%

TAKEAWAYS

Overall, those surveyed had a positive view of higher education's success in preparing adults to succeed on the job. The overwhelming majority gave higher education a passing grade, with 27% assigning an A and 43% assigning a B. These highly positive ratings reflect both the growing awareness that a degree is a necessity in today's job market, and an understanding that the value of a degree extends beyond serving as a mere credential. This indicates that individuals are seeing others - whether they be peers, family members, mentors, co-workers, or friends - achieving better outcomes as a result of obtaining college degrees. That's not to say that skepticism around the perceived benefits of higher education doesn't exist: respondents who indicated that they were considering returning to school assigned higher scores to higher education than those who have not considered going back, suggesting that students who have done research into higher education options, or who have been watched someone else successfully complete a degree, are much more likely to perceive the industry favorably, and better understand the value of higher education.

THE BARRIERS TO PURSUING HIGHER EDUCATION

THE TOP 5 REASONS FOR CHOOSING NOT TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL

Why adults don't want to go back to school to pursue a certificate, associate degree, or bachelor's degree.	% Agree
I don't want to be burdened with student loan debt.	75%
I can't afford it.	70%
I don't think higher education will be worth the investment of time and money for me.	35%
I would like to go back to school, but don't know if I have the time.	38%
I'm skeptical that it will lead to career advancement.	35%

TOO OLD TO BENEFIT

Over a quarter (27%) of respondents believe they are too old to benefit from higher education.*

SUPPORTING CHILD'S EDUCATION

One third of respondents (33%) can't afford their own education because they have to support their child's.*

Above percentages indicate the proportions of students who indicated that they "strongly agree" or "agree" with a given statement.

TAKEAWAYS

Unsurprisingly, financial factors are the primary barriers to going back to school, with 75% of respondents citing "student loan debt" as a significant barrier and 70% saying they "can't afford it." This reflects the massive national debate over the value of a college education, and the rising costs of college tuition. While the majority of adults perceive higher education positively, as seen in the prior question, it's clear that equal numbers of adults see it as out of reach due to the cost. What's also striking is that while the financial barriers were the most significant obstacles indicated, it's apparent that adults are facing a multitude of other challenges in their pursuit of a degree that go far beyond the financial, and relate, more often than not, to life circumstances around career and children. That suggests that while significant reductions in tuition would make college more accessible, there are many more barriers in place that make college seem like an unrealistic option for many adults and that must be addressed.

We also found significant differences between those considering going back to school and those who are not considering going back to school when it came to these barriers. While both groups were most likely to identify financial factors as the primary barriers, those who have not considered going back to school were more likely to strongly agree with barriers relating to skepticism around the benefits of higher education, such as "I don't think higher education will be worth the investment of time and money for me," "I'm skeptical that it will lead to career advancement," and "I'm too old to benefit from higher education." Those who have considered going back to school were more likely to strongly agree with factors relating to success and access, such as "I'd like to go back to school, but worry I don't have what it takes to succeed" and "I would like to go back to school, but I don't know if I have the time." These differences can likely be attributed to the fact that those who have considered going back to school have already been convinced of the value of an education, both broadly and on a personal level, and so for them it's simply a question of determining how to make a degree program work in their lives. Those who have not considered going back may not have the same perception of value, perhaps due to seeing high unemployment or knowing individuals who've had difficulty finding jobs even after obtaining a degree.

THE TOP 5 REASONS FOR CHOOSING TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL

Why adults want to go back to school to pursue a certificate, associate degree, or bachelor's degree.	% Agree
I want to increase my earning potential.	73%
I will feel better about myself for having completed a degree.	59%
I want to be an inspiration for my children or other family members.	54%
I want the opportunity to demonstrate what I know and fulfill my dream of earning a degree.	52%
There are limited options for me without a degree.	51%

THOSE WHO HAVE CONSIDERED GOING BACK TO SCHOOL EXPRESSED ADDITIONAL REASONS FOR MAKING THE BACK-TO-SCHOOL DECISION:

56% want to change careers.

50% are not doing work that interests them, and believe a degree is required for the work they want to do.

41% believe that they need to go back to school in order to get promoted.

Above percentages indicate the proportions of students who indicated that they "strongly agree" or "agree" with a given statement.

TAKEAWAYS

Of the reasons offered, the main reason for wanting to go back to school is "to increase earning potential," with 73% of respondents agreeing with this statement. This reflects a widespread recognition that having a degree will generally lead to better jobs with higher salaries, and that the higher the degree level, the greater the increase in earning potential. Interestingly, the other top factors motivating individuals to go back to school were not financially-related, and instead were focused on quality of life. That suggests that while income is critical, adults perceive higher education as having the potential to change their lives in meaningful ways: by helping them create a better life for their family, expanding their options, helping them fulfill a dream, letting them inspire their children and others, and giving them a sense of self-satisfaction. This reflects what can be termed a "hope gap," a sense that many adults are living unfulfilled lives, stuck in unsatisfying careers, and are trying to find a way out - but the barriers noted in the previous question are impeding their ability to do so.

