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Admissions officers aren't checking social media—here's why

BY LAURA ASCIONE
Managing Editor, Content Services

It appears college admissions officers aren't visiting applicants' social media profiles as much as in years past, and for a surprising reason, according to a new survey from Kaplan Test Prep.

In 2015, 40 percent of surveyed college admissions officers said they went to potential students' social media profiles to learn more about them. But now, only 25 percent say they seek out applicants' social media. A possible reason? Admissions officers can't find the accounts.

Of the admissions officers who say they have visited applicants' social media profiles, 52 percent say students have become savvier about hiding their social media presence over the past



few years, or students have moved away from social communities where what they post is easy to find by people they don't know.

According to a 2018 report by research firm Piper Jaffray, about 85 percent of teens say

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How big data is driving innovation at Elon University

BY RODNEY L. PARKS, PH.D.

When big data produces new insights, the results can be stunning. Uncovering new growth opportunities, finding answers to long-asked organizational questions, and using IT resources more effectively are just a few of the outcomes big data can offer.

However, building the integrated data sets necessary for big data to work its magic has historically been challenging for colleges and universities, even more so than for businesses. While higher education

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Which new higher-ed approach will you follow?

BY LAURA ASCIONE
Managing Editor, Content Services

Five specific approaches could help address new realities of and demands on public higher education, according to a new report.

These new models also will work to improve the student experience, and they are detailed in The Future(s) of Public Higher Education, released by Deloitte's Center for Higher Education Excellence and Georgia Tech's Center for 21st Century Universities.

The report offers an example of a current university and how its practices align with

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one of the five approaches.

Higher ed will have to respond to the academic and financial needs of its current and future learners in order to maintain relevance, experts have consistently said.

“The rapid pace of change in higher education, due in large part to shifting learner demographics, mandates a new educational model for public universities,” says Rich DeMillo, executive director of Georgia Tech’s Center for 21st Century Universities. “This report outlines critical examples of ways that public universities might revitalize their approach and meet the demands of learners with a wide variety of needs.”

The five approaches include:

1. The Entrepreneurial University:

A state university system differentiates its offerings at the institution level while coordinating at the system level to align educational investments with student—and state economic—needs. Individual institutions would specialize in areas such as undergraduate education, vocational training, or research, while degree programs and curricula would be centrally influenced through the definition of clear goals by the state and system.

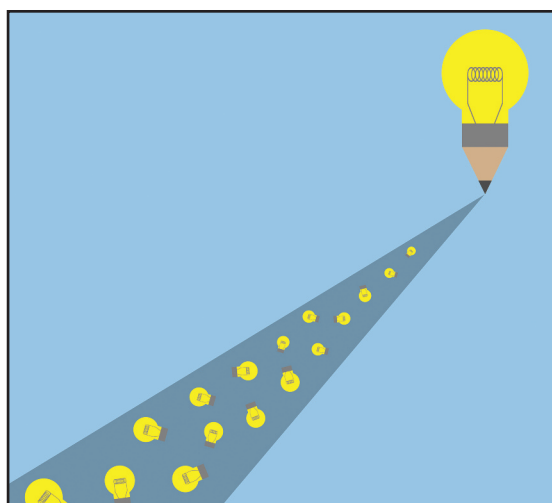
Example: Western Governors University (WGU) is a nonprofit university established to expand access to quality higher education to adult students with some college and no degree. WGU is the nation’s first accredited competency-based education (CBE) university, providing CBE online and at scale.

2. The Sharing University: Campuses would link student and administrative services to realize efficiencies of scale and/or capitalize on the expertise of institutions. Repetitive activities would be either automated or outsourced to a single institution within the system, enabling the other campuses to focus resources on more strategic

activities. Examples of shared activities: career services, international recruitment, academic advising, legal affairs, and information security.

Example: The University System of Georgia has started the OneUSG initiative to develop and put in place streamlined policies, procedures and technologies.

3. The Experiential University: Institutions would integrate work experiences into the curriculum, with students toggling between long stretches in the classroom and the work world related to their area of study. Employers would have a chance to evaluate stu-



dents for potential fit before committing to hiring them for a full-time position. Work experiences would be closely tied to the state’s economic development priorities and its emerging job market.

Examples: University of Cincinnati and Georgia Tech are operating a cooperative model, in which students are working one-third to almost half of the time a student spends in school.

4. The “Subscription” University: This platform focuses on continual learning throughout a student’s lifetime. Under this model, students would start higher education earlier by taking dual-enrollment or early college courses while still in the K–12 system. Thereafter, they could access university courses throughout their lives to gain and update their knowledge and skills as needed, paying lower tuition fees up

front and then an annual subscription fee during their lifetime.

Example: Idaho’s State Board of Education makes policy for K-20 public education, continually working toward an education system without barriers within the governance or committee structure.

5. The Partnership University: The annual budgeting cycle would be extended across several years, making it easier for institutions to plan and make strategic investments. It would guarantee a certain level of funding from the state over multiple years in exchange for agreements from colleges for tuition limits, cost savings, increased collaboration and consolidation, and private fundraising. Businesses and other employers would also provide insights on curriculum, financial assistance for equipment, and other essential resources.

Example: Maryland’s Effectiveness and Efficiency Initiative saved \$94 million at its 11-campus system and froze tuition for three years.

“Adopting elements of one or more of these models would require input and collaboration across a diverse set of stakeholders as well as strong leadership,” says Jeffrey J. Selingo, a visiting scholar at Georgia Tech’s Center for 21st Century Universities and one of the authors of the report. “Developing a master plan that is forward looking and self-aware of a system’s challenges is a big lift but can be done and is needed to position our public higher education institutions for the future.”

In the research for the report, several common elements were identified to enable change at the system level, including:

- **Effective leadership:** Strong and visionary leadership from the state governor, state legislators, university system leadership, boards, and institutional leaders will be required to drive change. An effective leader will help to design the blueprint for the state’s

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they use both Instagram and Snapchat—two platforms that make it easy to share posts with specific people, along with making it easier to keep user profiles and posts hard to find, if desired. This compares to just 36 percent of teens who use Facebook once per month, a decrease from 60 percent two years ago.

Another factor may be a shift in attitudes about checking social media. While 57 percent say it’s “fair game” for them to visit applicants’ social media profiles like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to help them decide who gets in, it represents a significant drop from the 68 percent who held this view in Kaplan’s 2017 survey.

Notably, students have been generally more accepting of this practice than admissions officers—in a separate Kaplan survey completed earlier this year, 70 percent said they believe it’s “fair game” for admissions officers to check social media.

“Unless it’s a matter of checking on something that might be a hate crime or

endangering other people, then it becomes a safety issue, but otherwise it’s a privacy issue,” one surveyed admissions officer stated.

Yariv Alpher, Kaplan Test Prep’s executive director of research, has been tracking this issue for a number of years and says many factors could explain the change of attitude and practice in admissions officers.

