



“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”

--W.B. Yeats

Getting to College

has never been exactly easy: only now, it's gotten tougher. The increasing costs, the preparatory tests, the red tape, the big expectations, the hours of study, the personal sacrifices—all of it has been pretty standard for generations of men and women seeking to improve their education. Some things never change, even if it's only that things get tougher.

But more and more people are going for one simple reason: *they need it*. As most of us know, not finishing high school just about guarantees starvation wages. Yet even with a high school credential the earnings aren't much more than \$30,000 a year, *while a bachelor's degree doubles it*. For almost everyone who has left high school, young or old, the math is simple—if you want more money or the better kinds of jobs, you'll need some sort of higher education or advanced training. Indeed, employers don't merely prefer it in their applicants: increasingly they expect it.

The **problem** is, more than 17 million Americans are expected to enter college in 2010 (an historic high) but as much as half are expected to **drop out** before they complete a degree. Families, administrators, not to mention students, are worried—why invest so much money and effort if there won't be a payoff? And as jobs become scarcer over the next decade, **competition for work** will increase—how can anybody afford to spend money on school if there's not enough dollars to survive? Making an investment in higher education is risky and costly; **NOT INVESTING** in higher education, however, can be more risky and costly. What can you do between a rock and a hard place?

The answer is, **PLAN WISELY**: make use of the free, professional resources around you. In the package here, we've compiled just some of our material for coaching people who want to begin the process. Our **Transitions Program** at UMUT Adult Education aims to foster both the **KNOW-HOW** for getting a higher education and the **SKILLS** for staying there. We have a wide variety of materials to help you explore your possibilities, learn about financing, organize your options, and support your learning. By making a strong **RoadMap** now, you can head off future difficulties or gaps. Spend smart, and let our expertise and experience (many of us already college instructors and advisors) help you get the most from your next step.