The survey found that those who have considered going back to school had a significantly higher level of agreement on every factor measured than those who have not considered going back to school. This affirms that those who have considered going back to school have already convinced themselves of the value propositions of higher education, and are more easily able to see the ways in which higher education could improve their lives.

"I feel like I'm stuck in a dead-end job. An education would improve my skills and help me find a better career."

"The career area I want to work in requires further education."

"As a single mom, I wanted the opportunity to make a better life for my kids."

"I'm considering going back to school to get higher pay. It's tough to support a family with a minimum wage job."

PERCEPTIONS OF ONLINE LEARNING VERSUS FACE-TO-FACE LEARNING

Respondents were asked to compare the effectiveness of online learning and face-to-face learning on ten dimensions.

	Rate Face-to-Face Better	Gap Between the Two	Rate Online Better
Meeting the needs of adult students age 23 & up	26%	+12	38%
Meeting the needs of traditional-aged students age 17-22	46%	-28	18%
Offering a dynamic learning environment	44%	-24	20%
Providing excellent teaching	42%	-27	15%
Offering academic support for students	45%	-28	17%
Creating career opportunities	29%	-11	18%
Providing value for the tuition dollar	30%	+2	32%
Ensuring a quality academic experience	41%	-25	16%
Providing a personalized learning experience	43%	-15	28%
Creating a learning community	43%	-22	21%

> The only measure where online learning was perceived to be statistically significantly better than face-to-face learning was in "meeting the needs of adult students age 23 and up," with 38% of respondents assigning online learning a higher score.
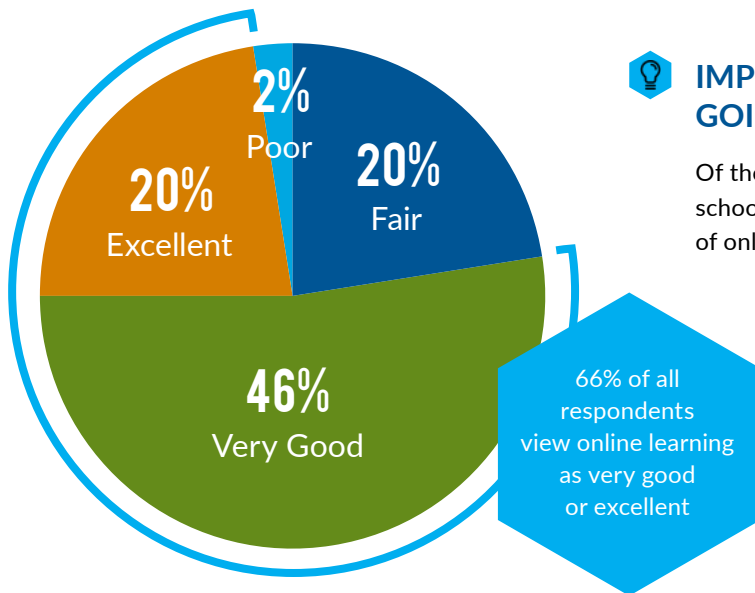
TAKEAWAYS

On nearly every measure, respondents judged face-to-face learning to be significantly better than online learning. The largest gaps between the two were in perceptions of "excellent teaching" and "academic support," where face-to-face learning was rated a full 27% and 28% higher than online learning, respectively. This points to a significant discrepancy when it comes to the work many online institutions are doing to maintain a commitment to overall quality, and quality in the areas of teaching and support in particular. While a number of institutions have made huge strides in these areas, and offer an educational experience that is on a par with, if not superior to, the offerings of comparable campus-based institutions, students are either not convinced of this, or are simply not aware of online higher education's measures of quality. This indicates that online higher education leaders have quite a bit of work to do when it comes to educating potential students about the value and quality of online learning. While online learning is becoming increasingly prevalent, traditional, face-to-face learning is still perceived as the better option. This is at least in part due to the widespread confusion and misconceptions around online learning, which are growing alongside the overall market. Face-to-face learning has an advantage in that it is familiar, and often the first thing that comes to mind when people think about higher education. Online learning, in contrast, is still a new concept in the minds of many adults, and the diversity of providers in this space (with some of them gaining significant media attention for their questionable institutional practices) has made the evaluation of quality even more challenging.

However, it's important to note that respondents deemed online learning to be better at "meeting the needs of adult students age 23 and up." This means that despite some of the challenges when it comes to convincing potential students of the quality of online learning, adults understand some of the other, more tangible benefits of a virtual education, particularly the flexibility that it offers. Respondents also perceived online learning and face-to-face learning to be nearly equal when it came to "providing value for the tuition dollar." Given the emphasis on tuition and debt as barriers to going back to school, the fact that adults see online learning and face-to-face learning as on a par on a cost level is important. As with other questions, those who were considering going back to school looked at online learning more favorably than those who were not considering going back to school, though by very small margins, and once again, this is most likely attributable to the fact that these students have done more research and are more aware of the market and their options within it.

