

Valley Courier

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Opinion

TSC: The Smart Choice for Beginning or Continuing Your College Education

As we enjoy these beautiful late days of summer, it's time to plan for college classes this fall. The pandemic years have shifted traditional college-going patterns as we once knew them. New high school graduates may have delayed college plans to take advantage of work opportunities, especially as employers



Rhonda M. Epper

were boosting starting wages in a tight job market. Working adults may have stopped out of college to balance work while caring for young children as their schools shifted between in-person and remote learning. Whatever reason might have kept you from going to college, I encourage you to consider coming back.

Years of economic data show that going to college has a high return-on-investment. A 2021 study by the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce showed that higher levels of education generally result in higher lifetime earnings: from \$1.6 million for a high school diploma, to \$2 million for an associate's degree, to \$2.8 million for a bachelor's degree.

We are also learning more about the benefits of adults returning to college. A recent study from Lightcast showed that adults were 22 percent more likely to achieve upward mobility and earned annual salaries 140 percent greater than peers who didn't return to college. Adult learners earned an average of \$7,500 more per year after returning to college.

Trinidad State College has many great programs that can increase your earning potential, including Nursing, Paramedic, Teacher Education, Cybersecurity, Law Enforcement, Criminal Justice, Construction, Welding, Automotive, Line Tech, and many transfer programs in the Arts and Sciences. Trinidad State is a smart choice because we have small classes taught by outstanding faculty at an affordable price. Your dollars will go further by starting your education here (where tuition is about half of what you would pay at a public four-year university) then transferring after earning a certificate or associate's degree.

Here are some ways Trinidad State can make college even more financially feasible:

Concurrent Enrollment – Earn college credit while still in high school at little or no cost.

Learn Local Scholarship – If you live in Las Animas, Huerfano, Alamosa, Costilla, Conejos, Rio Grande, Mineral, or Saguache counties, you will automatically receive a 20% discount when you register for 15 credit hours.

Merit Scholarships – If you graduate high school with a 3.0 or higher you will automatically receive up to a 40% discount when you register for 15 credit hours.

"Finish What You Started" Scholarship – Returning adults who have earned previous college credit OR have experienced economic loss due to the pandemic can receive \$1,250 per semester in scholarships – until you finish! www.trinidadstate.edu/cosi

TSC Foundation Scholarships – More than 60 scholarships are available for new and continuing students: www.trinidadstate.edu/scholarships

Housing Scholarship - \$1,000 per academic year for full-time students

Transfer/Bridge-to-Bachelor – save up to \$6,000 per year by starting your degree at Trinidad State with guaranteed transfer to public universities in Colorado.

Statistics show time is the enemy in attaining a college degree -- the longer you wait, the less likely you are to complete. So don't wait! We care about the prosperity of our community members, and want to help you get on (or back on) a path to college completion.

Fall classes begin August 22. Contact us today at 1-888-TSC-1925 or visit us at www.trinidadstate.edu. Our advisors will help you determine the right plan for you.

Rhonda M. Epper, Ph.D.

President, Trinidad State College