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## COLLEGES RESIST FEDERAL EFFORT TO GAUGE STUDENT OUTCOMES

*Government scorecard had ambitious goals but ended up with modest results*

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In an effort to expose poorly performing schools and rein in college costs, former President Barack Obama in 2013 proposed a [rating system](#) tying federal dollars to school outcomes.

The initiative faced fierce resistance from a wide swath of schools that said it was unfair to compare outcomes of institutions with different missions. In 2015 the Education Department released a more modest [College Scorecard](#) that tracks retention and graduation rates for first-time, full-time students; average post-college earnings for students who received federal grants and loans; debt loads for those students; and popular areas of study.

But critics say [the information doesn't dive deep enough](#) to be useful, since [earnings for an English major and engineering major could vary greatly](#) and less than 60% of undergraduates get federal financial aid.

At schools with generous financial-aid packages, such as Harvard University, or very low sticker prices, like California's community colleges, the federal government posts earnings information that reflects just a tiny share of students. And military service academies are left out entirely.

Higher-education policy experts and researchers said they had expected the Education Department to begin publishing graduation rates for part-time students in the College Scorecard as well, but the initiative seems to have been delayed.

The department didn't respond to a request for comment on its plans for providing more comprehensive information.