

Outstanding Talent: 15 stories, 37 pages | **Recovery Force:** Tech start-up takes team approach

Magazine of the Indiana Chamber of Commerce

March/April 2017

BIZVOICE

A photograph of two women standing on a modern staircase with metal railings. The woman on the left has blonde hair and is wearing a black long-sleeved top and a necklace. The woman on the right has short blonde hair and is wearing a black blazer over a light green collared shirt and a dark skirt. They are both smiling at the camera.

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Stan Was Our State's Education Man

Education, and its critical role in helping provide the workers that create economic success for our companies and our state, has been a featured topic throughout the 19-year history of this publication. Beyond the business/workforce implications, we're talking about the future of our young people.

Stan Jones, featured on the pages of *BizVoice*® a number of times, passed away in February. While his resume may have read state legislator (first elected at age 24), commissioner of higher education and later national leader of the Complete College America initiative, Stan was first and foremost a passionate advocate for students in the education process.

Politics were put aside when it came to our young people. Stan led the way in bringing opposing factions together. Years of policy inaction were replaced by positive education changes that will continue to benefit Hoosiers for years to come.

Perhaps more than any person I've known, Stan was doggedly persistent in getting people and groups that were often adversaries to sit down and talk to one another. Stan was a visionary leader, first in K-12, then higher education. He was soft-spoken, thoughtful and extremely intelligent. He was very instrumental in the formation of Indiana's Education Roundtable, which served our state well for many years.

It's not an overstatement that Stan redefined what the commissioner of higher education could accomplish. He led the charge to make college more accessible to a wider population, pushed to raise the state's K-12 academic standards, helped to formulate performance-based funding and to fully develop the state's community college system.

Stan Jones was the Indiana Chamber's 2009 Government Leader of the Year; view that *BizVoice* feature story in the November-December 2009 archives at www.indianachamber.com.

With this issue's focus on the *Indiana Vision 2025* driver of Outstanding Talent, we proudly dedicate it to Stan Jones.



Kevin M. Brinegar
President and CEO



Indiana Chamber Mission:

Cultivate a world-class environment which provides economic opportunity and prosperity for the people of Indiana and their enterprises.



Stan Jones and Kevin Brinegar at the 2009 Annual Awards Dinner.



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Indiana's Leading Statewide Business Magazine

BIZVOICE

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Leading the Way in K-12

Jennifer McCormick's career in education has taken her to the Indiana superintendent of public instruction role. She talks policies, partnerships and more.

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Powering the Ivy Tech Engine

Sue Ellspermann became Ivy Tech Community College's president last summer. But, in a way, her various stops have prepared her for this position.



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It Takes a Team Effort

Associates and advisors play critical roles as Recovery Force continues along a promising path. Learn how they are going about the process.

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Innovation on Display

High school class helps put Noblesville students in charge. Today's projects set the stage for promising futures.

Cover photo: Helping lead the way in Indiana's search for education excellence are Jennifer McCormick (left), new state superintendent of public instruction, and Sue Ellspermann, who became Ivy Tech Community College president in July 2016.



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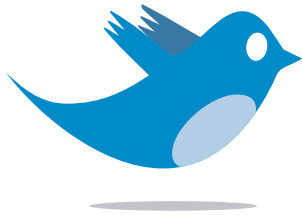
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What's Chirping on Tweet Street?

The Indiana Chamber has over 16,300 Twitter followers. Are you on the list?



@IndianaChamber

We're #AllIN4PREK too! Expanding IN preschool program to more kids from low-income families is a top priority for us indianachamber.com/priorities

We've submitted a list of detrimental federal rules that need repeal to @mike_pence - <http://tinyurl.com/h8qqohy>; list <http://www.indianachamber.com/federal>

When an emergency strikes, will you be ready? @GibsonInsurance talks workplace emergency plans at #INSAFETY17 bit.ly/2jxphjN

HB 1002 is vital: Indiana needs \$1.2 billion per year, on average, to make our roads & bridges safer. #Roads4OurFuture @Brian_Bosma pic.twitter.com/wduOHyRiY6

Half of Indiana's smokers tried to quit last year. Let's help them succeed. <http://ow.ly/uxxY3089CMm> #HealthierIndiana

.@RocheDiaUSA CEO: @INBiosciences will succeed as a global leader <http://ow.ly/BcUW3085cYw> (via @ILB)

What others are saying to – or about – the Indiana Chamber:

@Launch_Indiana: Mark Lawrance from the @IndianaChamber presenting on future initiatives in Indiana to the Small Business Caucus.

@AnnCompton: I am looking forward to bringing fresh political insights when I visit @IndianaChamber

@KelleyIndy: Congrats to #KelleyIndy grad @wechsler from @LaunchFishers on being appointed to the @IndianaChamber Board of Directors! #KelleyProud

@AndrewSCullen: A \$50 mil investment now in pre-K will pay 4 to 1 dividends to IN for generations. @uwci @PNCBank @IndianaChamber

@danforestal: I had a great time talking road funding. Indiana Lawmakers on @wfyi tonight 5:30, tomorrow 8pm. W @mlawranc @IndianaChamber @j_stvns

@FishersIN: We were named @IndianaChamber's 2016 Community of the Year. Learn how we earned that distinction here: bit.ly/2hHG8Cj

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Indiana's Talent Gap and Brain Drain Special Workshop to Address Critical Issue

How can we educate and train our workforce to fit the current and emerging employment opportunities in Indiana companies? How can we retain our graduates to fill the skills/education gaps? These challenges are not new and although concerted efforts have been put forth to address them, Indiana businesses currently have unfilled jobs due to a lack of skilled candidates and a significant proportion of graduates from Indiana colleges and universities are leaving the state.

This workshop seeks to frame and detail the challenges, solicit a variety of viewpoints and bring the range of stakeholders together in working groups to formulate ideas and plans. Stakeholders include: state, regional and local governments, human resource professionals, business and industry leaders, secondary and higher education institutions, philanthropic organizations and students.

The workshop, held in conjunction with the 53rd Annual Human Resources Conference (\$49 for workshop only), is April 26, 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. EST at the Indianapolis Marriott East. It is a partnership of the following organizations: Purdue University, Indiana Chamber, Lilly Endowment, Indiana Commission for Higher Education and Indiana INTERNnet.

23rd Annual Employment Law Seminar March 16 Forum Conference & Events Center, Fishers

- Provides hands-on knowledge and tangible actions to implement in the workplace
- Topics include: FMLA and immigration compliance; review of key employment decisions
- Chamber member discounted price: \$399
- List price: \$499

Remaining Union-free Seminar April 11 Indianapolis

- Hear about changes regarding how to prepare for a union election
- Gain knowledge on establishing effective communication programs
- Chamber member discounted price: \$399
- List price: \$499

53rd Annual Human Resources Conference & Expo April 24-26 Indianapolis Marriott East

- Participate in educational break-out sessions on hiring, compliance, culture, leadership and more
- Explore human resources tools to implement in the workplace
- Chamber member discounted price: \$399
- List price: \$499

2017 Human Resources Professional of the Year Awards Luncheon April 26 Indianapolis Marriott East

- Celebrate human resources excellence
- Network with other human resource professionals
- Individual ticket: \$49
- Table of 10: \$469

2017 Best Places to Work in Indiana May 2 Indiana Convention Center, Indianapolis

- Celebrate the 100 best companies to work for in Indiana
- Support peers and learn about new strategies or programs
- Individual tickets: \$120
- Table prices range from \$950 to \$1,850

I-69 Regional Summit May 5

- #### Hyatt Regency Indianapolis
- Hear comprehensive overview of I-69 project
 - Tap into resources, ideas and expertise
 - Examine site selection, local planning, logistics and public private partnerships
 - Price: \$269

Environmental Permitting and Reporting Conference May 16-17 Ritz Charles, Carmel

- Ascertain complete and comprehensive updates on reporting issues
- Gain information to understand environmental permitting programs
- Chamber member discounted price: \$699
- List price: \$799

What you receive:

- Training from top professionals
- Important take-home materials
- Continuing education credits
- Information to make your job easier

Forklift Safety: Train the Trainer May 23

Indiana Chamber Conference Center

- Participate in stability triangle demonstration
- Explore safe truck operations and inspection requirements
- Chamber member discounted price: \$399
- List price: \$499

OSHA's Walking-Working Surfaces and Fall Protection Standards Seminar May 24

Indiana Chamber Conference Center

- Review new standards and requirements
- Learn about workplace inspection of walking-working surfaces
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- List price: \$499

Family Medical Leave Act Seminar June 8

Ritz Charles, Carmel

- Don't take a chance! Ensure you know the details of the Family Medical Leave Act
- Offers an introduction for new HR pros or those with new FMLA responsibilities
- Chamber member discounted price: \$399
- List price: \$499

Workplace Violence Plan Review and Audit

June 14

Indiana Chamber Conference Center

- Nearly two million American workers annually report being victims of workplace violence – are your employees safe and secure?
- Review your plan or get assistance in creating one for your workplace
- Chamber member discounted price: \$399
- List price: \$499

2017 Indiana Worker's Compensation Conference

June 20

Hyatt Regency Indianapolis

- Discover strategies and knowledge on how to handle worker's compensation claims
- Learn how to keep worker's compensation premium rates low
- Chamber member discounted price: \$399
- List price: \$499

For more information, or to register, call (317) 264-6885, (800) 824-6885 or visit www.indianachamber.com. Group discounts available for many Indiana Chamber conferences. All programs take place in Indianapolis unless otherwise noted.

For sponsorship and exhibit opportunities, contact Jim Wagner at (317) 264-6876.

Want to Attract New Businesses to Your Region? (and retain the ones you have)

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- ✓ 1. Great quality of life
- ✓ 2. Solid infrastructure
- ✓ 3. Strategic incentives
- ✓ 4. Family educational opportunities
- ✓ 5. High-quality healthcare
- ✓ 6. Great workforce
- ✓ 7. The “super-secret” winning element?
(see point 6)

As the saying goes, a decade or so ago the key element to winning new business involved three things: **location, location, location.**

Today, there are still three critical elements. Here they are: **workforce, workforce, workforce.**

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Employment Law Handbook (Twelfth Edition)

This comprehensive handbook helps employers determine which Indiana and federal laws they are required to comply with and

to understand their rights and responsibilities under these laws. Authored by Faegre Baker Daniels LLP. Price: \$149



Indiana Guide to Hiring and Firing (Sixth Edition)

A clearly written manual that outlines employers' legal responsibilities during the employment process, from interviewing to

termination of employment. Authored by attorneys from Barnes & Thornburg LLP. Price: \$109



FMLA Guide (Third Edition)

This comprehensive guide is designed to help employers understand their rights and responsibilities under the Family and Medical Leave Act. Authored

by Ogletree Deakins. Price: \$99



Model Employee Policies for Indiana Employers (Seventh Edition)

Designed to assist employers in creating an employee handbook. Contains numerous sample

policies with legal commentary to assist employers in understanding what policies can increase employee morale and prevent employment lawsuits. Authored by Bose, McKinney and Evans LLP. Price: \$109



The Supervisor's Handbook (Second Edition)

Supervisory employees play a critical role in any business. *The Supervisor's Handbook* explains supervisors' rights and

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A large graphic on the left side of the page. It features a red heart shape with a white outline, held by a red hand with a white outline. The hand is positioned as if holding the heart. To the left of the heart is a large black letter 'I'. To the right of the heart is a large black 'HR'. The background of the entire page is a collage of many small, stylized human faces in various colors and orientations.

I HR

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Wellness Council Earns National Award

The Indiana Healthy Community Initiative from the Wellness Council of Indiana recently received one of 10 national awards as part of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation’s Health Means Business campaign.

The Healthy10 Award, in the education and workforce category, was presented at the national Health Means Business Summit. Indiana hosted one of the program’s regional Health Means Business events in February 2016.

The Wellness Council of Indiana (WCI), which became a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Indiana Chamber of Commerce in 2011, created the Indiana Healthy Community Initiative to drive positive health outcomes through community partnerships. The program, similar to the WCI’s workplace-focused AchieveWELL certification, offers a roadmap of best practices and guidance to community partners – including businesses, government, community organizations and citizens – to create a healthy population.

Muncie/Delaware County and Greenfield/Hancock County were early adopters of the Indiana Healthy Community Initiative. Today, a number of other Hoosier communities are in various stages of participation with the ultimate goals of improving health and advancing economic development.

The Healthy10 Awards were created by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation as a way to honor 10 outstanding business-led initiatives or cross-sector collaborations.

“The Indiana Healthy Community Initiative shows what true cross-sector collaboration looks like in action,” says Marc DeCourcay,



Accepting the award (from left) are Chuck Gillespie, Jane Ellery and Dr. Jerome Adams (U.S. Chamber Foundation photo).

senior vice president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. “This comprehensive partnership is helping improve the quality of life for the people of Indiana.”

The U.S. Chamber Foundation announced the winners of the Healthy10 Awards on February 16 at a ceremony in Washington, D.C. Accepting the award with Gillespie were Dr. Jerome Adams, Indiana State Health Commissioner, and Jane Ellery, Ph.D., associate professor of wellness at Ball State University and senior fellow at the Project for Public Spaces.

Visit www.wellnessindiana.org to learn more about the WCI and the Indiana Healthy Community Initiative.

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Taking a Leap Forward

STEM, Humanities Intersection Offers Opportunities



Keira Amstutz

In a key scene from the hit movie *Hidden Figures*, a mathematician saves the day. She does it not by discovering a computational error, but instead by reaching into history to use an ancient theory.

When Col. Eli Lilly founded his pharmaceutical company, he did it not simply because he was interested in new chemical compounds, but because he was troubled by the ethics and intentions of the people who sold the elixirs of the day.

And when Steve Jobs launched Apple, he built success not just on groundbreaking technology that left competitors in the dust, but also on design that reaches across cultures.

In these and countless other examples, major advances were made not by focusing exclusively on a particular discipline, but by putting an idea into a larger context. Or, to put it another way, these advances were made at the point where the “hard” sciences – what we know as STEM disciplines – intersected with the humanities.

Unfortunately, despite lessons like these, we find ourselves in an era and a nation where that intersection is increasingly devalued, often in the worthwhile pursuit of jobs and a stronger economy. Sadly, in many cases, STEM and the humanities are viewed not as potential partners but as opposing forces.

As troubling as this reality can be, it does offer opportunity: Those individuals, organizations, communities, states and nations willing to marry STEM and the humanities will, as history suggests, find themselves with a considerable advantage. Indiana is well-positioned to seize that advantage, but we must do so consciously and ambitiously. And that’s what Indiana Humanities is trying to encourage with our new statewide initiative, Quantum Leap.

Setting the table

Before I go further, let’s define our terms. Most people are clear about what STEM is – science, technology, engineering and mathematics; on the humanities, however, people tend to be a little less certain.

Generally, I describe the humanities as those fields that examine the things humans make and the things that make us human. Specifically, that includes history, literature, poetry, philosophy and ethics, world languages and cultures, religious studies and archaeology, among others.