“We’re seeing the result of combining trends here. On the one hand, students are savvier. They are more careful with what they post and are increasingly using more private social networks. In some cases they also create fake accounts that they only share with friends, but which are not easily attributed to them,” Alpher says.

“On the other hand, admissions officers are increasingly conscious of the need to maintain students’ privacy, and are more inclined to use social media in a more targeted way. Regardless, social media remains an admissions factor for a significant number of colleges, so students should be mindful of what they share.”

But just because admissions officers

aren’t checking students’ social media as often doesn’t mean students shouldn’t continue to use common sense.

Alpher advises students to be thoughtful about what they post, and to avoid things such as making a snap decision and posting an opinion others may find offensive or hurtful.

He also cautions about spending weeks on perfecting a video library on YouTube in the hopes that admissions officers will organically come across it—he suggests applicants call it out to them instead.

“Even as technology has allowed college admissions officers to discover more information about their prospective students, it seems they are sticking with the traditional elements of the application to help them make enrollment decisions, like standardized test scores, GPA, letters of recommendation, and personal statements. These factors overwhelmingly decide applicants’ paths,” he says. “Social media remains a wildcard, though from our research, a somewhat diminishing one. We’ll be tracking to see if this trend continues or reverses.”



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higher educational system and animate the university community to help build and embrace the vision.

- **A new focus for the university system office:** The university system office would need to transition their focus from reporting and compliance to helping to define and measure success by establishing common data structures across the system, providing tools to monitor progress and support decisions, and conducting active communication between the central office and institutions. This additional level of responsibility will demand a concomitant level of authority and funding allocation.
- **An institutional culture that puts students at the center:** When the needs of

the student are at the forefront, decisions about where to invest and focus can be made more clearly, supporting areas that meet student demand. This line of thinking can help to direct investments needed to hire faculty, expand degree/credential offerings, and invest in new technology.

- **New financial models and incentives:** As universities innovate, evolve, and collaborate more frequently within and across a system, the operational changes can affect the current funding model. Analysis would need to be done to rethink how to allocate revenues and costs across the system, and create clear incentives to develop new programs designed to meet the needs of today’s and tomorrow’s economic realities.
- **Clear and frequent communication:** Change in higher education is fraught

with peril. Many change initiatives fail to take hold due to lack of stakeholder and leadership buy-in. Frequent and clear communication—painting a picture of the change imperative but also the vision of the improved future state—is a prerequisite to successfully implementing the difficult change outlined in the report.

“Today’s demands on public higher education institutions are very different from those dating back many decades, when the basic model of these institutions was formed,” says Cole Clark, managing director, Deloitte Services LP, who leads client and community outreach and relationships for its higher education practice. “Higher education is now firmly planted in a new era, and requires a new master plan: how it is organized and funded, its mission, and whom it serves.”



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institutions do aggregate massive amounts of data, often individual departments collect and review it in isolation.

Fortunately, the introduction of new technology, specifically designed with higher education in mind, is helping to drive a new wave of campus modernization. At Elon University in North Carolina, we've been able to harness the power of big data, increasing collaboration across departments and ultimately enhancing the college experience with a true focus on student success. With a renewed campus-wide focus on data and the technology to help us get there, we've successfully used big data insights to directly improve student and staff outcomes. Here's how we did it.

Building a sandbox of innovation

The concept of using student and administrative data to improve the overall experience for students and staff is relatively new to higher education. While colleges and universities already have access to terabytes of potentially useful data, many institutions don't have the means of aggregating that data across departments to quickly extract actionable information.

For us, the first step to solve this challenge was creating a flexible digital platform that could collect, integrate, and store a massive amount of data. We needed a solution that would ingest enough data to give us insight into campus processes, practices, and behaviors. We chose Ellucian Colleague® for its flexibility and ease of use. Because it's hosted in the cloud, we could focus on collecting the right data and pulling the most relevant insights from it, not maintaining IT infrastructure and trying to keep up with application releases.

Improving the college experience and enabling post-graduation success

Once we had the right data feeds

integrated across campus, we could begin to create some really exciting and innovative solutions. One recent example is the Elon Experiences Transcript (EET), which is made possible by the student data we're now tracking. The EET, unlike traditional transcripts, is designed to demonstrate a holistic picture of each student's skills, interests, and accomplishments by focusing on the specific skills learned through their college experiences.

The EET serves as an interactive portfolio that features more than just a student's degree and grade point average. It includes descriptions of their work while on campus, explanations of leadership positions they held, and details on courses they took. Potential employers can then dive even deeper to view more detailed information, such as outcomes of specific classes and in-depth descriptions of research in a particular field. The EET gives a more nuanced picture of a potential employee, greatly helping recruiters find the right fit for a job and ensuring Elon students have a better chance of getting hired.


We're also using big data to gain insight into a range of processes across campus, from studying what makes high-achieving programs successful, to training advisors with metrics-driven feedback, to measuring on-campus engagement, and even designing new degrees.

For example, after we uncovered a trend in data that showed our theatre students were lagging behind others in participating in global education opportunities, we revised the degree path to incorporate global education into the body of the major. These types of course corrections are easier to make and to justify with the backing of data evidence.

Data. Insights. Campus-wide improvement.

With two full years of data securely stored on our platform and more being collected every day, we are in an

incredible position to quickly react and adapt to campus-wide challenges. We've found that it's no longer just academics that create a successful, thriving student, but the combination of academic coursework and an enriched on-campus experience. To create the best experience possible, it's becoming increasingly important for schools to recognize the value of data they already have in their possession and invest in using that data to fuel innovation.

Collecting data, if not done properly, is meaningless. Data's value is in the insights it uncovers and those insights are only possible with a system that can aggregate, integrate, and store it in ways that make it easy to understand and react to patterns. The good news is it's easier and more cost-effective than ever to invest in data. Today, universities have the ability to holistically influence student and staff outcomes, creating massive new opportunities for innovation. 

Dr. Rodney L. Parks is the registrar, director of Summer College, and director of Winter Term at Elon University where he has served since January 2013. Dr. Parks also serves as an assistant professor in the Human Services Science Department. Parks earned his Ph.D. in Counseling from the University of Georgia and has published numerous research studies and book chapters focusing on the unique populations of students navigating higher education. Dr. Parks is also a U.S. Navy veteran having served as a naval medic stationed in the Middle East during Operation Desert Storm as well as other duty stations in Europe and the United States. He was awarded the Navy Achievement Medal with Gold Star, Southeast Asia Serve Medal with Bronze Star, National Defense Service Medal, and the Kuwaiti Liberation Medal. Dr. Parks is an active member in CACRAO and AACRAO and currently serves on the Executive Committee for SACRAO.

5 ways to help students feel like they belong

A new survey sheds light on the link between academic success and positive mental health

BY LAURA ASCIONE
Managing Editor, Content Services

Students who report a strong sense of belonging at their college or university typically do better in school, and a new survey points to five key steps schools can take to support students' mental health and success.

