

## **Research Proposal**

### **Introduction**

The escalating cost of higher education has emerged as a critical issue affecting college students across the United States. This problem has received significant attention in recent years as tuition fees have soared beyond the rate of inflation. Many students and their families find themselves in financial distress, struggling to afford the cost of college education. The issue of unaffordability not only hampers access to higher education but also has far-reaching consequences for graduates' financial stability and future prospects. This proposal aims to explore the multifaceted challenges posed by the rising cost of college education and its implications for students, families, and society at large.

### **Exigence**

The unaffordability of higher education is a matter of urgent concern, not just for those directly affected, but for society as a whole. For students, the financial burden of college can lead to significant stress and anxiety, impacting their mental health and academic performance. The issue also has broader societal implications, as it perpetuates socioeconomic inequalities. Students from low-income families are disproportionately affected, often having to juggle multiple jobs alongside their studies, which can detract from their educational experience and hinder their academic success.

This problem is not just a personal issue but a systemic one that affects the economic and social fabric of our society. The heavy debt burden carried by many graduates can delay major life decisions such as buying a home, starting a family, or investing in further education. This debt can also influence career choices, steering graduates away from lower-paying but socially valuable professions, such as teaching or social work, in favor of higher-paying jobs that may not align with their passions or skills.

Addressing the unaffordability of higher education is crucial for fostering a more equitable and prosperous society. It is a topic of ongoing conversation among policymakers, educators, and the public, reflecting its significance and the urgent need for solutions.

### **Thesis**

At this stage, my central argument is that the rising cost of higher education in the United States exacerbates socioeconomic inequalities and imposes long-term financial burdens on graduates, thereby necessitating comprehensive policy reforms to make college more affordable and accessible. This argument will be developed through an examination of the causes and consequences of rising tuition fees, the impact of student debt on individuals and society, and potential strategies for alleviating the financial strain on students and their families.

In conclusion, the unaffordability of higher education is a pressing issue that demands immediate attention. By addressing this problem, we can work towards a more inclusive and equitable education system that empowers all students, regardless of their economic background, to pursue their academic and professional goals without the looming threat of financial hardship.