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The neighbors believe my life will become a miserable failure. They have not said as much – because they have barely spoken to me since I moved in a couple years ago. But the track record of previous owners of this house shows that my life is going to fall into financial ruin. My relationships are going to dissolve. Some night, they suspect, I’m going to load up a truck and abandon the house, leaving it stripped of appliances, copper, light bulbs and anything else that can be disconnected and sold before the bank repossesses it.

This is a possibility, of course. The life of a writer is not the grandest existence a person can live. But what I resent is that this was all decided not based upon how I live my life or the quality of the individual that I am. Rather, it’s the misfortune of others that has doomed me.

But the processes of deduction and speculation are risky endeavors. If you form your ideas based on randomness, the end result is going to present a flawed final picture. In this edition of Career College Central, we decided to take a look ahead – 25 years forward – at the changes that could await higher education. On the eve of the Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities Annual Convention & Exposition, an event that will focus on the evolution of education, we felt this was an ideal time to look at the changes that could await higher education as a whole.

Technology is imposing its will on higher education as we know it. In the last couple of years, we have seen the rise – and leveling off – of massive open online courses. We have all heard of flipped classrooms and hybrid programs. The latest buzz is credentials, and the process of offering credit for cost is a driving factor behind many of these technological innovations. But, then again, there is inherent change that will come to higher education outside of that caused by technology. And what will that evolution bring? Our feature story takes a few guesses. Our projections are based on snapshots of the present and trends of the past. They are guesses, but they are reasoned ones.

I love my house, as quaint as it might be. I have lost some faith, though, in the cordiality of the folks who live around me. They seem like good people. But they gave up on me before I ever had a chance to make an impression. The realm of higher education has taught me an appreciation for research and reason. Now, if only the people who live on my street could take a similar course.
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Will there ever be scrutiny placed on the student? Do we all have a hand in this? What is the cost of the "everyone wins" methodology? Allow me to expound on this a bit. My wife and I have three girls. Early on, we enrolled them all into community group sports; our thoughts were this would be stimulating and would teach teamwork. Much to my surprise, all of the group sports in our area teach "everyone wins." Everyone gets a trophy. While watching I noticed that even the most challenged player was rewarded. In fact, my oldest daughter noted that she only wanted to play to get the trophy. Perhaps I am part of the problem, as I bought into this concept for a while.

Fast forward to higher education and the purpose of this tool. A great portion of what I read and hear is consumed by the for-profit schools and student debt. Why is there a lack of success stories or marketing towards achievement? In my humble opinion, the student or the individual should have some accountability. There is an abundance of statistics and research about the amount of student loans, scrutiny of the institution, regulation needs, etc.

How much money does the inexperienced student/employee cost the business, customer, community and country? Can the "everyone wins" methodology actually be impacting our markets? Not everyone can be a CEO, leader, scientist, CFO, business owner, firefighter, professor, moderator, etc. I also believe that most of us know right from wrong, even the ones brought up with the "everybody wins" methodology.

What kind of impact would there be if prospective students had to qualify for higher education by serving a number of years in a specific area? I am sure that most people know that some countries mandate a number of years serving in the military. During this time, I am certain that goals, leadership, ethics and rules are offered as well as demanded. Early on in my pursuit of becoming a professional firefighter, I paid my dues as a volunteer EMT on private/city ambulances. I also was rejected/failed 25 times on written tests before earning a seat as a rookie. For me, failures made me hungry to win – to compete.

Is there reason to believe that there should also be a discussion about the individual choices that are made along with accountability? It makes me cringe when I hear about the poor college student that can't get a job and is burdened with debt. Did they choose a vertical that didn't fit their ability?

Sure, there is plenty of room to point fingers. What I struggle with is the burden on the business owner, who occasionally hires a promising specialist with an impressive resume and then pays the price with lost revenue, quality, reputation and ability to focus, due to lack of knowledge, skills and, more importantly, the instinct to win that was forged by lessons learned from past experiences and failures. What is the cost of "everyone wins"? Should there be more accountability on the individual?

Respectfully,

Ronald Hollister
Director Business Development
Blueforce Development
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Ron, thank you for the letter. I appreciate your thoughts and the questions you've raised. You've touched on a topic that has been a discussion point in our sector – actually, in all of higher education – for some time. While there is room for personal responsibility, many students are taken care of by their parents until they reach college age and may not have explored what to do once they start living on their own (no career exploration at home, at school or few resources and support). Although nontraditional students who attend career colleges better understand the challenges they are about to take on than a typical college freshman would. Students should be held accountable up to a point, and that point is when the school they attend doesn't deliver its end of the bargain. I believe the vast majority of our schools do an excellent job in providing an education and delivering exactly what they say they will. If the school does its job in helping students understand the financial commitment they are making and the effort it takes to complete a degree before enrolling, then the student accepts that challenge in good faith. Students must take responsibility for their success or failure. That, in my opinion, is the largest part of the college experience – being an adult and owning up to your commitment.

Kevin Kuzma
Editor, Career College Central
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Do grades tell the real story of student experience or knowledge gained?

By Don Arnoldy, Contributing Writer

In December, Harvard came under fire when it was revealed that the most common grade its students received was an A, with the median grade being an A-. Discussions of grade inflation, though rare in the mainstream media, are common in education media. The problem is not Harvard (or any other specific school). The problem is the grading system itself.

As it stands, it is in any particular college's best interest to have its students' GPAs as high as possible — even while professing to be against grade inflation. Higher GPAs get more of an institution’s undergrads into graduate schools, which in turn increases the school’s ranking and reputation. This keeps the students happier and, in the end, increases alumni donations. Imagine a college where students’ GPAs really formed the often-idealized bell-shaped curve, and 70 percent of the students had a GPA between 1.5 and 2.5. What would you think of such a school?

Since there are satisfactory academic progress (SAP) requirements, a student who has a cumulative GPA of less than 2.0 can lose eligibility for financial aid and can be dismissed from the institution (and many of them already leave on their own). But, in a perfect bell-shaped world, half of the students are below 2.0. Are we expected to cast off the lowest-performing half of our students each term, deflate the grades of the remaining students during the next term to maintain "the curve," and then repeat this process? If so, is it any wonder that completion rates at traditional colleges are so low?
How can you reduce a person's entire four-year learning career down to a single number (GPA)? Is being excellent at writing and average at math really the same as being good at both? Do an A and a C mean the same as two Bs?

It is difficult to know what a particular grade on a transcript means, yet we imbue these grades with a great deal of meaning. From seeing an A in ENG101 class on a transcript, what can you infer about knowledge, skills and attitudes of the student? Does that A mean that the student took an easy class from a professor with low standards, or does it indicate an excellent student who worked hard to master the subject? How does an A in a course at Middle of Nowhere State College compare to a B or C in the same course from Big Ivy Research University?

Research has shown that when people are offered an external reward for performing a task, the task loses meaning. In his book *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*, Daniel Pink talks about research that shows that, for tasks with a cognitive component, a larger reward leads to poorer performance. Learning is mostly a cognitive task. The grade becomes more important to the student than the learning it is supposed to motivate.

From a pedagogical standpoint, why shouldn't all of your students achieve excellence? Isn't that what we're working toward? Do we see the course we teach as a staircase to help the students on their journey or a hurdle they must overcome (or circumvent) before they proceed?
In their paper, "The Impact of Grading on the Curve: A Simulation Analysis," Kulick and Wright look at how well grades reflect the preparedness of students. Since a typical test does not test all of the material covered in a course, if an average student masters 75 percent of the material, the grade earned depends greatly on how well that student’s mastered material overlaps with the questions that the instructor chooses to ask. Kulick and Wright found that equally well-prepared students could receive grades ranging from a D to an A, depending on that match. Is that what we are really grading – the students’ ability to figure out what this teacher wants?

Grading has become a vast exercise in accounting, rather than a mechanism for providing students with meaningful feedback on their learning. Until and unless we can move to a system that focuses on the mastery of student learning objectives instead of grades, this will continue to be a problem.

Imagine a college where students’ GPAs really formed the often-idealized bell-shaped curve, and 70 percent of the students had a GPA between 1.5 and 2.5. What would you think of such a school?

What can you know about the instructional methods, testing or grading used within a class by looking at the grade spread? Does a course with a high frequency of As mean that the instructor was an easy grader with low standards – or does it mean that the instructor was a good teacher who inspired the students to work hard and excel? Does a course with a high frequency of Fs mean that the instructor had high standards and allowed the lazy students to earn the grade they deserved, or does it mean that the instructor was incompetent and failed to lead his students to even a basic understanding of the material?

Throughout the last 20 years, Don Arnoldy has worked at several for-profit career colleges as an instructor, department chair and dean. He is currently an instructor at Carrington College in Portland, Ore.
Direct Response Advertising for Schools since 2001.
A new generation of online course providers is marrying the lofty goals of massive open online courses (MOOCs) with a tangible benefit to students. MOOCs were originally created to spread access to education by putting lectures and course materials from top-notch professors on the Web. However, they do not address rising college costs. As budgets shrink on campuses, students are struggling to pay for classes and to get into them.

An online education platform known as Education Portal is among the "next generation" of MOOCs – new online courses that allow students to learn independently and earn low-cost, transferable credit. By taking courses from a third party, students can bypass high costs at their schools while still transferring credits that apply toward their degrees.

"Demand is high," said Jessica Bayliss, Education Director at Education Portal. "Students are feeling squeezed by rising costs, which is a big reason why over 3 million students have used our courses in the past two years."

A poll last year of California’s San Jose State University students yielded frustrated comments, such as, "Classes are really cramped." And, "A lot of students are saying I'm paying more but receiving less."

Transferring credits may not be unique, but leveraging three widely accepted credit-by-examination programs is. With a next generation MOOC, courses are paired with credit-granting exams offered by organizations like the College Board and the not-for-profit Excelsior College. The Education Portal website alone has more than 50 online courses paired with these exams.