This sense of belonging is critical for students, especially students who are first-generation college students and students of color from low-income backgrounds. In fact, feeling a sense of belonging has been proven to have an effect on college completion rates.

A report based on a survey of alumni from the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP), which aims to prepare its K-12 students to thrive in education and the workforce, points to clear-cut steps institutions can take to help students feel positive about their path.

The survey results indicate five actionable steps colleges and universities can take to help KIPP alumni, and students like them, sustain a strong sense of belonging and positive mental health.

1. Bolster or create more targeted support for first-generation college students before they matriculate: Programs such as Summer Bridge or other pre-college connections can help build community for students. They also provide clarity on how to access the resources that already exist on campus for both academic and emotional support. Colleges should foster these programs to help students feel a sense of community before they arrive on campus. Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) do particularly strong work with these programs, and other schools can learn from their efforts.

2. Continue to increase the diversity

of faculty and staff: Colleges should intentionally recruit faculty and staff who were themselves first-generation college students. These faculty and staff can serve as powerful mentors or presenters at events for first-generation college students.

3. Make it easier for students to access academic and social supports on campus: Colleges can make it easier for students to connect with the services that already exist on campus—for instance, providing office hours and tutoring at flexible hours for students with jobs. They can also frame their resources in inclusive, inviting ways. Additionally, colleges should work to break the stigma students feel about seeking support for mental health in particular, to create a culture in which students feel empowered to advocate for themselves and one another on campus.

4. Seek out student voices and create spaces for students to share their experiences around race and identity: Students do better academically and report stronger mental health when they feel a positive connection to their racial and ethnic identities. Universities should be in dialogue with first-generation college students, students of color, and students from low-income families. By getting student input on what's working and what's not, schools can strengthen the support that exists and provide opportunities for new interventions.

5. Conduct and publicize annual surveys on college students' sense of belonging: Colleges already share data on a host of indicators. Given that a sense of belonging is associated with higher achievement and better mental health, we believe colleges and universities should annually survey students on this topic and share the data with the public.



The five steps are based off key findings from the report.

1. Most KIPP alumni say they feel a sense of belonging in college.

2. The majority of KIPP alumni say they have made friends in college.

3. For KIPP alumni, a sense of belonging and mental health are linked—59 percent say they have good, very good, or excellent mental health.


4. The KIPP alumni reporting higher GPAs also report a stronger sense of belonging; of students reporting a GPA of 3.0 or higher, 68 percent also report feeling a sense of belonging.

5. KIPP alumni are conscious of their racial and ethnic identities—89 percent say their racial and/or ethnic identity is an important part of who they are. Fifty-eight percent say they feel negatively judged by others based on their racial group.

6. The vast majority of KIPP alumni say they believe they can have a growth mindset and that their intelligence can grow (85 percent); a smaller majority said they believe belonging can grow (59 percent).

7. Most KIPP alumni say they seek academic support from peers and instructors.

8. KIPP alumni attending HBCUs are more likely to feel a higher sense of belonging and other positive indicators than KIPP alumni attending non-HBCUs.

9. KIPP alumni who say they see other KIPP alumni on campus are more likely to report a higher sense of belonging and other positive indicators than KIPP alumni who say they do not see other KIPP alumni. 

Why every college should create learner profiles

Collaborating with your Registrar's office is the key to creating a student-centered pedagogy

BY RODNEY L. PARKS, PH.D.

Registrars have long been advocates of student-centered policies and processes. However, the Registrar's Office can also play a role in working with faculty to create a student-centered pedagogy. Consider how far we have come with modifying the generic system class roll. Today, faculty have access to student pictures, pronouns, academic standing, notification that the student has applied for graduation, or even to submit an e-warning if they are not performing well. We thought: Why don't registrars provide additional information about students to help faculty adjust the way they teach an individual section of a course?

A report is born

To experiment with this idea, Elon University Registrar's Office created a report for instructors teaching capstone courses in the core curriculum. While capstone courses may vary by institution, most seek to serve as the pinnacle of a program of study, designed to give students experience in the practical applications of their coursework.

At Elon, the capstone is an opportunity for students to integrate and apply what they have learned during their Elon experience. The capstone also challenges students to consider larger themes of the program—ethical reasoning, personal and social responsibility, and global citizenship. The new report illustrated the distribution of completed courses by students enrolled in each capstone, enabling the instructor to further tailor their multidisciplinary approach by knowing the disciplines in which their students excel or may require additional focus.

The new report inspected another factor: common courses completed by

students enrolled in a certain capstone. By knowing which classes the students bring (or are missing), the instructor can further tailor his or her multidisciplinary approach by building off of stronger disciplines and providing more focus in weaker areas.

As one faculty member said, "I was stunned that nearly every student in my class had taken economics during the completion of their core requirements. As a result, I invited an economics professor to join me in a discussion on the impact of tariffs on the global economy."

Similarly, another professor wrote, "I was surprised that students in my course that had managed to avoid history completely would register for a course titled Rome!"

Expanding the Registrar's outreach

Given the success of the initial trail, the Registrar's Office began to work with faculty to determine other information that could be provided to positively impact the pedagogy of a course. Some ideas include:

- current technologies being used outside the classroom
- the types of direct service that has been performed
- global education experiences
- languages taken
- whether the learner considers themselves an introvert or extrovert
- the country/region they are from

Some of this information is available in the student system, but some will need to be collected. To accomplish this, we will survey all students at the beginning of each fall using Colleague, our student system.

The new "Learner Profile" will be



available for download from the faculty members' class roll each semester (see below). Initially, the profile will be standardized across the institution, but future iterations could be based on declared major.

Throughout primary and secondary schooling, teachers spend time getting to know their students. For those of you reading this that occasionally teach, consider the questions that we frequently ask a new class: Why are you taking this course? What do you hope to learn? What have you heard about the course? These questions tell us little about our students. Having a learner profile could help students engage more quickly, feel connected, and open the door to sharing more about who they are as adult learners. [eSN](#)

Dr. Rodney L. Parks is the registrar, director of Summer College, and director of Winter Term at Elon University where he has served since January 2013. Dr. Parks also serves as an assistant professor in the Human Services Science Department. Parks earned his Ph.D. in Counseling from the University of Georgia and has published numerous research studies and book chapters focusing on the unique populations of students navigating higher education.

Casey Hayes is an assistant registrar for data management and reporting at Elon University, where he has served since 2013. Hayes earned a BS in Computer Science from Elon University. Besides his work on a number of big data initiatives, he serves as team of innovation for Elon's student system, Ellucian Colleague.

Texas A&M students enhance their workforce readiness skills

Here's a fun way to prepare students for the constantly changing workforce

BY JENNIFER SIGMUND

To prepare students for a constantly changing, connected world, higher ed is creating more personalized and collaborative learning environments. Colleges and universities are in the middle of a significant shift in educational models, delivering both unique learning models and student campus experiences through digital transformation. Students are increasingly taking advantage of technology on demand to meet their own learning needs and chart their own path to workforce readiness.