IMPRESSIONS OF THE QUALITY OF ONLINE LEARNING

All respondents were asked to rate their overall impression of the quality of online learning on a scale of "poor" to "excellent."

2% Poor
20% Fair
20% Excellent
46% Very Good

66% of all respondents view online learning as very good or excellent

💡 IMPRESSIONS OF THOSE CONSIDERING GOING BACK TO SCHOOL

Of those respondents have considered going back to school, more than three quarters (76%) judge the quality of online learning to be "excellent" or "very good."

TAKEAWAYS

Despite the previous question indicating that online learning has more to do when it comes to demonstrating quality, especially when compared to face-to-face learning, it's clear that taken on its own, online learning is regarded very positively by adults. This indicates that while adults might, if given the choice, chose face-to-face learning over online learning, they understand that online learning is a good option that delivers an overall high-quality higher education experience.

This is most likely due to the large (and growing) numbers of adults who are enrolling in online degree programs across the United States. In 2015, over 6 million students took at least one online course, and reports show that by 2020, a projected 5 million students will be studying exclusively online, with the majority of those being working adult learners. That indicates that while online learning is still a newer phenomenon, and not as widespread as face-to-face learning, it's not seen as alternative or untrustworthy, and many adults most likely know someone who has enrolled in an online degree program. The positive word-of-mouth stories shared by satisfied online learners go a long way towards convincing students that online degree programs are, overall, a worthwhile experience.

Additionally, with the continued growth of the online learning market has come increased diversity in the providers offering online degree programs. While the industry was once dominated by for-profit institutions who often engaged in practices that damaged the reputation of online learning as a whole, in recent years a wave of reputable, non-profit colleges (many of them with long histories of offering high-quality, campus-based degree programs) have entered the space. These seasoned higher education institutions have brought a new sense of quality and respect to online degree programs, and degrees conferred by online institutions are now seen as equivalent to - not inferior to, or different from - degrees from campus-based schools. This shift in the quality of online learning providers (and the options available to prospective students) may be contributing to the overall positive impressions of online learning found in this survey question.

Respondents were provided a series of statements about higher education institutions that offer degree programs to adult students online, and asked if they made them feel better, worse, or the same about online learning.	Felt Better	Felt Worse	No Change
At some higher ed institutions, faculty are provided intensive training and continued professional development and monitoring to ensure teaching excellence.	54%	5%	28%
At some higher ed institutions, classes are capped at 25 students to ensure a personalized learning experience.	49%	6%	31%
At some higher ed institutions, instructors are experts with industry experience rather than tenured faculty.	48%	7%	31%
At some higher ed institutions, there is less emphasis on test taking and more emphasis on analysis and critical thinking.	45%	8%	32%
At some higher ed institutions, faculty performance and pay is based on meaningful engagement in the classroom and high levels of interaction with students.	43%	8%	33%
Some higher ed institutions outsource to for-profit corporations all aspects of their online programs, including admissions, student advising, curriculum development, and teaching.	25%	24%	33%
Some higher ed institutions establish online divisions primarily for revenue generation rather than pursuit of their institutional mission.	24%	33%	26%
Some higher ed institutions do not develop their own courses. Instead, they buy pre-packaged course content that is offered at institutions across the country.	24%	25%	35%
Some higher ed institutions are for-profit, so they make decisions based on shareholder expectations rather than student needs.	22%	35%	26%

TAKEAWAYS

Overall, respondents felt better about aspects of online learning relating to quality, such as ensuring teaching excellence (54%), small class sizes (49%), instructors being industry experts (48%), and a classroom emphasis on critical thinking and analysis versus test-taking (45%). This suggests that adults might view online education more positively (especially in relation to face-to-face learning) if they knew that online institutions were taking significant steps to ensure the quality of their degree programs. These markers of quality are, notably, often associated with face-to-face environments; online learning institutions need to do more to promote these aspects of their degree programs. When it came to statements that made students feel worse about online learning, these were generally related to the profit motive of institutions, such as a college being for-profit (35%) or establishing an online division solely for revenue generation (33%). This reinforces the idea that students are looking for quality and value in an online institution, and understand the importance of attending a school that puts the student, not profit, first.
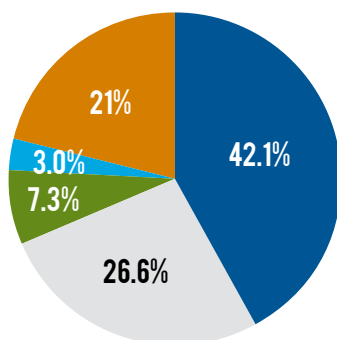
JOBS OF THE FUTURE