The key to credit-by-exam is that it is widely accepted by schools across the U.S. Credits earned from exams like College Board’s CLEP and Excelsior’s UExcel exams are accepted at over 2,900 colleges, including most state universities and community colleges.

"I'm a full-time student, working and broke," said Elisa Fleming, one of the 76,000 students who passed a CLEP exam in 2012. Fleming cited credit-by-exam as saving her time, money and stress, and she planned to take several more.

For these MOOCs to truly be of value, they have to be offered at affordable rates. Right now, it costs less than $100 to earn three college credits through Education Portal, and the exams cover most of the subjects students need to take during their first two years.

"Since Education Portal has courses in history, math, science and other core topics, many students use them to knock out their general education requirements," Bayliss said. "This allows them to start their major classes earlier and have a better chance of graduating on time."

The potential savings for students can be significant. The average cost of one semester at a public university is $4,327, according to the College Board. Students who take just one semester's worth of classes could save over $3,500 and graduate more quickly.

With rising college costs and families concerned about going into significant debt to enroll students in degree programs, it’s possible that MOOCs built on the principle of improving education accessibility could offer a fast and inexpensive way to earn college credit.
That said, last year, substantial criticism was levied at MOOC provider Udacity and its founder, Sebastian Thrun, who made big promises but delivered little. Retention rates in Udacity courses have been abysmal, and those students who did make it through were those with Bachelor’s degrees already. Udacity then decided to charge money for their certified courses, leaving behind their claims of free, quality higher education for all.

With the promise of free, quality online education gone by the wayside, are low-cost courses that offer transferable credit the next logical step?

In today’s business realm, where nothing is ever totally free, it certainly seems that the MOOC super highway is going to be paved with gold.

Kevin Kuzma is Editor of Career College Central. His feature writing, essays and short stories have appeared in The Kansas City Star, Urban Times, Review, Ink Magazine and Present Magazine. He can be contacted at Kevin.Kuzma@CareerCollegeCentral.com.
THE EDUCATION EVOLUTION

What changes will come in the next 25 years of higher education? Tomorrow’s transformations will likely be tied to those we see today

By Jenni Valentino, Staff Writer
In EDUCAUSE’s "Top-Ten IT Issues in Higher Education 2014," author Susan Grajek says, "It is time to stop considering whether to be the change you want to see in the world because the change is here. It is time to be – and, better yet, to lead – the change you already see."

While she was referring to technology in higher education in particular, the notion will likely be applicable across all aspects of the higher education landscape. It is highly unlikely that the next 25 years will bring changes that render higher education unrecognizable – universities won’t cease to exist, instructors won’t be replaced by robots, and students won’t be able to forgo tests in lieu of uploading what they’ve learned into a computer database a la Johnny Mnemonic. Instead, we’ll see the proliferation of changes that are already present – it’s all but inevitable that students will carry only a tablet and won’t need backpacks, the student loan bubble will burst, and institutions will no longer be judged by the longevity of their names but by the outcomes of their most at-risk students.

Perhaps it’s impossible to truly predict what higher education will look like in 25 years. For example, technology is moving quickly enough that a real-time translation device eliminating the language barrier and allowing students instruction from any country on earth is extremely plausible. Economic collapse, technological advancement and unstable global relations all have the potential to drive a change we can’t yet foresee. But in order to avoid the fate of 1960s predictors who bet on flying cars in the 1990s, we’ll take a cue from Susan Grajek and comment primarily on the change we already see.

1. **Online and video-based learning**

It’s no secret that online learning became mainstream years ago. "Horizon Report: 2014 Higher Education Edition" says, "Education paradigms are shifting to include more online learning, blended and hybrid learning, and collaborative models." According to the Department of Education, 5.5 million students took at least one online course in 2012. And as colleges and universities continue to struggle with funding challenges, distance learning – spurred even further by the growing prevalence of video conferencing – will begin to outpace classroom education. After all, it’s more convenient for many students (especially those entering higher education after having grown up on computers, who are used to learning with a technological bent) and more affordable to maintain for institutions.
2. E-textbook exclusivity

"No more pencils, no more books ..." Maybe Alice Cooper’s 1972 graduation anthem is more prophetic than he intended. Tomorrow’s students won’t stand being tethered down by heavy, expensive textbooks that have to be updated every few years – and neither will environmentalists. While The New York Times published an article titled "In a Digital Age, Students Still Cling to Paper Textbooks" in 2009, they won’t continue to cling for much longer. Textbooks will move exclusively to the cloud, allowing students to study and take notes on smartphones, tablets, laptops and campus computers, no matter where they happen to be.

3. Loss of public funding for traditional colleges and universities

In the summer of 2012, when Inside Higher Ed and Gallup polled campus CFOs, only 13 percent expressed strong confidence in the financial health of their institution over the next 10 years. Unfortunately for campuses and students, that lack of confidence is probably warranted. Take Louisiana for example: In the past, Louisiana higher education institutions got up to 70 percent of their funding from the state. In 2013, however, the state was spending a full 42 percent less on each student – while tuition increased 38 percent. Across the country, states spent $2,353 (28 percent) less on each student in 2013 than they did before the recession began. Expect this funding gap to continue to deepen and the unsustainable cost burden to shift onto students – necessitating a complete paradigm shift in the way we view higher education.

4. More selective – and more expensive – federal student loans

"There are millions of people feeling the pain of student debt. When that number gets big enough, it starts to permeate the public consciousness," said Richard Vedder, an Ohio University economics professor who directs the Center for College Affordability and Productivity, in a December 2012 Bloomberg Businessweek article. The federal government will likely continue to push some form of a gainful employment regulation in order to mitigate the ballooning student loan default rates – but it won’t just be universities feeling the squeeze of a new
student loan landscape. A new report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office shows that the cost of administering the government student loan program grew by more than $500 million from fiscal year 2007 to 2012. While the government still expects to make money on loans disbursed over these years, it is unable to predict future costs. While interest rates are currently fixed at 3.9 percent for undergraduate student loans, and capped at 8.25 percent for the same group, don’t expect them to be for long.

5. Move toward competency-based learning
A report from the Center for American Progress explains that competency-based learning is “an outcomes-based approach to education where the emphasis is on what comes out of postsecondary education – what graduates know and can do – rather than what goes into the curriculum.” By leveraging technology and taking into account what students already know before enrollment, institutions can redesign teaching and testing in a way that saves students unnecessary time and money.

6. Higher expectations for admissions departments
A study from the National Association for College Admission Counseling found 79 percent of students applied to at least three colleges in 2011, and 29 percent applied to at least seven colleges in 2011. The New York Times’ 2013 “College Acceptance Rates” report cites the University of Southern California as receiving upward of 47,000 applications in 2013, an increase of more than 10,000 from just two years prior. The bottom line: More students are applying to schools than ever before, and they expect faster decisions from admissions departments. Universities need to utilize technology in order to make fact-based admissions and recruitment decisions to enroll the best candidates.

7. Trend toward vocational (or market-based) education
Farewell, liberal arts. It’s time to remove Underwater Basketweaving from the course catalog. As stated in No. 3, tuition rates will continue to rise, meaning that students will need to make smarter decisions about the education those tuition dollars are funding – decisions that will give
them the best possible chance at a career after graduation. This means that colleges and universities will need to begin collaborating with employers, watching the job market and offering internships in order to offer the education current students need. Of course, Private sector colleges and universities have been doing this for decades.

8. **Data transparency**

Schools will be required to make all their collected data publicly available, empowering students to make better, more informed decisions about which school to choose. American Enterprise Institute (AEI) Education Expert Andrew P. Kelly has stated that "each year, far too many students go off to colleges where they are unlikely to graduate. Students and parents deserve clear, comparable information on college costs and quality." Institutions will be expected to present information about student learning, outcomes, tuition and more in language that is easily understood, widely available and updated regularly.

9. **Data-driven learning and assessment propelled by fully accessible, integrated student records**

As technology enables student information systems to pull data from across the enterprise, colleges and universities will be able to use this information to help individual students succeed and reveal patterns within student groups. Eastern Connecticut State University, for example, is "using a data-driven approach to increase the success of low-income, minority students and first-generation students," said "Horizon Report: 2014 Higher Education Edition." "Gathering data from sources such as residential, library, tutoring programs and surveys, the university is hoping to understand and predict why some students are more likely to drop out than others."

10. **Teacher effectiveness, not tenure**

The outdated tenure model that traditional universities continue to follow will fall away. According to *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, the proportion of college instructors who are tenured or on the tenure track has already dropped from 57 percent in 1975 to 31 percent in 2007. Chronicle Vitae’s Josh Boldt asks, "not ‘Where will tenure be in 10 years?’, but ‘Where will professors be in 10 years?’" However, I firmly believe there are some things technology cannot replace, and the instruction of a live person is one of them. Instructors will, however, be measured on their effectiveness in distance learning situations and real-world market scenarios rather than their longevity in the classroom. Teacher evaluations will be tied to student performance, and evaluations will be tied to job stability.

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There are a number of achievements along the way. For some of them, it could be as simple as having a clear direction in their lives for the first time or finally finding the motivation to leave a menial job behind for something better. Along the way, many of our scholarship students are recognized for their academic performance – appearing on honor rolls and dean’s lists. But what about the businesses and organizations that back the Foundation that supports the students?

For years, the Imagine America Foundation has sought ways to pay tribute to those supporters whose financial contributions affect the lives of career college students. This year, it is our pleasure to introduce the Imagine America Foundation’s Student Champion Honor Roll. On the following pages, we recognize those businesses, organizations and individuals who made substantial contributions to our students and our work. Without them, our students might not find the resources for a college education to become a reasonable possibility. These contributors also support our research studies that emphasize the impact career colleges make on the U.S. labor force and the American economy. Our sector understands that our graduates keep America working!

