Higher ed opinions divided along party lines.

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Recommended Citation
Until recently, higher education commanded a great deal of respect in the United States. According to a 2013 Gallup-Lumina Foundation survey, 72 percent of people in the U.S. thought that to have a college degree was “very important,” and 25 percent thought it was “somewhat important.”

However, that good image has been eroding rapidly. According to the results of a 2018 survey funded by the Koch Network, Americans are increasingly uncertain about the necessity of college for success in the workplace. When asked the question, “Do you think that a college education is necessary for a person to be successful in today’s world?” only 32 percent of Americans said that college is necessary for workplace success – a 35 percent drop from a similar survey in 2015. Seventy-seven percent of Americans said that there are many ways to succeed in today’s world without a college degree, 14 percent lower than in 2009.

And the gap in these views is significantly wider of several of the nation’s leading institutions, and Democrats are deeply divided on the impact of the news, and shows just how split this country is and Carl Vollmer from Gateway

So why is public opinion about the value of higher education changing so fast, and why is it so unraveling apart along party lines? First of all, we need to remember that bad news about higher education is being fed a constant diet of bad news about media outlets.

Universities are increasingly uncertain about the necessity of college for success in the workplace. When asked the question, “Do you think that a college education is necessary for a person to be successful in today’s world?” only 42 percent of Republicans said that colleges and universities and 25 percent thought it was “somewhat important.”

The idea that colleges are having a negative impact, compared with just 43 percent of moderate Republicans. On the other hand, liberal and moderate Democrats said college has a positive impact (79 and 47 percent respectively).

Many students feel that they are being overcharged. A recent survey found that 60 percent of college students said they felt they were being overcharged.

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