Respondents were asked a series of questions related to jobs in the U.S. over the next ten years.
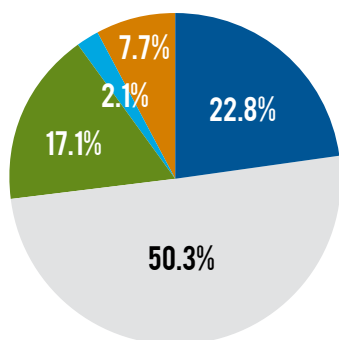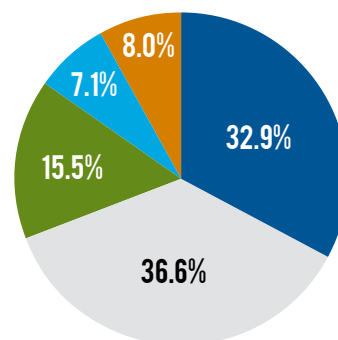
Of today's jobs, in 10 years do you expect...

	Most will exist	22.8%
	Some will exist	50.3%
	Only a few will exist	17.1%
	Nearly none will exist	2.1%
	Don't know/refused	7.7%

How likely is it that your job will exist in 10 years?

	Very likely	42.1%
	Somewhat likely	26.6%
	Not too likely	7.3%
	Not at all likely	3.0%
	Don't know/refused	21%

How important is holding a bachelor's degree for securing the jobs of the future?

	Very important	32.9%
	Somewhat important	36.6%
	Not too important	15.5%
	Not at all important	7.1%
	Don't know/refused	8.0%

70% of respondents feel it will be "very important" or "important"
to hold a bachelor's degree in the future in order to secure a job

TAKEAWAYS

Nearly one in five respondents believed that "only a few" or "none" of the jobs today in the United States will exist in 10 years. However, only 10% of respondents believed that it is "not too likely" or "not at all likely" that their own, specific job will exist in ten years, with 42% saying it was "very likely" their job would still exist. Interestingly, more than one in five (21%) said they didn't know if their job will exist. Given widespread predictions around automation and shifting job markets, and the number of positions that will be eliminated across many industries as a result, this discrepancy is striking - it suggests that many adults are not being adequately prepared, in the form of retraining and upskilling, for these coming changes. In addition, while the large majority of respondents recognized the importance of holding a bachelor's degree in order to secure employment in the future, those who had not considered returning to school were much less likely to agree that it was "somewhat important" or "very important" (with only 41% agreeing, as compared to 84% of those who had considered going back to school). Again, this reflects the fact that those who have not considered going back to school are much less likely to be convinced of the value of a degree, and thus may not see it as important in terms of securing or maintaining employment, despite evidence to the contrary.
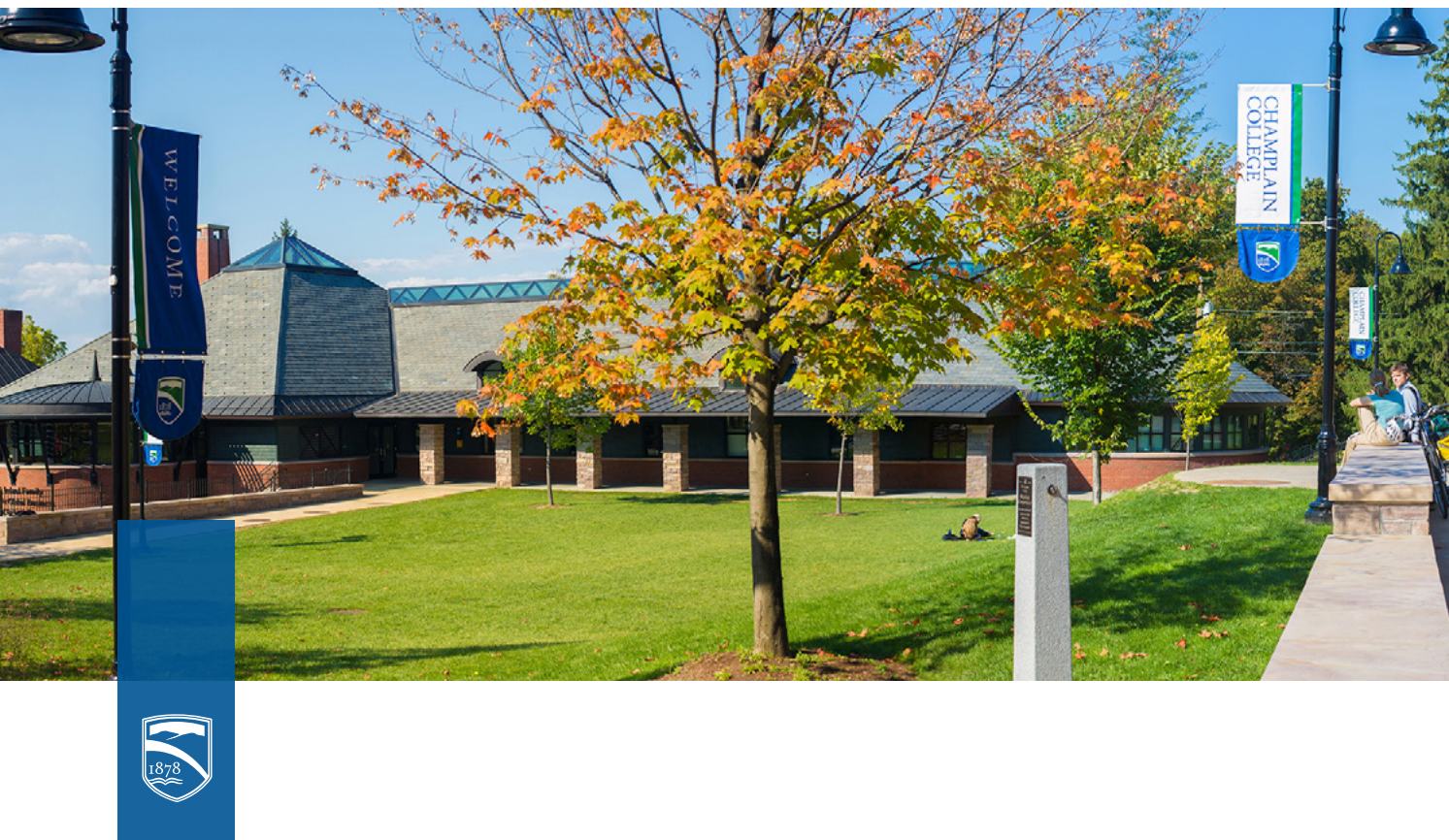
CONCLUSION