All of the students in our programs have achieved a great deal in their lives and educational careers. We are amazed by what they are able to accomplish. But just as amazing is the number of contributors recognized here that make contributions to the Foundation every year. We are truly honored. This is our honor roll. Join us and help!

Robert L. Martin, President & CEO
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By Martin Lind, Velocify

On Aug. 26, 2005, Hurricane Katrina unleashed her wrath on the Louisiana Gulf Coast. While the levees were being over-topped and wind and flood waters were ravaging cities along the coastline, Grantham University's senior leadership team was working all hours to keep its institution – then half-a-century old – from being washed away.

Scattered across the southeast in Texas and Arkansas, in hotel rooms and relatives' homes, the leadership team was on conference calls to try and keep track of students and employees and keep everyone abreast of the latest news. The university served more than 8,000 students around the globe at the time with a few hundred faculty, and everyone wanted to know if the Grantham University community had escaped danger.

When the storm finally passed, four of Grantham's five buildings in Louisiana were destroyed, and everything inside was rendered useless.

Christine Shelly, Executive Vice President and Director of Web Properties at Grantham Education Corporation, told this harrowing story to open the second of Career College
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Central's six-part leadership webinar series, Leading Through Innovation, sponsored by Velocify. What happened next was nothing less than what Shelly now calls "the great social experiment."

Grantham, which was already in the final stages of making an expansion to Kansas City, Missouri, made a bold move and accepted an offer from city officials to relocate its operations to Missouri while the university found its feet. Shelly said the university was going through the licensing process required by the state and was about to officially become a degree-granting institution in Missouri. Knowing that its online students would eventually lose patience with the issues caused by the hurricane, Grantham decided to make the move permanent.

"Even with the business side addressed, we still needed to get our employees there," Shelly said. "We made an offer to every single employee located in Louisiana, and told them we didn't know what was going to happen in Louisiana but come to Kansas City and we'll figure it out. Seven days after the hurricane, we had 60 employees relocating and settling in Kansas City."

The quick actions of Shelly, her colleagues and a caring community helped turn a desperate moment into an innovation of sorts for Grantham. That innovation has translated into the marketing aspect of Shelly's career where she has relied on her background in social work and familiarity with the military family to help make Grantham University a major player in online education.

Shelly was interviewed by Dr. Jim Hutton, the former CEO of Virginia College and current leader of KUCCEL, an institution for educating career school leaders. Shelly said her background in social work has aided her professionally to help students change their lives. Her grandfather and several uncles served in the Marine Corps, which has helped her build ties to Grantham's mission of serving veterans and active-duty military.

Last January, Grantham celebrated its 63rd year as an institution of higher education. The university now serves about 20,000 students online with 300 employees based in Lenexa, Kansas, and 300-plus global faculty, delivering 38 programs at the Associate, Bachelor's and Master's levels.

"Serving those who serve still remains the heart of the institution," Shelly said. "The majority of our student body is comprised of active-duty military, prior service, military spouses, law enforcement, first responders, and local state and federal government employees."

Since members of the military are spread across the globe, Shelly said Grantham must use a variety of measures to reach prospective students. The university conducts targeted outreach in and around military communities where Grantham has already established a significant population. Grantham does not rely on traditional media. Instead, the school chooses to utilize social media, which can more effectively reach more areas where prospects are located.

"When a display advertisement runs in digital format or in a newspaper, once you pay for an impression or a click, it's gone," Shelly said. "But if we leverage social media like YouTube, Facebook and blogs, it allows our students and graduates to tell their stories and then talk about their challenges and their successes. That content lives on in perpetuity, so it's extremely impactful."
"When we help students tell their stories through social media, it's organic, it's very viral, and it helps to motivate other students and prospective students to enroll, work hard and graduate."

Grantham has a number of relationships with organizations affiliated with the military, such as Association of the United States Army, the Marine Corps Association and the Air Force Association. The university has an outreach team that meets with and advises students in the military community. Oftentimes service members or veterans who are already students might bring a prospective student with them to a scheduled meeting with a Grantham representative. Shelly finds that this creates a tremendous "viral" opportunity.

Grantham, now a fully online college, has seen a transition in employers' acceptance of online degrees compared to those that have been attained at more traditional, brick-and-mortar colleges.

"They're beginning to [accept it] more," she said. "Particularly for large companies like Verizon or Sprint that have employees located in geographically diverse locations, if they want to provide educational opportunities through tuition assistance or tuition reimbursement, and they have established a relationship with an online institution like Grantham, employee participation is not limited by geography. They don't have to have relationships with institutions in 50 states or 25 states to ensure their employees have the same opportunities."

Listen to the complete recording of Christine Shelly's interview or the entire collection of Leading Through Innovation webinars here: CareerCollegeCentral.com/2014LeadershipWebinars.
MANUFACTURING SUCCESS

Evolving to adapt to changes in the manufacturing industry

By Dr. Pietro (Pete) Savo, Chief Financial Officer of a Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business

The U.S. manufacturing sector has undergone a massive change in the last several decades. Both print and online media document new automated technology and outline the lack of competitive advantage to improve operational efficiency. This inefficiency led to many manufacturing plants closing and a climbing unemployment rate. The result is a loss of U.S. manufacturing knowledge and manufacturing jobs.

Historically, the manufacturing workforce was often composed of family members who had worked for generations at the same plant. The sharing of manufacturing knowledge occurred at the dinner table. In addition, skilled workers rose through the ranks and held management positions, thereby expanding the knowledge beyond the family. In this way, manufacturing knowledge continued to grow through the sharing of ideas. As competition increased and methodologies changed, the required skill set changed. Remaining competitive meant hiring managers with university-generated business skills and little or no hands-on manufacturing experience. These highly educated and poorly experienced leaders began encouraging the older manufacturing generation to retire – or simply downsized them altogether. This meant a continued loss of historical and hands-on knowledge over the last 50 years. In 1950, manufacturing was about 35 percent of total employment. In 2004, this number dropped to only 13 percent, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland economic commentary "Why Are We Losing Manufacturing Jobs?" In 2014, the number was only 6.6 percent. These changes made learning from the past difficult at best.

I began to write this article over 30 years ago when I was a production manufacturing worker at Sikorsky Aircraft. I witnessed the jobs leaving firsthand. Thirty years later while conducting research for my doctoral dissertation, I discovered that the missing link to that mass exodus of jobs was the devastating loss of manufacturing knowledge. This discovery prompted the need...
The career college community is grounded firmly in a context that is best equipped to support the U.S. manufacturing industry, because career colleges, universities and vocational schools are closest to the workforce.

My research identified the career college sector as the community best equipped to support this ground-level important function in our nation.

The career college community is grounded firmly in a context that is best equipped to support the U.S. manufacturing industry, because career colleges, universities and vocational schools are closest to the workforce. Bringing well-paying manufacturing jobs back is critical to the future of our sector.

The global labor market has become strong outside the U.S. because of the high labor cost stigma associated with the U.S. economy. Heightened domestic costs empowered millions of people around the world to compete for U.S. jobs. This increased global competition led to downsizing of the manufacturing sector in the U.S. Many products formerly manufactured in the U.S. are now manufactured in part or in whole elsewhere in the world. U.S. companies outsourced manufacturing because the company’s leaders honestly believed American workers held no competitive advantage over cheap offshore labor. This strategy caused great devastation by halting investments in manufacturing technology and education. When companies do not have the additional capital generated from higher revenue to invest back into the business, the result is a loss of competitive advantage and shared knowledge.
The U.S. economy relies heavily on manufacturing, meaning that the sustained growth of the manufacturing industry is paramount to economic stability. The purpose of this article is to introduce the feasibility of a certification to bridge the gap between manufacturing and research in the U.S. by establishing a side-by-side value education partnership that links manufacturing industries and the career college community.

The researcher sought to understand the challenges from both a practitioner’s and researcher’s perspective. Manufacturing leaders participating in the survey for the feasibility study were from Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Rolls Royce, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon and United Technologies; the survey also included supply chain leaders from the U.S. government. Eighty percent of the survey respondents agreed that there is a need for a new manufacturing practitioner certification. Eighty-three percent of the survey respondents agreed that a new certified professional would improve manufacturing productivity through focused career education. Ninety-four percent of the survey respondents agreed that engaging in technology and career education would increase manufacturing opportunities.

My study provided the educational capital to identify the need for developing a new joint manufacturing and research career-educated specialist, called the certified manufacturing practitioner (CMP). The CMP concept simplifies the means to link the past, the present and the future by developing business solutions from shared leaders’ experiences in the manufacturing industries. The new certified manufacturing practitioner program is designed to improve knowledge sharing through case study evaluation that is grounded in where the manufacturing jobs reside. This shared education understanding takes the manufacturing case study out of the university classroom to the manufacturing shop floor. Career-guided steps are necessary to prevent further degradation of the manufacturing knowledge base. Historical literature provides the means to improve the U.S. manufacturing industry’s productivity and competitiveness through past and present case studies. Learning from history can improve the future. Business and manufacturing case studies provide real-life stories of successes and failures in the same industry and should be the basis for knowledge sharing. Students can best obtain and share this knowledge when the career education community is committed to rolling up its sleeves to deliver hands-on career education experience directly from the U.S. manufacturing source: the manufacturing shop floor.