In past eras, STEM and the humanities have been seen as two sides of a common coin. In ancient Greece, what we now think of as science was very much intertwined with what we think of as the humanities and were collectively called the liberal arts – an education that combined literature and numbers. Today, people generally are OK with that relationship until such matters as funding, hiring and other resources are being considered. Then battle lines tend to be drawn.

As the ancient Greeks so wisely knew, there is no such thing as a one-sided coin, and neither STEM nor the humanities can exist in a vacuum.

New questions

Today, this is perhaps most obvious with new technologies and discoveries. As former Notre Dame professor (and current Miami of Ohio president) Gregory Crawford pointed out, “The acceleration of discovery and invention in this century has reached a point where the question, ‘Can we do this?’ is almost always answered ‘Yes.’ Meanwhile, the question of ‘Should we do this?’ takes on new urgency.”

“Should we?” is a question the humanities can help us answer. They also allow us to ask, “How has this been handled in the past?” and, “What impact will this have on the people around me?” They help us to consider ethical dilemmas and matters of justice, compassion and wisdom. They guide us in processing truths and possibilities. They inspire, engage and enrich us.

As we look at such examples as the *Hidden Figures* character, Eli Lilly, Steve Jobs or countless others who have pushed the world beyond all boundaries, we see that we are at our best when we explore the spirit of possibility by combining the humanities with the sciences.

And that’s what we need today if we’re to prepare Indiana for its next 200 years. We must pursue both technical proficiency and critical thinking. We must master data and its implications. We must push forward by understanding the paths we’ve already walked. We must occupy this tiny space on a map while also considering its place in the greater world.

How do we do this? By being mindful that, as we push to increase our ability to compete in the STEM disciplines, we must also push to expand our horizons. By hiring innovators rather than simple executors. By valuing both technological expertise and nimble-mindedness. By investing in training that supports both technical skills and critical thinking. By thinking, reading and talking about the people and organizations that have succeeded by marrying STEM and the humanities.

Through Quantum Leap, Indiana Humanities will help tell those stories and support this effort with grants, programs, community conversations, “field trips” to places of Hoosier ingenuity and discovery, and more. We will facilitate collaborations and encourage examination. We will provide spaces to wrestle with change.

And we will call on leaders from all sectors of our communities to engage and participate, in order to ensure that Indiana seizes the opportunity not simply to expand our knowledge, but to expand our horizons. If you’re interested in participating in this conversation with us over the next few years, I encourage you to take the leap with us and reach out to me directly. I’d love to hear from you.



AUTHOR: Keira Amstutz is president and CEO of Indiana Humanities. This is the first of a series in BizVoice®. Future “Take the Leap” columns will focus on individual Hoosiers who are making a difference by merging STEM and the humanities. Learn more at www.indianahumanities.org/QuantumLeap

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Team members, with some of their products in development, in an early 2017 photo.

POWERFUL 'FORCE'

Company Develops Well-Rounded Team

By Tom Schuman

EDITOR'S NOTE: Second of a six-part series throughout 2017 with Fishers-based Recovery Force. Assembling a team is the focus. View the first article in the series in the January-February 2017 archives at www.bizvoicemagazine.com.

The principal players at Recovery Force have a few advantages over many of their peers in the worlds of entrepreneurship and innovation. They have started companies, owned their own businesses and bring a wealth of experience to the table.

They, however, have not done this before – well, in fact, no one has. The “this”, in simplistic terms, is weaving nickel titanium into textile fibers to develop wearable products that have a variety of medical and comfort benefits. And they, the three co-founders along with other key players, have never done this together.

While talking to team members reveals strong passion and true chemistry, no one says this type of innovation in the start-up domain is easy.

Brian Stasey, co-founder and chief technology officer, admits, “I just hadn’t realized how much it would take over my life. If I had known this was going to take four years and take the toll it has taken, I don’t think I would have done it. But when I see the technology out in the marketplace (late this year or early next) and how much of an impact it is having on diabetic patients and athletes and more, I will say it’s been worth it.”

- In addition to Stasey, we talk with the following:
- Matt Wyatt: Founder, president and CEO
 - Matt Wainscott: Co-founder and vice president of operations
 - Polina Feldman, Ph.D.: Director of research
 - Jeff Schwegman: Director of engineering
 - Dr. David Armstrong: Advisor and professor of surgery at the University of Arizona
 - Allen Ali: Advisor and managing director with Visionary Private Equity Group

Early engagement

The idea for Recovery Force evolved as Wyatt was determining his next move after exits from two medical start-ups. Emerging friendships and business relationships with the two co-founders were an important part of the equation.

“I’ve known Matt for 20-plus years,” Wainscott shares. “We met a lot, discussed careers, shared business stories. It was to the point of when he was getting ready to decide what he was going to do, I said, ‘Whatever you do, I want to be an investor.’” (A few years in, as the company was gaining some momentum, was the time for Wainscott to sell his distribution company to his partner and become involved on a

full-time basis).

The Stasey-Wyatt connection is shorter in duration (approximately nine years as the business Stasey owned did information technology work for Wyatt's previous company) but quickly became a close one.

"We hit it off, started having breakfast or lunch every month or so. When he sold his business and was figuring out what he was going to do, he mentioned various ideas – some better than others," Stasey offers. "This was one of those ideas. It seemed interesting and through many breakfasts we explored it.

"I was reasonably good at what I was doing and doing well, but looking for new challenges," he continues. "I knew Matt's history and I assumed anything connected with him was going to go well. I think you have a choice sometimes of good people and good ideas. This was both. But I think it was the people more; even if it was a bad idea, he still would have made it work."

Wyatt says the two needed each other.

"I had this vision combined with doing tactical work at the same time. I had enough energy and naivete to keep persevering," he recalls. "Brian, from his engineering background, recognized future hurdles and challenges that I didn't even contemplate. So the beauty of that was he didn't tell me some of his fears, so it didn't squelch my vision and ambition.

"But I think he also would say, had I not been so passionate about what we were doing, he wouldn't have continued to go along for the ride with me. Between the two of us, it was definitely holding each other accountable and between the rails."

Stasey acknowledges his partner's "damn the torpedoes" approach even today. "If you don't have that person at the top of your organization, you might as well pack it in. I'm much more, we've joked, about being the Debbie Downer at times. I'm much more the engineer, the 'Well now, we have to make it work.'"

Fast forward from the dining meetings to early efforts in Wyatt's home and the two sitting together in the initial Launch Fishers space in the basement of the local library to today – 10 employees, a team of investors and advisors, and relationships that are putting the ultimate goal within reach.

Adding the players

One of the early roles for Wainscott was to "get the right people in the right seats." That includes Schwegman and Feldman, who both came on board in 2015.

Schwegman, with 15-plus years in the medical device world and contract design experience with a variety of companies, knew

what he wanted. He became aware of Recovery Force through four different contacts from a recruiter and friends. Once the two parties got together to talk, it turned into four meetings within a week, an ensuing job offer and a strong match.

"I wanted to be on the front end of a new and exciting technology," he reveals. "I thought I was going to have to go to California or the East Coast to find what I was looking for. I didn't want to do that, have to move my family."

Once on board at Recovery Force, a shift in mindset was required.

"I had worked with some start-up companies – the fast pace, let's go and go and go. That's not how big companies work. They work very, very, very slow. I had gotten into that world and was really

frustrated with it.

"No matter how much I recognized it and wanted to go, go, go, I had the handcuffs on for several years with the big corporations," Schwegman adds, "so I had to get my motor running again. In a start-up, you make the call, your team does. You can't wait for anyone else. It's adjusting from a corporate, regimented world to a wide open, yours to fail or succeed world."

Feldman spent her first six months "learning a lot about the technology, what we would need to do to validate it from the human testing, performance side, how the different compressions work, the versatility of the product. During that time, I wrote a lot of (federal) grants."

With previous experience at the Indiana University Research and Technology



Co-founders (from left) Brian Stasey and Matt Wainscott have been on board in various roles since day one. Jeff Schwegman, director of engineering, joined Recovery Force in 2015.



Team members balance the potential of new ideas while focusing on moving initial products to commercialization or licensing.

Corporation and in work focused on alleviating chronic pain, what attracted her to Recovery Force?

“In that world, it was a lot of drug development. I was interested in understanding what we could do, beside drugs, that could have similar, better effects for a person’s quality of life,” she begins. “The moment I met Matt (Wyatt) and the rest of the team, they were just so passionate about this technology. We work really well together as a team and that culture was important to me.”

Feldman has been stationed at a health care incubator in Chicago since July 2016,



Polina Feldman now spends much of her time at a health care incubator in Chicago, giving the company access to additional resources and partners.

coming back to Fishers every other week for direct contact. She has important connections with health care start-ups, hospital systems and others that prove helpful to Recovery Force’s development.

Expanding horizons

Recovery Force also has a Western flavor. Stasey points to two engineering consultants in Montana and Oregon as vital contributors. While they just could as easily be part of the official team, the current relationship is very effective, he says.

“One of the reasons to do that is to keep the new stuff out of here. One guy, in his garage, has pretty much a duplicate of all the machinery we have. He can do things without getting interrupted. The other guy has been playing around with this material for 20 years.”

Head south from the engineering outposts and one will find Armstrong, not only the university professor and surgeon but co-founder of the Southern Arizona Limb Salvage Alliance. He describes himself as a toe

mechanic, but quickly turns serious in explaining how diabetes leads to infections and often amputations – at a rate of one every 20 seconds on a global basis.

Armstrong brings extensive experience in National Institute of Health (NIH) protocols. Recovery Force received official notice in late January of a major NIH grant. He will work with Feldman and others on the clinical protocols.

“It’s a very exciting time to be playing around with these really cool, next gen alloys,” he enthusiastically imparts. “While we and others have had ideas like this in the

past, the ideas have never been able to get beyond the lab because of the exorbitant costs.

“Now, what we’re seeing is industry, one company, Recovery Force, having the focus, having the vision and having the technological know-how to develop these (next generation alloys) and bring them to top academic centers and to work with colleagues to try and effect positive change for patients. It’s life-affirming, frankly.”

Armstrong terms the technology “disruptive” in the most positive way. He cites one of the keys he has seen in his interactions with Recovery Force.

“One of the hardest things to do for a small company, particularly a small company with a potentially revolutionary product that has so many applications – the hard part is focus. I’ve been very impressed with these folks. They have surrounded themselves with some top notch advisors in industry and medicine and academia.”

A little closer to home from a physical standpoint is Ali, based in Chicago with the

private equity group. He is a DePauw University graduate and the CEO of the Visionary firm is Ronald Zamber, a Notre Dame graduate and well-known eye surgeon. Visionary participated in the \$4.7 million Series B round of funding for Recovery Force in October 2015 and plans to be actively engaged going forward, according to Ali.

A simple product from Recovery Force wasn’t going to be enough to attract the initial investment. Among the attributes that were enticing, Ali says, were the “breadth and depth of the suite of products,” the potential of scaling it globally and the strength of the intellectual property.

And, maybe most of all, there needs to be strong confidence in the CEO.

“We use an internal barometer called LAP. We look for the ability of a CEO to listen, to absorb and, if necessary, to pivot,” Ali states. “A lot of times we see entrepreneurs have the enthusiasm, zeal, commitment, but an underlying element of hubris; the thought of pivoting could be seen as giving in, something, ‘I’m not going to do.’”

“Matt is very open to listening, absorbing information and saying, ‘Right, that makes sense.’ His ability to be completely transparent is another thing that scored a lot of points with us,” he continues. “A lot of CEOs say, ‘You don’t need to know that part of the business or we have that covered.’ Matt is a complete open book on that front with investors and advisors.”

In addition to financial resources, Ali’s firm assists by arranging meetings with potential strategic partners and offering additional guidance based on the business experience of its principals.

Rounding out the squad

What separates the contributing team members from those who might not be the best fit?

Wainscott, who insists we “definitely have everyone in the right seats on the bus,” adds, “We want to hire people who are willing to roll their sleeves up, put in 60-plus hours if needed and be excited.” As for the co-founders and the variety in their backgrounds, “We all have shared experiences and individual experiences. We all respect each other and draw upon each other for those experiences.”

For Wyatt, growing the organization – both internally and externally – comes easier due to his past ventures. He cites identifying weaknesses and intentionally filling voids with people who have certain core competencies.

“A lot of it is instinctive, from having hired a number of people – and having made

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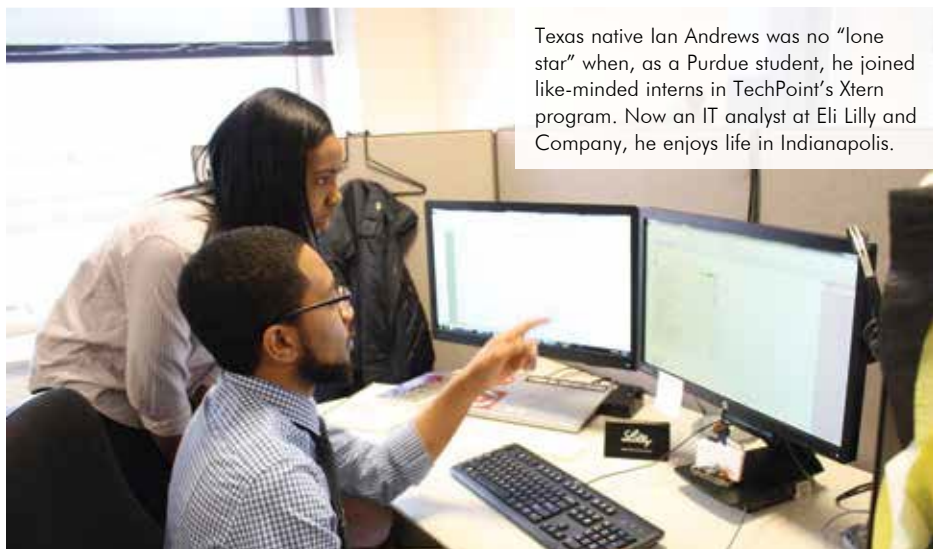


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X-FACTOR

Internship Program Showcases Jobs, City

By Matt Ottinger



Texas native Ian Andrews was no “lone star” when, as a Purdue student, he joined like-minded interns in TechPoint’s Xtern program. Now an IT analyst at Eli Lilly and Company, he enjoys life in Indianapolis.

The value of internships – for both students and employers – is well documented. TechPoint’s Xtern program, however, goes beyond the job and highlights the experience of living amongst peers and enjoying the many amenities found in Indianapolis and central Indiana.

It’s become a valuable outreach tool to attract talent to the area’s blossoming tech sector.

“Between 2015 and the middle of 2016, 74% of the jobs announced by the (Indiana Economic Development Corporation) were from tech companies,” explains Mike Langellier, TechPoint CEO. “That was a shift that surprised a lot of people. We have to make sure they fulfill that potential.”

