



ACTA RELEASES STUDY OF 1,098 COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

--Survey Examines Education, Not Reputation: Rates Every Public College in the U.S. and Hundreds of Private Institutions on the Strength of their General Education

--Just 18% Require Even a Single Course in American History or Government; 13% Require Foreign Language; 3% Require Economics

WASHINGTON, D.C. October 15, 2014—The American Council of Trustees and Alumni today released the 2014-2015 edition of [What Will They Learn?](#), which peels away reputation to assess what value students are actually getting from college.

“Too many college rating systems rely on largely extraneous measures like alumni giving or selectivity to determine which colleges top their list,” said Anne D. Neal, ACTA president. “*What Will They Learn?* looks at the most important data—the strength of a college’s education—to find out which institutions are delivering the tools students will need to succeed in career and community.”

Only 23 institutions receive an “A” grade for requiring at least six of seven subjects that are essential to a liberal arts education: literature, composition, economics, math, intermediate level foreign language, science, and American government/history. According to the study, most students graduate from college without exposure to such fundamental courses as American history, basic economics or literature. In too many places, graduates aren’t expected to have any more knowledge of these pivotal courses than a high school student.

Public Institutions:

- 28% require American history
- 8% require foreign language
- 3% require economics

Private Institutions:

- 10% require American history
- 17% require foreign language
- 4% require economics

“One wonders what tuition and tax dollars are going toward when most colleges—even public ones—don’t require basic economics, foreign language, American history or even literature,” said Dr. Michael Poliakoff, director of the *What Will They Learn?* project. “Are we really preparing our nation’s next generation of leaders when our colleges are failing to ensure the most basic skills and knowledge?”

What Will They Learn? By The Numbers

By Grade:

A: 23 schools	2%
B: 389	35%
C: 329	30%
D: 259	24%
F: 98	9%

By Subject:

Economics:	36 schools	3%
Foreign Language:	144	13%
U.S. History/Gov.:	201	18%
Literature:	412	38%
Math:	660	60%
Composition:	907	83%
Science:	960	87%

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