The problem today is that business-manufacturing case studies do not receive adequate attention. It is difficult for a manufacturing business to be competitive in today’s volatile business market without having the means to review, understand and benefit from experience. Not learning from the past creates a communication disconnect and knowledge loss, which has a direct link to lost manufacturing businesses and jobs. In manufacturing, when learning stems from past successes and mistakes, business efficiency and competitiveness naturally follow, because an understanding of the past reduces the risk of repeating the same mistake – or, even worse, not learning from or sharing
success stories. Success is dependent on the ability to develop and identify manufacturing solutions from case studies. This ability also can provide a heads-up display for market changes, diversity of markets and the ability to adapt to markets with a historical customer perspective that is practitioner-based. A CMP practitioner can fuel progressive learning across corporate cultures and different leadership styles, and he or she could have the influence to build upon strong team-based relationships that share knowledge.

The cost of waiting for old ideas to catch up with modern-day manufacturing practices obstructs new manufacturing market opportunities. Such obstructions represent a stream of wasteful manufacturing practices, making it difficult to be competitive in today’s volatile manufacturing markets. The loss of competitiveness results in lost manufacturing work and higher unemployment statistics. Once people become unemployed, 44 percent remain unemployed for 27 weeks or more, as reported by the Congressional Budget Office. CMP becomes the natural bridge by forming sustainable manufacturing solutions based on experiences, while at the same time observing market changes that provide the means to respond, adapt and capitalize on this market change. Finding the strengths and weaknesses of employees becomes important to rediscovering the company’s value. CMP career college partnerships work with U.S. manufacturers to help them create and retain jobs, increase profits, and save time and money.

Today, the manufacturing industry knowledge base is limited to real-time events that occur daily in the manufacturing industry. The CMP embraces a holistic and unified approach in career education study connected to the manufacturing shop floor, and it creates the means to retain and share manufacturing knowledge. Imagine the education possibilities when the career college community reshapes the U.S. and global manufacturing industry. So, is the career college community ready to take CMP from a research study concept to a successful manufacturing reality? I think so.

Dr. Pete Savo is the Chief Financial Officer of a Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business (SDVOSB), a higher education service business that provides qualified student candidates to military-friendly colleges and universities nationwide. Savo, a respected lecturer and published author, was employed 18 years with Sikorsky Aircraft and six years as a Direct Business Operations and Lean Manufacturing Consultant for the U.S. Air Force Small Business Manufacturing Technical Assistance Production Program (MTAPP), Air Force Outreach Program Office and the Department of Defense (DOD) supply chain missions. If you’d like to contact Savo, he can be reached at PSavo@Education-Resource-Information.org or 603.321.6224.
The importance of college leaders making decisions with an entrepreneurial mindset

By Karen Watts, Contributing Writer

In a world where lifelong employment at a single company is only a memory and personal branding is essential to a job search, entrepreneurial thinking is important for all of us, not just business owners. For many years, I’ve been advising individuals to think more like entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurial thinking gives a competitive advantage to everyone, whether or not they open a business, and during all phases of life.

This message has been well-received by my clients and my students, but I’ve had much less luck with educational institutions and leaders. Our work in providing education and training can mean the difference between career success and a life of poverty for our students. We can’t afford to get it wrong, so we can’t afford to stay stuck in the academic bubble any longer. Educators need to apply entrepreneurial strategies to academic concerns.

Just because a college is set up on a business vs. state institution model is no guarantee that leaders are making decisions with an entrepreneurial mindset. The entrepreneurial thought process, what I’ve dubbed "big E thinking" in my public presentations, is unique from start to finish. There are three major areas where entrepreneurial thinkers differ from those stuck in more traditional thought processes: how they frame a problem, how they see responsibility, and how they view decisions and risk-taking. For adult education, all of these areas offer fertile ground for process improvement.

Traditionally, when a problem arises, our first tendency is to try to figure out who is at fault. Who can we blame for the mess staring us in the face? The education world is no stranger to this inclination. Reams of paper and millions of bytes of online space have been devoted to trying to figure out "why Johnny can’t read" and other issues around the lack of skills we continue to see in incoming college students. It’s not that figuring out where the system is broken isn’t important; it is. However, entrepreneurial thinkers spend less time focusing on who is to blame and more time and energy on solution-based discussions. Entrepreneurs don’t typically see problems; they see opportunities. Entrepreneurial thinkers spend far less time agonizing over what’s wrong and who has messed up and far more time thinking about what new, interesting or great discovery can come out of the current situation. Once some good ideas are on the table, entrepreneurial thinkers immediately move toward implementation.
Frankly,
Entrepreneurial thinkers spend far less time agonizing over what’s wrong and who has messed up and far more time thinking about what new, interesting or great discovery can come out of the current situation.

In addition to seeing problems in a different light, successful entrepreneurs believe they can make a difference; psychologists call this mindset an internal locus of control. They are always on the lookout for new information, and they respond quickly. There is no reason that colleges cannot duplicate this entrepreneurial thought process and decision-making strategy, provided that leaders are willing to ditch the stale methods of the past. Ideally, colleges would model and pass along the positive characteristics of entrepreneurship to students. What might this new way of thinking look like at the institutional level?

Entrepreneurial college leaders would frame discussions differently. They would see problems as new opportunities for growth or chances to cut or modify programs. William Pepicello, President of University of Phoenix, demonstrates such an understanding in his brief online statement about the continued importance of the much-maligned liberal arts education within our current, more job-skill-focused culture. Big E thinking leaders would focus on their own control of outcomes, spending less time complaining about funding and politics and more time responding with new and better offerings that meet market demands. For example, Kaplan University has over a hundred degrees and certificates available for military, veterans and spouses of active-duty members. Many of these programs were specifically developed to dovetail with occupations and programs established by the military.
Thriving entrepreneurs know that they are personally responsible for creating their own success. Smart traditional job candidates realize the same thing. Creating a personal brand, i.e., the total experience of working with someone, is a crucial step in implementing a success plan. It’s a step entrepreneurial colleges must take as well, which is no secret. In 2012 and 2013, Forbes ran articles about the need for colleges to build brands. But has your institution taken the challenge and responsibility seriously? Douglas College in British Columbia goes so far as to dedicate an entire webpage on their site to the Douglas brand and what it means. The page discusses the meaning of the logo, the history of the brand and the mission of the college, all while offering slick visuals of branded merchandise and departmental materials. Branding is an essential way to connect with potential students.

However, good branding won’t be enough; competing for new students will prove an equally complex task as our industry moves forward. In 2013, stories about declining college enrollment rates began hitting the news. The reasons were complex and included the micro improvements in the economy, the ever-rising cost of tuition, and, frankly, the bad press that higher education garnered in a chronically weak job market. In fact, Slate.com declared that we were "obsessed with higher education" in 2013. Colleges will need more than a sound business model to compete for students. They will need a fresher, faster and more flexible way to serve students, stakeholders and employers. In short, they will need big E thinking.

The core of big E thinking

- Reframe problems into opportunities for growth and change. Don’t waste time finding fault; focus on finding solutions.
- Realize that planning is great, but the ability to pivot, adapt and be flexible in the face of change is a key marker for success.
- It’s not enough to be brilliant or to have a great program if no one knows you exist. Branding and risk-taking are important when a college needs to stand out.

Karen Southall Watts began teaching business in 1999. Since then, her business and education writing has been featured in Forbes.com, Reach Magazine, Educator’s Voice, Evollution.com and on various business blogs. She has been quoted on CareerBuilder.com, FoxBusiness.com and in The New York Times. Watts works with students and private entrepreneurship and management clients in the United States and Canada. Contact her at KarenSouthallWatts.com or @AskKaren on Twitter.
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• Connect industry innovations to higher education to better prepare students for the world of work
• Improve academic and institutional outcomes
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“This event was such an engaging experience!
The presentations were passionate and inspiring...
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– Attendee of Innovation Insights, April 2014

SAVE THE DATE
Contact plscareer@pearson.com to join the Innovation Insights mailing list for conference updates on registration and the full agenda.
Evolution has become a constant in the realm of education. That's why it's only fitting that "The Education Evolution" is the 2014 APSCU Annual Convention & Exposition theme. Only a few decades ago, innovation was something many educators simply made note of – it was something to occasionally consider. Today evolution has become our state of being, and it affects our organizations from many aspects, from their infrastructures to the very missions they carry out. In fact, innovation is so prominent, it can pass by unnoticed. We are constantly moving from technology advancement to technology advancement and new idea to new idea.

But evolution does not just apply to technology and teaching strategies. We, as a sector, have undergone a significant evolution in the last year as many of our institutions have been impacted – both positively and negatively – by market conditions, regulatory concerns and media reports. Along with these transformations, we have reached a critical new time in the sector: one of looking forward, not backward – a time of continuing to be leaders and innovators in the realm of education delivery and flexibility.

Once again, it is our pleasure to host what has been for years the single largest annual gathering of educators and executives representing private sector colleges and universities. Our convention carries this theme of evolution into our renowned learning tracks that will provide members with the information and resources they need to implement new strategies. If you scan your convention guide, you will see references to new concepts in education delivery, such as competency-based education, flipped classrooms, and more about massive open online courses or MOOCs. You will also see sessions that cover the Department of Education’s suggested gainful employment rule. Again, it’s our focus as an organization to offer you the information and resources you need to excel in a challenging time.

We look forward to the conversations that will be had during the convention, both as a listener to your ideas and as a leader in advancing our mission to provide students with job-ready skills for the 21st century workforce.

Private sector colleges and universities are at the forefront of new technologies, strategies and efficiencies. Innovation has been a hallmark of institutions since their founding. And it will continue to be, down whatever path future challenges lead us.
Sink or swim? Those are the two alternatives, it seems, when it comes to higher education and the embracement of technology.

While most institutions would reasonably choose to swim, without the proper navigation, what schools sometimes end up with is a pseudo dog paddle with no clue where shore might be.

Each year, the APSCU Annual Convention & Exposition offers an opportunity for educators and executives in the private sector to share best practices and learn more about the latest technological advancements impacting career colleges. Then, not long after everyone has left the convention, there is a cooling off period in which many attendees wait to see whether or not the "hottest" innovations indeed catch on. Who can forget a few years ago when The New York Times proclaimed 2012 the "year of the MOOC"?