With the likelihood of a workforce shortages in many industries, we need to be looking for new ways to help build a future-ready workforce. Today's students—who are digital natives—are the key to solving real world problems. According to a recent Dell Technologies study on Generation Z, 80 percent of Gen Z (those born after 1996) aspire to work with cutting-edge technology and more than a third are interested in IT careers. Yet, 94 percent of the Gen Zers are worried about having the right skills and experience. Universities are finding a way to tap the potential of budding innovators and by giving them an opportunity to show off their tech savvy, while also giving students the soft skills to make them more confident as they prepare to enter the workforce.

Specifically, Texas A&M engages students with immersive learning with Aggies Invent, a 48-hour intensive design experience that engages 60+ students in multidiscipline/multi-level teams in hands-on projects that will push their innovation, creativity, and communication skills. The end goal is to provide students the opportunity to acquire skills essential to becoming successful innovation leaders and support them in founding startup companies. These events are held monthly during



the academic year and have different themes. This past weekend, I had the opportunity to participate as a mentor as Dell with Intel and Nvidia supported the augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) competition.

Participating students were asked to address challenges using AR and VR solutions in a wide range of industries including healthcare, first responders, education, military, and designers. To reinforce the immersive experience at the event, students were provided with Dell Precision 7730 workstations, VR technology (HTC Vive headsets), and AR technologies including Microsoft HoloLens, Magic Leap headsets, and Meta headsets. In addition, Dell and supporting sponsors lent their expertise to assist students all weekend long with mentoring and assistance with the technology solutions, product development as well as marketing.

Over the course of 48 hours, students self-organize into teams and selected a challenge that they would like to solve. In the first few hours of the competition, the teams identified the specific need to address, developed three different options to solve the challenge and pre-

sented to a panel on how their plan will deliver a unique solution to address their challenge. From there the teams worked to develop the concept, produce a 90 second video describing their idea and a final 10 minute presentation in which they presented to the judges.

For me, the most of exciting part of the challenge was the ability to work as a mentor with the student teams. Students wanted guidance on a number of different activities. Technical guidance included helping them understand the different uses of AR and VR technology and how to determine which might be the best fit for their solution and what development platforms are being used today for content creation. As they presented their plans, the Dell team provided feedback on presenting their solution, including Powerpoint and presentation best practices. It was exciting to see how much the students progressed as a team over the course of 48 hours from their initial concepts to the presentations to the judges.

Each member of the winning team, which created a VR solution to address the fear of speaking in public, received

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6 lessons our college learned about campus redesign

How multi-use and re-use spaces are reshaping the campus experience of the future

BY RICHARD WAGNER

Change. It's an essential part of any educational institution—and it should be. To succeed today, higher ed must thoughtfully and continually evolve to stay ahead of the opportunities technology now affords. Just as importantly, colleges must anticipate the changing needs of students and their eventual employers. With each of these critical assessments, however, come logistical hurdles and financial burdens.

Now new thinking in flexible learning and collaborative campus spaces, as well as smart re-use of space, is helping institutions become flexible and remain change-ready, effectively creating more efficient teaching and better, more cost-effective, long-range development planning.

So what, then, are some key principles in flexible use planning for the teaching environments of tomorrow?

1. Focus on student needs first

At Dunwoody College in Minneapolis, we've seen more change than most. When you've been around for a more than a century you learn—and re-learn—about evolving. Over the decades we've grown from one of the country's earliest dedicated technical-education institutions to one that offers a Bachelor of Architecture, and a School of Engineering with four-year engineering degrees, in addition to a core set of offerings.

That evolution has taught us to focus on the needs of the students. How will they be taught? What new cutting-edge technologies are available? Which learning environments and physical spaces on our campus provide the optimal conditions for their success? These and other questions were part of our planning process before we embarked

on phase one of a multi-year renovation that is reshaping the campus experience for our students.

2. Re-use and multi-use spaces to manage initial costs

Not every physical change to a campus means building new facilities from the ground up. The best higher-ed architecture partners now seek opportunities to re-imagine current square footage that is underutilized or serving an outdated function. In our case, that meant transforming 12,000 square feet of dormant gymnasium space first built in the 1920s and giving it new life as an open, two-story collaborative Learning Commons and Welcome Center, with double the square feet. Re-use can save thousands in construction costs and re-optimize the functional footprint of your existing campus structure for more modern day needs.

3. People like people: Create interaction through openness

For decades, traditional thinking in campus (and corporate) design has focused on departmental silos, on putting different academic and learning disciplines on different floors or wings of a building. The principle seemed sound: Allow each group their own space to function properly and focus on their own departmental teachings and needs. But in recent years we've seen a breaking down of those silos in corporate and educational campuses across America.

4. People like people

Interaction and the opportunity to collaborate bring enhanced learning opportunities and a more cohesive student experience. At Dunwoody, our




engineering students mix with architecture and design students, often working purposefully on joint projects and enhancing their learning experience through shared use of the environment around them. Structurally, that has meant designing mixed-use, flexible learning spaces that serve all students. Philosophically, we're breaking down the silos too.

5. Double duty: From classroom to after-school special events

When colleges are gathering places for the greater community, everyone benefits. To that end, when redesigning a campus or a component of a college, it's imperative to design spaces that encourage community interaction and engagement. Multi-function, open-event spaces that can bring students and faculty together with alumni or representatives of the local industries they're training to enter should be a priority in the modern campus.

6. Build change readiness into your DNA

Whether you're undergoing a physical renovation or doing due diligence research for future change, the key factor to planning, preparing for, and managing campus renovation or redesign is simple. It's all about a comprehensively change-ready culture throughout the institution; an open readiness to explore new opportunities, to try and test out new ideas and technologies in the real world, and to learn from it as we go along. After all, isn't that why we're in higher education? 

Richard Wagner is president of Dunwoody College of Technology in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

22 favorite mobile apps: Appy Hour on the Future Trends Forum

BY BRYAN ALEXANDER

In June of 2018, the Future Trends Forum ran an experiment. We didn't host a guest, as we usually do. Instead, we hosted an "Appy Hour," a session where we invited participants to simply share their favorite mobile app for learning. (The idea came up during the June 7th Forum discussion. Kudos to the community for thinking of it!)

The experiment turned out to be... a wild success. People jumped onto video to share app after app. Discussion flowed freely.

This wasn't done programmatically. I didn't pick or pre-load ready-to-go speakers. Several days before the event I fired off a mass email, as is customary for each Forum. When I started the session, I introduced the topic then simply opened the floor to volunteers. This was very ad hoc and organic.

Here's the app list in alphabetical order. I've added the person or people who volunteered it as best I could:

Algebra By Hand – an algebra learning and practice app (thanks to Rod Murray). Rod also did a podcast interview with the app's creator.

