

Frills Versus Value?

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I read with interest the article last week in the *Boston Globe*, which talked about the Southern New Hampshire Univeristy's new Salem campus, a satellite campus that is being described as a "no frills campus." As a word-person, I was intrigued by the terms being used to describe the branch campus and its programmatic offerings. SNHU is describing value without using the often-stigmatized phrase "commuter campus."

The language of "value" is resonating with students. As proof, today the AP ran a story about record enrollments for community college campuses. Here is how the AP breaks down the economic benefits of fewer frills (my phrase) at a community college:

Nationwide, the average annual cost of community college is \$2,402, compared to \$6585 in tuition and fees at in-state public four-year schools, according to the College Board. Averaging tuition and fees for private four-year schools: \$25,143.

Factoring in financial aid, the College Board estimates the average net cost at community colleges is only about \$100.

What are the down sides to a "no frills" or reduced frills educational experience? A parent interviewed in the Boston Globe story summarize the negatives well: "By being with other students and listening to the way they handle projects and even problems in life, you learn a great deal," Teri Gambardella said. "That's what they're missing right now. They just leave at the end of the day and go home."

This is the year's most critical season in higher education--the time between student acceptance and student deposits. What language are you using to describe the value of your education and how does that experience compare to your "no frills" competitors?

- [Teresa Valerio Parrot](#)

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