Well, massive open online courses might have been positioned as the next big thing, but that rhetoric came with a little caveat: MOOCs were mostly undiscovered territory, and no one had managed to find a way to make them lucrative for schools.

As the MOOC craze cools off, higher education has been buzzing about the concept of competency-based education (CBE). The concept involves education that is focused on outcomes where curriculum is developed to help learners achieve mastery in defined skills/competencies. And it has supporters in high places, such as Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, who said last year, "I see competency-based education as the future of education."

CBE has become a major focus for the career college sector for a couple of reasons. First, it’s a great model. Given the nature of technical learning, the process lends itself well to allowing students to demonstrate their aptitudes for various concepts and abilities. And second, as Title IV drives up the cost of a college education, CBE can help schools become more efficient and shorten the time frame it takes students to graduate. CBE can help schools escape the current emphasis on credit hours and seat time. With CBE, the process is about learning and documenting how students learn the content.

In its ongoing effort to be a leader in providing members with the information and resources they need to implement new strategies, APSCU has made it a focus to explore the possibilities of competency-based education. During the 2014 APSCU Convention, our competency-based education working group, comprised of me, Ron Kimberling (Argosy), Shanti Konkoth (ASA College) and Charlie Wonderlic, will discuss the results of our CBE survey and the resulting next steps. We surveyed APSCU members who either attended our webinar on CBE in December or are academic officers within our membership. The survey ascertained what they knew about CBE and what they wanted to learn about the concept.

Based on the results of that survey, the general conclusion is there is a great deal of interest in CBE but not much knowledge. Essentially there are two types of CBE programs: crisply defined technical schools ("either you do it or you don’t") and the emerging CBE programs that comprise a large gray area and encompass programs from HVAC all the way up to MBAs. Private sector colleges and universities understand the former but are curious about the latter.

Since CBEs are such a rich subject, APSCU will be offering two separate one-hour sessions at the convention. Below is a look at each session and what will be discussed:

**Session I – Navigating the New Waters of Competency-Based Education**

Competency-based education is the new business model of the future. It reduces the time and cost to the student and allows the sector to continue to grow and innovate. But what is competency-based education? What are the challenges and opportunities of CBE programs? How do we assess and give credit for prior learning? Our panelists will offer insights involving three to four programs ranging from HVAC to the Master’s level.

**Session II – The Future of Competency-Based Education**

Competency-based education reduces the time and cost to the student by providing an academic solution, not a social engineering one. But what is the state of practice in terms of the federal government in CBE? Where do the accreditors stand? CBE programs run counter to the measure of the credit hour, so to what standards will career colleges be held? Credit hour, assessment or hybrid? Many large foundations are supporting CBE programming. Where are the innovations headed?

You can learn more about CBE by attending the Innovations in Education Delivery learning track at the convention. Our hope is to address whether CBE is a better way to deliver technical education. We would like your involvement in finding an answer.
Over the last several years, private sector institutions have been the subject of an unprecedented amount of regulatory attention. While operating in such a heavily regulated environment, many of our institutions need additional guidance.

At the APSCU Annual Convention & Exposition, the Government Relations/Regulatory learning track will once again feature a number of sessions that can help attendees navigate the gray areas and determine how best to move forward. Here are a few sessions that will help you and your institution address recent adjustments to existing rules and navigate uncertain waters:

**Show What You Know – Repayment Options Potpourri**
Show what you know (and anonymously discover what you don't) about repayment plans and other repayment options available to student borrowers. During this interactive session, you can choose your answers to challenging questions on a variety of repayment options in a game format.

You’ll learn what repayment options are available to federal student loan borrowers, and we’ll test your knowledge of various repayment options, including repayment plans, deferments, forbearance and rehabilitation. Enjoy the fun, interactive nature of the presentation and leave with valuable, practical information.

**Report From the Front Lines: Federal and State Oversight and Actions**
No one knows the regulatory challenges facing the sector like the attorneys who are on the front lines of the issue. In this session, attorneys and a CPA with firsthand experience successfully defending Department of Education investigations and Department of Justice actions will share their insights. You will also hear from a representative of an institution that experienced a significant investigation and emerged stronger. Attendees will also be provided with the last status and analysis of the Department of Education’s regional investigations and actions as well as those involving the OIG and the Department of Justice’s involvement in legal action.

**Going Against the Flow: Innovative Strategies to Communicate Our Value in a Hostile Environment**
How can private sector colleges and universities cut through the disinformation and make inroads with legislators and policymakers? Sometimes it is a new twist on an old idea; sometimes it means developing new capabilities. Learn how institutions in two states have made it work by developing successful editorials and letters to the editor, countering misinformation in the media and attracting notice from lawmakers.

**Admissions, Compliance and Financial Aid: Best Practices in Balancing Regulatory Requirements and Effectiveness**
Join compliance, admissions, legal, mystery shopping and financial aid industry experts for this lively panel discussion focused on sharing best practices to avoid student eligibility problems and maintaining compliance while maximizing outcomes. You will gain awareness of the kind of admissions operations and oversight practices that can improve compliance with Title IV eligibility requirements and develop an understanding of best practices that have been observed across thousands of mystery shops.

**Don't Get Blindsided by the Incredibly Broad Reaches of the Federal Telephone Consumer Protection Act**
If you are making phone calls to students, you must have a basic understanding of the Federal Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA). Unsuspecting businesses have been saddled with substantial legal exposure for simply making phone calls or sending text messages to their customers. This program is designed to educate you about recent developments in the law that will help you protect your institution from the pitfalls of the TCPA.
DEFINING MILITARY-FRIENDLY AND VETERAN-FRIENDLY: PROVIDING CLARITY AROUND ILL-DEFINED TERMS

By Michael Dakduk, Vice President of Military and Veterans Affairs

At the 2014 APSCU Annual Convention & Exposition, a special presentation in the Innovations in Campus Leadership track on the soon-to-be-released white paper “Defining Veteran-Friendly and Military-Friendly for Higher Education: Providing Clarity Around Ill-Defined Terms” will take place. The paper argues that a robust environment exists for providing a macro-level definition for "military-friendly" and "veteran-friendly."

When the Post-9/11 GI Bill took effect in 2009, many military veterans and service members sought to take advantage of the educational and financial opportunities the new law offered. Consequently, colleges and universities of all types recognized the opportunity to expand their enrollments, and some suggested their policies, programs and campuses were military-friendly or veteran-friendly. In the ensuing years, veteran advocates and higher education stakeholders have searched for common ground on what, exactly, the terms mean.

Into this void have stepped media publications that survey colleges and universities and then rate or rank them according to criteria these private entities have developed. At least three higher education groups have created best practices guides for institutions to leverage. The federal government and state governments have also been involved, either overtly or suggestively, in shaping the narrative around what constitutes a veteran-or military-supportive institution of higher education.

The Department of Defense created a memorandum of understanding that allows institutions that have signed the agreement to enroll service members and offer them certain educational benefits. Secondly, in an effort to protect and support veterans and service members, President Obama signed an executive order that provides guidelines for consumer education, institutional transparency and educational supports. Through a federal-states partnership, state approving agencies remain responsible for reviewing, evaluating and approving the quality of education and training programs under state and federal criteria.

Finally, higher education groups have created best practices resources for institutions to leverage in the development of programs, policies and supports at the campus level. Most notably, the American Council on Education, the Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities, and Operation College Promise separately published comprehensive resources for institutions of all types.

Taken together, these efforts can help sharpen the definition of a military-friendly or veteran-friendly institution. While some have suggested adding information on educational outcomes to the mix, limited data exist on graduation rates, persistence rates and postgraduation employment numbers for military veterans and service members. For now, the current model of achieving transparency, compliance and support through voluntary participation in all three areas – government compliance, media publication surveys and higher education best practices guides – better determines whether an institution is military-friendly or veteran-friendly.

With the military downsizing after the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan – and as the Pentagon’s budget is pared back – it’s a critical time for such a determination to be made. Hundreds of thousands of veterans are expected to return to the workforce or to college in the next several years. According to the Associated Press, the Army is drawing down to 490,000 troops from its current 522,000. Defense Secretary Hagel has proposed even steeper cuts in his latest budget, which would reduce the Army alone to its smallest size since before World War II – about 440,000 troops – if approved.

Join me in a discussion on shaping the narrative around what constitutes a veteran-friendly or military-friendly institution in the "Defining Military-Friendly and Veteran-Friendly: A Blueprint for Sector. Institution leaders interested in understanding the disconnected yet overlapping relationships between media lists, government agreements and higher education best practices resources should attend to learn how to become more supportive of student service members and student veterans.
HELPING STUDENTS STAY SUCCESSFUL: EARLY INTERVENTION TO INCREASE CAREER READINESS

By Jim Sigman, VP Readiness and Retention, Pearson

Career readiness, in its truest sense, isn’t limited to the outcome of one assessment. The work that is done to make a student “career ready” extends from enrollment to a graduate’s employment status at least three years following graduation. It involves not just educators, but professionals at many levels of higher education. The career readiness of private sector education students is our shared goal as education professionals, and we are constantly looking for ways to ensure that our students not only graduate successfully, but with the skills they need for their unique next step.

Early intervention in the student’s academic journey

Despite our best intentions, the reality is that many students don’t complete their higher education programs feeling ready for a career or don’t complete their higher education goals, period. These are shared risks for the student, the educator and the institution. According to a U.S. News & World Report article, 30 percent of college and university students drop out after their first year (Bowler, 2009). It is well-known that this number is often much worse in private sector schools – sometimes as high as 65 percent – as it often serves students who are at higher retention risk for a myriad of reasons. The time between enrollment and that of graduation is a time where the student has the chance to succeed, but is incredibly vulnerable to any number of setbacks and, in academic terms, to complete failure.

