



College You: Get Much More Out of College

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College You Press

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Arguing that pursuing a traditional higher education is a civic responsibility, the bold education manual College You speaks to college-bound students with convincing aplomb.

Part survival manual for college-bound students, part gentle polemic, Chiara Bacigalupa, Shelly Albaum, Antonia Bacigalupa Albaum, and Gianna Albaum's book *College You* is a comprehensive education resource drawing on their expertise as seasoned educators.

Addressing the questions, doubts, and misunderstandings that students transitioning from high school to college may have, this book argues against an increasing skepticism about higher education. It covers concerns regarding tuition costs, pressures to pursue high-paying vocational tracks, the opportunity cost of devoting four years to one cause, and the challenges of college life itself. Its position is that a bachelor's degree is an essential introduction to a flexible, mature adult life in the modern world. Students gunning for a quick diploma and anxious about career prospects and ballooning costs are encouraged to consider long-term consequences of not seeking a higher education and to embrace the uncomfortable, thrilling process of intellectual growth.

This text rejects "career prep" approaches to higher education in favor of more traditional ideals. Institutions of higher learning exist, it argues, for a noble purpose: to "pass the torch" of civilization's achievements to the next generation. From its perspective, young adults have a civic responsibility to pursue a broad education on behalf of future generations. This framing gives a new cast to an old problem, avoiding the inward focus that determines much of the contemporary public discourse on college.

The book also comes down hard on common student excuses for cheating, laziness, and lack of clear commitment. Indeed, much of its advice is reminiscent of standard college wisdom, with tips for getting involved in campus life and developing strong academic habits. Some of its takes are bolder, though, as where it encourages all students to choose an immersive and challenging study abroad program, or where it cautions against declaring a major within the first year or taking on more than the minimum course load. These propositions are addressed in a self-assured manner that somewhat belies their deeper, unexplored complexities.

Cartoon interlocutors representing the student perspective appear in the margins of each chapter, delivering pert asides and fair questions to break up the manual's often serious tone. At the close of each chapter, these cartoon characters reappear for more extensive question-and-answer sessions to address a vast range of possible student anxieties. The bright coloration and cutesy, round-faced mascots may not appeal to the target demographic, though. The book's summaries, postchapter takeaways, and appendices aimed at a wide range of student backgrounds and comfort levels have more general appeal.

Aimed at students exploring college and at educators alike, *College You* is a broad-ranging beginner's guide to the college experience.

ISAAC RANDEL (October 31, 2024)

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