Calm – a tool for helping users meditate (thanks to Patrice and Cari Jimenez).

Chalk (iTunes) – an augmented reality app which lets users draw on the real world within a videoconference. It could be used in many situations (thanks to Renee Franzwa).

Desmos – a free math app that replaces graphing calculators (thanks to Maria Anderson).

Fabulous – helps users build good habits and fix up bad ones (thanks to Rachael Larson).

Feedly – a good RSS reader that helps us manage incoming information (thanks to Maria Anderson). I have blogged about Feedly previously.

Flipgrid – a kind of video-based discussion tool (thanks to Mary Talbut and Rita-Marie Conrad).

Forest – encourages you to not spend so much time on the phone (thanks to Maria Anderson).

Goose Chase – a scavenger-hunt app (thanks to Mary Talbut).

Inoreader – another good RSS reader (Bryan).

iScanner – a very good scanner (thanks to Maria Anderson).

Libby – an e-reader app for reading ebooks, hosted by OverDrive (thanks to Babette Kraft).



Lingro to Go – a language-learning app with a key focus: how to use language in the right moment (thanks to Cari Jimenez).

Marco Polo (iTunes, Google Play) – an asynchronous video tool (thanks to Barbara Mitchell).

MyWGU (Google Play, iTunes) – an app for Western Governors University students, aimed at WGU's portal (thanks to Rachael Larson, who helped develop it).

Nearpod – for classroom presentation and interactive exercises (thanks to Mary Talbut).

Newsmeister – a news quiz tool (thanks to Tim Holmgren, who helped develop it).

Scuttytree – an AI/chat tool that helps students form study groups (thanks to Rod Murray).

Shared grocery lists – an app category very useful for multi-person households (thanks to Maria Anderson).

Smart Kapp – a note-taking app that lets you send content to multiple devices (thanks to Mike Welker).

Stitcher – a leading podcast aggregator (Bryan). We learned that Rod

Murray's podcast is now on Stitcher.

TripIt – a travel planner that creates itineraries (thanks to Maria Anderson).


Vamos a aprender náhuatl (iTunes, Google Play) – a Nahuatl language learning app (thanks to Babette Kraft).

Once we covered the majority of those apps, Rita-Marie then asked us to get meta, wondering how we can best keep up with the deluge of apps? In response, Cari Jimenez suggested three apps for keeping up with apps and information: Product Hunt, Flipboard, and EdSearch. Maria mentioned her vacation habit of downloading a raft of apps all at once, then sifting through them in free time.

I took a step back and wondered about themes which emerged across this range of apps and through our discussion. They included:

- the wide range of app types. We shared apps for education (on several levels), personal productivity, and mental-health aids.
- access. Many people were interested in low-cost or free apps.
- practical pedagogy. Some saw their apps as supplementing a preexisting curriculum (e.g., Desmos, Algebra by Hand, Lingro to Go). Others were standalone learning tools (Vamos a aprender náhuatl).
- ease of use counted for a lot. We paid attention to improved interfaces and especially to good design.
- gamification. Many apps used game features, such as points and competition.

What do you think of our list? And what do you make of our experiment?

My thanks to Maria Andersen and Rita-Marie Conrad for offering the Appy Hour idea. 

[*Editor's Note*: This blog was originally posted on Bryan Alexander's blog on July 5, 2018.]

Bryan Alexander is an internationally known futurist, researcher, writer, speaker, consultant, and teacher.

41 edtech predictions for higher ed in 2019

What innovations can your university look forward to this year?

BY ELLEN ULLMAN
Editorial Director, Content Services

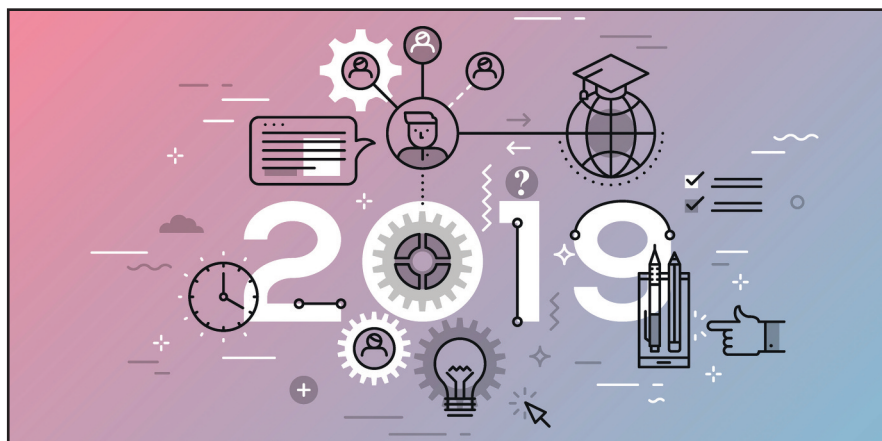
We asked 20 edtech executives to look into their crystal balls and share their thoughts about what will happen in 2019. In addition to the usual suspects—artificial intelligence (AI), active learning, and microcredentials—people predicted more nuanced uses of data (to handle campus security, for instance), chatbots to help with studying, and blockchain-enabled digital student IDs to improve security. Read on to see what's in store for 2019...

Eran Ben-Ari, chief product officer, Top Hat

- Faculty-centric student success will be prioritized. Faculty are the most important components of an effective university-wide student success program. Students report higher levels of engagement and learning when their professors use active and collaborative learning techniques in the classroom. As this trend grows, students will be provided better learner outcomes and administrators will gain ways to identify cases where a student may be falling behind or need additional resources and intervene as necessary.

- Classroom engagement boosted through tech use. The best edtech platforms allow professors to move into engaging, action-filled, active learning pedagogies before, during, and after class. With the wealth of data collection (through the use of technology), it is possible for professors to act on the data in real time.

- Making edtech choices based on faculty needs. With the steady increase of the average number of students per class, there is a growing need for technology solutions that allow professors to engage students wherever they may be on their learning journey regardless of class size. Student success will increasingly depend upon these choices.



Chris Coleman, president, Woz U

- A growing number of individuals are going to focus on taking an accelerated learning path in 2019. The expectations of the next generation of learners place an acute focus on employer-valued skills to enter their desired profession. The notion of a 'well-rounded education' is no longer going to be synonymous with taking marginally useful college courses.

- 2019 will see the employer sentiment shifting towards more interest in 'learners' than 'experience' when hiring employees, as demonstration continues to offer more value to organizations than memorization. Next year, I expect to see more employers less interested in credentials and more interested in demonstrable competencies when adding staff to their workforce.

- I foresee systems evolving next year towards a self-directed format, where data-driven platforms provide students with recommendations for learning units that are in line with in-demand careers. As skillsets are identified by employers for future openings, students will be educated with the proficiency in sought-after areas for a pathway towards a thriving profession.

