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State's new "Return on Investment" report spotlights college value

INDIANAPOLIS – The Indiana Higher Education Commission released a new "Return on Investment" (ROI) report today as part of an ongoing effort to help Hoosier students and families make more informed choices as they pursue education beyond high school.

"An investment in higher education may be the smartest purchase Hoosiers ever make," said Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education Teresa Lubbers. "College graduates employed in Indiana earn more than two dollars for every dollar spent on their degrees within the first four years of graduation—the beginning of a lifelong return on investment."

The Commission's ROI report is the latest in a series of state reports focused on providing greater transparency around the costs and benefits of a college education. The report features consumer-friendly profiles highlighting the average cost, debt, salary and employment opportunities for graduates of Indiana's public colleges and universities.

"Though there is no mistaking the value of a college degree, the data clearly show that the outcome greatly depends on individual choice—where students go to school, what they study, how long it takes them to graduate and how much debt they incur," Lubbers noted. "We want to empower Hoosiers with the facts, equipping them to maximize their return on investment through purposeful planning and responsible borrowing."

A Closer Look at College Value

"I am pleased that our state has been able to connect education and workforce data to help Hoosiers make smart choices as they seek to improve their economic wellbeing through education and training," said Governor Mike Pence.

Featuring both state-level and college-specific profiles, the ROI report includes three key pieces of information:

- **Average cost of college** (before and after financial aid) and **average student debt**. These estimations show how much a student is likely to pay for college as well as the average amount of college debt upon graduation. This information can help students and families better understand their expected investment and the importance of college completion, especially on-time college completion.
- **Top three industries of employment** by college program one year after graduation for Hoosier graduates who stay in Indiana. For some college majors, two-thirds or more of graduates go to work in a particular industry while other programs have far greater variability in job opportunities. Students benefit from understanding which degree programs offer direct paths to specific professions and careers versus those programs that may require more research, planning or advanced education to determine a career pathway.
- **Average salary one, five and ten years post-graduation** for Hoosier college graduates who stay in Indiana. Expected salary is important information to consider when choosing a degree program, determining how to finance a college education and planning a post-graduation budget. Beyond future earnings, students should also consider other factors, such as personal interest, career development potential and value to society when selecting an area of study.

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Data included in the latest “Return on Investment” report comes from three main sources: the Indiana Commission for Higher Education Data System (CHEDS), the federal Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and the Indiana Workforce Intelligence System (IWIS), the state’s longitudinal data system.

The “Return on Investment” report series is a companion piece to the Commission’s “Reaching Higher, Achieving More” strategic plan. Adopted in 2012, the “Reaching Higher, Achieving More” calls for key reforms designed to increase college completion and education attainment in Indiana. To read the Commission’s strategic plan or the new Return on Investment report, visit www.che.in.gov.

About the Commission for Higher Education

The Indiana Commission for Higher Education is a 14-member public body created in 1971 to define the missions of Indiana’s colleges and universities, plan and coordinate the state’s postsecondary education system, and ensure that Indiana’s higher education system is aligned to meet the needs of students and the state. The Commission includes representatives from each Congressional district, three at-large members, a college faculty member and a college student representative.