In the inaugural campaign in 2014, 50 interns from 10 universities were welcomed into the Xtern program. The latest installment, however, saw over 1,300 applicants from 78 universities (and 40 states) for 150 available spots.

“Our team will visit 30 universities, but the net is far larger,” qualifies Merillat Flowers, TechPoint’s director of College-to-Career

Talent Programs. “We’ve been able to expand our recruitment efforts and use champions who’ve been through the program. We partner with universities in Indiana and take a hands-on approach. We also recruit in neighboring states that are drivable. But as word has spread, our scope has expanded beyond those states.”

And with organizations like Eli Lilly and Company involved, the experiences include more than technology-related positions, with sales and marketing jobs and other opportunities available.

Opening eyes to Indy

The entire Xternship experience is more than employment. Various events and social activities showcase both the city and the local tech community. In fact, building cohesiveness is touted on the Xtern web site: “On your first day of college, you joined a network of students and professionals that will stay with you for the rest of your life. On your first day of Xtern, you will join another one.”

Xterns are housed in downtown Indianapolis apartments with the help of Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), and foundation funds help cover program administration and costs. Participating companies do pay a fee in addition to the hourly wages.

“In addition to (internships), we rely on our businesses for both the social programming and professional development,” Flowers explains. “We host tech talks, where we’ll have a group of Xterns go to companies, see their space and learn. The wonderful benefit is that Xterns are exposed not just to the companies they work for, but the larger tech industry as a whole.”

Houston, Texas native Ian Andrews, a computer and information technologies graduate from Purdue University, was essentially a stranger to the Circle City before his Xtern experience at Interactive Intelligence (now Genesys).



Gayle Ocampo (second from left) enjoys actual “standing meetings” in her software development role at Performance Assessment Network in Carmel. She credits the Xtern program for opening her eyes to the innovative side of central Indiana.

"I didn't have much of an impression of Indianapolis, living in Texas and being in West Lafayette," says Andrews, now working as an IT analyst at Lilly via a tech fellowship. "I'd only visited two or three times."

And now?

"After the program, I think it's great. I really like the city," he explains. "It's very compact, which I like, compared to Houston, which is spread out and it can be difficult and it's more expensive to go to multiple events and experience the city. It's a lot more accessible (here). And living downtown, you can walk around the city, go to the canal, see shows and go to the museums."

Illuminating Indy's merits isn't just reserved for out-of-staters. Noblesville native Gayle Ocampo studied computer science at Butler University, but was still surprised after diving into the local tech community as an Xtern at T2 Systems.

"I didn't think it had as big of a tech scene as it does, and I credit the program for opening my eyes," she offers. "It was nice to know that within central Indiana there were plenty of job opportunities."

She's now a tech fellow and software development engineer for Performance Assessment Network (PAN) in Carmel.

"I'm interested in a leadership position," Ocampo notes.



Xterns like Kathryn Frankewich mentor students each summer at the Butler Lab School through the Code.org Hour of Code.

"Attending different leadership classes in the Xtern program opened my eyes on how to become a better leader by being more efficient and showed me what it really takes to succeed in the business world."

She adds that the TechPoint program exposed her to presentations from entrepreneurs like Interactive Intelligence founder Don Brown and former ExactTarget chief Scott Dorsey.

"Dorsey spoke a lot about the culture and how important it is for the company to succeed," Ocampo relays.

X-cellent for business

Matt Tyner, vice president of finance and operations for marketing personalization platform company SmarterHQ, was well aware of the program during its inception while serving on TechPoint's talent committee. SmarterHQ enthusiastically remains one of more than 50 participating companies.

"We've hosted 11 Xterns in three years," he reports, noting the diversity of roles in which the interns have served. "Five of the 11 worked with us full time or part time following the internship. Of those five, three were given full-time offers and two have joined the company. That's a very high success rate from a recruiting standpoint for us."

Eric Sendelbach, chief technology officer at MOBI, explains his company hosted one Xtern last year and plans to have two this year. He describes the talent level of its Xtern, an Ohio State University student, as "nothing short of remarkable."

"To be honest, I wasn't even aware this level of talent existed at the intern level ...," he elaborates about the intern, who recently became a full-time staffer. "This is funny, but he was assisting to train and mentor the rest of our intern class."

The recruitment strategy also presents a unified front of sorts for Indiana businesses as they collectively reach out to the brightest minds.

"I think it creates economies of scale that we wouldn't otherwise have," Tyner asserts. "We can't go to career fairs and markets where there's talent and be relevant as a 65-person company looking for one or two hires in a particular business unit of the firm. But when you combine 50 to 100 job opportunities together and set up a booth alongside Apple, Google and Oracle, you automatically become competitive."

He also credits TechPoint for doing "the heavy lifting."

"For the number of applicants they get, they do a very good job of vetting those people, so on the Xtern finalist day, we're picking from the cream of the crop," Tyner surmises. "That saves us a ton of time and guarantees the program a higher success rate because the people that come work for us as Xterns are great people and very talented hires."

Moving forward

While the program is proving to be an archetype and a boon for the tech sector, Langellier explains successful implementation meant overcoming challenges.

"It has to serve a critical mass of companies," he points out. "We asked, 'Can we get consensus among a broad swathe of companies to participate? Can we take something that's a competitive exercise like talent recruitment and turn it into a collaborative strategy?' That's something we can be proud of in Indiana – that we have a spirit of collaboration, and they'll come together on something bigger than their own selfish interests."

Recruiting enough qualified candidates is also imperative.

"Because Indianapolis does not yet have that well-known brand of being a tech hub like Silicon Valley or Austin (Texas), it can require changing hearts and minds to attract talent here for one summer of their lives."

Based on the notable growth, the Xtern program is on point when it comes to building a better Indianapolis. But can it ultimately expand beyond the capital city?

"We're in early discussions now (with other communities)," Langellier reveals. "But because there's housing, company involvement, and you have to execute events, it can't be done on a statewide basis right out of the gate. But we have had a number of organizations and individuals from places like West Lafayette, Bloomington, Fort Wayne and Evansville who think there could be an opportunity to develop something similar."

"The ultimate success is that the talent pipeline and talent pool we're building is among the best in the country," he concludes. "Talent can also be a strategy to attract companies, and it's an asset to students in our universities, and it helps our partners create an exceptional education experience for their students."

RESOURCES: Ian Andrews and Gayle Ocampo, Indy Tech Fellowship, at www.techpoint.org/techfellowship | Merillat Flowers and Mike Langellier, TechPoint, at www.techpoint.org | Eric Sendelbach, MOBI, at www.mobium.com | Matt Tyner, Smarter HQ, at www.smarterhq.com | Xtern program at www.xtern.me

VITAL CONNECTIONS

Mentoring Snapshot Comes Into Focus

By Rebecca Patrick



The Innovation Connector is a full-service business resource incubator focused on emerging tech and innovative companies in East Central Indiana. In January 2017, the group launched the Coding Connector for area students to promote discovery of coding and programming.

“Our chief want in life is somebody who will make us do what we can.” – Ralph Waldo Emerson

That wisdom from the famed poet perfectly reflects the impact that a good mentoring relationship can have on a person’s life.

As Indiana continues to take steps to further establish its identity in the technology and innovation space, mentoring for those entrepreneurs and future leaders is paramount.

Making it a priority

Incubators and co-working spaces may be more prominent in number in the Indianapolis metro area, but they also have become commonplace across the state.

The Innovation Connector in Muncie has enjoyed growing success for the last 15 years. It currently has 44 office spaces – all of them full. The facility attracts people from Jay County to the east, New Castle to the south and points north.

Without a doubt, says executive director and CEO Ted Baker, mentoring can be the determining factor in success. So much so that it’s his primary job – to be a business coach and advisor.

“Some people are in my office every day. It’s like when one of your kids needs something and you just drop things,” he notes. “Some of them know a little bit; some of them know nothing. We’ll mentor them on what they need to know. We don’t enable our clients, we empower them.”

He has also brought some resources into the facility. Those include the Indiana Small Business Development Center and SCORE, which is an organization that provides free business mentoring services

to entrepreneurs.

Baker adds: “On top of that, we have relationships with other business owners – start-ups who have made it and people in certain industries. We make it intentional to find out what kind of resources that client needs. That’s the most important thing that we can do.

“What is sometimes the hardest for us and for any mentor is to get the business start-up owner or the one who’s in the early stage to understand that there are best practices of ways to do things – and not that it’s the only way, but they need to listen to others for help. That’s the most frustrating thing ...when they think they know everything,” he acknowledges.

Shelley Klingerman, executive director of Launch Terre Haute, which has been in full operation a little over a year, puts it another way.

“Mentoring saves them from lots of mistakes, costly and timely mistakes, because mentors can help you navigate those challenges. Networking – making those connections; it’s so much better to have a warm handoff than do a cold call.”

Opportunities and challenges

When asked if he was fairly content with the mentoring provided at the Innovation Connector, Baker was blunt.

“I don’t know what that word – content – means. Muncie is a bigger city, but (what’s going on here) is not like anything we’re seeing in the Indianapolis metro area, and even Lafayette, Fort Wayne and Evansville. There’s some amazing things happening in those places.”

Still, Baker believes his home base has a significant amount of knowledge and resources for mentoring; it’s more about getting people on the same page and properly sharing and exchanging knowledge in the most beneficial way.

“The problem is that there are too many individual silos where people and groups act independently on their own. I think this is in each community – but we’re seeing this being broken down now in Muncie.”

Baker also contends that proximity shouldn't really come into the equation as long as you have access to a phone or computer.

A business coach and friend of Baker's, who lives in Texas, has his own coach in Seattle. "He's never seen her before. He's just on the phone and on the internet. She has changed the way he thinks ... rather, she's allowing him to change the way he thinks. Sometimes it's good to have that space."

Both Baker and Klingerman stress you don't need to be in the same industry – in this case, the tech world – to gain insight from a mentor.

Unlike most co-working spaces, Launch Terre Haute is taking on non-tech clients. Klingerman says that mix only adds to the mentoring experience.

"We have freelancers who work out of there, we have individuals from larger companies who use this space as an office. Their networks aren't necessarily even here (in Terre Haute), so it sort of catapults others into areas they would have had no connection to.

"So they become really good resources for especially our younger entrepreneurs."

Baker asserts: "I do believe that we're in a time where if we only get our resources from one location or one entity or one part of the ecosystem, you're not going to make it.

"But I (also) think if you're in the tech world, you'd better start hanging around people who understand tech. If you don't, you're not going to make it. However, if that's all you hang around, it's going to be hard for you then too. There needs to be a good balance."

Meanwhile, Baker says he's hearing less and less about challenges in mentoring, even in more rural locales.

"What we're seeing is that there's help out there. The question is: Are you taking advantage of that help? We can teach them to do business around the world, but if they're going to do business in say Hagerstown or Knightstown, then they have to learn about doing business within their community.

"I always ask people, 'Who do you know in your community that has inspired you?' We want them to hang around those people," he continues.

"Here's the other thing: It's not (only) about us supplying them with all of their mentors. Some of this is on them. They've got to figure out who they need it from and go get it."

RESOURCES: Ted Baker, Innovation Connector, at www.innovationconnector.com | Shelley Klingerman, Launch Terre Haute, at www.launchterrehaute.com

Recovery Force

Continued from page 16

good hires and not so good hires. With the team that we have now, it's a mature group. They recognize what they want and they're passionate about it as well," he imparts.

"I think that I wear on my sleeve the purpose and passion of what we do – and it either connects with people or it doesn't. When it does connect, it's a really fluid and easy conversation. It's much less of a traditional interview and more of a lifestyle choice for everybody. We're not a traditional 9 to 5."

The compatible diversity is important to the overall effort.

"If you look at the employees, you look at the founders, if each a circle, all overlap to some degree. I have been intentional about

the advisors, that they have a genuine contribution to round out the team," Wyatt relays.

Home sweet home

The Indiana ties, from colleges to business experiences, bind the group. The fact that they are able to build this innovative company in their own backyard makes it even more special. Even from 1,500 miles away.

"It's great. It makes you smile, doesn't it?" Armstrong articulates. "It's usually Silicon Valley, Boston, New York, perhaps L.A., but to see it come out of the middle of the country. ... You have a great collection of folks in a whole bunch of industries and academics. That creates the critical mass to

make this work. This is something Indiana should be really proud of, something I think Indiana can replicate."

For Feldman, "The Fishers community is just phenomenal. I've been able to see so many parts of how a business functions through Launch Fishers. I think it would be a little bit more daunting in a bigger city."

Schwegman, who searched for an opportunity like this, is grateful it came so close to home.

"It's been exactly what I had hoped for. The people are the biggest key. There's a level of trust; we're all in this together and we're going to make this happen."

RESOURCES: Recovery Force at www.recoveryforceusa.com | Dr. David Armstrong at medicine.arizona.edu/person/david-g-armstrong-dpm-md-phd | Allen Ali, Visionary Private Equity Group, at www.visionaryprivateequitygroup.com

Business Point of View



"My business partners and I have been incredibly blessed in the South Bend region with mentors who have been incredibly successful businesspeople and massively impacted the South Bend region and want to continue to see the growth," offers Rich Carlton, president and COO of Data Realty and Aunalytics.

"These individuals are not only mentors with their advice, but many

have been mentors as investors.

Carlton is pleased with the increased shared purpose that exists: "We're becoming much more regional between South Bend and Elkhart, Goshen, Mishawaka and Plymouth and our greater marketplace here.

"We host a tableau user group, we host a technology networking group to get people to continue to talk about tech and that's very cross-county with our whole north central region."

Internally, Carlton prioritizes the importance of letting employees know the company is making investments in them. One of those ways is with purposeful mentoring.

"We have a focused effort for people at various levels to meet with other people in organizations, cross-functionally, as well as within their own function," he explains.

"It's about mentoring in the technology space, so you've got places you can go to learn more about a specific software or code or a technology. And there's people here in the organization too – a lot of them have done teaching in the past."

RESOURCE: Rich Carlton at www.data-realty.com and www.aunalytics.com

THE (NOT SO) SECRET WORD: INNOVATION

USI Delivers Commercialization Potential

Companies in southern Indiana and students at the University of Southern Indiana (USI) are mutually benefitting from the university's Technology Commercialization Academy (TCA), a 12-week opportunity for students to help bring new technology to the market.

Sixteen students each year are selected to participate in the program, which gives them experiential learning opportunities and a chance to network with local companies.

Businesses can utilize the TCA resources to work out new technologies or innovative ideas.

The program – which initially partnered with Naval Surface Warfare Center Crane in 2012 and grew out of the university's co-op initiative – is part of the USI I-69 Innovation Corridor. Five years in, the TCA is continuing to adapt new methodologies and reach out to regional companies, while focusing on student learning opportunities.



Students participating in the Technology Commercialization Academy at the University of Southern Indiana work with local companies to develop and market ideas and technologies.

"Tech transfer is a challenging endeavor in the best of circumstances and we are experimenting on ways to facilitate it," offers Dr. Jason Salstrom, technology commercialization manager. "The mission was on experiential learning opportunities for students and the ambitious goal of facilitating students launching new start-ups on Crane technology."

