

PRICE VS. COST

WHY CHOOSE A CHRISTIAN COLLEGE?



MAKE A DIFFERENCE

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Dear Parents,

You are on an important quest to ensure that your student enrolls in an institution of higher education that will provide academic challenge, professional preparation and personal and spiritual growth.

I am passionate about the education and experience Corban University offers our students, and I strongly believe that a Corban education is worth the investment. The quality of our education and career preparedness has earned Corban national recognition as a College of Distinction and one of *U.S. News & World Report's* Best Universities in the West, but what impresses me both as president and as a Corban parent myself (Hannah graduated in 2013), is the way each student here is challenged to dive into their studies and their Bibles, to wrestle with questions alongside peers and to connect with staff and faculty who encourage critical and prayerful thought.

Our graduates are deep, insightful people grounded in the Word of God. And that's exactly what our world needs.

Today we live in a post-Christian culture with increasing pressure to abandon biblical principles and truth. Never has it been so critical that we instill a faith continuum in the next generation who will go out and "make a difference in the world for Jesus Christ."

Thank you for your interest in Corban University. May God bless you as you seek His guidance in the college selection process.

To Christ be all glory,

Sheldon C. Nord
President
Corban University

WHY CHOOSE A CHRISTIAN COLLEGE?

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With over thirty years of college administration, consulting, research and up-close observation, I might as well admit right up-front that I believe EVERY college-bound Christian student MUST at least consider a Christian college. For almost all college-bound Christian students, I would be even more adamant that the first few years at least MUST be spent at an academically challenging and unapologetically Christian college. Since much of my employment has been with public colleges, you might wonder what in the world has led me to my current perspective. This short article will lay out the six reasons I have become so “narrow-minded.”

Reason 1: There is a real difference in the mission of building godly character between Christian colleges and other institutions.

In the broadest sense, the college years are a time of preparation for life, ministry and career – in that order. Preparation for life and ministry are uniquely the realm of the Christian college. They, unlike other options, are uniquely equipped to model and promote biblical, godly character. A non-Christian college typically avoids character issues unless dealing with unlawful acts and runs from the word “ministry.” Note that I am talking mainly about small “m” ministry – loving and serving people with the hope of salvation and a godly life regardless of career. Sure, there are campus clubs and ministries on non-Christian college campuses that really counter the college culture and provide opportunities for students to grow and serve. However, the data shows that most Christian kids on non-Christian campuses do not participate in these venues.

This issue of character is more important than what career I choose, which courses I take or even which college I attend. Character IS the primary issue that MUST be solidified during the college years. Where character and Christian values are especially threatened is in the typical non-Christian college classroom. Let’s pull back the curtain a bit from the protected academic mystic. Why are the values and life choices of faculty so important? First, no matter how much they would choose to ignore the fact, a person’s perspective will pervade his or her speech, thought processes and lifestyle. It will be evident in the classroom and faculty office. Second, the long term implications are clear. Students most likely will reflect the values and perspective of their faculty mentors. There are exceptions for sure, but an article from a few years ago gave some startling stats: 84% of college faculty members are in favor of abortion rights and well over two-thirds believe homosexuality is an acceptable lifestyle. When you pull faculty at Christian colleges from the study sample, these stats sky-rocket.

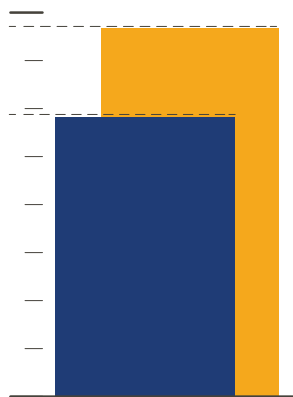
Consider just one of the main contemporary philosophers whose views are the foundational basis for many other writers and theorists in American public education – Richard Rorty. Two quotes: “... we try to arrange things so that students who enter as bigoted, homophobic, religious fundamentalists will leave college with views more like our own ...” and “... So we are going to go right on trying to discredit you in the eyes of your children, trying to strip your fundamentalist religious community of dignity, trying to make your views seem silly rather than discussable.” Suffice it to say that the college years should be a time where faith should be tested and refined NOT torched and denied!

Reason 2: There is a real difference in the spiritual growth and maturity of students attending Christian colleges versus other institutions.

Dr. Gary Railsback and I have collaborated over the years to measure the change in religious commitment depending on the type of college attended. Simply, unless at a Christian college, research consistently reports a decline in religious values, attitudes and behaviors during the college years. More specifically, students attending all types of non-religiously affiliated private and public institutions report significant decreases in religious affiliation and religious behaviors (church attendance, praying, reading the Bible, etc.). Enrollment in church-related colleges tends to support and strengthen the student's existing religious values and behaviors.

Sadly, by the time they finish college and depending on the type of non-Christian college attended, 52% to 70% of all Christian students will no longer identify themselves as born-again Christians or, even if they do still self-identify, will have not attended any church service in the last year. What was most surprising in my study of 16,000 students attending 133

U.S. colleges was this: the more conservative the background of the Christian student, the greater decline there appears to be in religious commitment if the student attended a non-Christian college. By comparison, less than 5% of Christian students walk away from their faith while attending a Christian college.



