Problem: Household Income Inequality

Since 2007, real median household income declined by 6.1 percent and...

Uneven pie

Incomes have become increasingly unequal over time, with the top 10 percent (and the top 1 percent) taking an outsized slice of the pie.

When income grows, who gains?

Between 1918 and 2008:

- Average incomes in the U.S. grew by $39,099
- The richest 10% got 51% of that growth.
- The bottom 90% shared 49%.

Average income over time

Source: The data come from this table: http://www.econ.berkeley.edu/~saez/TaxFig2008.xls on Emmanuel Saez's website at University of California, Berkeley. Methodology
There are 1,167 community colleges in the U.S. enrolling over 8 million students, representing 43% of total U.S. undergraduates and an estimated **50% of enrollment in economics principles courses**.

In comparison with students at four-year institutions, community college students more likely to be older, minority group members, first generation to attend college, working at paid employment, and enrolled part time.

But very little detail is known specifically about economics instruction.

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One Solution: Community Colleges Access

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**Number and Type of Colleges**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribal</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Headcount Enrollment (fall 2008)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12.4 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noncredit</td>
<td>5.2 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled full time</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


- Full-time students employed full time: 21%
- Full-time students employed part time: 59%
- Part-time students employed full time: 40%
- Part-time students employed part time: 47%

**Percentage of Students Applying For/Receiving Financial Aid (2007–2008)**

- Any aid: 59%
- Federal aid: 42%
- Federal grants: 21%
- State aid: 13%
- Institutional aid: 11%

**Percentage of Federal Aid Received by Community Colleges (2008–2009)**

- Pell Grants: 31%
- Academic Competitiveness Grants: 15%
- Campus based aid: 10%

**Student Demographics 2007–2008**

- Average age: 28
- Median age: 23
- 21 or younger: 39%
- 22–39: 45%
- 40 or older: 15%
- First generation to attend college: 42%
- Single parents: 13%
- Non-U.S. citizens: 6%
- Veterans: 3%
- Students with disabilities: 12%

**Fall 2008**

- Women: 58%
- Men: 42%
- Minorities: 45%
- Black: 23%
- Hispanic: 26%
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 6%
- Native American: 1%

Community college students constitute the following percentages of undergraduates (fall 2008):

- All U.S. undergraduates: 44%
- First-time freshmen: 43%
- Native American: 55%
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 45%
- Black: 44%
- Hispanic: 52%
Obstacle: Economics Major Transfers

Community college transfers do poorly when majoring in economics at a 4 year institution... Why?

Figure 2. Grade Distribution in ECON 311: Transferring from a Community College (Other than Principles of Macroeconomics)

Research: How Does Economic Instruction Vary In Community Colleges

This poster reports on findings of one of four regional surveys conducted for an NSF-funded project, Adapting Effective Outreach and Workshop Practices to Improve Community College Economic Instruction AwardNumber=1043245

A phone/email survey was conducted Q3 2011 covering VA, DC and MD community colleges. The survey shows:

- Most colleges/campuses have one economics instructor
  - A limited number Ph.Ds
  - Many cases taught by a business/social science faculty
- No discipline specific professional development opportunities
- No consistent curriculum standard (e.g. “Up to an instructor!”)
- No effectiveness measurement
- Offer best practice teaching resources & workshops (more to come... )