Today, the partnerships have expanded past just Crane and into the community and other businesses. The focus has "pivoted" to helping existing companies, Salstrom explains.

"In surveying the region, there are a number of companies that have ideas, but they're not sure how to move them forward, or they don't have necessarily the bandwidth or market research. So, we've pivoted toward helping these types of companies launch new ventures themselves, which has more potential for impact than the high risk of launching student start-ups," he advises.

Salstrom acknowledges that the USI program is unique, due to the university's smaller size.

"Normally at a school, the job would be to transfer university research into commercial opportunities. We're not a big research university; we're not developing much for commercial potential. My job is a little turned inside out. I look outside into the region for technology that I can use for students to have opportunities to work on real-world technologies," he explains.

TCA graduates are finding jobs and, importantly, staying in the region after graduation.

As a new offering of the TCA, Salstrom is retaining four of the "best and brightest" TCA graduates to continue to work for him and with clients on a year-round basis. And the 2017 TCA will once again partner with Crane, as well as the Battery Innovation Center, to "discover commercial potential for Crane technology in the energy sector," Salstrom adds.

RESOURCE: Dr. Jason Salstrom, University of Southern Indiana Technology Commercialization Academy, at www.usi.edu/tca

Alumni Inventions on Display at Trine

The Molitor golf ball, a ground fault circuit interrupter and an in-dash car radio.

These dissimilar inventions have one thing in common: All are patents held by graduates of Trine University in Angola.

Plaques displaying the work of patent holders – more than 200 alumni, representing over 1,000 patents – are now prominently on display at the new Hall of Innovation at Trine.

Jason Blume is executive director of Innovation One, the university's incubator for business, innovation and design. The Hall of Innovation, unveiled in October 2016, is another vehicle to show potential students and others just how relevant innovation and invention are in daily life, he says.

"We show it to area high schools, middle school students. It's really understanding, 'I'm going to be an engineer ... I can relate to that golf ball. I listened to a car radio on the way here,'" Blume explains. "They can relate to what the engineering really is. It's bridging the academic to reality."

Many of the patent holders are graduates of the school's engineering department, but others come from business and accounting backgrounds. Most of the inventions were patented through the course of the alumni's careers and not while they were in school, Blume notes.

There are about 30 new patent holders that have been included since the Hall of Innovation was established, and the Innovation One team is actively seeking more patent holders to come forward. Each patent holder's background is thoroughly researched to ensure accuracy before being added to the wall.

Additionally, the Innovation One team



Over 1,000 patents for inventions – such as the ground fault circuit interrupter, technology for cruise control and a number of orthopedic devices – are on display in the Hall of Innovation at Trine University.

creates the plaques in-house, with a laser engraver on acrylic.

The in-dash car radio, patented by Ray Ellis from the class of 1921 (and when Trine was called Tri-State University), was recently submitted and is now the oldest patent on display. The newest submission comes from Bryan Bowman of the class of 2011, who patented an orthopedic knee device. The class of 1966 leads the way with more than 20 patent holders.

“This gives them that tangible connection to the university as an alum. We don’t ask for a hard donation to get them on the wall. This is how they’ve impacted the world,” Blume offers.

“Outside of that, it’s the ability for people to understand and see what an engineer can do. They walk into this hall and they really see, ‘Wow, this is what people are doing.’ It’s amazing to show potential students, industry leaders, the pipe of product that is here.”

RESOURCE: Jason Blume, Innovation One, at www.trine.edu/innovation-one

I-Light Upgrades Speeds to Increase Connections

Uploading data to its intended destination via the internet should be faster than driving the data on a disk for several hours or to another state.

But that was the reality for at least one of Indiana’s higher education institutions until recently, when upgrades to the I-Light bandwidth system began to enable faster connections. The greater speeds – now up to 100 Gigabits per second – allows increased capability for the network of Indiana’s universities and colleges (both public and private) that are connected to I-Light.

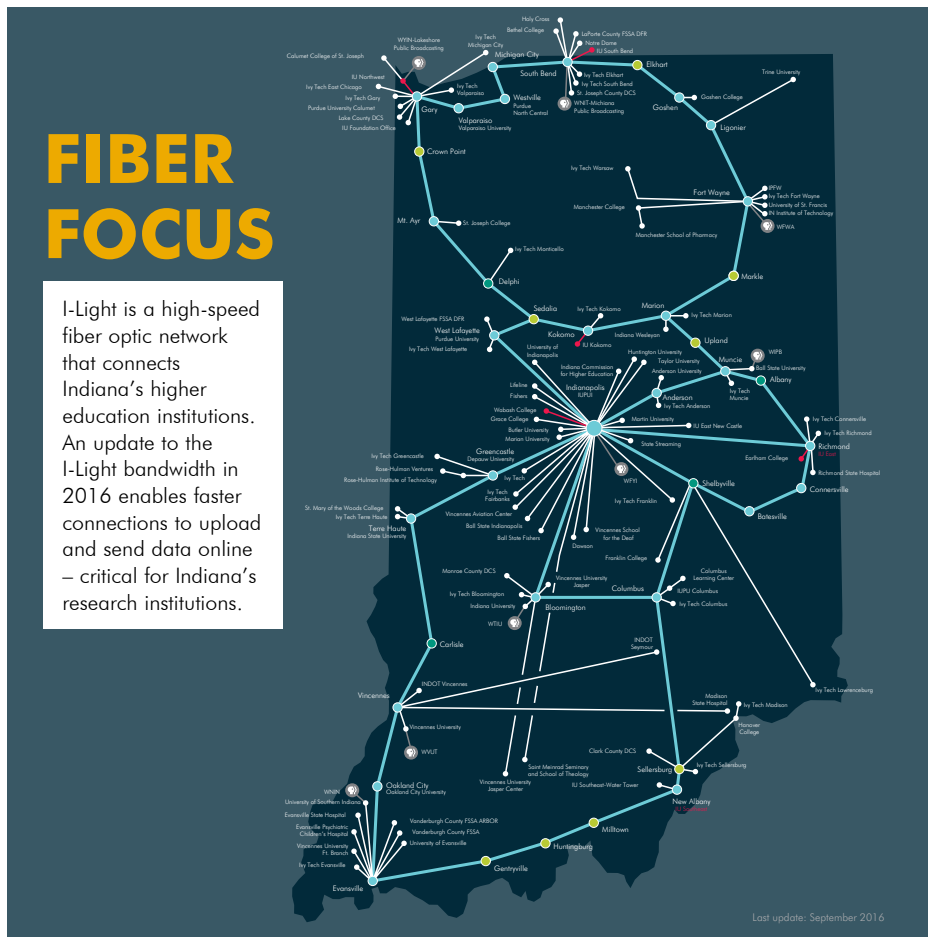
I-Light is a high-speed fiber optic network that is managed by the Indiana University Global Research Network Operations Center (management of the network is under both Indiana University and Purdue University). The public-private partnership is limited to serving only Indiana’s higher education institutions.

“What we provide to the schools is essentially transport; they get connectivity from us and we connect them all back to Indianapolis, and to the Indiana GigaPOP and commercial internet providers,” explains Marianne Chitwood, I-Light director.

The member institutions pay a fee to the fiber optic backbone and can subscribe to connections between 1 Gigabit per second and up to 100 Gigabits per second, according to Chitwood.

The benefits are obvious for Indiana’s larger research institutions – Indiana University, Purdue University and the University of Notre Dame. I-Light also assists its smaller member institutions through applying for grants to increase fiber infrastructure or connectivity. Wabash College (the institution that needed to physically drive its data) wrote a proposal for and received \$350,000 from the National Science Foundation to improve its infrastructure and connection.

“That’s a big deal. These schools – the smaller, private colleges – typically have a very small IT budget,” Chitwood notes.



I-Light connects most Ivy Tech Community College campuses as well. That has bolstered opportunities in many of the rural areas of the state.

“We believe I-Light certainly is a positive business development opportunity for communities where universities sit. ... We contract with the telecommunications providers to that (fiber) and they benefit. They build fiber to wherever (the need is),” Chitwood adds.

The potential for continued bandwidth growth is also available.

“We’ll be able to continue to grow this as our needs dictate and it’s just a very simple matter of changing out electronics to go from 100 gig to 200 gig or more. ... The intent for the platform is to sustain us for at least 10 years. We can turn up an additional 100 gigs where we require it,” she concludes.

RESOURCE: Marianne Chitwood, I-Light, at www.ilight.net



In January 2016, Jennifer McCormick announced her candidacy, saying: "As we teach our students and I teach my son, you can't make change just by talking about it; you have to do something about it."

STABILIZING FORCE

McCormick Education Era Begins

By Rebecca Patrick

Jennifer McCormick, Ph.D., ticked all the career education boxes at Yorktown Community Schools: teacher, principal and superintendent. In January, she became the 44th Indiana Superintendent of Public Instruction. Her goal is straightforward: “to help all students in the state”. McCormick talks in-depth to *BizVoice*® about the policies and partnerships that will help achieve just that.

***BizVoice:* You’re entering office following tenuous relationships Glenda Ritz had with the governor’s office, most Republican legislators and other interested parties. How are you repairing and building those relationships?**

Jennifer McCormick: We did a lot of outreach through the transition team and beyond. We’ve tried to reach out to those folks who felt either neglected for several years – some beyond the four years – or they felt they were heard but it was very on the surface ... done to check a box for some requirements. So really re-engaging those stakeholders is a very big push for us. ... It’s got to be ongoing and very purposeful.

We’re making sure that we are inviting them to the table for very important discussions such as ESSA (the federal Every Student Succeeds Act slated to replace the No Child Left Behind Act; President Trump put it on hold in late January). It’s making an effort to make sure everyone is getting a voice. That doesn’t mean we are going to agree with everybody, but we need to make sure those voices are heard and that the communication is solid to the field and outside the field so folks are aware of what’s happening in the education world in Indiana.

***BV:* Coming in, how would you characterize your relationships with educators and the business community?**

JM: I’ve had some really great experiences professionally in the education arena. I’ve got good relationships with a lot of superintendents. Do I know them all? No. But I’m going to get to know many more. I’ve had great relationships with many of the professional organizations and I’ve been a member of several of them as well. That’s an advantage; that’s where my life has been for over 20 years.

Where I’m going to have to work and focus on is with the business arena. Did I do that locally? Absolutely, but this is statewide. Through the campaign, I started some of those relationships – and will continue that so they are

aware and their voices are heard. A lot is going to happen through CTE (career and technical education) ... making sure we’re being very smart with the Department of Workforce Development, working in partnership with them.

***BV:* Expand on how you see the partnerships with the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and CTE playing out?**

JM: There’s a great opportunity with higher education, K-12 and the business world, and making sure DWD is part of that is going to be critical. ... We need to make sure that we’re all paddling in the same direction. ... What is our best way to prepare K-12 to maximize higher education and our workforce needs that are immediate? That conversation is already happening. There may be a restructure of how we look at CCTE (career, college and technical education) courses, CTE funding and how we prepare kids before they enter high school.

Our focus right now is once kids enter high school, that it’s planned. But many times they need to plan prior to that, or they need to be exposed to things so when they hit high school they’re better informed when making course decisions. Not that anybody is going to know what they want to do for the rest of their life, usually at 14, but it’s

Personal Snapshot

- New Castle native; graduated from public school there in 1988
- Attended Ball State, Indiana State and Purdue universities
- Career in Yorktown Community Schools: special education and language arts teacher at the sixth grade level; elementary school principal; and district superintendent for seven years
- Married with one son, who is attending West Point; husband is a science teacher at Yorktown High School and longtime wrestling coach

nice to expose them to the jobs we have in Indiana, the salaries attached and the education or certification you would need.

BV: You've said before that you don't believe the state Department of Education has been responsible enough to local schools – in what ways do you find that is the case?

JM: For example, the pay-for-performance monies. The previous go-round (not this one), it took five memos from the department for them to get it right, in order for us to distribute that. We didn't hit timelines and teachers were upset at their own central offices waiting on their money. It's things like that – we need to make sure communication is clear, concise and going to the folks it needs to go to at the same time. We'll get that shored up and taken care of.

BV: The Indiana Chamber supports suitable testing for students and accountability measures for all involved in the education process. Is that something you agree with in principle? What are your feelings about the systems we currently have?

JM: The assessment is the problem. I



McCormick pledges to “work tirelessly” and believes the staff she’s put together will allow for great things. A new cabinet position, chief talent officer, “will oversee licensing and will be a big help in the arena of evaluation, professional development.”

understand accountability, I agree with accountability. One area that ESSA will allow for is a multi-faceted approach, instead of saying (for example), Yorktown you're an “A”, when I can tell you that Yorktown has got some work to do. Other districts will be a “C” and they are doing really well in some areas that maybe an “A” school would need some work in.

The communities don't see that. To put one grade on a school is probably not very reflective of what's happening. Parents can

understand a grade card. Some people don't think they can understand a multi-faceted approach grade card, but I think they could.

I like the idea to say this is where we are with graduation rates, this is where we are with student growth, with student performance, with that student support piece, how we are doing as a community, with those wrap-around services (health care/screenings; afterschool programs, etc.) – so a multi-faceted approach to accountability. I've not talked to a

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*Source: Indiana Department of Education ** Source: 21st Century Scholars 2015 State Report Card

superintendent who wants accountability to go away. They don't want it to be lax. They want it to be accurate. They want it to be transparent. They want it to be fair. And I would agree with that.

BV: How would you overhaul ISTEP – or does it need to be merely tweaked in certain areas?

JM: It's too long; we could shore that up as far as time. I don't agree with some of it, but we have to be careful because it has to be an assessment that is proving to do what it does with the amount of questions it asks. I'm worried because it provides us no national norming; ISTEP does not do that. Whatever that end result test may be, we need to know: Are kids on track for graduation and how are they being compared with our national peers? To find that, we need to be diligent. That's going to take some time. Anytime you make a shift in assessment, it requires a shift in comparability studies and different things.

BV: How deep is your support for school choice and charter school programs?

JM: I'm a parent; I understand the power of choosing where your child goes to school. I like that choice because sometimes (public school) is not a good fit. I've had students come to me (at Yorktown) and say this isn't working and I need this. I've told them that's not what we offer, but there are three schools around us that do. Transportation becomes an issue a lot of times, but I do agree with choice.

My concern with the choice – and some of the limits I would like to see – is for the voucher program to be appropriated separately, so

**VIDEO BONUS:
McCormick up
to the task**



it's not coming out of K-12 funding. It would be easier to track and more transparent. Then taxpayers would have a better handle on what's happening. Many of them during the campaign would ask me questions and there was a lot of confusion about that program – a lot of people in the dark.

Not all the state's monies are going to traditional public schools; we now have traditional charter and private schools receiving that money. So how do we better communicate that to the folks who are voting and whose money is going to those programs? Separate appropriations would be a good start.

