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STATE OF THE STATE RESULTS SHOW STRONG SUPPORT FOR COLLEGE EDUCATION

A strong majority of Michigan adults believe that a college education is important for a successful career, according to the latest State of the State Survey from Michigan State University.

“About 72 percent of those questioned in the phone survey said that a college education is very important for Michigan’s young people to be successful in the labor market,” said Charles Ballard, MSU economics professor and director of the State of the State Survey.

Another 25 percent said a college education is somewhat important. In sum, 97 percent said college is either very important or somewhat important.

“These results are encouraging, because they show that Michigan’s people understand what has happened in the U.S. economy over the last 40 years,” said Ballard.

“The economy has changed in ways that have greatly rewarded those with a college education, so that college attainment is the most important factor in determining which states have the highest incomes.”

In 2009, Massachusetts ranked first in the nation in the percentage of the population with a college degree, and Massachusetts was second in per-capita income. Michigan was 36th in college attainment and 40th in income. Mississippi was 48th in college attainment and 50th in income.

The beliefs about higher education and career success are remarkably consistently across demographic groups in Michigan, Ballard noted. The percentage saying a college education is very important was nearly identical for men and women.
The percentages were also very similar for whites, blacks, Republicans, and Democrats, he said.

The Michigan College Access Network (MCAN) sponsored the questions about the importance of college in the State of the State Survey, conducted from Aug. 23 through Oct. 10.


A total of 1,018 interviews were completed in the quarterly survey of Michigan adults aged 18 and older.

Although the survey shows a strong belief in the importance of college education, the survey also reveals a widespread concern about whether college is affordable, Ballard added.

MCAN also sponsored a question asking whether people agree that “at today’s levels of tuition and financial aid, a college education is reasonably affordable for people in Michigan.”

Nearly 68 percent of those answering the survey said they disagreed with the statement. Only 32 percent said that a college education is reasonably affordable.

The Institute for Public Policy and Social Research (IPPSR) specializes in leadership training, policy analysis, and survey research. It is a unit of MSU’s College of Social Science.

SOSS analysis and results, including built-in, self-guided analysis software, can be found at [http://ippsr.msu.edu/soss/](http://ippsr.msu.edu/soss/).

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