

The Humanities in Our Lives



THE VALUE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Americans today value community colleges because they are affordable, local, and flexible, with a large population of part-time students. Yet this flexibility has disadvantages, as a sizeable portion of students who enroll in community college courses do not complete their degrees. Many programs have emerged to encourage and support students in earning meaningful credentials.

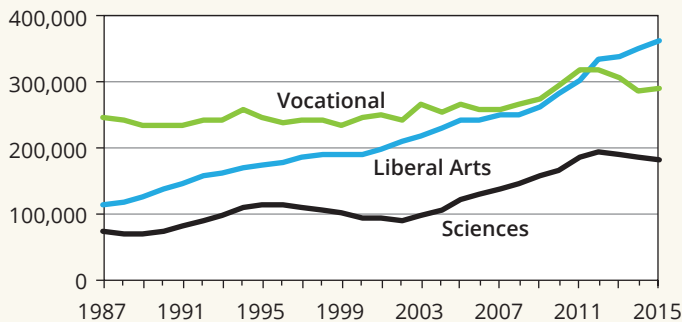
COMMUNITY COLLEGES

In the early 20th century, progressives embraced community colleges to expand access to higher education and train a burgeoning workforce by focusing on vocational programs. Today, more than a thousand community colleges in the United States educate nearly 6 million students each fall.

KEY FACTS

- In the fall of 2015, almost 3 million students took humanities courses in community colleges.
- The same year, more than 360,000 students earned associates degrees in humanities and liberal arts fields—a number that represents an annual average increase of 4.3% per year since 1987.

Associates Degrees Conferred, by Field



INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

To promote humanities education, the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) launched “Humanities for All” in conjunction with Johns Hopkins University. The program, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, connects Hopkins faculty with CCBC students and faculty to improve course content and foster transfer to four-year institutions.

“[S]ome of our graduates admit that they hadn’t considered themselves as ‘Hopkins material,’ let alone capable of pursuing transfer or continuing undergraduate work at a prestigious institution . . . That changed.”

So far, Humanities for All has offered a 10-week, intensive summer course that allows CCBC students both to take courses with Hopkins faculty and to work independently on scholarly research. With the academic skills gained from Humanities for All, participants have gone on to pursue bachelor’s degrees at Columbia University, UMBC, Towson University, and Roanoke College.

The Humanities in Our Lives series (#HumInOurLives) highlights the many and diverse forms of humanities activities in the nation, and key facts about the health of the field.



For more on the broad trends that mark American engagement with various forms of the humanities, visit humanitiesindicators.org or email humanitiesindicators@amacad.org.