BV: One of your biggest pledges was to push for another overhaul of the state funding system to re-examine how aid for poor children is calculated (via the complexity index in the funding formula). What brought you to that conclusion and talk about your experience as a public schools superintendent in dealing with that one bucket of money?

JM: First, Sen. (Ryan) Mishler has a huge job in front of him, with some help from Sen. (Luke) Kenley (leaders on the Senate Appropriations Committee). When the complexity index was changed (for 2015) from those qualifying for the (federal) free and reduced lunch to those directly served (through welfare or in foster care), it really impacted some districts. It's one of those unintended consequences where some of the most at-risk districts really took a hit in their overall funding. I know Sen. Mishler is aware of that and they are revisiting it.

Beyond that, the other piece of the puzzle is property taxes. The districts that are being greatly impacted by the circuit breaker issues

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McCormick, who is sworn in as her father (holding the Bible) and husband Trent look on, will primarily reside in Speedway during this session and then decide whether the family will make a move from Yorktown.

have got to be looked at as well. For Yorktown, we had plenty of money for transportation, but I didn't have any money for bus replacement. I can hire drivers, but I can't replace buses. So, when they're done, they're done; it becomes an ongoing crisis. When you don't have bus replacement money, you have to dip into the general fund, which is where you pay for staffing – so where is the support for students coming from? So it's not just the funding formula, but it's a piece of it that we can't ignore.

BV: A few days before you and Gov. Holcomb were sworn in, he announced his desire to make your position one appointed at the governor's discretion (starting in 2021). What are your feelings about that personally and from the perspective of an educator and parent?

JM: This isn't a new conversation for Indiana. Personally, it's a little odd when you come off a campaign for 11 months – and campaigns aren't fun, they're very taxing on a family – and this hits. But I wasn't blindsided; there were a lot of conversations and they were very courteous in letting me know what was going on. I understand the importance of a governor being able to work with a state superintendent, because we just lived with a governor and a state superintendent who couldn't get along.

And it was very hard for all of us in the field. It did cripple us. I understand this is being proactive (to avoid that in the future). I get the power of the governor and the state superintendent working well together. On the other side, I also respect the voice of the voters. I had a lot of people voting for me. ... It's a very difficult decision for legislators to make, and I hope they get feedback from their home (districts) in making that decision.

The voters voted me in for four years.

I'm going to do what I have to do to develop the best state Department of Education in the nation. We're going to stay focused on that.

I haven't proven myself in this position, I know there are a lot of what-ifs, a lot of questions. My motive is not to say, "Hey if that happens, I hope I get re-hired."

BV: Indiana businesses are very supportive of sensibly expanding the state's pre-K program – first beginning with more students from low-income families. What is your position on pre-K, both for this year and going forward?

JM: We're really going to get aggressive. I think that is an area that we have not maximized what the department can do with the field and other stakeholders. We're trying to entice some great people into that arena in the department. I've been in a lot of conversations where it is so hard to track who is being serviced, who is not being serviced. There is no tracking mechanism at the preschool level like there is in K-12.

People are asking for data and there is no mechanism to get the data. Our pilot (program of five counties) is so limited. It's good because we're servicing people, but for the purposes across Indiana it's so limited. I would love to see universal pre-K, but I know we simply can't afford it and can't maintain it. And that's a big problem.

I do like that the governor wants to double the pilot program for those most at risk who aren't already being served. I support that. I know he said he wants to stay within those counties that are already identified. There are areas outside those counties I hope we can eventually look at, but I know too it's a financial decision.

I'm not as concerned about the exact dollar amount. ... The legislators are going to have a better handle on what we can

afford. People at the K-12 level get nervous because we know there's one big massive amount of money and if monies start getting taken for pre-K purposes, obviously that may impact K-12 purposes.

BV: What are your top priorities for your first year in office?

JM: When people ask that, I say "yes". People laugh about that, but if you look at where we are – assessment and accountability has got to be a priority, teacher retention and attraction has got to be a priority, preschool and doing it well has got to be a priority, where we are with broadband accessibility and capacity, it's got to be a priority. And the whole piece of the puzzle to address the funding, it's got to be a priority.

BV: Where are we right now with implementing ESSA?

JM: We pushed our submission date back to September (and communicated that with the U.S. Department of Education). That does not put our federal funds at risk as long as we do our assurances up front; those will be finished early in the spring. Despite the pause at the federal level, we are continuing our work in order to stay on track for that September deadline for formal submission.

BV: Any parting thoughts for our readers?

JM: I think what the business world can expect to see is for us to have a focus on STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), CTE, what we are doing with our higher performers, talent development and preschool. A lot of our staffing and cabinet choices will give the Chamber a snapshot into who we are and who we want to become. We will work tirelessly to become the best in the nation.



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TAKING ON THE 'NEW NORMAL'

Ellspermann Seeks Strong 'Workforce Engine'

Sue Ellspermann, Ph.D., became the ninth president of Ivy Tech Community College, and the first female to hold that position, on July 1, 2016. That followed one term in the Indiana House and three-plus years as Indiana's lieutenant governor. She shares her insights in this one-on-one interview.

BizVoice®: What did you learn during campus visits last summer before you officially started on the job?

Sue Ellspermann: June was great, to visit more than 20 of Ivy Tech's locations across the state, to visit with over 700 faculty and staff in more than 50 meetings. It was important because as you come in to a new institution – I had an outside view, as lieutenant governor I had gotten to understand workforce – but to really understand what makes Ivy Tech tick, to understand what is important to faculty and staff, how we serve our students, who our students are is very, very important.

Those meetings really informed me about the commitment our faculty and staff

have to the work they do. As I left, I said this is more a vocation than a job. Because we really understand at Ivy Tech the students we are serving. There's a really special spirit about the people here at Ivy Tech.

BV: If that was your internship, now you've had six months of on-the-job training. What are the biggest surprises?

SE: There are so many. I would say that first 30 days (June) was also a little bit about drinking out of a fire hose, as was the early fall, first semester, seeing how all of our campuses work. Each serves their communities, the employers in that community, while being part of this bigger system. We are the largest singly

By Tom Schuman

accredited community college in the country and with that comes a fair amount of complexity.

Some of the things that we're working on is really about how do we take on what I call the "new normal." The cheese has moved. Back in the recession, we had so many students, they were knocking down our doors. We couldn't keep them away. We almost doubled in size. Now that we're at nearly full employment in Indiana, which is a great thing, it's challenging to have those same numbers of students come back because we **need** them to.

Indiana's employers really need those middle skills jobs that Ivy Tech provides. Understanding that it's not just hanging out your shingle and saying, "We have this welding program or this industrial maintenance program or this IT program and all those seats will be filled." We have a real challenge to recruit those students – both 18-year-olds and incumbent

workers to come back to school and get that credential or degree that will allow them to take that 50, 60, 80,000 dollar job that is out there.

BV: On-time completion is a huge issue. What does it mean to you and how should it best be measured for Ivy Tech students?

SE: I shared that 69% of our students are part-time, so that full-time student is probably not our main metric. It’s OK to track, and we should. We are beginning to track something called student’s expected time frame.

Let me give you an example. If you are one of our 5,300 apprentices, an apprenticeship typically takes five years. By definition (of on-time graduation), that’s a failure. And yet the apprenticeship programs, we all know in industry, are some of the best. They’re working, they’re gaining the skill and they’re gaining an associate degree – all with no debt. So if you think about the best of all worlds, that’s a great example.

Yes, we appreciate and support what the higher ed commission and the state are pursuing with those graduation rates. We want all of our students to proceed at the fastest rate they can, but we want to know when they walk in the door, what is their expected time frame. I often share that it took me eight years to do a master’s and Ph.D. If I could have gone full time, I could have done it in four years.

But I had my own full-time business, I had a child and I had a second baby on spring break one year. So eight years was all right. It was the right thing for me and it was successful. My Ph.D. was no less valuable than had I completed it in four years. That’s the understanding we want to be sensitive to, but we always want to help people move as quickly as they can.

BV: Knowing which students are on the right (or wrong) track is so essential. How is your data system working to provide that critical information in a timely manner?

SE: I’m now convinced Ivy Tech has the best data warehouse in the country. We’re able to take many of these separate systems and feed this information in so we can look at these variables in

real time. We call that system NEWT – that new thing. We know within two weeks, with 81% accuracy, whether one of our students will succeed or fail. That’s very important information, but it’s only good if you act on it.

In two weeks, we knew that 16,000 of our students were at risk of failing. So we had advisors, faculty, staff reaching out to each and every one of those students during the next two-week period with the hope of understanding what their challenges were. It was everything from the bookstore to one of our students who had no food. We do serve an at-risk population. We were able to help many of those students. Some of them, they overwhelmingly appreciated the call.

We didn’t say, “You’re failing.” We said, “Can we help? Is there anything we can do? How are you doing?” So in mid-terms, we tracked how they were doing. We improved our pass rates at midterms by 3.3%, the biggest one-time bump we’ve ever seen at that point for any given intervention. We called that project Early Success.

We’ll continue to use that, but it shows you that when you have real time data and you actually use it to help that student, you can change the trajectory. It is one of many examples we hope to use – we believe it can help us be both high-tech and high-touch – because our students do have in many cases a more challenging environment than their four-year peers.



**VIDEO BONUS:
Ivy Tech role in
the community**



BV: Alignment of education and workforce development. Everyone wants to do it well, but many struggle to succeed. What does our state do well and where are the biggest gaps?

SE: I would say this is one time where the stars have aligned in Indiana. We have a General Assembly that last year gave Ivy Tech its own bill, which required us to have a vice president of workforce which would be focused on that alignment with our employers and we’ve done that. We have aligned a whole part of Ivy Tech to make sure that is happening, including the development of tools to help ensure we are using data provided by the Department of Workforce Development. So we know what those top five jobs are in each of our five industry sectors –



Before her official start date last July, Sue Ellspermann traveled to Ivy Tech locations around the state for a first-hand look at campuses and programs.

manufacturing, health sciences, IT, logistics and agriculture.

If you have listened to Gov. Holcomb, he's absolutely as equally committed to workforce, his wanting Indiana to be a magnet for jobs. For my years around higher ed and the state, this is really the first time I have heard such a consensus and a commitment to working forward.

I think we have a lot to do, but I think Indiana is ahead of the game. Ivy Tech, I call us the 12-cylinder workforce engine for Indiana; it's critical that we be leading by example, putting these tools in place to make this alignment happen.

BV: 12 cylinders; that sounds pretty powerful?

SE: That's a great engine. That would be a great car. Wouldn't you have wanted that when you were 16 years old?

BV: What are some of the other ways Ivy Tech's role is evolving to help meet the skill needs of Indiana employers?

SE: That student who is 30, 40 years old – making Ivy Tech easier for that student to come back to. Whether that's things like block scheduling, co-requisites that help that student get the kind of support if they didn't come in quite college ready, doing a lot around making that experience easier.

Second is really around the workforce alignment. Before we approve any kind of capital request going forward it has to line up, be tested against workforce demand so that we're making the right investments. Honestly, I think we'll be divesting of some of that 6.6 million square feet we have across the state of Indiana.

I'm an industrial engineer. We're going to have the buildings we need. We're not trying to build large campuses. ... We want to meet exactly the need that our employers have. That ability to be agile is going to be really a hallmark that we'll be building upon and see how we can do that in a way that serves Indiana well into the future.

BV: I read where you were in the classroom a few months ago in Terre Haute as a guest instructor. How enjoyable was that and would you like to do more?

SE: It's very purposeful. We did 12 of them. I'm being scheduled for 12 more this spring. It's so I can get to know our students. That IVYT class, that introductory 100 level, one credit hour class, you

VIDEO BONUS: Spare time for Ellspermann?



Ellspermann has been a vocal supporter of experiential learning opportunities, including those through Indiana INTERNnet and its IMPACT Awards.



might think about it as a college success class, career development class. I come in and I speak about workforce development and the jobs that are out there.

I can be a voice for all of Indiana and regionally. I test them a little bit. Have you thought about whether there are jobs on the other end of careers you are pursuing? They then have to write for me a paper that demonstrates, by data, that there is demand. I show them how to go look for that. Whether it is a living wage, what their challenges are going to be and what they will define as success. I know everybody doesn't define income as success, so I want to hear, "Why are you doing this?"

Then in that class, I do a little bit of a focus group with them so I can learn about what we're doing well and what we might change. I ask: "How many of you have a job?" Well, virtually all have a job and most of them full-time jobs. I ask, "How many of you have children?" More than a third of the hands go

up. That is not a traditional college campus.

When I ask them, "What are the things you hope Ivy Tech would consider doing," things like day care, transportation challenges come up. Technology, having a tablet or some kind of technology to work with. Those are things I hear from them that help me to be calibrated with the student we have, not the one I remember being. As you travel the state, you get a tremendous understanding of the challenges they have in meeting their goals. I would love to bring employers into that experience. For me, it helps make sure I know who we're serving.

BV: Sounds like a great day?

SE: I then have to read all those papers. I commit to giving them all feedback. I don't grade them, but I give them feedback about do I agree with where they're going, are there some other things they might be thinking about. ... Now I have ongoing relationships with any number of those students who have real exciting careers planned. And if there's a way I or we can help, like hooking them up with an employer that might offer them an internship. There are many opportunities those meetings offer.

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As lieutenant governor, Ellspermann outlined a Blue Ribbon Panel on Transportation Infrastructure report at the Indiana Chamber in 2014.

faculty and staff. We're building something together. That's what's really fun and exciting for me, building this plan that will transform one of the nation's largest community colleges into being the best community college in the nation.

BV: Final question: Can you share an anecdote, something that has touched you, from a paper you have read or a visit you have made?

SE: I met a student from southeast Indiana who had been a heroin addict much of her life. And she had come from a family that had actually helped her become addicted when she was young. She's not my age, but she isn't far off. She got clean a few years ago. Her husband overdosed; they were able to bring him back. That's when she decided she was coming back (to school) and she was going to be part of the solution.

I met her at one of these IVYT classes. She shared her story. She sent me not only her paper, but the paper she had written in one of her classes about the addiction services she hopes to offer some day. I was totally inspired. I will stay in touch with her. We'll support her every way we can. But that's someone who is coming back at a time in her life when she actually has grandchildren, and she's here because she knows there's something bigger she wants to do.

Life may not have been easy for her, but she wants to take that experience and use it in a way that she believes few can unless you've been there like she has. She has the chance to really build programs that will help others, and we know addiction services are unfortunately in very high demand across Indiana and much of the country. Here we have someone who I believe will really be part of that solution. I'm so proud when you meet people like that that just know their purpose, and we're part of helping them achieve that.

I hope that they keep me on the right track as we go forward.

BV: How much are you enjoying this role?

SE: Absolutely more so than I imagined in that you get to be around – granted, we're nontraditional but we're still young. Our average student is about 27 years old. But it's still a young place and it's a place where people have big dreams. So whether it's in the classroom or working with our programs where we're launching new things or working with employers. I'm a creative problem solver.