Breck DeWitt, education strategist, Dell EMC

- Higher ed is already making serious investments in Internet of Things (IoT) and supporting projects from smart energy, security, transportation, navigation, and wayfinding services, to improving the selling of concessions on college game days as part of their digital campus initiatives. By 2025, we expect one in three universities to make a significant investment in IoT research or student/professor projects to fuel initiatives that simplify life and challenges.

Alan Ewing, executive director, CBRS Alliance

- While colleges and universities pay millions of dollars for wi-fi and LTE services to keep up with student and staff expectations for fast, free, ubiquitous connectivity across school facilities, demand for high-volume data applications is growing quickly. Cisco estimated that by 2021, 78 percent of the world's mobile data traffic would be video. This increasing demand, as well as the need for connectivity outdoors in common spaces, means more campuses improve connectivity while capping overall expenditures. Using LTE technology based on shared spectrum, campuses will be able to take

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advance of expanded connectivity and the ability to widely deploy connectivity solutions across their facilities, indoors and outside. Deploying private LTE networks on shared spectrum, such as the Citizen Broadband Radio Service (CBRS), will also allow campuses to prepare themselves for upcoming 5G deployments at a lower cost than what is traditionally associated with LTE services.

- There's an increasing demand for privacy across industries, including higher ed. Students and staff expect that their personal data and identifying information is secure and being handled responsibly. This requires that campuses have their own local wireless networks to ensure secure access to potentially sensitive data. In 2019, we expect to see more campuses investigating private LTE options for their wireless networking needs, and the ability to deploy on shared or unlicensed spectrum is a key differentiator for these solutions.

Susan Grajek, vice president, communities and research, EDUCAUSE

- Short-term: Growing focus on measuring learning. As societal and economic factors redefine the skills needed in today's workforce, colleges and universities must rethink how to define, measure, and demonstrate subject mastery and soft skills such as creativity and collaboration. The proliferation of data-mining software and developments in online education, mobile learning, and learning management systems are coalescing toward learning environments that leverage analytics and visualization software to portray learning data in a multidimensional and portable manner.
- Mid-term: Proliferation of OER. Adoption of OER has been driven largely by efforts to reduce the costs associated with higher ed, though perhaps the most powerful potential out-

come of OER is the opportunity for institutions to develop a broader set of investments in course development and infrastructure.

- Long-term: Cross-institution and cross-sector collaboration. Today's global environment, which is increasingly connected via technology, allows institutions to unite across international borders and work toward common goals concerning teaching and learning, research, and shared values. Increasingly, institutions are joining forces to combine their intellectual capital or to align themselves strategically with innovative efforts in the field. Cross-sector collaborations and partnerships are also becoming more common, with industry looking to institutions for research and development to solve pressing challenges and institutions looking to business to prepare students for the digitally focused workforce, aligning programs and degree pathways with industry needs.

Philip Hauserman, vice president, The Castle Group

- There's no excuse for not being prepared, especially in a world where news of an incident on campus can spread like lightning in a matter of hours, if not minutes. An increasing number of institutions are revisiting existing plans and developing new plans for what to do when an incident occurs. That trend will continue in 2019. There are just too many issues—Title IX, sexual assault, discrimination,

Cross-sector collaborations and partnerships are also becoming more common, with industry looking to institutions for research and development to solve pressing challenges and institutions looking to business to prepare students for the digitally focused workforce, aligning programs and degree pathways with industry needs.

data breach, violence, among others—that could do significant damage to the institution and the individuals involved if communications are not handled in a timely or appropriate manner.

Mike Huseby, chairman and CEO, Barnes & Noble Education

- We will see AI being used more and more, as higher-ed institutions continue their digital transformation journeys and look to appeal to students' preferences for adaptive, engaging learning experiences. Particularly when it comes to Gen Z students, who now make up the bulk of those enrolled in higher ed institutions today, faculty members and administrators need to meet students where they live: online. By using resources with AI components—such as AI teaching assistants—online and traditional, in-person courses will start to be used more frequently across campuses over the next year and beyond.
- Content and learning management systems will become even more advanced and robust, thanks to the advancement of AI technology. We will see more AI-enabled study tools that generate not just an answer, but an explanation of how to get to that answer, when students ask a question. Along with enhancing learning both inside and outside of the classroom for all types of students, these tools also increase students' efficiency, as

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they're available whenever and wherever students need them.

- The writing center is a staple on any college campus, but it's no secret that the traditional student is rapidly evolving. This means that more students need writing assistance early in the morning, late at night, or on the weekends—all times when the traditional, on-campus writing center is closed. To address this gap, institutions have begun offering additional writing support, such as live online writing assistance and other digital writing tools. Because of the growing number of older, "nontraditional" students—and the fact that the digital native Gen Z students demand digital study assistance and tools—I expect we will see a major shift in the traditional writing center model, as institutions adopt more online writing assistance tools to meet students' evolving needs.

Brandon Lee, CEO, Terra Dotta

- The number of new international higher ed students has been trending down due to tough talk on immigration, a tenuous national climate, rigid visa processing, and more competition abroad. However, we expect those numbers to start to rebound in 2019 as more higher ed institutions use technology to make the application, acceptance, compliance, and onboarding processes smoother and quicker. The faster an institution can issue an international student an offer of admission and streamline the process of issuing student visa documentation (I-20 for F-1 visas, DS-2019 for J-1 visas), the faster prospective international students can respond and expedite their decisions and commitments as well as their visa-processing requirements. Application, compliance, and onboarding technology also frees up time for international offices to do more recruiting and programming.

Shannon Leininger, vice president of U.S. public sector state, local and education (SLED) east, Cisco

- As universities work to create a safer campus that protects students and faculty's data and devices across the network, they will also be turning to technology to improve physical security. From 24/7 security cameras on campus to automated locks, universities will look to get back to basics to ensure their campus is as safe as possible. Since the biggest issues on campuses tend to be the smallest acts, such as crossing the street on campus, campuses need to be prepared.

Tom Livne, CEO, Verbit

- Throughout 2019, we can expect to see a move towards incorporating voice assistants into the classroom as a tool for education. Conversational AI has become a staple of everyday life, with widespread adoption of programs like Google Assistant and Alexa infiltrating homes. Millions of people use digital assistants to complete simple tasks, which sets an expectation for this same level of digitization and ease in all facets of life—including education. In that context, these devices have revolutionized the role of speech technology in schools. They enable tremendous opportunities for educators and students by providing access to a wealth of information on any topic, simply by speaking a few words. Though some argue that this may prove to be a source of distraction or interruption, it would also serve to drive curiosity and encourage learning for younger grades that are not yet able to simply search for the many questions they have. The educational potential is enormous, and we are just on the edge of leveraging its full capabilities.
- As universities strive to reach ADA compliance, we're starting to see an increased effort across campuses for increased accessibility. Universities are taking heed and ensuring that they have the tools in place to pro-

vide equal access education for all students, which includes the integration of accessible technology like speech recognition capabilities and transcription for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Closed captioning in the classroom not only aids students with disabilities, but it also fosters student learning and creates a searchable record of lectures that students can refer back to after class.

