



From Stereotypes to Success:

# How 3 Schools Battle Misconceptions About Community Colleges





## From Stereotypes to Success

Community colleges are at a crossroads. Why? There are still so many misconceptions and questions about them.

Numbers from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center paint a clear and unfortunate picture. Enrollment of men plummeted by more than 15% in 2020, with most of the decline coming from low-income and high-poverty areas. Adult learners declined by 30% from 2020 to 2021, while retention dropped below 40% ([University Business](#)).

**“The number of students seeking associate degrees fell 6.2% year over year in the fall” ([Higher Ed Dive](#))**

Fortunately, not all is lost. Despite those bleak statistics, plenty of schools are still thriving through effective communication with their core audience. In this ebook, we'll describe some of the strongest answers we've found to answering the most common misguided questions about community colleges.

Stick around to the end to see community colleges who are thriving by answering these questions and more through modern technology solutions.

answer these questions 

# 1. Is community college bad?

This question has roots in negative stereotypes that have been perpetuated for years. Many people relate community colleges as financially feasible, which has traditionally associated them with low educational value ([Brookings](#)). Making that leap is a mistake that has caused perceptions of this type of educational institution to become confused over the past few decades.

So: is community college bad? The short answer is, of course, no. Unfortunately though, a lot of people are still in the dark regarding the benefits of attending community college. Here's the long answer:



Community college is absolutely not bad. A community college is a two-year school that offers excellent programs for less money and less time. It can be used as an advantageous pathway to more easily obtain a four-year degree. In addition, surveys rating the educational experience at higher education institutions across the spectrum tend to rank community colleges and associate's degrees [right alongside more traditional four-year degrees](#).



It's vital to get across the fact that community college does not always equate to lower quality. It can be an excellent way to save money by taking high-quality courses to more easily complete a four-year education ([Study in the U.S.A.](#)). In the process, it offers just as many benefits as a four-year college, typically at a fraction of the cost.

answer these questions 

## 2. Is community college free?

This question gained a lot of steam last year. While many students were excited by the prospect of free community college tuition as Congress rolled out the Build Better Back Act in 2021, recent developments tell a different story ([Rocky Mountain PBS](#)). Earlier this year, President Biden [pulled free tuition for community college students out of the plan](#).



So, what's the answer? Is community college free?

While many community colleges in the US are not inherently tuition-free, some of them do offer programs to help students get there ([Education Data Initiative](#)). Most schools in the US offer financial aid opportunities, scholarship programs, lower cost for room and board, and the average tuition at a community college is up to [10x less expensive than a four-year university](#).

Communicating affordability and value must go hand-in-hand. One without the other leads to the types of stigma that cause enrollment to fall. An effective strategy to mix affordability with high educational quality, on the other hand, has the potential for immense success.

## 3. What are the academic advantages at a community college?

Across the US, people associate the phrase "college education" with a four-year university. As a result, community colleges continually face questions about how their educational paths can help students enter and succeed in the workplace.

According to [Think Impact](#), over 1/3 of undergrad students are also community college students. That means that over 1/3 of the undergraduate population in the United States will be interested in what programs your school has to offer. A strong answer to this question, and the three that go under it, will be vital in convincing a prospective student to attend.

## Here's the list of question students most likely have regarding academics at community colleges:

### 1. Can I get a bachelor's degree at community college?

Simply put, it depends on the school. Although community colleges have been traditionally two-year associate's degree schools, there's been a significant shift in the last few years in which community colleges are starting to offer bachelor's opportunities.

Let's start with the obvious: if your institution offers a bachelor's degree path, your students need to know. Too many assume that four-year degrees don't exist at community colleges, even though [their availability has been steadily rising for years](#). Even if only some of your core subjects lead to a bachelor's degree, they should be highlighted.

The next question revolving around academia at community colleges regards transfer credits:



### 2. Do community college credits transfer?

The short answer? Yes! The long answer?

Credit transfers also depend on the school. However, many community college credits can transfer to four-year institutions, and the process is becoming more formalized by the minute. Through articulation agreements, students can enter a four-year degree path at community college with a clear map to a bachelor's degree at a partnering institution ([US News](#)).

The problem lies in the complexity of these agreements. The more clearly you can outline how students at your school can earn college degrees, the more receptive they will become to these options rather than defaulting to the traditional college path.

And, finally...

### 3. Do community colleges accept everyone?

Just as with any college, students who want to attend have to apply and await the admissions process. However, the **national average community college acceptance rate is 79%**, compared to the national average of **66% for a four-year institution**. The range of acceptance in US community colleges can stretch from the mid-10s all the way to 100%. ([CollegeData](#))



## 4. Do community colleges have dorms?

Historically, commuter-first campuses keep tuition down by drastically lowering room and board costs, as mentioned previously. However, some students may not know that's beginning to change.