Many American adults are looking to go back to school, whether it's to make more money, find a fulfilling career, or build a better life. Higher education holds the key to helping adults achieve these things, and yet many adults don't perceive it as a realistic option for them: it's too expensive, they're too busy, or they don't see how it will translate into real-world value and success. Online learning can address many of these concerns, but as this survey shows, online higher education leaders have a long way to go in convincing adults of its value and quality. Online learning institutions must continue to pursue the markers of quality that adults respond well to - such as excellent teaching, small class sizes, a dynamic classroom environment, and an emphasis on critical thinking and real-world application - and educate potential students on how to identify institutions that are committed to these practices.

Beyond that, online learning institutions must also determine how they can help students overcome the very real, often significant barriers that are preventing them from going back to school. Finding ways to make programs more affordable, and thus reducing student loan debt, is critical. Online learning institutions must also recognize their responsibility to offer degrees that are tied to high-growth career paths and will set students up for success, in addition to providing a return on their tuition investment.

The groundwork has been laid: after all, the vast majority of respondents said that they believed online learning to be high-quality, and much better at meeting the needs of adult students. However, online learning institutions must help adults see that their offerings aren't just a good choice for practical reasons, and that online degree programs are just as good as - if not better than - face-to-face learning when it comes to providing high-quality, relevant education and helping adults achieve meaningfully better lives.

APPENDIX

Following is a complete list of the findings of the Champlain College Online Adult Viewpoints 2017 Survey

COMPLETE FINDINGS
APPENDIX

Q.S1) How old are you?

23 to 35 years old	32.7%
36 to 46 years old	30.0%
47 to 55 years old	37.4%

Q.S2) What is your highest level of education attainment?

High school degree or GED	35.3%
Some college but no degree	41.8%
Associate degree	22.9%

Q.S3) In which geographic region of the United States do you live?

Northeast	25.0%
South	24.9%
Midwest	25.0%
West	25.1%

Q.S3) In which geographic region of the United States do you live (state)?

Alabama	1.8%		Montana	0.8%
Alaska	0.2%		Nebraska	1.3%
Arizona	3.7%		Nevada	1.5%
Arkansas	1.0%		New Hampshire	0.6%
California	10.7%		New Jersey	3.3%
Colorado	1.3%		New Mexico	0.7%
Connecticut	0.9%		New York	9.7%
District of Columbia	0.4%		North Carolina	2.1%
Florida	3.2%		North Dakota	0.2%
Georgia	2.0%		Ohio	5.2%
Hawaii	0.4%		Oklahoma	1.0%
Idaho	0.7%		Oregon	1.6%
Illinois	3.4%		Pennsylvania	7.0%
Indiana	2.5%		Rhode Island	0.4%
Iowa	0.8%		South Carolina	1.0%
Kansas	0.8%		Tennessee	1.9%
Kentucky	1.5%		Texas	4.5%
Louisiana	0.7%		Utah	1.1%
Maine	0.6%		Vermont	0.3%
Maryland	1.1%		Virginia	1.6%
Massachusetts	2.3%		Washington	2.3%
Michigan	3.8%		West Virginia	0.8%
Minnesota	2.0%		Wisconsin	2.4%
Mississippi	0.4%		Wyoming	0.2%
Missouri	2.7%			

COMPLETE FINDINGS
APPENDIX

Q.S4) What is your gender?