- As university customer service representatives get bogged down with calls, institutions are starting to turn to automated chatbots on school websites to help handle some of the simpler requests that students have. These chatbots have a much faster turnaround time than traditional email support, which can often take a week or more for simple questions to get answered. Outside of the convenience that chatbots offer, they also serve to be an ADA-compliant solution that users can turn to if they are unable to chat on the phone, as websites must be made completely accessible to all individuals.

Michael London, CEO, Examity

- Momentum will continue to build for learning validation, reflecting the growing demand for secure online assessment from universities, corporate HR departments, and certification and standardized test providers.
- Increasing attention to the population of students with some college but no degree, as employers look to tap into new talent pools and the landscape of just-in-time, job-aligned training continues to expand.
- Edtech companies will continue to advance the application of AI and machine learning in ways that are more responsive to the needs of students and education providers.

Drew Magliozzi, CEO, AdmitHub

- AI will continue to permeate higher ed—and while bots may not replace instructors, advisors, or university

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presidents anytime soon, they will augment (and in some cases automate) day-to-day tasks that enhance the delivery and impact of core university functions such as admissions, enrollment, and student support.

- To make good on the promise of AI, we expect that universities will need new positions to train and monitor their artificially intelligent machines. Don't be surprised if in the coming year we see the emergence of university positions such as Lead Bot Nurturer or AI Personality Architect.

Jim Milton, CEO, Campus Management

- Blockchain, AI, and machine learning have been transforming industries across the globe over the past few years. Like other industries, higher ed has been adapting these new technologies and finding innovative ways to service students and enhance their education experience. Over the next year, we expect institutions to expand the use of these technologies and further integrate them into their enterprise systems. Using AI, like bots, to answer common student questions is one way the next generation of CRM systems will integrate with these technologies. As technology continues to mature, so will institutional innovation to increase student engagement.
- We anticipate greater interest and willingness to rely upon prescriptive analytics. Institutions will begin using technology to assist in improving student engagement and thus retention through sentiment analysis and indi-

vidualized interactions personalized to the student. Identifying when students need degree information and career counseling gives faculty the opportunity to have a meaningful conversation using data and analysis-rich platforms.

Keith RajECKI, vice president of public sector, education and research industry solutions group, Oracle Higher Education

- In 2019, we will see AI continue to transform higher ed, whether through operation management or improving the traditional classroom experience. However, universities must consider the ethical implications of AI, especially unconscious bias. If biases were applied to the process or data beforehand, it's possible that AI applications will replicate those biases as it automates processes.
- Blockchain has the ability to transform higher ed, especially in credentialing and identification in the near future. Universities will provide digital student IDs, which will make campuses much more secure, verify students' identity, and provide access to records including administrative, academic, and medical.

Dan Rivera, portfolio marketing manager for education, Aruba, a Hewlett Packard Enterprise company

- Campus safety is not a new trend, but in 2019 higher ed will take advantage of advanced technologies such as location-based services (LBS) to enhance campus safety and security. One example of using LBS to respond to an onsite threat event: First responders can have access to 4D visualization of

buildings, showing reported threat locations as well as entry and exit points, and can provide real-time communication between staff, students, and visitors to confirm which rooms have been secured and which rooms have not. This allows responders to focus on the correct areas, the ones needing the most immediate attention.

- Higher ed institutions will be focused on student success. One technology trend that will help them do that is providing a student-centered, robust mobility experience—one that allows students to have uninterrupted access to educational resources, campus services, advisors, mentors, and counselors on- and off campus. Institutions will need to implement tools to provide network assurance to ensure that positive student experience.
- The need to secure the network from cyber threats will continue to be a top priority. With an influx of IoT devices, financially motivated cyber criminals and disparate IT groups, higher ed faces a particular challenge protecting their networks and data from intrusion. Colleges must implement new tools that go beyond traditional cybersecurity measures, such as user and entity behavior analytics (UEBA), which identifies patterns in typical user behavior and provides actionable intelligence when it detects an anomaly. By detecting any anomalous behavior, UEBA solutions can provide real-time protection that traditional systems miss and enable faster responses to attacks.

Andrew Rosen, CEO, Interfolio

- In 2019, as institutions adopt more integrated hiring strategies designed to

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Higher ed institutions will be focused on student success. One technology trend that will help them do that is providing a student-centered, robust mobility experience—one that allows students to have uninterrupted access to educational resources, campus services, advisors, mentors, and counselors on- and off campus.

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promote greater inclusion and diversity, like cluster hiring (hiring cohorts of faculty whose research interests complement each other versus individual contributors), I expect more institutions will tap technology to reduce administrative work, increase transparency, and facilitate greater collaboration among hiring committees for more important considerations like diversity and faculty-institutional fit.

- Despite the indispensable role of faculty in higher ed, faculty have largely been underserved by education technology. Fortunately, some of the savviest higher-ed investors have acknowledged this underserved market. Keep an eye out in 2019 for the rise of more edtech companies that are focused on supporting faculty.

Tyson J. Smith, president and CEO, Reading Horizons

- More universities will evaluate their teacher-prep programs with an eye towards improved instruction in decoding strategies and phonics.

Nicola Soares, vice president and managing director, Kelly Education Practice

- Alternative credentialing will offer a solution to education qualifications.

In 2018 we saw an increasing trend towards experimenting with new forms of an alternative education, such as microcredentials and less traditional-intensive degree programs. Outside of highly regulated industries, such as healthcare, we are beginning to see employers embrace microcredentials as an alternative to the traditional four-year degree. With this increased focus on supporting the ‘nontraditional’ student, and a decrease in enrollment for education degrees, I predict that we will see an increase in alternative credentialing options for teaching.


André Thomas, CEO, Triseum

- Edtech focus will move from platforms to content. For quite some time, educators have focused on platforms, from grading to LMS to proctoring solutions. While today’s technology has improved content engagement and accessibility, in many cases we are still dealing with stale, static resources. I believe we will see a renewed focus on high-quality content in 2019.
- Blockchain technology will become a major point of discussion in education. The technology can provide a secure means to record grades, store transcripts, and reduce cheating, and while still in its infancy for educational use, I believe we will see the

first major applications take advantage of the technology in 2019.

- Interest in virtual reality (VR) will shift to AR. First, many schools, classrooms, and teachers don’t have access to the hardware to fully utilize VR experiences. Second, teachers likely don’t want to stand in front of students who are wearing headgear; if the teacher is also in the VR environment, he or she can’t see facial reactions and emotions. I believe we are longing for more interactions in person rather than through screens.