I look at this place and the complex challenge we have before us. I know the talent that we have in the organization and it's a very exciting time. We're going into strategic planning as we speak; it will be about a yearlong endeavor, bringing hundreds of our people together,

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Loan Program Part of a Brain Gain

By Rebecca Patrick

A quality education is the surest path to break cycles of poverty, transform lives and lift up communities by attracting the best employers and jobs.

That’s why the Indiana Chamber lists as a key goal in its *Indiana Vision 2025* plan to “increase to 60% the proportion of Indiana residents with high quality postsecondary credentials.”

Currently, less than 41% of Hoosiers are there. And in the Indiana Chamber’s 2016 employer workforce survey, 45% of respondents indicated they had left jobs open in the past year due to under-qualified applicants.

One region is tackling this issue in a substantial way and setting an example for not only the state but the country.

In northeast Indiana, the Questa Education Foundation is assisting Hoosiers’ pursuit of a college degree or industry certification with a generous forgivable loan program.

The origin

Fort Wayne’s tradition of supporting students capable of further education, but with financial barriers, dates back 80 years to R. Nelson Snider, for whom Snider High School is named. Snider loaned money out of his own pocket and gradually tapped into local philanthropists.

“So it’s been around for a long time and has evolved. It moved from that to being the Fort Wayne Education Fund to more for all of Allen County. Then about 15 years ago, the board really looked at what it had in terms of resources and said, ‘We ought to spend it out or do something bolder,’ ” tells Marc R. Levy, Questa’s executive director for the past five years.

Bolder won the day and set the stage for present-day Questa to bring “gap funding” to more area students.

“The timing of that was around a discussion taking place here in the community and statewide – the feeling there was a loss of talent. They were going to school and weren’t coming back,” Levy notes.

Since then, Questa has grown its resources while maintaining a commitment to the original mission and vision. It now serves 11 counties in the region: Adams, Allen, DeKalb, Huntington, Kosciusko, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben, Wabash, Wells and Whitley.

How it works

Qualifying full-time students receive between \$2,500 and 5,000 annually (\$3,700 on average) to assist in their education at any public or private institution of higher education in the state. Upon graduation, half of their loan is erased if they agree to stay in the area and work for five years.

That forgiveness level jumps to an astounding 75% if a student goes to one of the Questa partner institutions: Grace College, Huntington University, Indiana Tech, Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne (engineering program only), Ivy Tech Community College, Manchester University, Trine University and the University of Saint Francis.

“The money is not just given to them; it’s released on a semester-by-semester basis. After each semester, they get us their grades and demonstrate they’ve completed those courses and show us they’re registered for the next semester,” Levy explains.

“The check is then sent to the school and the money released to help with students’ gap funding for their education.”

Students must maintain a minimum 2.75 grade point average, which is the same criteria for applying to become a Questa scholar (the term for someone receiving one of the loans).

Because it’s a loan, rather than a scholarship, there is more flexibility in how those dollars can be used. From room and board to course fees to textbooks – whatever is needed.

Levy also stresses the accountability of the program.

“Our individuals all have some skin in the game. If we give 50%,”



Eight institutions of higher learning in Indiana – including (from left) Indiana Tech, Huntington University and University of Saint Francis – have partnered with the Questa Foundation to provide additional loan forgiveness to qualifying students.

they have to complete their degree (or certification). If they go for a year or two and don't complete, they're responsible to pay back 100% of what was loaned to them."

While the goal is for students to complete their certification or degree in the recommended timeframe – most often two or four years, that doesn't mean Questa scholars are necessarily tied to that typical span; they simply get four years of gap funding overall.

"If they had to take a break because something happened in their life or their family's life, and as long as they're committed and have an education plan and can tell us why they had to take a semester or a year off, we will fulfill our part of the commitment up to the \$20,000 total," Levy states.

When students graduate, they have 90 days to come to Questa and work out a payment plan; the process enables the foundation to know if the scholars have yet secured local employment.

"Students see a column of what they're going to pay, and we start with it as if the 50% (or 75%) is forgiven. They also see another column that shows what they would be paying at any point in time if they choose to leave (the region)," Levy shares.

"We want to keep the talent here. We don't push them to have to start paying aggressively after that 90 days when they haven't gotten the job they wanted (locally). It's a relationship; we work with them to help them be successful."

Beneficiaries and results

Questa has more than 350 students currently in the four-year and two-year education cycles. The most recent term saw 75 to 80 students come into the program; 100 the year prior. Six graduating classes have gone through the current loan model.

Levy is proud of what the program is accomplishing and characterizes the results as "phenomenal!"

"We are close to 80% of our students graduating in four years, which is double – almost triple – what the national average is. We are

over 90% for five years."

As for the retention part of the equation, that is going better than even expected. "Two-thirds of our students are staying or returning to northeast Indiana. (We) thought doing well would be 50%, so we think we're doing fairly good at retaining talent," Levy declares.

Auburn native Hayley Martin is in the latter stages of her education career at Trine University; she's a junior majoring in criminal justice and psychology while also playing basketball for the school.

She says her Questa loan is what enabled her to attend Trine, and she is grateful. "Not only do I have peace of mind from the opportunity that Questa allows me, but it also provides the financial assistance that my parents cannot provide."

Word of mouth from a friend led Martin to seek out Questa and apply for a loan.

"I've met adults who have a substantial amount of loan debt that requires them to make large payments each month. (Thankfully,) I will not have to be in the same position.

"Having 75% of my loan forgiven within five years (of graduating) makes things less stressful! This will give me the opportunity to worry less about paying off my debt and more about beginning a new chapter of my life."

For her part, Martin is looking forward to fulfilling her commitment to stay in the



Hayley Martin (No. 14) is a DeKalb High School graduate and Questa scholar at Trine University.

area with an employer.

"This will give me an opportunity to focus on giving back to the community that invested in me."

Funding and growing

Making sure Questa funding is sustainable – so students like Martin can fulfill their dreams – is a balancing act for Levy and the board.

"Our model is relatively new, and it's a business model that most people don't have," he begins.

"If we're successful, we will lose 50%. So the good news is that if we're successful, we still get back 50%. And then if we have sustainable funding, that ends up being a growth in what we're doing."

The trick to that is getting funders to give at a certain level each year and to secure more four-year commitments that follow students, which has been Levy's goal since his arrival.

The Olive B. Cole Foundation has chosen the path of providing funding for two students for their four years of school.

Maclyn Parker, a longtime community leader in Fort Wayne, is president of the Cole Foundation.

"We supported (Questa) to start the project in DeKalb County. Then a similar grant was made in Steuben County and we've made some smaller grants too," he offers.

"We think they are a very good organization and have been very pleased with the results. They have better graduation rates than a lot of scholarship students. And that's impressed us. It's a good program and we will probably support them again."

In fact, Parker was so impressed, he says, that he joined the Questa board.

Even though the organization has been steadily growing its funding, the reality is that a much larger financial need exists in the region than the resources Questa has available.

"We're funding right now about one out of every four individuals (who apply), so we're having to make tough decisions. We can't fund



everybody (in need) at this point in time,” Levy reports.

Employer connection

One way Questa is looking to expand its reach is through area employers. This new concept centers on routing dollars earmarked for tuition reimbursement to Questa for loans.

“I’m talking more with employers because the conversation we all hear is, ‘I’m having trouble finding the talent’ – whether that’s HVAC, welders, plumbers or even IT. My response is, ‘Do you have somebody who comes to work every day and with further education might be that talent you’re looking for?’

“Generally they look at me, and say, ‘Now that you mention it, I do,’ ” Levy recounts.

A scenario he describes could be a loan for \$2,500 to an employee. “They would sign a document that authorizes the employer to pay us tuition reimbursement to pay off the 50% (taking the place of a traditional funder for Questa). When they do traditional tuition reimbursement, usually there is some implications for staying with an employer for a period of time anyway, so this blends into that and makes a natural commitment.”

The appealing part for the employee is that the money coming through Questa is now a loan and can also be used for things like child care or transportation costs – things not allowed under strict tuition reimbursement initiatives.

Parkview Health is the first to begin to develop and then pilot a program with Questa.

Adds Levy: “Several other employers like the idea and are reaching out to county economic development directors to talk about partnering with manufacturing in key areas where people are finding they have talent gaps.”

Challenge issued

Amazingly, it seems Questa is the only group of its kind in the state and nation – at least that’s what Levy has been told.

But there’s no reason it should be that way, he contends.

“If there’s really a commitment at the state level to that 60% (education attainment) goal, just think about what another four of us around the state could do. If every public or private (institution) in the state would be willing to discount their education by 25% as a partnership in this and if we’re able to get

local businesses in combination and employers with new donors to say we’re committed to this, this could be taken to scale across the state.

“You would have more people graduating on time, more people going back and getting their education and then going out in the workforce – and it’s geared toward the fields in need,” Levy continues.

“You take that person making \$12 or \$15 an hour. They get that degree in HVAC, maintenance or advanced manufacturing, so they’re now making \$40,000 a year instead of \$30,000, \$20,000 or \$15,000.”

And they would graduate with less debt, which is impactful for them individually and for their community.

“They then become part of the economy right out of school. Maybe they can buy a car, buy that house, start to set up their family – and those dollars recycle like any other dollar.

“Whereas if you’re paying back a \$20,000 or \$30,000 debt, it’s going somewhere else; those dollars are not going back into the local economy,” Levy emphasizes.

“This is a win for the individual, it’s a win for the employer and it’s a win for the community.”

RESOURCE: Questa Education Foundation at www.questafoundation.org



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The innovation-focused curriculum in Don Wettrick's Noblesville High School class allows students to dive into projects of serious interest.



NEW CLASS

By Matt Ottinger

Innovation Course Puts Bold Twist on Norm

Stepping into the Innovation and Open-Source Learning class at Noblesville presents an obvious deviation from the traditional high school experience. But that's sort of the point.

Don Wettrick opens this particular class by explaining to his students that he's been contacted by the developer of a new app focused on real-time sports discussion – or more specifically, trash talking. Wettrick discusses the developer's challenge of attracting users and informs his charges they are welcome to help out and offer feedback if they're interested.

But for the most part, they're focused on their own projects. It's a year-round course, and Wettrick begins the adventure by teaching fundamentals of innovation.

"I spend the first seven weeks or so

teaching about project management, how to think for themselves, how to use social media and build professional profiles and associate with people, and deliberately think differently," he relays.

"Our projects are two weeks long – and if they're good, continue beyond that," Wettrick adds. "I'm a big fan of quitting though. If you're on a project and it's not working out, stop. Or some kids will say, 'I started working on this because I thought I was passionate about it, but now I hate it.' After two weeks, you adjust and stop and go on to something else. So for the rest of the course, I'm a project manager."

Wettrick spent 10 years as an English teacher and noticed tendencies in different types of students. It's proven to be an apt illustration of why some previously labelled as "the bad kids" have had success in his course.

"I discovered straight A students were really good at being told what to do," he

points out. "But when I said, 'What do you want to do?', they would ask, 'What are you talking about? That doesn't compute.' I said, 'What are you passionate about?' and they'd say, 'Getting an A.'"

Hardest third

The students' projects must be broken down into a "rule of thirds." This consists of: serving a personal interest, acquiring technical skills and serving others.

"That hardest third is that last one," he tells the students, before they break to focus on individual work. "I know you want to make money, but who else benefits other than you? Make sure that's a part of it."

"Some kids may say, 'I just want to learn to make money in the stock market,' he adds in an interview. "That's cool, but who are you helping other than you? Then you're forced to think, 'Maybe I can have a club or go to an elementary and teach them how to do some basic stock portfolio stuff.'"

Robert Jones (left) and Jack Caroselli reach out to their peers and far beyond through their podcast focused on today's hot topics.



'Solutions Matter'

Two students, seniors Robert Jones and Jack Caroselli, have used the class to create a podcast to reach listeners of all stripes.

"Most of our (listener) demographics are 18- to 24-year-old males," Caroselli quantifies. "Although the women we have are middle-aged."

The duo, both have faced personal hardships, consider themselves unique for their stations in life. Their podcast, titled "Solutions Matter," reflects their libertarian-leaning viewpoints, although they seek interviews with notable policy minds encompassing various perspectives.

"We're trying to not shy away from tough topics or taboo things, but also be professional and show maturity," Caroselli reports.

Earlier in his high school career, Caroselli had been consumed by anxiety and depression, and dropped out of traditional schooling only to find online courses further enhanced his feelings of isolation. He notes that Wettrick's class was an essential building block to getting his life on track again.

"For someone in my shoes two years ago, who couldn't see past tomorrow, the class gave me hope and the confidence that I'm not just destined to be a death waiting to happen," he offers. "It's showed me you can really be something if you want to."

Furthermore, Jones enjoys how the podcast allows him to reach out to thinkers from all walks of life.

"After (graduation), I want to keep the podcast going," he remarks, adding he'll also take some courses through Ivy Tech Community College. "I currently have a marketing internship lined up

in Noblesville, and I want to get my insurance license and sell insurance, and do a couple of other things and be entrepreneurial."

Beyond podcasting, one of the most successful endeavors to come from the class emerged from student Zack Baker. Now studying at the University of California-Berkeley, Baker earned a 2016 TechPoint Mira Award as an entrepreneur Rookie of the Year for his patented app, Passwhiz. The app eliminates the need for paper hall passes in schools.

Other students acquired patents for a transparent solar panel and a children's language development toy.

Real gamification

Another technologically-savvy endeavor blooming as a result of the course is a budding e-gaming team. Wettrick notes Madison Square Garden was sold out recently as gaming fans watched the "League of Legends" finals live on large video monitors. The event had a global viewing that dwarfed American professional sports championships like the World Series and NBA Finals.

"It's my job to prepare them for the future," Wettrick explains. "There's a huge future in gaming. I interviewed a guy the other day who's made \$1.5 million playing 'Counter-Strike.' We bought everything (empty cases, processors, keyboards, headphones, etc.) and the students assembled it. We'll have enough for two teams."

Junior Ryne Haas is spearheading the gaming effort as his class project. He plans to not waste the opportunity.

"I love video games and my brother plays professionally," he says. "(A friend in the class and I) thought it'd be cool to do a hypothetical



Students collaborate with not just each other, but also with some of the top names in entrepreneurship.

pro organization. ... That's now the project for this class.

"We're trying to show proof of concept before we can expand, so we want to secure Noblesville," Haas outlines. "But this idea just came about before winter break; I was working on something completely different

for the first four months (of the class). Since we don't have competition around here yet, we'd focus on online leagues."

According to Wettrick, the potential for Noblesville to embrace gaming could have benefits beyond just entertainment, learning and camaraderie among students.

"There are so many kids that aren't necessarily athletic, but this is their sport, so why not have them look into e-sports?" he ponders. "Statistically speaking, we'll spend a lot of money on football, baseball and basketball, and many schools will never produce a pro athlete. But the chances of producing a pro gamer are way higher. And frankly, there's marketing, development, hosting events; there are 10 universities now that offer full-ride scholarships for gaming."