If you imagine the student life cycle mapped out on a timeline, you’ll realize that the moments when a student is most at risk occur in the early days of their studies – specifically in the first term or set of courses. Busy schedules that include work, family life and a full course load all factor into the equation. While this window of time – this early stage of the learning experience – is often seen as the riskiest time for students during their educational programs, I’d like to argue that it actually provides the biggest opportunity, as education professionals, to help them succeed.

The early days of the student life cycle are a time when support, mentoring and readily available assistance that is personalized to students’ unique needs can help them overcome the challenge of pursuing their postsecondary education. All of this support, front-loaded into the early days of the student life cycle, has the potential to increase retention and boost student engagement and, ultimately, completion.

Holistic student support to improve career readiness

Higher education is moving away from thinking about the student as a fragmented person whose home life and work life have no bearing on his or her academic performance. The idea of holistic student support, while perhaps not new, is becoming more of a popular idea, grounded in reality. (This podcast offers an in-depth look at the concept of holistic student support: www.pearsonlearningsolutions.com/blog/channels/online-blended-learning/holistic-student-support-why-mentoring-matters/.)

Students today often look for a consistent, full-service experience that serves and supports them both academically and as people.

Shifting the way institutions think about student services starts with understanding the value of creating a student experience that is able to provide support in all aspects of the educational experience so that students may be better prepared for success in today’s workforce. Think about being able to offer that experience to one student. Now imagine scaling that experience across your entire institution. If you could increase graduation retention rates by one percent through providing holistic mentoring and student support in the early days of the student life cycle, how would that impact institutional outcomes? How would this impact your completion rates and overall institutional reputation? It’s a question many private sector colleges and universities must answer in today’s competitive education environment.

While there are many programs that have mastered providing personalized support to students as they begin their educational journeys, the time is right for private sector education to take a closer look at how providing holistic support early on can ultimately enhance retention, readiness and placement. As leaders in academic innovation, private sector colleges and universities are primed to give students the unique resources, support, tutoring, mentoring and coaching they need to help students become truly career ready.
Whether you’re a student or administrator, the college experience is not what it used to be even a decade ago. In fact, that phrase, "college experience," connotes an evolution of thought from 10 years ago, when students simply went to college, and administrators based their critical operations decisions on their own familiarity with college-going.

But times have changed. Technology and cultural shifts have altered who attends college, where they attend from, what they learn and how they learn. In the higher ed realm today, college owners and administrators must compensate for these adjustments so students are delivered what they deserve. To do otherwise would cause them to be left behind.

This year’s APSCU Convention learning tracks represent the turbulence students face in their collegiate experience and explore how CEOs and other leaders can develop institutions and programs to enhance these students’ experiences. The student experience has changed, from those students returning from tours of military duty overseas to new barriers that impede their path to graduation. What follows are a few highlights of sessions on the student track and a few details that will encourage you to attend them:

**Innovations in Improving the Military Student Experience: A Five-Year Case Study**
A surge is coming to America’s college campuses. In the next few years, tens of thousands of new veterans are expected to return to college while the military downsizes after wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and as the Pentagon budget is trimmed. With more service members seeking education as they exit the military, career colleges are going to need to re-evaluate the current level of service being provided to this large nontraditional student group. During this session, Michael Betz, General Manager of Military Student Initiatives, will present the research and findings from five years of enhanced services to military-affiliated students, including centralized certification, enrollment, academic and placement considerations. He will explain how colleges can place a sharper focus on military students to improve their student experience and find them better job placement.

**Hurdling 101: An Evolutionary Plan for Student Success**
Students don’t pursue college to fail, but often they do. This interactive session explores barriers to student success and introduces a proactive method, called Practical Points To GO, that teaches students to plan for obstacles so they can be successful in any class. Generally speaking, most colleges and universities struggle to maintain and improve their completion and retention rates. In this session, Dr. Nichole Karpel, Advisory Services Consultant at Ambassador Education Solutions, and former campus executive, will discuss the context of student success; how institutions define success; and what it means to individual students, faculty and administrators. Karpel will take a closer look at the most current research on student success rates and identify common barriers, including influences and reasons why students often fall short of achieving their learning objectives.

**Creating a Career Services Center of Excellence**
Current research shows that optimistic employment prospects improve retention and admissions programs. For you, with a geographically dispersed student population, meeting student employment needs is more challenging than ever. Facilitator Mary Beth Ryder and a panel of career market experts will discuss trends and best practices in online employment services, career services and placement.

**Health Care’s Impact on Our Students, Our Schools, Our Sector**
With the coming impact of President Obama's Affordable Care Act and potential changes from the Department of Education’s gainful employment rule, how can institution leaders and administrators make the appropriate adjustments for their health care students to succeed? What if there are reductions in the health care workforce as a result of these changes? At this session, you will hear directly from a health care industry professional with a background in connecting colleges with employers to establish skilled entry-level jobs. You’ll learn how to create the ideal employer profile, how to shorten the gap between graduation and employment, and how to ensure students have a shorter ramp-up time.
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RESTRICTUING
THE JOB MARKET

Why are schools struggling to hire exceptional talent when candidates should be available?

By Vincent Scaramuzzo, Ed-Exec Inc.

It is easy to see how one would assume hiring would be a breeze in 2014. It is the most common question I have been asked over the past year: "How is all the downsizing affecting talent acquisition in the sector?" People truly are perplexed at how hard it is to find exceptional and passionate school leaders among the turmoil.

Last year, when career college parent company Apollo Group announced it was going to downsize 800 employees and close 115 campus locations, my email and phone lines lit up. The writing must have been on the wall weeks prior, though, as individuals who wouldn’t even consider other opportunities in the past suddenly wanted to be our best friends. This followed an earlier round of layoffs paralleling similar cuts by Kaplan and Education Management Corporation.

Another shot to the sector came right after the last presidential election as Career Education Corporation announced it would close 23 campuses and cut 900 jobs. Then, Strayer University announced it would close campuses, and most recently, Corinthian Colleges is rumored to have made a significant reduction in force. This doesn’t include other smaller "restructurings" that have taken place nationwide.

Normally, if any sector had this much downsizing or RIF (reduction in force), as it is now called, it might mean it was time for recruiters like me to do a little traveling, work on our golf game and return a year from now when the smoke clears. Just ask any IT recruiter who got fat during the IT boom only to starve immediately after Y2K and 9/11. But, oddly enough, the exact opposite has been true.
I thought it was a fluke or just a little luck at first, but then I started talking to a few other firms we know and respect, and they reported the same: Business was good. So why is it so hard to fill positions if so many candidates should be available?

Some people are leaving the sector. But why?

- Individuals are frustrated with the idiosyncrasies of the sector. While certainly not the case at every school, some employees only feel as good as their last start.
- They have lost faith in the stability of the sector and fear another position might end in similar fashion.
- The work/life balance is difficult. This is by far the biggest complaint my recruiters hear every day – and a nationwide trend in general. People want more than just work in their lives.

Finally, people seem to be departing the education sector because they can. The job economy continues to make steady improvement. National unemployment is hovering just under 7 percent right now. For those over the age of 25 with a completed Bachelor’s degree, that rate drops to well under 4 percent, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. There are a lot of jobs out there for qualified candidates leaving our sector, and these candidates perceive that other industries might offer better stability or provide stronger opportunities right now.

It appears those recently RIF’ed are following Bob Marley’s words:

*Open your eyes and look within;
are you satisfied with the life you’re living?*

A COO I know likes the saying "Rightsizing is right, for whomever is left." But there are not many left – and that has made the demand for administrators who can succeed in good climates and bad, running schools the "right way," stronger than ever.
Kevin Kuzma: What if "for-profits" disappeared?

Michele Wilson: Lest we forget that education in the U.S. is not without cost; no matter who delivers it—"This study also serves as a reminder to policymakers and state taxpayers that when comparing costs between public and proprietary institutions, it is important to consider not just the cost to students and their families represented by the tuition charged by each institution, but also the per-student public subsidy that supports the real cost of education."

Larry Alvarado: If they graduate well prepared, and that's a big if, then $6,000 per student is a good investment if students get training in areas society needs and that can earn them enough money to have a good lifestyle which can feed the economy. We need to better choose where we put taxpayers' monies with for profit and nonprofit institutions of higher education. The investment needs to be made but we need to start looking at what we are getting for our monies, the monies of families, and time and effort of students there.

Raul Valdes: Aside from the issue of "quality," imagine if state institutions had to subsidize the roughly 2 million students that go to school at our sector. If you were to use an average subsidy of $10,000, states would have to increase higher ed funding by around $20 billion. Like I said, that is discounting the issue that we unfortunately don't have good data on and that is that for a sector of students, we do a better job than public sector.

Dr. Ann Clark: The issue is really confused by the term – for-profit – a tax classification. State and publicly funded schools make their profits through salaries, vacations, sabbaticals, research assistants, better offices, etc. As a graduate of a great state-funded school and faculty member of others, I know intimately the waste and self-serving that goes on in "nonprofit"
arenas. Clearly, no one needs a report to know that if for-profit schools disappeared, there would be a huge gap – and that gap would be especially felt by the underserved, culturally and ethnically diverse, and the student that does not fit the picture of button-downs and hipster garb. There is a place for each kind of school that exists in this country just as there is religious freedom, there indeed needs to be scholastic freedom.

I came to know for-profit schools as an Ivy-League snob. I have learned that these schools are in fact incredibly committed to their students, excel in service and technology, and have filled a need that is proven by the literally millions of graduates who have prospered from this type of education. Why is Congress conducting this witch hunt? The very existence of both proposed and already enacted sanctions against the for-profit sector is perhaps the best measure of their efficacy and success.