Lee Wilson, president, FreshGrade


- Grades are dead; long live grades. In the 1820s, universities began issuing records of student performance. For 200 years, report cards were the most efficient way to communicate the inherently messy and complicated process of learning. To work, learning had to be rated on a scale and reduced to paper. It wasn’t perfect, but it was the best tool we had. Today, capturing text, images, video, and audio is easy. In real time we can now capture and share those deeper moments of learning that reveal what lies behind the letter grade. A new generation of tools that blend rich multimedia with grading tools are opening up the possibility of much deeper conversations about learning. 

Skills

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a Dell 5530 Mobile Precision Workstation. The second place team developed an AR solution for improving the experience of purchasing clothes online and the third place team developed a VR application to teach students materials science. The placing teams all received monetary prizes as well.

Today, higher education is at a pivotal moment. College and universities are looking for new ways to provide learning experiences and prepare their students for the future. I am proud to

work for an organization that helps higher education with digital transformation through innovative and affordable solutions delivering enhanced learning experiences, improving student outcomes and exploring important research initiatives. Dell is helping universities prepare for students for their digital future. 

[*Editor’s note:* This article originally appeared on the Dell EMC blog on December 6, 2018.]

Jennifer Sigmund is a senior higher education strategist for Dell EMC with 20 years’ experience working with educa-

tion institutions. She is committed to driving Dell Technology partnerships and initiatives with higher education institutions to support better learning outcomes, improve administrative processes, campus efficiency, and safety. She builds strategic partnerships with universities and education tech companies for student success initiatives and research. Prior to joining Dell EMC, she was the director of product marketing at both Trillion and Polycom where she managed integrated solutions portfolios that helped educational institutions implement network connectivity, distance learning, and collaborative solutions.

Looking to boost graduation rates?

A new program at Northwest Missouri State University keeps students on track

BY ROBERT LEROSE

A report from Complete College America reveals that only 19 percent of students attending public colleges full-time earn a bachelor's degree in four years. A new initiative at Northwest Missouri State University (Northwest) is aggressively working to reverse that trend.

Launched in fall 2018, Complete 30 is a school-wide effort to help students graduate on time and is loosely based on Complete College America's 15 to Finish program. Students strive to complete 30 credit hours every academic year, spanning fall, spring, and summer sessions.

"All of our students are encouraged to participate, but we also understand that the academic journey for each student is different," says Allison Hoffmann, director, academic success and retention at Northwest. "We take a very personalized approach to student success and the same can be said for participation in Complete 30."

Flexibility is built into Complete 30, allowing students to progress at their own pace. For example, one student could complete 15 credits per semester, while another student might accumulate 15 credits in the fall, but only 12 in the spring. Rather than let students fall behind and possibly lose their momentum, academic advisors would steer the student to pick up the additional three credits over the summer.

Equidistant from Des Moines, Omaha, and Kansas City, Northwest attracts a lot of students from rural communities, including many first-generation college students. Some may have to interrupt their schooling or be unable to take a full course load to help out on the family farm or care for a family member, so the involvement of academic advisors is key.

Advisors meet with students at least once per term, and sometimes more. They invest time and effort in getting to know students and working with them to come up with a personalized success plan that may need to be adjusted over time to



Northwest Missouri State University

meet students' changing circumstances and keep them on track to graduate.

"These are great conversations for advisors to have with students: What are you able to do and manage? What do we need to factor in?" Hoffmann says. "If a student isn't likely to meet that goal or is falling behind, then that's when some additional conversation can take place to revise that academic plan."

Discussions address the student's situation, but Hoffmann is quick to point out that the tone is cordial, candid, and supportive. Students are not meant to feel that they've failed because they accrued fewer than 15 hours in a term and have sabotaged their chances for graduating. Instead, solutions are found that fulfill Northwest's mission of "student success—every student, every day."

Hoffmann says that there are three crucial benefits for students who graduate on time:

- saving money on tuition
- moving quicker into careers. "The average entry-level income for a bachelor's degree in Missouri is just under \$46,000. We're always trying to help students understand the importance of a college education and a bachelor's degree."
- developing strong, lasting relation-

ships that can serve students not only during their academic career, but also as they move out into the workforce

For institutions thinking about their own student success programs, Hoffmann offers these suggestions:

1. Build relationships. Get to know your students and give them a good foundation to start their education.

2. Be positive. Don't let minor setbacks such as fewer completed credits derail their enthusiasm.

3. Work to students' needs. Come up with a program that students can realistically achieve and make adjustments when necessary.

Although Complete 30 was just launched and results aren't in, the promise of success bodes well. Hoffmann says that students who complete 30 or more hours during their first year have a higher GPA than students taking fewer credits and have significantly higher graduation rates. **eSN**

Robert Lerosé is a New York-based freelance writer. He received the APEX Grand Award and seven Awards For Publication Excellence for his journalism. He was the 2004 winner of the Great American Think-Off, a philosophy competition open to the public.

These 10 hard and soft skills will be key in 2019

A new LinkedIn analysis offers a look at the hard and soft skills managers desire most in employees

BY LAURA ASCIONE
Managing Editor, Content Services

It's not always easy to measure soft skills, but more and more, they're proving crucial in an increasingly competitive workforce facing a shortage of highly-qualified workers, according to new data from LinkedIn.

A large majority (89 percent) of professionals feel their skills are more important than their job titles, according to 2018 LinkedIn research that paints a picture of the changing workforce and the skills that will help workers achieve the most success.

Additional LinkedIn Learning research notes that the combination of a short shelf life of skills, combined with a tightening labor market, leads to skills gaps. Talent developers, executives, and people managers agree that training for soft skills is a top priority for talent development teams—all the more reason why job applicants should focus on strengthening those skills. In fact, 57 percent of senior leaders today say soft skills are

more important than hard skills.

Here are the top 5 soft skills companies will look for most in 2019, along with LinkedIn's explanation for why the skills matter:

1. Creativity: While robots are great at optimizing old ideas, organizations most need creative employees who can conceive the solutions of tomorrow.

2. Persuasion: Having a great product, a great platform or a great concept is one thing, but the key is persuading people to buy into it.

3. Collaboration: As projects grow increasingly more complex and global in the age of AI, effective collaboration only grows more important.

4. Adaptability: An adaptable mind is an essential tool for navigating today's ever-changing world, as yesterday's solutions won't solve tomorrow's problems.

5. Time Management: A timeless skill, mastering time management today will serve employees for the rest of their careers.



Though soft skills are in high demand, hard skills are still important, and LinkedIn researchers also ranked the most important hard skills for 2019—here are the top 5:

1. Cloud Computing: As the world rushes toward the cloud, companies are desperately searching for engineers who have the skills to accommodate this demand.

2. Artificial Intelligence: It's official—the Age of AI is here.

3. Analytical Reasoning: As they collect more data than ever before, companies are hungry for professionals who can make smart decisions based off of it.

4. People Management: The world has changed from a “command-and-control” model toward leaders who can coach and empower, a difficult skill set few professionals possess.

5. UX Design: UX design is the key to making a digital world work for humans. eSN

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