Male	49.8%
Female	50.1%
Other	0.1%

Q.1) How successful is higher education, on average, in preparing adults with the necessary knowledge and skills to succeed on the job? Please assign a letter grade.

A	26.7%
B	42.9%
C	23.2%
D	5.5%
F	1.7%

Q.2) Have you personally considered going back to school to complete a certificate, associate degree, or bachelor's degree?

Yes	60.3%
No	32.0%
Don't know	7.8%

Q.3) What has prompted you to consider going back to school to complete a certificate, associate degree, or bachelor's degree?
Sample of 5 responses for the open-end question:

- "I feel like I'm stuck in a dead-end job. An education would improve my skills and help me find a better career."
- "I've reached a financial ceiling in my profession without a complete college education."
- "Higher pay. It's tough to support a family with a minimum wage job."
- "I want a new job and I've been doing the same thing my whole life so I would like a change to something more fulfilling."
- "As a single mom, I wanted the opportunity to make a better life for my kids."

Q.4) Why haven't you considered going back to school to pursue a certificate, associate degree, or bachelor's degree?
Sample of 5 responses for the open-end question:

- "I am not currently financially able to carry on debt, I would have to cut my workload in order to pursue a career and I can't do that right now. I have a daughter that is about to enter college so I will help her."
- "I am too old now to be worrying about going back to school."
- "I really don't have the time, I would like to but I just don't have the extra time to study right now."
- "I don't think pursuing a degree would help me in the job market."
- "I already have a decent paying job that doesn't require more education."

Q.5) Below are some of the potential barriers for adult students who wish to pursue a certificate, associate degree, or bachelor's degree. After you read each of the following, please rate your level of agreement.

I'd like to go back to school, but worry I don't have what it takes to succeed.

Strongly Agree	11.5%
Somewhat Agree	22.3%
Neither	19.1%
Somewhat Disagree	13.0%
Strongly Disagree	28.6%
Don't know/refused	5.5%

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APPENDIX

I'm too old to benefit from higher education.

Strongly Agree	11.3%
Somewhat Agree	15.8%
Neither	17.8%
Somewhat Disagree	16.4%
Strongly Disagree	33.6%
Don't know/refused	5.1%

I don't think higher education will be worth the investment of time and money for me.

Strongly Agree	16.1%
Somewhat Agree	18.9%
Neither	20.5%
Somewhat Disagree	17.0%
Strongly Disagree	23.9%
Don't know/refused	3.5%

I don't want to be burdened with student loan debt.

Strongly Agree	49.2%
Somewhat Agree	26.0%
Neither	10.4%
Somewhat Disagree	2.7%
Strongly Disagree	6.3%
Don't know/refused	5.5%

I've tried college in the past and have not succeeded.

Strongly Agree	10.4%
Somewhat Agree	15.0%
Neither	17.4%
Somewhat Disagree	12.3%
Strongly Disagree	29.5%
Don't know/refused	15.4%

I would like to go back to school, but don't know if I have the time.

Strongly Agree	13.3%
Somewhat Agree	24.7%
Neither	21.9%
Somewhat Disagree	12.6%
Strongly Disagree	21.2%
Don't know/refused	6.2%

I have to support my children in the pursuit of their education, and don't have the money for mine.

Strongly Agree	15.7%
Somewhat Agree	17.5%
Neither	14.0%
Somewhat Disagree	7.1%
Strongly Disagree	10.5%
Don't know/refused	35.2%

My employer will not support me in pursuing my degree.

Strongly Agree	7.7%
Somewhat Agree	9.3%
Neither	21.0%
Somewhat Disagree	9.9%
Strongly Disagree	16.6%
Don't know/refused	35.6%

I'm skeptical that it will lead to career advancement.

Strongly Agree	12.7%
Somewhat Agree	25.3%
Neither	23.9%
Somewhat Disagree	13.6%
Strongly Disagree	17.0%
Don't know/refused	7.4%

I can't afford it.

Strongly Agree	44.4%
Somewhat Agree	25.2%
Neither	13.6%
Somewhat Disagree	4.8%
Strongly Disagree	8.8%
Don't know/refused	3.2%

Q.6) Here are some of the reasons adults give for going back to school to pursue a certificate, associate degree, or bachelor's degree. After you read each of the following, please rate your level of agreement.

I want to increase my earning potential.

Strongly Agree	44.2%
Somewhat Agree	28.5%
Neither	14.0%
Somewhat Disagree	1.4%
Strongly Disagree	4.0%
Don't know/refused	7.9%

APPENDIX

I want to change careers.

Strongly Agree	17.9%
Somewhat Agree	23.9%
Neither	20.8%
Somewhat Disagree	6.6%
Strongly Disagree	12.3%
Don't know/refused	18.5%

I'm not doing work that interests me, and a degree is required for the work I want to do.

