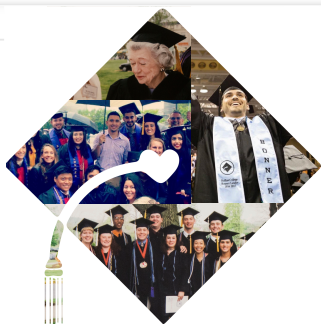


# WELCOME TO THE BONNER CONGRESS NATIONAL ISSUES FORUM!

## GOALS:

This all group session will provide us with an opportunity to engage in deliberative dialogue about a topic we all have a stake in: **what should be the focus of higher education and why getting a college education matters to us.** We will:

- **Learn how the National Issues Forum works** by modeling it on one topic;
- **Learn and share perspectives** on the role and value of a college education;
- **Engage in dialogue** with peers;
- **Explore how dialogue enhances learning** and how it can be a tool for leaders



## *Your Perspectives on the Role & Value of a College Education*

## GROUND RULES AND SAFE SPACE NORMS:

- **Use "I" Statements** .Speak for yourself.
- **Be aware of non-verbal expressions** - your body speaks volumes.
- **"Seek first to understand, then to be understood"** - listen generously.
- **"Tell me more..."** - Ask clarifying questions.
- **Respect Different Opinions** - Be open to conflicting viewpoints.
- **Silence is O.K.** - Actively listening can be one form of participation.
- **What is said here, stays here** - Take the learning and leave the names.
- **Say "Ouch"** - Help redirect the conversation constructively.

## PRIORITY 1:

### College should prepare students for today's job market.

- The workforce is changing, and students' college education should be focused on building career-applicable skills to maximize post-graduate employability and to meet the needs of the job market.
- This requires close partnerships between colleges and businesses to tailor a job-oriented curriculum and plentiful opportunities to apply this knowledge in the field via internships, service, and work-study programs.
- A challenge of this view is that students' education would be limited to job training.

#### Discussion Questions:

- ☐ In what ways do you personally hold and question this priority?
- ☐ How have you seen and heard this perspective in your family, on campus, in the community, in the news, etc.?
- ☐ Does this perspective support student involvement in the community? Could it?
- ☐ Does your cultural background shape your own view on this perspective?

## PRIORITY 2:

### College should prepare students to be effective leaders and contributors to society.

- Students will be educated to become well-rounded, flexible leaders that can adapt to the changing workforce, create jobs, and transform our society.
- This requires a curriculum focused on widely-applicable skills including critical thinking, collaboration, adaptation, ethics, and problem solving.
- A challenge of this view is that students participate in broad, general education without skill specificity or real-world application.

#### Discussion Questions:

- ☐ Does this priority reflect your own values? How?
- ☐ Discuss whether you see this priority reflected on your campus. For which people or places is it strongest or weakest?
- ☐ How do you think employers value this perspective? Do you think they would want their managers and employees to have these skills?
- ☐ If graduates are supposed to make positive contributions to society, how should they be educated as leaders?

## PRIORITY 3:

### College should leverage resources to drive economic & social opportunities in the community.

- Colleges and universities have tremendous potential to act as anchors in the community, and leverage their assets as sources of employment, investors, talent, and money for region.
- This perspective suggests that colleges should not be the center of a community, but should be an valuable contributor to the community.
- A challenge of this view is that student development becomes a secondary focus of the institution.

#### Discussion Questions:

- ☐ What are the strengths and drawbacks of this priority?
- ☐ What voices on our campuses (i.e., president, faculty, staff, etc.) or in our society seem loudest for this priority?
- ☐ What kinds of learning and experiences would colleges need to focus on to excel at this priority?
- ☐ How does this priority reflect or differ from your own values and experiences?