

The main reason is that the future is so uncertain. How do you plan for the unknown? Flexibly. A college education prepares you for the options that will hit you hard. When crises happen, you have to know how to think your way out of a paper bag – or you might end up stuff-

- Those with an associate degree earn salaries 26 percent higher than those with only a high school diploma.
- Those with a bachelor's degree had salaries 57 percent higher than those with only a high school diploma.
- Those with master's degrees had salaries 90 percent higher than those

people who have been around the block. They've been doctors, lawyers, engineers, nurses, journalists, graphic artists, poets, lobbyists, military officers, chiefs of state. They know things that can help you get where you want to go. Smart college and university students find people like this and take classes from them – more than that, they track them down during office hours and pick their brains with questions. They buy them coffee and wear them out with even more questions. They don't just study and get good grades. They soak up all they can.

Of course all that takes time – which is why college is worth the months and years (and the money) you set aside for it. Two years at a junior college or four years at a liberal arts institution or university is the life-space you need to sit back and look at the career or vocational landscape. You don't want to settle for a job you can live with. You want a vocation or profession that you love. And to find it, you have to take time to look inside yourself and find out who you are.

Workplace managers don't have a lot of patience for that. But your academic adviser – or that faculty member you find who takes time to listen to you – will go beyond patience. The best of them

# Behind

ing plastic bags, maybe long-term, at a checkout line. Future employers want to know how well your brain works. A diploma from a respected college or university shows them you've had preparation for what they'll throw at you, along with all the stuff they don't know about yet. They like hiring thinkers.

Fact is, the more thought-training you have, the more you'll earn. A recent U.S. Census bureau study showed that people like you will rake in more, over time, if they complete college. The census data show that:

## Landscape Architect

**Description:** Plan and design land areas for parks and other recreational facilities, commercial, industrial and residential sites.

**Educational Level:**  
Bachelor's degree

**Average Median Salary:** \$47,000

with only a high school diploma.

But it's not as simple as just enrolling. It takes three things

Kentuckians are known for nationally on the basketball court and athletic fields – drive, ambition

and out-of-the-box thinking. A recent study of college students by the Chronicle of Higher Education showed that those most likely to succeed, and earn the highest salaries after graduation, weren't those who floated through their college years. They didn't try to ride on a strong SAT or ACT score. They worked hard. They surrounded themselves with friends who were working as hard – maybe harder – than they were. And they took the time to build networks with the right people.

A college or university isn't merely a catalog. It's a vast collection of people –

## Software Engineer

**Description:** Analyze user needs to develop computer software solutions that will optimize efficiency.

**Educational Level:**  
Bachelor's degree

**Average Median Salary:** \$60,500

## Paralegal

**Description:** Assist lawyers by researching legal precedent, investigating facts, or preparing legal documents. Conduct research to support a legal proceeding, to formulate a defense, or to initiate legal action.

**Educational Level:**  
Associate degree

**Average Median Salary:** \$31,000

## Technical Writer

**Description:** Write technical materials, such as equipment manuals, appendices, or operating and maintenance instructions.

**Educational Level:**  
Bachelor's degree

**Average Median Salary:** \$46,100

## Broadcast Technician

**Description:** Set up, operate, and maintain the electronic equipment used to transmit radio and television programs.

**Educational Level:**  
Postsecondary vocational award

**Average Median Salary:** \$24,900