



The Washington Post

washingtonpost.com > Opinions

» FOLLOW OPINIONS ON:     

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

How much is a college degree worth?

Wednesday, September 15, 2010

Sarah Kaufman's Sept. 10 Style article, "[Is college overrated?](#)," explored two options for high school graduates: investing in an expensive four-year degree with uncertain returns or forgoing higher education. But are these the only options?

Economists Harry J. Holzer and Robert I. Lerman say that nearly half of all jobs now are and into the next decade will be [middle-skill jobs](#), which require technical training past high school but not a bachelor's degree. Such jobs are going unfilled. The Minneapolis Federal Reserve estimates that if workers' skills were matched to what employers need, the national [unemployment rate could fall to 6.5 percent](#).

Yet federal investments to send people to vocational training programs at community colleges, community-based nonprofits and labor unions pale in comparison to what is spent to underwrite educations at Georgetown and Harvard. Perhaps it's time to give more attention to a middle path.

Rachel Unruh, Washington

The writer is associate director of the National Skills Coalition.

--