[](http://www.forbes.com/sites/andrewjosuweit/)**Why Skipping Community College Could Be A $20,000 Mistake**

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*Image courtesy of Student Loan Hero*

When Adam Reres was in high school, he decided to take a different route than many of his peers. Rather than go straight to the four-year school of his dreams, he decided to start his education at a community college.

“My decision to go to community college was mainly based on cost,” said Reres. “Community college was about one-third of the tuition of a four-year school. And with all of the core requirements accounted for, it was my gateway into a four-year program without wasting money on unnecessary credits.”

Community colleges offer an affordable alternative to four-year schools; Reres’ approach saved him thousands of dollars. While some people view them as a less glamorous option, there’s no doubt that community colleges offer tremendous value – $20,000 or more in savings for many students.

**Cost Of Tuition**

A recent study by Student Loan Hero examined the [cost of a college](https://studentloanhero.com/featured/cost-per-credit-hour-study/) credit today. It was found that the average cost per credit at a four-year public school was $325, while private school credits are a whopping $1,039 each.

Considering the typical four-year degree is equivalent to 120 credits, students can save an average of $11,337 by completing the first half at community college. In states where college credits are more expensive, such as New Jersey, that savings can add up to more than $20,000.

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Millions of students are catching onto this, which is part of the reason community college attendance has risen so dramatically. Between 2000 and 2010, enrollment in community college jumped about 2.5 million, according to [U.S. News](http://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/2012/04/21/report-community-college-attendance-up-but-graduation-rates-remain-low). And it’s still growing today.