97% OF STUDENTS ATTENDING CHRISTIAN COLLEGES REPORTED SPIRITUAL GROWTH THROUGH THEIR UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE.

68% SAY THEY HAVE EXPERIENCED **SIGNIFICANT** SPIRITUAL GROWTH!

Reason 3: There is a significantly higher graduation rate in four years if a student attends a Christian college versus other institutions.

Lindsay Perna of the Religion News Service stated, "Religiously affiliated universities rank the highest nationwide in graduating their students." By researching the graduation rates of all colleges in the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCCU) versus public institutions, I estimate the average number of years to graduate from a CCCCU college is 4.4 years. Are you ready for this? The same method for determining the estimate for graduation from a public university yields 6.2 years – nearly two years more! You may ask the obvious question, "What about starting at

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89% OF CORBAN GRADUATES EARN THEIR DEGREE IN FOUR YEARS COMPARED TO 60% AT STATE FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS.²

a two-year community college and staying at home?" One study estimates that only 12% of college-bound students who start at a community college ever finish a four-year degree. Even worse is that only 5.1% of those who attend the typical, widely advertised online college graduate within six years of beginning the program.

89% **60%**

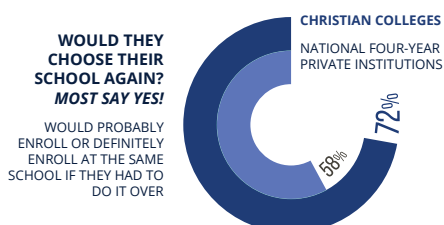
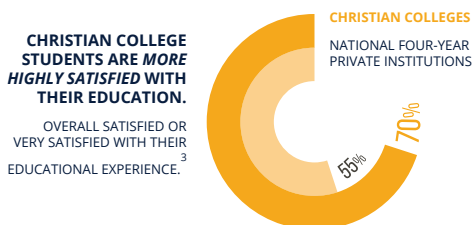
Reason 4: In most cases, there is only a minimal difference in total debt at graduation between those attending a Christian college versus other institutions.

The average debt of those who borrow for a Christian college education is \$26,839 while the most recent number I have gathered for public colleges is \$21,945 – a difference of less than \$5,000 for an undergraduate degree. How can the difference be so small? First, although less expensive per year, it is taking almost two years longer to complete the same degree at a public institution. Second, students who attend public institutions are enjoying their “freedom.” There are many other resulting “costs” that comparing sticker prices totally ignores. Let me leave that discussion for another time.

Reason 5: With an earlier graduation from college, students should be able to be employed significantly earlier if they attend a Christian college versus other institutions.

With nearly two years earlier entry into the workforce, it is hoped that Christian college graduates would get a two-year career jump on their public-institution-graduating peers. I believe the first job of the Christian college graduate should be to pay off any college loan debt. Think of it – the possibility of two years seniority in the work force, two years more pay and advancement and, if totally committed to it, college debt PAID OFF by the time public college peers join the party. A number of Christian college financial aid professionals are proving this is not only possible but actually reasonable!

Reason 6: Students are significantly more satisfied with the college experience and would most likely say they would do it all over again at that same institution if they attend a Christian college versus other institutions.



Utilizing years of results from the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory, it is clear that students are far more satisfied with the college experience if they attend a Christian college. Students actually say if they had to do it all over again, they would want to do it again at the same Christian college – far more so than at any other type of college.



Conclusion:

If I told you straight out that you and your family can choose a better education that strengthens your student's faith for about the same debt load as a public university and that your student would most likely finish earlier and be more satisfied with the total experience, why would you not choose a Christian college? What more can I say? PLENTY, as you might expect with charts, stats and footnotes galore. But, my hope is that you will just let these comments settle in a bit.

Your student is making one of the most important choices in life. Only two choices have more life impact than the choice of a college: the choice of Jesus Christ as Lord and the choice of a spouse. The choice of a college can be a determining factor in both of these decisions. Now – encourage your student to choose the rather obviously better option. Choose wisely! Choose a Christian college!

Dr. Steven J. Henderson founded Christian Consulting, Inc, and served as its president for 20 years. His ongoing national study on what happens to Christian kids if they go to non-Christian colleges has been a widely quoted source for promoting the value of a Christian college education. With a passion for Christian higher education as well as outstanding experience in private and public college marketing, retention and administration, Steve has brought a strong understanding of the best-of-the-best strategies to nearly 150 colleges and universities. He is a Senior Fellow of the Association for Biblical Higher Education and a frequent speaker at national and statewide conferences. His doctorate is from the University of Arkansas in Higher Education Administration with research at the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA.

For more information about the benefits of a Christian college, call Corban University at **1-800-845-3005** or email **admissions@corban.edu**. We would love to talk with you!

"Christian colleges" are defined as fully-accredited, intentionally Christ-centered institutions that are members of the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCCU).

- 1 Ma, Stella Y. "The Christian College Experience and the Development of Spirituality Among Students." Christian Higher Education, 2:321-339, 2003
- 2 <https://www.naicu.edu/research-resources/private-colleges-factfile/successfu>
- 3 www.cccu.org/news/articles/2012/Upcoming-Webinar-to-Discuss-Results-of-Noel-Levitz-Student-Satisfaction-Inventory

