

“Continuing the Conversation” with City Club of Boise

October 28, 2015

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Making the Grade on the College Scorecard

Recently I had the opportunity to speak before the City Club of Boise. I’m grateful to the club for hosting me and for offering a forum for ideas that impact our state and our world. One item I mentioned during my talk, but which is worth exploring in more depth, is the federal government’s new College Scorecard report and website (<https://collegescorecard.ed.gov>).

Even casual observers of the college education landscape likely know that there are many rankings, ratings and lists every year, all purporting to add information. Instead of clarifying things, however, the many, many sources often serve to muddy the waters. By contrast, the College Scorecard report offers clarity, based on credible data, about three critical measures: affordability for students and families, graduation rates, and earnings after college.

For students, for families, and for taxpaying citizens of our state, these three measures get to the heart of the matter: Are we serving students and our public well? At the University of Idaho, the answer is a resounding yes. I encourage people to look at the public, four-year universities in Idaho. UI’s net cost is the lowest in the state. Our graduation rates are the highest in the state. And for a UI graduate, earnings 10 years after graduation are much higher than other institutions. (UI fares similarly well when compared with private institutions.) In each measure, we outperform the national average. These easy-to-read charts showcase UI’s delivery of an excellent education at an affordable price - a value for our students and for our state.

The data are based on students who received federal financial aid. That means those students who need and receive support in attaining a college degree receive an outstanding return on their investment from UI. These students will experience firsthand how UI contributes to social mobility. They will go on to lives with greater financial stability, with greater satisfaction at work and in their personal endeavors, and with stronger rates of civic engagement. They will, in short, be on a pathway to realizing the American Dream.

We are proud to play a role in that success. As I discussed in my presentation, the University of Idaho is focused on making an outstanding education accessible to more Idaho students. For prospective students and families, there are many decision points on the journey to college. For other citizens of Idaho, they want to know how their state’s leading, national research university is performing with their taxpayer dollars. The College Scorecard website makes clear that for affordability, for graduation rates and for success after college, UI stands out in Idaho and across the region.