Beyond the tech talk

Granted, technology plays a major role in much of the coursework, but the class is not only based on coding, app development, podcasts and propagating new tech innovations. In fact, one student's project revolves around learning to quilt and do patchwork with her grandmother.

And Quentin Morris' focus is on a practice reminiscent of Indiana's early settlers on the actual frontier – not the digital one.

"When I started this class, I didn't have any idea what to do," the junior admits. "I decided I wanted to work with my hands. Then I found some woodworking stuff and some old chisels. The first thing I did was a bench, which I gave to (Wettrick)."

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Wettrick's students are laying the foundation to launch an e-gaming team, a thriving business opportunity for those with savvy in this area.

"It's sitting on my back porch," Wettrick interjects.

"I've done some smaller projects and cabinet work," Morris continues. "I really like it and I'm learning to do it more. The woodworking career is hard to make a living in, but if I can, I will. But I'll keep it as a hobby or a way to make extra money."

Projects can truly be about big ideas as well.

"We had a girl (in a previous course) write a local ordinance on light pollution," Wettrick reports, noting the project was covered by WISH-TV. "She worked with local lawmakers and ended up voting down her own policy, because it got so watered down in committee."

He adds that another student worked with a farmer's market in Noblesville.

"She wanted to get people (who are) on food stamps to get a matching program through currency she created here," Wettrick explains. "She laser cut her own currency so people on food stamps would eat healthier, trying to spur the local farmer's market economy and get people on food stamps to eat healthier. That was so freakin' cool."

Projects currently in the works include developing tactile aids for people with high anxiety and stress, self-publishing a children's book and cultivating vegan food recipes.

"The nice thing is we get to try (the recipes)," Wettrick quips.

The producers

Wettrick believes exposure to those who've had success, both locally and beyond, is an important factor. He's taken some of his students on a field trip at the request of Stanford University, which yielded visits with iconic Silicon Valley companies like Google and Facebook, and some smaller start-ups.

High-profile entrepreneurs like Tim Ferriss and Daniel Pink have called in to chat with students. The class also welcomes outside visitors and observers every week. In fact, as our interview concludes, top officials from the Indiana Commission for Higher Education stroll in to observe the course in action and talk with students.

"It's weird. For a while, we were collaborating more with people in other states than in our backyard," Wettrick asserts. "That's changing, and I'm appreciative of that."

He views the course as a weapon against the status quo that has bogged down the American education system.

"There's so much compliance in the course of a day," he notes. "But if you think about school, the point is about learning, not compliance."

Critics, he says, ask how his course helps boost standardized test scores, but Wettrick believes it's essential that students also be made employable.

"No one has hired anybody off of a great ISTEP score," he states.

"I don't want to make it seem like I'm devaluing other classes; I'm not," he clarifies. "Foundational learning is foundational learning. I'm just asking for one period a day to be about learning on their terms."

For him, the main thrust of the course is to change pre-existing attitudes that lead to complacency.

"I want my kids to be running toward the problems," he concludes. "Instead of saying (about a challenging situation), 'Oh, that sucks,' it needs to be seen as an opportunity. I don't want them to be waiting around for the government to create their opportunities or have things handed to them."

"Ninety-five percent of people are consumers and 5% are producers; I want my students to be the producers."

RESOURCES: Don Wettrick and students, Noblesville High School, at www.noblesvilleschools.org and www.theinnovationteacher.com

Wettrick also hosts an innovation-themed podcast called "StartEdUp," available on iTunes and Soundcloud, in which he interviews notable entrepreneurs and policy experts

SLICE OF LIFE

Partnerships Prepare Students for College, Careers

By Symone C. Skrzycki

Denise Sudol, owner of the Dragonfly Gift Gallery in downtown Spencer, exudes enthusiasm. It's evident when she describes the community's economic efforts and the teenagers she has the pleasure to mentor in her shop that the two passions are intertwined.

"Owen County is an extremely poor county," she remarks. "Everything we do and everything we get has to be stretched. But there's this neat fiber of community – private, business and educational – that comes together for the same purpose. A lot is getting done. We're really maximizing our potential to succeed."

"The (Evan Bayh) 21st Century Scholars program plays into that because it gives (students) who might not otherwise be on track for college or for careers a chance to succeed."

Administered by the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (CHE), 21st Century Scholars provides students from low-income families in communities across the state with up to four years of undergraduate tuition assistance at an eligible Indiana college or university.

Beginning with the class of 2017, participants must verify completion of the Scholar Success Program using their online ScholarTrack account. It includes 12 mandatory high school activities (three per grade level). In addition, the minimum accepted grade point average increased from 2.0 to 2.5 on a 4.0 scale.

"CHE began seeing the need for 21st Century Scholars to have a more structured college and career preparation process in high school to successfully navigate their first semester of college and move toward

degree completion," explains Shelley Huffman, director of college and career readiness for the Indiana Chamber.

Many communities, especially rural, are banding together to support their students in completing their Scholar Success activities (see chart on page 45).

"School counseling isn't one person's responsibility; it's a community's responsibility," Huffman asserts. "Today's students need more than an appointment with the school counselor once a year. The Scholar Success Program is structured to involve counselors. It involves businesses. And it involves parents. Students have a higher likelihood of success when parents are engaged and the community provides collective support."

As of February 2017, there were 16,599 scholars across the state, with 85% having ScholarTrack accounts and 35% on track to meet the new requirements.

Financial and geographic barriers pose additional challenges at rural schools. Taylor High School in Howard County and Owen Valley High School in Spencer are among those striving to assist their students in fulfilling the Scholar Success requirements and their own potential.

'Students take pride in it'

Southeast of Kokomo stands Taylor High School, which shares a facility with its middle school.

The high school, which enrolls approximately 400 students, has 29 scholars in the graduating class of 2017. All are on track to earn their scholarships. The success rate in each of the 12 required Scholar Success categories is 100%.

Principal Eric Hartman attributes the numbers to a phenomenal



Taylor High School partners with Community Howard Regional Health and other businesses to help 21st Century Scholars explore potential careers. Michelle Nicholson, a physical therapist, encourages student Liam Ireland to take a hands-on role with his internship.

job that staff, business partners, students and others have done with building relationships.

“Communication and information. It’s part of the culture here and has been for a long time,” he contends. “Students take pride in the program. We couldn’t have the rate of success we have without good kids and kids doing what they’re supposed to be doing.”

The counseling team meets with teens individually and as a group to answer questions and help map out their futures.

“We meet with the scholars by grade level at least four times per grade level within the year. We keep a chart of student progress as far as them completing ScholarTrack,” shares counselor Heather Baltz.

Assistance could be as simple as watching videos about paying for and succeeding in college to connecting them with internships.

Kathleen McKinney, recruitment consultant in human resources at Community Howard Regional Health, delights in seeing kids explore their interests. Taylor internships span 70 hours of workplace experience.

“We’ve probably had 15 to 18 Taylor High School students come through. We’ve had several in physical therapy and athletic training. It’s so valuable with the expense of college being what it is that they actually see what a day in the life is like.

“We’re hoping they have a great experience and have warm memories of their time with us. Some have continued the relationship (with us) and gone on to become volunteers.”

Back at Taylor, Baltz credits another crucial partner: parents.

“We have meetings in the evenings for any parents, but set aside a specific time for (21st Century) Scholars, especially when it comes time for filling the FAFSA out. Because we’re a small school, some of our parents are more comfortable coming to a place where they already have a personal relationship to get the help they need,” she confides. “It could just be a small question, but the comfort level of feeling like they have somebody they can go to is important.”

Students, however, are eventually held accountable.

“We do as much as we can in preparing them and completing all the steps,” she comments, “but ultimately, their grades and success ride on them.”

‘We’re flagging them early’

Start early and communicate often is a powerful philosophy at Owen Valley High School.

Counselor Bonnie Richmond says the goal is to “meet with students as much as possible to make sure they’re able to complete those different boxes (on the Scholar Success checklist).”

The high school boasts four innovative career academies: HELPS (Humanities, Education, Law, Protective Services); LIFE Science; PAVAC (Communications, Theater/ Visual/Musical Arts); and STEM.

“When we do their career assessments, students pick their academies,” Richmond notes. “They’ll meet with those three or four academy teachers once a month. And once within that month, they’ll have a workshop forum and guest speakers.”

Last fall, the high school recruited a career and graduation coach.

“He works with kids who are at risk for graduation. He can pull them into his office and make them sit down and get their work done. He’s got maybe 10 consistently down there. It’s something we were able to do through

go to a four-year school. They may choose to go to a technical school or directly into the workforce and it (maintaining ScholarTrack data) becomes less of a priority for them.”

The Indiana Chamber Foundation is providing college and career readiness technical assistance to Spencer-Owen Community Schools (and working with 14 additional districts throughout the state) through the Lilly Endowment Comprehensive Counseling Initiative. It will introduce a platform this year targeted to connect scholars with professionals in career fields they’re most interested in pursuing.

‘School of hard knocks’

Sudol, who spent 20 years as a stand-up comedian, interjects energy and humor into

The **Scholar Success Program** includes required activities that will help students stay on track for college and career success.

GRADE	REQUIRED ACTIVITIES		
9	Create a Graduation Plan	Participate in an Extracurricular or Service Activity	Watch “Paying for College 101”
10	Take a Career Interests Assessment	Get Workplace Experience	Estimate the Costs of College
11	Visit a College Campus	Take a College Entrance Exam (ACT or SAT)	Search for Scholarships
12	Submit Your College Application	Watch “College Success 101”	File Your FAFSA

a grant program with Ivy Tech,” Richmond explains. “He’s starting with freshmen and sophomores. We’re flagging them early.”

Currently, Owen Valley High School’s 2017 graduating class consists of 70 scholars, with 20% (compared to a statewide average of 35%) having completed the requirements to earn their 21st Century scholarship.

Richmond cautions against jumping to conclusions.

“There’s always more we can do to help the students meet those requirements,” she acknowledges. “And since it’s so new, it’s still kind of a learning experience as well. But (keep in mind that) although we have students who have signed up for the 21st Century scholarship, they may not choose to

insights on life in Spencer. She and her husband own a construction business and are involved in a variety of downtown revitalization efforts.

Reflecting on the Dragonfly shop, which opened in 2015, she notes that it’s not unusual for scholars to spend just a few weeks as interns before landing employment.

“21st Century Scholars tend to be more self-motivated, more mature, more trustworthy,” she notes. “A lot of them have great handshakes, which to me is such a dying art. They have a certain confidence in themselves that – even if it’s a quiet kid or one that wasn’t a cheerleader or prom king or that sort of thing – is very apparent as a business owner.”

Continued on page 74

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E2E CONVERGENCE
An Indiana education-to-employment conversation

What's Old is New

CONNER PRAIRIE THRIVES WITH STEM FOCUS

By Matt Ottinger

When recalling youthful excursions to Conner Prairie, memories are dotted by conversations with blacksmiths, petting farm animals and hard-to-suppress cravings for gift shop rock candy.

And that is all still found within its vast acreage.

Yet circa 2017, Conner Prairie has blossomed into much more, with an emphasis on experiential learning for children and a focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education.

Conner Prairie received a \$2.3 million grant from the National Science Foundation in 2012 when it launched Create.Connect, an innovation-centered indoor exhibit that encourages exploration.

It's a hands-on exhibit that teaches various aspects of wind energy, airplane and windmill technology among other sources of wonder.

"Part of our mission is to inspire curiosity, so it's a great way to do that. But it's also a way to take the historic narrative and STEM and combine those to help the learning experience for both children and adults," explains Norman Burns, president and CEO. "We discovered that we more than achieved a lot of the parameters we set in place for Create.Connect. The stay time for both the children and the parents (exceeded our goals)."

The March Passport to Hi-Tech event incorporates the Create.Connect experience as a means to boost STEM learning among young girls. Director of Programs and Education Chris Petrelli says placing science in a context of a story, specifically history, engages girls in the subject matter more than it otherwise would.

"It's our way of taking girls ages 5 to 12 to heighten their interest in STEM education and careers," he adds. "We bring in as many as 50 to 60 outside vendors – a number of large and small organizations."

Additionally, Conner Prairie offers Girls Science specialty camp, which incorporates Project Lead the Way instructors from area schools. He adds the Eleven Fifty Academy and Women & Hi Tech

also play roles and that a boys' camp has been added.

Workshop it

Teachers themselves can find educational resources on-site as well. Conner Prairie offers a free professional development workshop for educators – the most recent of which was held in September 2016.

"Project Lead the Way takes about 30 educators out on the grounds to show them how they can use us as an interdisciplinary resource," Petrelli reveals. "That's one of the main things strategically that we've worked on the past few years."

Field (trips) of dreams

With so many activities to choose from, itineraries can vary among school groups.

"Field trips are designed by teachers, but we offer guided tours," Petrelli imparts. "A teacher will make a reservation, and we'll provide a series of pre-visit materials that include logistical information and educational activities and supplemental materials. But the teacher designs the visit based upon the lesson plan."

Students from 80 of Indiana's 92 counties (as well as 43 schools from neighboring states) visited Fishers-based Conner Prairie last year.

"We're always looking to grow with underserved populations," Petrelli offers, noting budgetary challenges exist for some schools and transportation costs are a factor. "We've partnered with some of those schools to find sponsorship and opportunities within their communities to help fund those field trips."

As more students are exposed to this type of learning, the better the world will be for both the students and their future employers, Burns contends.

"Fortunately, that's what the humanities do, and what a place like Conner Prairie does," he concludes. "In general, the idea of having a liberal arts base of education means you're getting students who are well-rounded and capable. Instead of just being technicians, they're whole people."



Conner Prairie's Create.Connect exhibit promotes STEM learning by accentuating marvels such as airplane flight and wind energy.



RESOURCES: Norman Burns and Chris Petrelli, Conner Prairie, at www.connerprairie.org. (If your company is interested in sponsoring a trip to Conner Prairie for students in your local school district, contact Denise Kruse, director of corporate sponsorship, at kruse@connerprairie.org.)

Getting to Know Conner Prairie

On the prairie

- Fishers interactive history park welcomes over 340,000 guests of all ages each year
- Served nearly 63,000 students last year
- Created with land purchased by Eli Lilly in 1934
- Spans 800 wooded acres in Hamilton County
- Indiana's only Smithsonian Institute affiliate
- 328 employees (87 full-time; 83 part-time; 158 seasonal)

For the older crowd

- Nearly 1,100 attended 2016 History on Tap craft beer event
- Hearthside Suppers allow groups to prepare meals together in cozy atmosphere of William Conner House during winter
- Prairie Plates provides farm-to-table dining experience specifically for adults with food prepared by top local chefs
- Holiday Cheers includes candlelit stroll through 1836 Prairietown during December, featuring fine foods, wine, spirits and craft beer

Old schooling

- Award-winning Follow the North Star journey: Participants become fugitive slaves in 1836, seeking freedom on the Underground Railroad
- Headless Horseman Halloween experience welcomed 34,000 attendees in 2016
- Prairie Tots and Prairie Tykes – opportunities for very young kids to engage in revolving topics based on seasonal changes
- 1863 Civil War Journey puts visitors in the southern Indiana town of Dupont during invasion of Confederate General John Hunt Morgan
- 1859 Balloon Voyage
- Martin Luther King Day – museum opens for free with special programming and premieres two one-act plays on African-American history in Indiana
- 1816 Lenape Indian Camp explores life, culture and the relationship between Lenape Indians and American fur traders



Conner Prairie still highlights the history-based education it's known for via exhibits like the 1863 Civil War Journey.