**Raul Valdes:** Dr. Clark, I agree. Unfortunately we have replaced quality issues with "for profit." Let’s develop a scenario: private enterprise funds building of colleges, equipment, etc. They do a great job graduating, placing students and students repaying loans. With profits, they pay taxes instead of consume them. Under this scenario, who would dare criticize our sector? Private capital, tax paying, quality. Where we have left the door open is on establishing what educational quality looks like and that we meet or surpass nonprofits.
Higher education is under pressure to meet societal needs for a better-educated public. Politicians have weighed in on how best to reduce the cost of higher education for students, improve quality, increase transparency and identify ways to link funding to performance.

Guided by support from private foundations, many institutions are embarking on projects to develop new methods of instructional delivery within their institutions. A growing group of private companies has stepped in to provide guidance and financial support in the development of academic programs for new markets and populations around the world. Advances in information communication technology have made global competition for education programs feasible. Many institutions of higher education have ambitions to grow dramatically to meet this new international audience.

The growth (or preservation) of enrollment and tuition dollars appears to be one of the primary factors incentivizing this growth at the institutional level. Recent experiments by top-tier research institutions in the area of massive open online courses (MOOCs) have been heralded as the advent of a new model for higher education with increased access and lowered costs. These developments make for an interesting time for higher education administrators, faculty, students and their institutions.

Although these developments and big ideas grab the headlines and have sparked the fire for a massive buildup of education technology investment and new initiatives within higher education institutions, the true measurement of the learning experience should be on the performance of the students who elect to join institutions of higher education. The reform of higher education via technological means is not a new concept, with many examples of new technology promising to increase efficiency and effectiveness while improving engagement.

The transformation of education has been a long-standing goal of philanthropic leaders throughout the past century. Calls from captains of industry for the replacement of the education system via technological means were heard in the early 20th century in statements by Thomas Edison regarding the impact that motion pictures would have on school systems: "It is possible to teach every branch of human knowledge with the motion picture. Our school system will be completely changed inside of 10 years."

Subsequent advances in communication technologies such as radio and television were also heralded as ways to increase the reach of education and to reduce the costs associated with education. Distributed media in the form of films, audiotapes and now digital audiofiles have made the transmission of recordings highly efficient, easily available and efficiently distributed. MOOCs follow in the footsteps of other technological advances in the promise to break down barriers for meritorious students who can now gain access to education where they may have not had access in the past.
Traditional online learning environments (that have existed since the 1970s in the form of mainframe-based instructional systems) paved the way by providing capabilities for both automated and peer feedback, as well as the delivery of instructional lessons for many years. Driving much of the excitement is the promise to expand access by driving up the number of students who can participate in higher education.

The largest of the MOOCs has had more than 300,000 students enrolled in a single course. This course, CS101: Building a Search Engine, was offered via Udacity. Increasing institutional capacity via changes to course formats and delivery methods has a long history in higher education. Many institutions have made use of large lecture halls for certain courses, have expanded enrollment capacity by hiring part-time faculty and teaching assistants, and have offered weekend or accelerated programs to make use of institutional capacity. Institutions have weighed the value of each approach for their particular institution and the degree to which each approach was used within their courses and programs.

Adult students are increasingly cited as a new population for many institutions to embrace to increase enrollment. This segment has been one of the primary targets of online degree programs and providers. Institutions are now developing programs and formats that appeal to this broad category of students. Approaches such as prior learning assessment and increased credit by examination options are hallmarks of adult learner-friendly programs.

Accelerated formats and flexible scheduling of programs that allow for employment while enrolled are other features of adult learner programs. It is time to move these tools into the mainstream of higher education institution practices. Measurement of students’ existing knowledge opens new possibilities for customizing programs of study to meet the needs of individual students while preserving institutional learning outcomes and mission.
Online programs and courses were once the providence of special-purpose outreach branches of institutions and were targeted at students who would never set foot on campuses. Online learning is no longer a fringe activity for higher education. As of fall 2011, 6.7 million students were taking at least one online course in degree-granting postsecondary institutions. The focus on personalized learning experiences within the structure of degree program outcomes is useful for traditional students as much as it is valuable to nontraditional students. The same tools that enable the capability for the mass delivery of courses also provide tremendous promise in individualization of instruction.

The time is now to build and select the right practices and systems that will support students at the individual level.

The capability to modularize certain learning experiences and allow students to take what they need to complete program requirements has the potential to dramatically improve the value that students receive from their higher education institution. Innovative practices by institutions such as Southern New Hampshire University, Western Governors University, the U.K. Open University and others will eventually become best practices in the future for all institutions. Institutions must now invest in the capability to develop organizational capacity to experiment with new ways of personalizing higher education in order to improve student learning.

Innovation is hard, but many higher education institutions have committed resources to growing new capabilities via the establishment of groups within their institutions to tackle online learning and the use of technology to improve learning. Over the past decade, higher education has developed a tremendous capacity to offer online programs and new degree formats to students. These efforts, often led by institutions with a strong commitment to adult and first-generation students, have resulted in tremendous growth in online learning. This organizational capacity has led to growing enrollments in online programs and has provided new opportunities for students to participate in the higher education system.

Students have more options than ever before and can enroll in institutions located far from their places of residence in a variety of delivery formats and at a wide range of prices. University brands remain valuable for students seeking employment or further study postgraduation. However, there have been few ways for students to evaluate the quality of the institutions and programs to which they apply. Institutions continue to struggle to find ways to enroll students who have the best chance of success within their programs.

Predictive tests such as the College Board’s SAT as well as the high school grade point average remain the gold standards for admission criteria for most institutions. The Predictive Analytics Reporting Framework (sponsored by WCET) is a multi-institutional data mining collaborative that seeks to identify student loss points and ways to improve student retention by the use of data within two- and four-year higher education institutions. Data collection and analysis tools have become increasingly sophisticated, and many see the advent of "big data" as a way to improve operation of institutions across a variety of institutional goals.

Legislators and politicians are calling for accountability and greater transparency in institutional outcomes, and many states are tying state appropriations to institutional retention and progression measurements. The time is now to build and select the right practices and systems that will support students at the individual level. Increased retention and graduation rates are good initial indicators, and we now have the tools to allow us to measure these and other metrics of student progress. However, we need to dive deeper into the student learning experience.

Dashboards and indicators provide opportunities for intervention and improvement with each passing term. As institutions become better equipped to determine what is happening within their institutions at an individual level, it is their obligation to fix the problems they unveil in their systems. Little has been done in the way of reviewing the quality of student learning experience at the individual level.

We have the tools to determine who is performing in classes and who is not, and it is possible to intervene if students need help. Now armed with these data, it is our obligation to our students to make use of the data. Students, especially at the college and university level, have chosen to be in our schools. They have selected our institutions for one reason or another, and they can leave if they aren’t successful (or we make them leave).

New analytical tools and data points are a start, but the real value for institutions is realized when the data are used to drive continual improvement. Developing organizational capacity to support continual improvement is a complex process requiring broad engagement within institutions to succeed. Redevelopment and refinement of courses and programs to bring each student up to the institutional standards is a challenge, but we now have the tools to identify trends at the course and program level.

Before we can succeed at scaling our programs to meet the growing global demand for higher education, we must understand what works in our courses and how we meet the needs of the students who come to us for their education.

Dr. David Edwin Stone is Director of Strategic Initiatives and Online Learning at Southern Polytechnic State University, where he works with institutional stakeholders on the development of online learning capabilities. Stone has conducted research in organizational change and development to support online learning as well as digital learning environments. Stone holds an M.S. and Ph.D. from Georgia State University in instructional technology. He can be reached at DStone@SPSU.edu.
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Are you confident with the placement information you are sharing? Whether you are sharing information with your board of directors, accrediting bodies or potential students, you need to know that the information you are providing is accurate. After all, accurate data is fundamental to regulatory excellence. While it is important to achieve the minimum placement benchmarks set by accreditors, it is not always possible. The economic times and high unemployment rates we have been dealing with over the last three to five years have made it even more difficult to reach the benchmarks. Accreditors understand this challenge and will often work with a school that is doing all the right things and yet is still unable to reach the minimum number of placements. What accreditors will not tolerate is inaccurate placement data. Depending on the accreditor, schools won’t necessarily get in trouble for missing the benchmark for placements, but schools will get in trouble if they are weak in safeguarding and documenting the data or if the quality and integrity of the placement data is lacking. Accreditors demand that, regardless of whether you are reporting 40 percent or 80 percent placement rates, the integrity of the information backing up those numbers be 100 percent accurate.

When we talk to school operators, they often say roughly the same thing at first: "We have collected all the placement data and are pretty sure it is accurate; after all, we trust our people." However, in our experience, even the best-run schools find that their data is flawed or incomplete in some way or another. The reason for this is rarely due to malicious intent, but rather a much more common reason: The data is maintained by human beings. Let’s face it: As humans, we can easily transpose numbers, become distracted or enter information in the wrong place. In addition, the information is not stagnant. Placement information, such as phone numbers, addresses and contact names of employers, often changes. It is difficult to keep up with it all. So, what can schools do to ensure the supporting placement data behind the numbers being reported is accurate?

Before I answer this, I’d like you to consider the following: We all face competing demands each and every day. Some of these demands are easy to meet and require only a few minutes of our time, while others are complex and require days, even weeks, of our time. Now, take a few minutes and think about what you did last week. Did you spend the majority of your time on the complex demands, or did you spend most of your...
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time on those tasks that were easy to accomplish? If you are like 99 percent of humans, you spent most of your time on the ones that were easier to accomplish and did not require a lot of your time. Why is this? One reason is that, as humans, we like to feel that we are making a contribution. When we accomplish something – even something small – we can check it off our list, and we now have evidence that we contributed. It’s part of what makes us human.