Strongly Agree	18.0%
Somewhat Agree	19.6%
Neither	22.0%
Somewhat Disagree	9.8%
Strongly Disagree	12.5%
Don't know/refused	18.0%

In order to get promoted, I will need to go back to school.

Strongly Agree	12.9%
Somewhat Agree	16.5%
Neither	19.6%
Somewhat Disagree	9.8%
Strongly Disagree	12.9%
Don't know/refused	28.2%

There are limited options for me without a degree.

Strongly Agree	24.1%
Somewhat Agree	27.3%
Neither	21.3%
Somewhat Disagree	8.1%
Strongly Disagree	11.8%
Don't know/refused	7.5%

I will feel better about myself for having completed a degree.

Strongly Agree	31.9%
Somewhat Agree	26.8%
Neither	20.7%
Somewhat Disagree	5.9%
Strongly Disagree	8.5%
Don't know/refused	6.3%

I want to be an inspiration for my children or other family members.

Strongly Agree	28.5%
Somewhat Agree	25.1%
Neither	20.3%
Somewhat Disagree	4.4%
Strongly Disagree	5.7%
Don't know/refused	16.0%

I want the opportunity to demonstrate what I know and fulfill my dream of earning a degree.

Strongly Agree	25.5%
Somewhat Agree	26.0%
Neither	24.4%
Somewhat Disagree	6.6%
Strongly Disagree	10.3%
Don't know/refused	7.3%

I started my education a long time ago, and I want to finish it.

Strongly Agree	21.2%
Somewhat Agree	24.8%
Neither	17.8%
Somewhat Disagree	9.3%
Strongly Disagree	14.2%
Don't know/refused	12.6%

I want to re-enter the workforce after time away, and a degree is needed to do so.

Strongly Agree	14.3%
Somewhat Agree	19.3%
Neither	24.2%
Somewhat Disagree	9.5%
Strongly Disagree	14.0%
Don't know/refused	18.6%

Q.7) Next, we are interested in better understanding your perceptions of online learning as compared to learning in a face-to-face setting on campus. For each of the following, please rate whether you think online is better, face-to-face learning is better, or, if you think they are both about the same, choose that option.

Meeting the needs of adult students age 23 & up.

Online much better	18.4%
Online somewhat better	20.0%
Face to face much better	18.3%
Face to face somewhat better	7.3%
Both about the same	25.1%
Don't know/refused	10.9%

Meeting the needs of traditional-aged students age 17-22.

Online much better	8.2%
Online somewhat better	9.6%
Face to face much better	33.4%
Face to face somewhat better	12.5%
Both about the same	22.6%
Don't know/refused	13.7%

COMPLETE FINDINGS
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Offering a dynamic learning environment.

Online much better	8.5%
Online somewhat better	11.3%
Face to face much better	31.1%
Face to face somewhat better	12.8%
Both about the same	25.2%
Don't know/refused	11.2%

Providing excellent teaching.

Online much better	7.8%
Online somewhat better	7.3%
Face to face much better	30.4%
Face to face somewhat better	11.8%
Both about the same	32.3%
Don't know/refused	10.6%

Offering academic support for students.

Online much better	7.8%
Online somewhat better	8.9%
Face to face much better	31.4%
Face to face somewhat better	13.1%
Both about the same	27.9%
Don't know/refused	11.0%

Creating career opportunities.

Online much better	8.6%
Online somewhat better	9.4%
Face to face much better	20.4%
Face to face somewhat better	8.3%
Both about the same	40.6%
Don't know/refused	12.7%

Providing value for the tuition dollar.

Online much better	15.0%
Online somewhat better	17.3%
Face to face much better	21.9%
Face to face somewhat better	7.7%
Both about the same	23.7%
Don't know/refused	14.3%

Ensuring a quality academic experience.

Online much better	8.4%
Online somewhat better	7.8%
Face to face much better	28.7%
Face to face somewhat better	12.4%
Both about the same	31.9%
Don't know/refused	11.0%

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Providing a personalized learning experience.

Online much better	12.5%
Online somewhat better	15.0%
Face to face much better	31.4%
Face to face somewhat better	11.9%
Both about the same	20.1%
Don't know/refused	9.1%

Creating a learning community.

Online much better	9.0%
Online somewhat better	11.7%
Face to face much better	31.1%
Face to face somewhat better	12.1%
Both about the same	25.0%
Don't know/refused	11.3%

Q.8) All things considered, what are your impressions of the quality of online learning? I believe the quality of learning to be…

Excellent	20.0%
Very Good	46.3%
Fair	19.7%
Poor	1.8%
Do not know enough to rate	12.2%

Q.9) Next, I would like for you to read some statements about higher education institutions that offer degree programs to adult students online. After you read each one, please tell us whether the statement makes you feel better, worse, or if it has no impact on how you feel about online learning.

