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Persuasive Speech

Continuing Education

 When I graduated from high school in 2010 my parents gave me two options for after graduation, one of them was to go to college and the other one was to get a job. Getting a full-time job after graduation was not appealing to me, especially as an 18 year old, so I decided to attend Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids. I graduated from Kirkwood in the summer of 2012 with an Associate’s Degree in Liberal Arts. I was undecided about what field of study I wanted to get into and because of how expensive college is I didn’t really want to go waste money when I didn’t even know what I wanted to be in college for, so I decided to move back home and work for a year. When I moved home I went back to work at the grocery store I had worked at in high school and I also started working at the Country Club in town. I looked for a different full time job, because working nights and weekends was not that great, but unfortunately in a small town of 2,500 people there were not many jobs available. At the grocery store I became the night staff supervisor and got a raise, which made me feel a lot better about working there, and I was also making awesome money at the Country Club. Working two jobs was not easy and I knew that I had to go back to school because I did not want to be living in Belmond, working at a grocery store and a Country Club for the rest of my life. I also had to start paying back my students loans because my 6 month grace period had ended, I was making a monthly car payment, and got unlucky and needed to have my wisdom teeth taken out. So, because I was no longer in school and I was living back at home with my parents, they considered me a “grown-up” so I also had to pay for my wisdom teeth surgery. Being completely cut off and having to pay for all this stuff made me realize that I was now in the real world and that I needed to go back to school, fast. I needed to get a higher degree, pick a field of study and get back on track, so I could someday find a good paying job.

 There are many people that dream of one day being a highly paid and well-respected professional in the careers that they have chosen. According to the, Bureau of Labor Statistics on March 29, 2012, “Out of the thirty fastest growing occupations, fourteen of them require a bachelor’s degree or higher. If you are one of those people who dream of one day being very successful in your chosen career path. Then you might want to pursue an advanced degree and a higher education” (“Occupational Outlook handbook:” March 29, 2012).

 According to Marc Joseph on September 17th from The Huffington Post, “out of 68% of high school graduates that went to college only 54% of them actually graduated within six years of starting” (Joseph, M., Sep 17, 2013). So why are people not attending college or dropping out of college? The first issue that I believe causes a student to not finish college or not attend college at all is money. I don’t think there is a person in the world that has not worried about money. Let’s face it college is very expensive and tuition costs will only continue to rise. According to the article *Its Too Expensive to go to College Anymore* by Marc Joseph and cited previously, “the average yearly budget to attend an in-state public university is $22, 260” (Joseph, M., Sep 17, 2013). I believe that because of the high cost of college many students are found asking themselves if it’s really worth going to school and then having a large amount of debt when they begin their careers. In the same article by Marc Joseph it states that, “CNN reports that the average college student in the class of 2013 faced about $35,200 in debt” (Joseph, M., Sep 17, 2013). It only takes a statistic like this to scare a person away from college. Why not just find a job and make money instead? The same article by Marc Joseph states that “a high school diploma earns you about 1.2 million dollars in your lifetime while a Bachelor’s degree will earn you 2.1 million dollars,” that is a 900,000 dollar difference and maybe a statistic like that will get people interested in continuing their education. According to Tamar Lewin on September 21, 2010, in The New York Times, “despite the rising tuition and student loan debt levels, the long-term payoff from earning a college degree is growing” (Lewin, T., Sep 21, 2010). Yes, there are a lot of financial expenses involved, but there are also financial benefits in the long-run and these benefits could be significant. The Bureau of Labor and Statistics shows that on average college graduates with a Bachelor’s degree earn 39% more than workers who only earned a high school diploma, and graduates with a Master’s degree earn 48% more. So how do we pay for college?

 There are several ways to finance your education. There is a government form you need to fill out every year known as the FAFSA. By submitting the FAFSA you see whether you qualify for federal student aid such as Pell grants and Stafford loans, based on yours and your parents’ earnings from the previous year. If you happen to not qualify for any aid or not enough aid there are credit unions that offer private education loans, so that could possibly be an option for you. You could talk to a financial aid counselor and ask if your school offers any sort of payment plans. Here at UNI we offer a 5 month payment plan, so instead of paying for all your tuition and fees at once; you make a payment once a month for 5 months. You could also check with your college’s financial aid department and see if there are any scholarships available that you could possibly apply for. If you are working and decide to go back to school, check with your employer and see if they reimburse continuing education costs, a lot do. While you research the many ways to pay for school, you should also develop a plan on how you will support yourself financially while you are in school, whether it means getting a part-time job or borrowing more money from your loans.

 Another reason people don’t continue their education is because of the great amount of time it takes. As stated by Ellen Keiley on February 24, 2012 in the Boston Globe, “Continuing your education can take an incredible amount of time and effort. You may find yourself frequently writing papers at all hours of the night and spending many hours on homework, but you need to remember that it is just temporarily and at the end of the day the benefits outweigh the negatives” (Keiley, E., Gates, K.L., February 24, 2012). When it comes to taking classes you have many choices you can be a full time student, half-time student, take classes at night, or take classes online. Online classes allow students to complete their courses at home and sometimes at their own pace and they require minimal to no class time. A benefit to online and night classes is that you would still be able to have a full-time job while also continuing your education.

 There are many other benefits to continuing your education. By doing so, it enables you to keep current on new technologies and trends. We live in a generation where technology and trends change frequently. Something you learned your senior year in high school might not be used anymore by the time you reach your senior year of college. Everything seems to be done electronically nowadays the use of emails, smartphones, eLearning sites, blogs, or E-portfolios are some programs that have become pretty popular, it is crucial to stay up to date with current technologies. Networking and social aspects are also more benefits that come with continuing education. According to the article by Ellen Keiley as cited previously, “the class atmosphere provides an opportunity to build your own network and build relationships that will last a lifetime and that could possibly serve as references when you are trying to get a job” (Keiley, E., Gates, K.L., February 24, 2012). It is also an awesome resume booster and it also helps you remain competitive in the workplace. According to Brian McKenna on January 20, 2011 on Ecollege Finder he stated that, “having additional education on your resume makes you look more desirable on paper and that a graduate degree says “I’m willing to go the extra mile” (McKenna, B., January 20, 2011). In the same article Brian McKenna states that, “In today’s day and age, image means everything, if you have a strong image with an MBA or PhD after your name, you put yourself in a better position to get the job and the salary you want and feel that you deserve” (McKenna, B., January 20, 2011).

 I agree, it is too expensive to go to college these days and unfortunately it does not look like the cost will ever be going down, but instead will continue to rise. What I do know is that even though it’s an expensive and time-consuming investment, your education is priceless. A degree can open many doors and bring countless opportunities. Continuing your education gives you a chance to make a living doing something that you are passionate about. By continuing your education you can pay your dues towards your dreams and then later become a positive contributor to our economic future.

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