Source evaluations for College Value topic

Stephens
This is clearly an opinion piece, making the case against college degrees. Some points are supported, in particular the claim that 36% of graduates lack critical thinking and writing skills. Other points lack support and should be treated as merely his perceptions. As the holder of a Thiel Fellowship (a "scholarship" to work in Silicon Valley, which requires that he not attend college), he has some credibility in that he is practicing what he preaches.

Smith
This is a very strong source to represent the viewpoint that college is worth the cost. As the president of a liberal arts college, Smith is knowledgeable, though likely biased, and he includes statistics from credible sources to support the claims about the economic value of a college degree. These factual claims could be corroborated with other sources.

Le
This is a personal essay, so it is not reliable as a source of information, but it does give a perspective on the value of college and could be useful especially as an example of someone who values the symbolic significance of earning a bachelor's degree, as a personal and family achievement. She includes statistics about the earning potential of college graduates and the number of college graduates in the country; since these are not cited, other sources should be used for this kind of information.

Riley
The Washington Post is a nationally-prominent newspaper. Some see it as left-leaning, but in general it is well respected. The author gives sources for some of her information, adding to her credibility. A web search led to her web site, which states that she is a former editor of the Wall Street Journal and that higher education is one area on which she has focused. Overall this is a credible source.

Census Bureau
This is a government agency, reporting data from the census. This a reliable source, informative rather than making an argument.

“Is a College Degree Worth the Money?”
This was printed in the Wall Street Journal, a well-respected newspaper with a focus on economic issues. Sources of the information are given, and they are relevant government and university agencies. This a reliable source, informative rather than making an argument.

Nemko
Nemko identifies himself as a career counselor, a very relevant profession. This essay is from his own website, which could make one question its credibility. The biography on the site indicates that he has a Ph.D. in Education and college-level teaching
experience, and has written books on college and on careers. He cites sources for some of the information, though not all. Overall, this seems like a good source to use, although it would be nice to have external confirmation that the author has the expertise he seems to.

ACT Report
This is a report giving information only, not taking a position. It is from the makers of the ACT, a reliable source for this kind of information. It suggests that Nemko is correct about the probability of students with low test scores to succeed in college, although it does not address the question of whether interventions such as those Perry and Miller propose might make a difference. I was not able to find this document on the Act website, but where I found it is also credible (the Tennessee Board of Regents website), and I found a longer document with similar data on the ACT site.

Perry
This is from a newspaper specializing in issues related to higher education, suggesting a knowledgeable author and audience, but perhaps biased on the side of valuing college. He has very specific information, suggesting that he is knowledgeable, although he only sometimes cites a source. Some internet research on the author shows that he was on the Board of Regents in South Dakota for a number of years, confirming his expertise on what is happening in that state.

Miller
Some internet research shows that the author has a Ph.D. in English and teaches in the Education program at the University of Virginia. One of her research areas is measuring student learning. Therefore, she has relevant expertise on the topic, and she also cites the sources of information included in the article. The publication is a trade magazine focused on higher education. She clearly has an opinion on the subject, but with that caveat, this is a highly credible source.