



# HIGHER EDUCATION

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**THE PROBLEM:** The University of Missouri system, and higher education in the United States in general, are at a crossroads. Tuition is rising, resulting in over \$1 trillion in student loan debt nationwide. At the same time, students who fail to secure a high-income job after graduation face serious financial consequences. As schools struggle with these issues, a rising tide of anti-free speech policy is sweeping across the higher education landscape.

**THE SOLUTION:** *Higher education reform.*

Higher education reform in Missouri should accomplish at least two objectives: (1) reduce costs through innovation; and (2) protect free speech. Universities could help reduce costs by encouraging competency-based education (CBE), which can reduce the time students must spend in school by granting accreditation when a student demonstrates proficiency in a subject. These programs let students pursue their degrees but also help protect them from excessive costs and loan defaults. In addition, the state could promote income share agreements (ISAs), which provide an alternative to student loans whereby a student agrees to pay a percentage of future income in exchange for present financial aid. Schools should also be encouraged to follow the free speech principles embodied in the University of Chicago's Statement of Freedom of Expression.

## WHO ELSE DOES IT?

Schools across the nation such as Texas A&M, Purdue, the University of Michigan, and the University of Wisconsin offer CBE degrees. Purdue has implemented a self-funding ISA program. The University of Chicago, Carnegie Mellon, George Mason, William and Mary, and Purdue have sterling records protecting student freedom of speech according to research from Heterodox Academy.

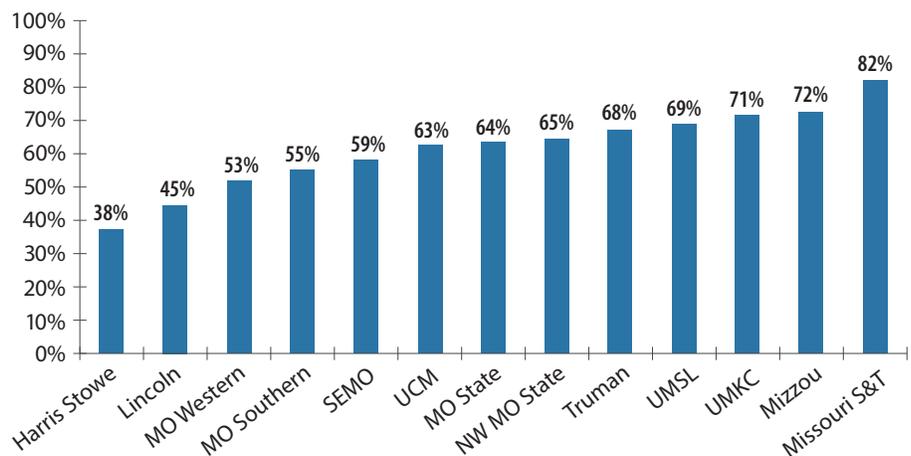
**THE OPPORTUNITY:** Recent upheaval at Missouri's largest university has given us a chance to step back and evaluate how to provide a cost-effective education to students in an environment that fosters the free exchange of ideas.

## KEY POINTS

- For many Missouri students, the enormous investment required for a university education isn't paying.
- Competency-based education programs can reduce both tuition costs and the time a student must spend in the classroom before joining the workforce.
- A collective pool of income share agreements could enable successful investments to fund future degrees.
- Free speech and open debate are essential to the health of a university.

## PERCENTAGE OF MISSOURI PUBLIC UNIVERSITY GRADUATES WHO RECEIVED FEDERAL AID WHO EARN MORE THAN A HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE

*A university degree is no guarantee that one's income will exceed that of someone with only a high school diploma.*



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## SHOW-ME INSTITUTE RESOURCES

Op-Ed: [“Reaping the Whirlwind at Mizzou”](#)

Blog post: [“Diversity of Viewpoints? Not at Mizzou”](#)

Blog post: [“Mizzou’s Loss Is Other Schools’ Gain”](#)

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