

Argument-Centered Education -- Counter-Argument Builder

Other Side's Overall Position: Public college in the United States should be free.

Other Side's Argument (Claim Plus Evidence/Reasoning)

College is currently unaffordable for many Americans, which is undemocratic. Average cost of public college is \$30K. It's growing at 10X inflation. Most good jobs require a college degree, so not having access to college keeps low-income students out of equal opportunity.

Counter-Argument

Looking at the average cost of public college is deceptive.

Evidence and Reasoning or Critique of Their Evidence or Reasoning

It may be the case that places like University of Illinois at Urbana are expensive, but there are public colleges like Chicago State or Northeastern Illinois that are far less expensive. Harold Washington College is already free. The point is that there are public colleges currently that are affordable to even very low-income families. Students can get a degree from a school like this, and then begin to make their way in the professional world based on their own merits.

Counter-Argument

Currently financial aid for low-income students makes even the more expensive public colleges either free or very affordable.

Evidence and Reasoning or Critique of Their Evidence or Reasoning

"Financial aid support for low-income and indigent families is still fairly robust, even despite state budget cutbacks. Currently nearly \$20 billion is provided annually through Pell grants and other means-tested programs to fund college for those families who cannot pay themselves" (Richard Fielding, National Interest, December, 2013). The affirmative side is not addressing the extensive financial aid that exists now for low-income students. They are only presenting the "sticker price" of college. But that's not a price that poor folk pay, nothing close to it. Financial aid programs are already addressing the problem they identify.