So, let’s go back to the original question: What can schools do to ensure the supporting placement data behind the numbers being reported is accurate?

**What can schools do to ensure the supporting placement data behind the numbers being reported is accurate?**

One thing schools can do is to shift the demands and responsibilities of the career services department. As we just demonstrated, when given a choice between helping a graduate find a job (complex and time-consuming) and verifying information for a graduate who already has a job (relatively easy and quick), even the best career services professionals will tend to spend their time on the less complex task of verifying existing placements. So if that responsibility were to be removed, the career services professionals would have one less thing to distract from what they do best – preparing graduates for the workforce and connecting graduates to potential job opportunities.

Several schools have already started to take action to re-focus their career services departments by utilizing a third-party partner to handle the highly administrative task of verifying
job placements for graduates. In addition, many accreditors have taken action to shift the focus by either requiring or highly recommending that schools use a third-party verification partner.

According to Bobby Reese, Chief Operating Officer at Medtech College, when Medtech College first decided to utilize a third-party placement verification company, it was because the school wanted to create full transparency in the process. "Simply saying regulatory excellence was a cornerstone of our company didn’t mean anything if we were unable to prove it. We decided the best way to prove it was to have a third party confirm our results," said Reese. "What we have come to realize is that, in addition to having confidence that the numbers we are reporting are accurate, we now have better-organized and more easily accessible information on our graduates than ever before." While we were able to confirm that Medtech had good supporting data to back up its placement numbers, Medtech also acknowledges that working with Placement Verifiers has instilled even more integrity into the data collection and maintenance process. "Because we work with Placement Verifiers, we have a strong checks-and-balance process that ensures placement details are properly maintained within our student management system. This gives us the ability to drill down on any placement without having to ask the school to pull a file or track down the information," said Reese. "I now have complete confidence in our placement data, which means, as an operator, I can focus more of my attention on enhancing the student experience vs. worrying about the integrity of our data."

We all face competing demands each day, and it can be difficult to ensure that we accomplish all of our No. 1 priorities. When we find an opportunity to shift one of those demands to a trusted partner, we should seize it. "Leaders must guide attention. The best leaders sense when and where to shift the collective focus of a team." When the focus of the career services department shifts to connecting graduates with potential employment opportunities and away from administrative tasks, you create graduates who are better prepared and more apt to find employment. Plus, you gain confidence in knowing that each and every placement included in your annual report is supported by complete and accurate data.

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In the current economy, it is evident that the public is increasingly focused on the job- and income-related benefits of a college degree. In a survey by the University of California, Los Angeles Higher Education Research Institute (HERI), an all-time high three out of four students indicated that the ability "to make more money" was a very important reason to attend college. The same survey showed another all-time high of 88 percent of incoming first-year students indicating "to be able to get a better job" as a very important reason for attending college. In a 2013 Gallup poll, parents also indicated that the most important reason for their child to go to college was "to get a good job."

These expectations of the public, as well as policymakers, have incited debate on the value of higher education and have resulted in increased scrutiny of higher education institutions with a particular focus on reported graduate employment outcomes. This has caused many institutions to establish new policies and procedures to fortify their graduate employment verification programs, invest in third-party verification agencies, and strengthen compliance programs. Institutions are also paying closer attention to developing their career services staff to create a high-performance culture as a lasting competitive advantage.

In today's environment, career services professionals must help diverse student populations navigate through a complex, highly competitive labor market. For example, in the past, career services professionals
didn’t have to coach students on developing an online reputation management strategy or how to incorporate digital and inbound marketing strategies to augment their job search. They didn’t have to worry about helping students with search engine optimization, social media optimization or video interviews. The old philosophy was that job searching was a numbers game and that students needed to apply to as many jobs as possible. Career marketing, though, has changed, and many career services professionals have struggled to keep pace.

In response to the need for career services training, MaxKnowledge worked closely with the National Association of State Administrators and Supervisors of Private Schools (NASASPS) to develop the

**Career marketing has changed, and many career services professionals have struggled to keep pace.**

Excellence in Career Services training program. The Excellence in Career Services program has been approved by NASASPS and leads to the Certified Higher Education Professional (CHEP) in Career Services credential. The CHEP credential is awarded by NASASPS to individuals who successfully complete 48 hours of approved career services training. Once earned, CHEPs are required to complete eight hours of approved training annually to maintain their credentials.

The Excellence program provides career services staff with the knowledge and skills necessary to help students become gainfully employed in a 21st century economy. Additionally, the program helps career services personnel gain an understanding of the regulations that impact student interactions in higher education, improve assistance provided to diverse populations, and use proven techniques and strategies to maximize graduate employment outcomes.

If you are interested in learning more about the Excellence in Career Services program, please visit your association’s online training center, or contact Robert Starks Jr., MaxKnowledge Vice President of Learning Initiatives, at RobertS@MaxKnowledge.com.
Biden backs apprenticeships

Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. announced the creation of a consortium of colleges and business and labor leaders that will focus on providing college credit for apprenticeships. Speaking at the annual meeting of the American Association of Community Colleges, Biden said apprenticeships provide "a pathway to the middle class" for working families and "a pipeline of skilled workers for employers" and must be expanded.

There are now 375,000 workers in registered apprenticeships nationwide. To match Britain on a per-capita basis, the United States would have to add 2.5 million more slots, Biden said. To equal Germany, it would have to add 7 million. The consortium, which will be jointly administered by the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor, will help workers enrolled in apprenticeships earn Bachelor’s and Associate degrees more quickly and at a lower cost, Biden said.

Colleges that join the consortium will agree to provide credit to workers who complete participating programs. The amount of credit will be determined by a third-party evaluator, such as the American Council on Education or the National College Credit Recommendation Service.

Synopsis of: "Biden Announces Drive to Award Credit for Apprenticeships"
Source: The Chronicle of Higher Education

Not ready for prime time (learning)

Most fifth- through 12th-grade students in the U.S. aren't success-ready. That's what the findings of Gallup's "State of America's Schools" report suggest. According to the Gallup Student Poll, only 33 percent of U.S. students surveyed in grades five through 12 are success-ready – or hopeful, engaged and with thriving well-being. Hope, engagement and well-being are significantly related to student performance, influencing outcomes such as grades, credits earned, achievement scores, likelihood to stay in school and future employment.

More than 600,000 students in grades five through 12 completed the Gallup Student Poll in fall 2013. Students from schools that elect to participate in the survey complete the online poll, which Gallup offers each year at no cost to public schools and school districts across the U.S. Though a large number of students take the poll each fall, the results aren’t representative of the U.S. student population. But the results do offer an illuminating look at how more than half a million young people feel about the quality of their lives, their experiences at school and their futures.

While 54 percent of students surveyed in the U.S. are hopeful, almost half lack hope for the future, reporting they feel stuck in their lives (32 percent) or discouraged about the future (14 percent). Hopeful students take their education more seriously and bring positive ideas and energy to the learning process, making emotional engagement in school more likely.

Synopsis of: "Not Enough Students Are Success-Ready"
Source: Gallup Business Journal
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WHY I CHOSE

Cory Lewis, Culinary Arts Student
Auguste Escoffier School of Culinary Arts

Culinary arts student Cory Lewis just landed on the island of St. Thomas. Although the sandy beaches, gorgeous sunsets and blue waters don’t hurt, the real draw for Lewis is The Ritz-Carlton. Only a week into his role within its kitchen, he envisions his career 10 years out within the company. Proudly giving 110 percent every day, he has quickly gained the trust of his superiors who are already sharing secrets to future success. Lewis told Career College Central about applying for externships, why he loves The Ritz and the importance of peer support at Auguste Escoffier School of Culinary Arts.

How did you approach finding an externship?
I knew I would apply to anything and everything. I applied to 23 externships. My buddy did 25. No matter what, my name was going to get out there; they would at least have my resume. My favorite website [for finding job listings] was Culintro.com. They post jobs for cooks and food-service-related jobs located all over the world. It doesn’t matter if you are qualified [for the specific job] or not; just send your resume and say you are looking for an externship. Of the 23 I applied to, I got 10 callbacks/emails and five job offers, including a two-star Michelin restaurant in San Francisco, Morimoto and The Ritz-Carlton.

Well done! How did you choose to go with The-Ritz?
I immediately took the offer knowing what the Ritz-Carlton was about and the great things they could provide for me. With The Ritz-Carlton, I can transfer anywhere in the world (that has a job opening) and learn. You never leave the company even if you leave your job. As long as you leave on good terms, you are always “part of the family” and go to the top of the list for job interviews. If you give them 110 percent, they will always take care of you. So that is what I’m doing now. I’m trying to better myself each time I get on that line.

How did class prepare you for this externship?
One day the executive chef was teaching us about food safety. Being fresh out of school, I kept rattling off [facts], and he gave me accolades. Cooking times and how to cook are very important. The Farm To Table® Experience [part of class] was great; I could give something that other people couldn’t, such as learning about which type of soil is best to grow things in and respecting your products.

Can you tell us about your interview with The-Ritz?
Chef Mark and Chef Greg did a lot for me; they recommended me. And then I had a half-hour-long phone interview. The chef told me about the expectations of The Ritz-Carlton, which are really high. He asked questions about what would you do in a specific kitchen situation – like if you make a mistake. I said that I will always make mistakes, and I would learn from them. I usually do not make the same mistake twice.

It sounds like there is a lot of opportunity for growth at The Ritz-Carlton. Have you thought about your career goals?
I have short-term goals and long-term goals. My three- to five-year goal is to become a sous chef, either here or at another The Ritz-Carlton restaurant. My eight- to 10-year goal is to become an executive chef with The Ritz-Carlton. I would like to stay with the company. This is not a job; this is the start of a career.

To nominate a student for Why I Chose, contact News@CareerCollegeCentral.com.
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