Here's how you can go about answering this doozy:



According to a recent survey, **about one quarter of all community colleges** now offer on-campus housing to their students ([Community College Review](#)).

Even institutions that don't offer on-campus housing can effectively communicate about their student life. Some have made agreements with four-year schools where students can live while they take classes at the nearby community college.

Others simply showcase their close-knit downtown community, on-campus gym, and other amenities. Either way, schools that can build campus life into their communications plan will fare well with students increasingly looking for a great community. As the examples at the end of this guide show, technology can play a major role in exemplifying how important the community is to the college.

See how schools have battled misconceptions 

# 3 community colleges who have battled common misconceptions

## 1. Bristol Community College

[Bristol Community College](#) offers an in-depth look at its more than 130 programs and certificates opportunities through its [virtual tour](#). Programs from health and science to theater, culinary arts, and nursing give students extensive options that rival some four-year institutions.

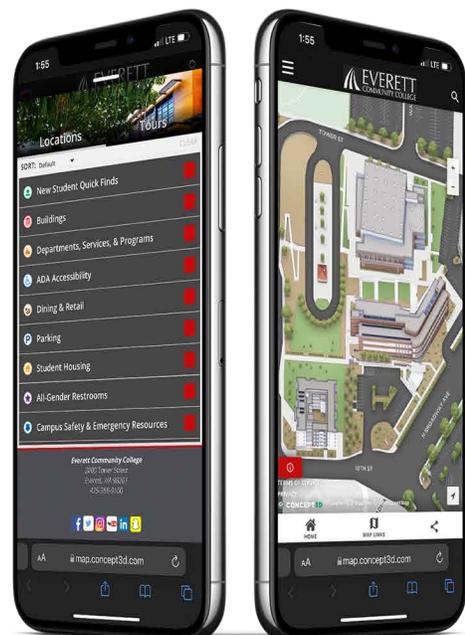


## 2. Sinclair Community College

[Sinclair Community College](#) in Dayton, Ohio has made a conscious effort to showcase not just its campus but its neighboring community with virtual solutions. [Multiple stops in its virtual tour](#) highlight downtown Dayton, showing just how closely the school is involved with the surrounding city. Students here are not just members of the school, but part of the very fabric of Dayton.

## 3. Everett Community College

In 2016 and 2017, [Everett Community College](#) opened the doors of its two student housing halls, Mountain View Hall and Cedar Hall. The school uses its [virtual interactive map's](#) categories to clearly label where these two residence halls are in reference to the rest of the campus. Not only does the category give pertinent information about these two halls such as room size, rent, and amenities available, but it also proudly displays that Everett is a college that has made the leap to incorporate dorm life into their campus.

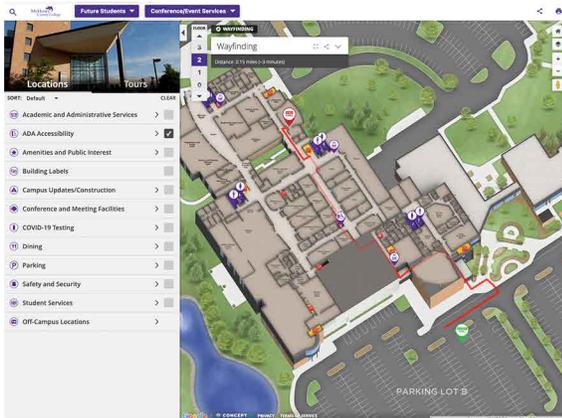


# Answering common questions to drive community college enrollment

When recruiting future students, every school will have to answer similar questions. And while they may not all be the same, most of them will ultimately come back to the same basic underlying tenor: is community college worth it? We know that the short answer is yes. Now, the key is getting the word out to your prospects.

The power is in your hands. Just like the schools we mentioned, you too can showcase the best that your community college has to offer.

[Learn more](#) about the ways you can attract more students to your school and reverse the way they think about community college by checking out our solutions.



## Interactive Map

Our market-leading mapping solution is designed to showcase your campus in an immersive, interactive way.

[Learn more](#)



## 360° Tour

Our interactive, digital experience will engage your audience, showcase your location, and better tell your story.

[Learn more](#)

From our 360° Tour platform to our Interactive Map, these visual channels can seamlessly help relay your school's story, answering and dispelling common misconceptions in the process.

**Ask us about the current promotion we are running for community college pricing!**

[Let's chat](#)

