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CS 292

Debate 8 Topic: Job Requirements

Background: The job market is rapidly changing and hiring strategies and job requirements must also adapt with the changing times. It is estimated that by 2030, between 75 million and 375 million workers worldwide will need to find a new job because their old job will be obsolete for humans. These people will need to acquire the new skills for a new job by any means necessary to secure new employment, which may include going to/back to college, or a specialized training program. Even now, not everyone has the same path to/through college which can lead to employment disadvantages for people not completing the standard 4-year bachelor’s degree straight after high school. Additionally, not everyone has the same set of privileges that make college an accessible choice, but everyone can have access to resources that aren’t as costly and time intensive and can learn a similar set of skills. Most tech jobs now are centered on the idea of lifelong learning, so the employees are expected to keep up with new and emerging technology either on their own or through the company’s training programs and this does not require a degree.

Side 1: Companies should require new hires to have Bachelor's degrees. Though many people never work in the field they have earned a degree in, Bachelor’s degrees have more value than just the knowledge you have gained in your major of choice. There are so many other skills beyond that that are required in the workforce, such as time and stress management skills, money management, determination, problem solving skills across academics and life, adaptability, and long term learning that cannot be replicated in another experience. A Bachelor’s degree shows that the bearer has either learned or grown theses skills through their 4+ years in college and knows the importance of getting the degree and sticking to it for as long as they have. College is also a time for widening your perspective and personal growth, and this well-roundedness and social awareness is very valuable to employers. Requiring degrees also makes the hiring process easier, if you don’t mind filtering by degree and making assumptions about degree holders such as they have the academic skills associated with that degree. Some companies I’ve interviewed for were more concerned with how well I would fit the company and how adaptable I am rather than the technical skills I have which they assumed based on my degree and GPA.

Side 2: Companies should weigh other factors more heavily than degree(s) attained. College is wildly expensive and the skills learned, academic and life skills, could be learned elsewhere and through other life experiences without being money and time intensive. College also favors those that can afford it or have means to obtain a loan, and those that do not have other obligations. The current estimate of student loan debt in 2018 is 1.48 trillion dollars. This would be so much less if college wasn’t a requirement for most jobs and recent high school grads didn’t feel so much pressure to just get a degree. Currently there are a plethora of free or low cost educational tools, like Coursera, Pluralsight, MIT OpenCourseWare, and ITunes U that could train people without the overhead of a degree and the potentially wasted time and money. About one-third of college-educated American workers are never employed within their degree field, so why waste the time and effort on it if you can learn the skills you seek directly. More important than the degree you obtain is the other experiences, such as internships, leadership experience, and volunteer work, that give you more professional experience and show you are adaptable and trainable, which is usually most important to a company, and shows you have been successful in a professional setting.

Possible Resolution: Bachelor’s degrees have a lot of value outside of the classes you take, but not all have access to this luxury. Also, degrees do not necessarily mean the person is competent in the field depending on where they went to school. A lot of qualified people may be overlooked simply because they could not afford to go to college. Companies should not require bachelor’s degrees, but should always hire the best person for the job, which usually entails skills such as adaptability, trainability, and good problem solving skills, which can be obtained without a college degree.