Some higher ed institutions do not develop their own courses. Instead, they buy pre-packaged course content that is offered at institutions across the country.

Feel much better	8.6%
Feel somewhat better	15.2%
No change	34.9%
Feel somewhat worse	15.8%
Feel much worse	9.4%
Don't know/refused	16.1%

Some higher ed institutions are for-profit, so they make decisions based on shareholder expectations rather than student needs.

Feel much better	9.6%
Feel somewhat better	12.6%
No change	26.4%
Feel somewhat worse	15.6%
Feel much worse	19.7%
Don't know/refused	16.0%

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At some higher ed institutions, instructors are experts with industry experience rather than tenured faculty.

Feel much better	21.3%
Feel somewhat better	26.7%
No change	30.7%
Feel somewhat worse	4.5%
Feel much worse	2.0%
Don't know/refused	14.8%

At some higher ed institutions, classes are capped at 25 students to ensure a personalized learning experience.

Feel much better	22.4%
Feel somewhat better	26.5%
No change	30.8%
Feel somewhat worse	4.6%
Feel much worse	1.2%
Don't know/refused	14.5%

At some higher ed institutions, faculty performance and pay is based on meaningful engagement in the classroom and high levels of interaction with students.

Feel much better	18.9%
Feel somewhat better	24.4%
No change	32.7%
Feel somewhat worse	6.0%
Feel much worse	2.1%
Don't know/refused	15.9%

At some higher ed institutions, there is less emphasis on test taking and more emphasis on analysis and critical thinking.

Feel much better	19.1%
Feel somewhat better	25.7%
No change	32.0%
Feel somewhat worse	5.9%
Feel much worse	1.8%
Don't know/refused	15.5%

Some higher ed institutions outsource to for-profit corporations all aspects of their online programs, including admissions, student advising, curriculum development, and teaching.

Feel much better	10.6%
Feel somewhat better	14.8%
No change	32.8%
Feel somewhat worse	13.7%
Feel much worse	10.0%
Don't know/refused	18.1%

Some higher ed institutions establish online divisions primarily for revenue generation rather than pursuit of their institutional mission.

Feel much better	10.4%
Feel somewhat better	13.8%
No change	26.3%
Feel somewhat worse	17.7%
Feel much worse	15.2%
Don't know/refused	16.5%

At some higher ed institutions, faculty are provided intensive training and continued professional development and monitoring to ensure teaching excellence.

Feel much better	24.7%
Feel somewhat better	29.0%
No change	27.5%
Feel somewhat worse	3.3%
Feel much worse	1.6%
Don't know/refused	13.9%

Q.10) Thinking, in general, about the jobs of today in the United States, in 10 years do you expect...

Most of today's jobs will exist	22.8%
Some of today's jobs will exist	50.3%
Only a few of today's jobs will exist	17.1%
Nearly none of today's jobs will exist	2.1%
Don't know/refused	7.7%

Q.11) Now, thinking more specifically about your job, how likely is it that your job will exist in 10 years? Is that...

Very likely	42.1%
Somewhat likely	26.6%
Not too likely	7.3%
Not at all likely	3.0%
Don't know/refused	21.0%

Q.12) How important, in your view, is holding a bachelor's degree for securing the jobs of the future? Is that...

Very important	32.9%
Somewhat important	36.6%
Not too important	15.5%
Not at all important	7.1%
Don't know/refused	8.0%

APPENDIX

Q.D1) What is your race/ethnicity?

Asian or Pacific Islander	4.3%
Black, non-Hispanic	10.1%
Native American or Alaska Native	1.1%
Caucasian, Non-Hispanic	71.0%
Caucasian, Hispanic	10.9%
Multi-ethnic	1.3%
Other	1.4%

Q.D2) Which of the following best describes your workforce status?

Employed full-time for pay	39.1%
Employed part-time for pay	15.1%
Not working, but seeking work	12.7%
Retired	3.4%
Disabled	13.5%
Stay-at-home parent or caregiver	11.6%
Other	4.5%

ABOUT CHAMPLAIN COLLEGE ONLINE

At the forefront of one of the most innovative, regionally accredited, not-for-profit colleges in the nation, Champlain College Online prides itself on its long history of providing career-focused education to adult learners. One of the oldest online institutions in the United States, Champlain College Online was established in 1993 by Champlain College, a non-profit private college founded in 1878 and offering a campus undergraduate experience in Burlington, Vermont.

Today, Champlain College Online is consistently ranked by U.S. News & World Report as a leader in online higher education, and serves nearly 3,400 students through more than 60 online undergraduate and graduate degree programs and certificates in high-growth fields like cybersecurity, healthcare administration and human resource management. Through the strategic alliance program known as truED, Champlain College Online has pioneered a bold reimagining of workforce development to create additional opportunities for adults to further their education in Champlain College's award-winning online academic programs aligned to needs in government and industry.

For more information, visit champlain.edu/online.

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QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SURVEY?
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