"We pioneered the Opening Doors philosophy back in the early 2000s and created a training model that's been used by over 1,000 museums worldwide. Prior to Opening Doors, you'd open the door to someone in a costume giving a monologue about history. We're opening doors to the visitor so they have an active exchange and enrichment. They dictate it based upon what their interests are, and it becomes a different type of educational opportunity."

– Norman Burns
Conner Prairie president and CEO



Celebrating nature is also a staple through its Treetop Outpost and summer camps.

ALL ABOUT LEARNING AND TEACHING

Igniting Innovation

What began as a childhood pastime is setting the stage for Katie Darlage’s future.

“Ever since I was a kid, I’ve loved building Legos®,” she divulges. Today, that passion has grown to encompass robotics.

Earlier this year, she proudly took part in the annual City of Indianapolis VEX Robotics Competition (IndyVRC).

“It was fun,” she observes before adding, “It was nerve wracking because it was my first competition!”

Launched in 2012, the Indy VRC Robotics Grant Program provides free robotics kits to elementary, middle and high school students. The goal is to introduce students to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) careers. It’s a partnership among government, corporate and non-profit organizations.

“(Then Indianapolis) Mayor Ballard put together a team and said, ‘Let’s raise money. Let’s reach out to schools and make sure they have everything they need to start a program,’ ” explains Laura Dodds, executive director at TechPoint Foundation for Youth. “That basically was, ‘Here’s your robot and we’re paying for your registration fee.’ And then, ‘Let’s make sure they have coaches to coach the team and let’s make sure the coaches know what they’re doing. Let’s provide professional development and make sure they have an absolutely awesome and inspiring event to compete at.’ ”

In 2016, the grant program expanded statewide. Currently, it targets elementary schools. The goal is to eventually include middle schools and high schools.

“This year, we started 347 new elementary robotics teams with this program around the state,” Dodds affirms. “What’s exciting about that is now Indiana is the state with the most Vex IQ teams in the country. It really catapulted the state to a position of being a leader and an innovator in how you get hands-on STEM learning into the classroom.”

Max Schultz, a senior at Lawrence North High School, calls robotics “a great way to introduce kids to the world of mechanical engineering.” Along with providing leadership training, he asserts that, “Things can go wrong really quickly, so you have to find a way to fix those problems in a timely



More than 150 teams competed in the 2017 IndyVRC robotics event (Ellie Sophia photos).



manner.”

Darlage, a junior at Lawrence Central High School, casts a different light on the stereotypical robotics student.

“People always think of people who are focused on their work and don’t want to

socialize with anybody,” she contends, “but when you get into a room with a bunch of other people who love what they’re doing, you see that they’re learning how to work together as a team. They’re having fun and making friends.”

RESOURCES: Laura Dodds, TechPoint Foundation for Youth, at www.techpointyouth.org | IndyVRC at oei.indy.gov/indy-vex-robotics-competitions

Engaging Entrepreneurs Early

What can we do to make a difference in the world?

Last spring, the collective response of a third-grade class led to a profitable paper-making business.

Their teacher, Barbara Tilley of Mintonye Elementary in Lafayette, received training through the Classroom Business Enterprise program coordinated by the Purdue Center for Economic Education (PCEE).

“Barbara is one of our best examples in terms of creating an ingenious production process,” comments PCEE Director David Perkis. “She made paper. And when I say she made paper, I don’t mean she bought paper and colored it to make it look fancy. She actually went through the work of figuring out how to make paper from pulp.”

Tilley enjoyed every minute.

“We decided there would be six pieces in a package of stationery,” she explains. “Students brainstormed how they were going to package it and how they were going to market it. Using blenders – that was one of their favorite jobs because they never get to use blenders!”

Parents who invested \$5 in the business were reimbursed \$5.25.

“That gave us some seed money up front so we could buy supplies we needed, like paint and glitter to make our stationery perfect,” Tilley notes. “We were excited! I had stations they worked through. They were shredding the paper, making the pulp, drying it, flattening it and adding the detail to it.”

Other activities revolved around deadline completion, problem solving, supply and demand, equipment safety and more.

“I made them collect the data,” Tilley recalls. “We had measurements. We made graphs of how much money was coming in – true life skills.”

Using a portion of the profits, students sank their teeth into a new venture: selling snacks.

“We had scoops and assembly lines. We were putting marshmallows, raisins, M&Ms, pretzels, Cheerios and things in baggies,” Tilley describes. “We decided we’d make 150 baggies to sell for three days. The snacks were going to cost 50 cents, so we had them figure out how to make change.”

Payday arrived with a festive after-school pizza party.



Paper-making is all in a day’s work for students in teacher Barbara Tilley’s third-grade class.

RESOURCES: David Perkis, Purdue Center for Economic Education, at www.krannert.purdue.edu/centers/pcee/home.php | Barbara Tilley, Mintonye Elementary, at mes.tsc.k12.in.us

Trying to Tackle the Teacher Shortage

Have the desire to be a teacher? Check. Enjoy providing youth with learning opportunities? Check. Possess the currency? Not exactly.

It’s an all-too common scenario that can bring a student’s aspirations to a screeching halt. The Achieve Your Degree™ program at Ivy Tech Community College Southwest in Evansville is helping to remove financial barriers for potential teachers and others by providing a free community college education.

Launched in 2016, Achieve Your Degree offers a unique take on tuition reimbursement by deferring it until the end of each semester. Individuals are required to complete federal financial aid applications, with many receiving funds. The employer then covers the cost difference.

Once students earn an associate’s degree at Ivy Tech, they can transfer their credits to the University of Southern Indiana (USI) or University of Evansville (UE) to pursue a bachelor’s degree.

Jonathan Weinzapfel, chancellor of Ivy Tech’s Southwest and Wabash Valley regions, contrasts Achieve Your Degree with the traditional tuition reimbursement model.

“At Ivy Tech, tuition costs range from \$1,500 to \$2,000 depending on the number of credit hours,” he shares. “Students would have to carry that, typically on a credit card or pay out of pocket, for three to four months until the semester is over. When you’re talking about entry-level employees without a college degree, typically their income level is not going to be such that allows them to carry that kind of debt.”

In addition to area employers covering a variety of industries, Vigo County School Corporation (Terre Haute) and the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation (EVSC) are partnering with Ivy Tech.

A cohort of teaching assistants and paraprofessionals at EVSC, for instance, is working toward associate degrees and career development certifications in one of two pathways: elementary education or early childhood education.

“As we look at one of the many challenges facing our K-12 educational system, one of them is a teacher shortage and how difficult it is to find and hire and keep talented teachers. With this partnership, we can work together to help stem the ongoing teacher shortage in Indiana,” Weinzapfel declares.

RESOURCE: Jonathan Weinzapfel, Ivy Tech Community College, at www.ivytech.edu

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Veil Nebula supernova captured by Hubble Space Telescope, which was serviced by a Space Shuttle Atlantis crew that included Purdue alumnus Andrew Feustel in May 2009. (NASA image)

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EA/EOU

YOU (REALLY) CAN GO BACK

By Charlee Beasor

College Initiative Seeks More Business Partners

A number of companies have joined with the Indiana Commission for Higher Education to encourage employees to go back and finish their degrees through the “You Can. Go Back.” initiative, which targets the 750,000 Hoosiers with some college and no degree.



The morning host of Soft Rock B105.7 in Indianapolis initially went to college to be a social studies teacher. But Sean Copeland knew as far back as high school that he wanted to be on the radio.

The “safe” move was to become a social studies teacher – until he was offered a full-time radio job about two years into his traditional four-year college pursuit.

“It paid just a little more than what a starting teacher made at the time, so I thought, you know what, this seems like a lot of fun. And much to the chagrin of my family, I dropped out of college and went to pursue the radio dream,” he recalls.

It didn’t end up like he hoped at the time.

“I was there four months and got fired,” he says with a chuckle. “So, I had to make that very humbling call home and say, ‘So, I’m an unemployed college dropout. Whatever you do, don’t say I told you so.’ My aunt, who helped raise me, she was very kind and did not do that.”

Copeland’s story of dropping out of college for other pursuits is not unique. He’s one of 750,000 Hoosier adults with some

college and no degree.

Those 750,000 Hoosiers make up 21% of Indiana’s working-age population, according to Teresa Lubbers, the Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education. Her aim is for those Hoosiers to get to a point where they can say: “I can do that. I can do it now. I couldn’t do it then, but I can do it now.

“We did focus groups to look at what are the reasons why people have not come back or dropped out. It was not surprising: the money, the time. A lot left not having met satisfactory academic student progress, or they left owing colleges money,” Lubbers offers.

The Commission for Higher Education’s (CHE) “You Can. Go Back.” statewide effort, now in its second year, is designed to remove

barriers for adult students to, as the name implies, go back.

Through targeted marketing, CHE reaches out to potential students and entices them to consider resuming their college career. There is \$300 million in need-based financial aid distributed annually and a \$1,000 grant to qualified applicants, funded from a \$7.5 million adult student grant fund.

An online matching tool (www.youcangoback.com) connects students with a higher education institution after the returning student answers a few simple questions. Public and private higher education

institutions around the state are charged with removing some of the barriers to adults returning to school (waiving application fees, providing scholarships, debt forgiveness, for example).

The other critical piece of “You Can. Go Back.” hits even closer to home for many adult students: CHE is seeking employers to encourage their employees to go back to school.

Optimistic outcomes

The goal for CHE, the Indiana Chamber’s *Indiana Vision 2025* plan and others is for Indiana to have a 60% postsecondary

education attainment rate. Currently, that rate is about 41%.

“There is no way to get to that 60% goal without those adults (with some college and no degree),” Lubbers adds.

Results from the initiative so far are encouraging: over 9,000 students who have received the targeted outreach have re-enrolled in school; more than 5,360 adult student grants have been awarded; and over 4,900 students have been matched with participating colleges through the web site’s matching tool.

Others are taking notice.

Jason Bearce, CHE associate commissioner, says the Lumina Foundation recently brought representatives from several states to Indiana to learn about the CHE’s strategy. The state of Mississippi is modeling a program after “You Can. Go Back.”

Lubbers isn’t ready to relax though. Hundreds of thousands of Hoosiers still haven’t taken the steps to go back.

“This is not a campaign that is a one-time flashy campaign. We have to keep ourselves focused on this, all the way through,” she asserts. “In terms of the logistics, it’s a heck of a lot easier if your employer is saying ‘We want you to go back.’ The question is how can we bring more employers to the table?”

(Business) help wanted

A number of organizations have signed on to participate, including Comcast, Cummins, Cook Group, Rolls Royce, Subaru, Toyota and the state of Indiana. Lubbers is hoping more small-to-medium employers sign on. While smaller companies might not be able to offer resources such as tuition reimbursement, there are other ways employers can assist.

Bearce adds it might be as simple as a communication change inside the company.

“Many times the employees don’t even know these programs are available, or (companies) don’t market it in a way employees would take advantage of,” he notes.

For some already zeroed in on the effort to create a skilled workforce, the “You Can. Go Back.” partnership seamlessly blends into an existing program. One example is the My Cook Pathway program at Bloomington-based Cook Group. As company executives were discussing how to tackle their own employee development strategies, “You Can. Go Back.” was being rolled out.

Cook Group President Pete Yonkman insists these efforts are not as daunting as they seem.

“It is far less expensive than we expected it to be – the (workforce) resources are there. The infrastructure is already in place,



Soft Rock B105.7 morning show host Sean Copeland dropped out of college for a full-time radio job, but is now on his way to a bachelor’s degree through WGU Indiana. Copeland says he is considering continuing on to earn a master’s degree.



The Indiana Commission for Higher Education’s goal – shared by the Indiana Chamber of Commerce and outlined in *Indiana Vision 2025* – is to have 60% postsecondary education attainment for Indiana. The current rate is about 41%.

you just have to plug into it,” he states.

Cook Group had a traditional tuition reimbursement program, which paid tuition costs after employees completed their courses. A redesigned program now offers employees the tuition up front.

“We’ve had an 800% participation increase in that program, from 50 to 450 (employees),” Yonkman says. “It’s been a tremendous success for us and for our employees and the community.”

Lubbers stresses that the “You Can. Go Back.” initiative isn’t just pursuing those seeking four-year degrees. Industry certificates and two-year degrees are also included.

“You don’t have to come back and get a four-year degree. We’re talking quality credentials,” she asserts.

Cook Group’s own program also applies to master’s and doctoral degree levels. Additionally, the company creates its own talent pipeline by hiring prospective employees on a part-time basis while they pursue a high school equivalency.

Once the equivalency is complete, those employees can work there full time. They can then enroll in qualified programs for a free two-year degree as part of Ivy Tech Community College’s Achieve Your Degree™ program.

Since the company launched the initiative about seven months ago, five employees have been hired into the company through the part-time equivalency program.

Dual responsibility

Employers can offer plenty of solutions, but employees need to take the leap.

“We still need the individual to actually make the commitment. We can do all the wrap-around services and employers can provide tuition reimbursement, but individuals have to take advantage of this opportunity,” Lubbers adds.

“For a lot of people, this has been a monkey on their back for a long time and they want to send a signal to their families that they came back and completed, as well as accruing the advantages that come to them from a job standpoint.”

Now that Copeland has been settled into Indianapolis with Emmis Communications for five years, he decided it was time to tackle that higher education ghost from his past. Last year he enrolled in WGU (Western Governor’s University) Indiana and is now just eight classes away from a bachelor’s degree in business management. He is considering a master’s degree.

“When I dropped out, I thought, I will do this someday. And quite frankly, it was over 10 years between when I dropped out and started back again. I didn’t think it would be that long,” he says. “Finally being here and having the schedule that I have and the great resource at WGU, the excuses were pretty much removed. And now you’ve just got to do the work.”

RESOURCES: Theresa Lubbers and Jason Bearce, Indiana Commission for Higher Education, at www.in.gov/che | Pete Yonkman, Cook Group, at www.cookgroup.com | Sean Copeland, B105.7, at www.b1057.com

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Dale and Elaine Hauptert are the namesakes behind the Hauptert Institute for Agricultural Studies at Huntington University. Dale passed away in 2016, but his legacy lives on through a new program that offers agribusiness and agricultural education degrees.



Jeff Mize needs talented workers. He's not alone as company leaders in various industries around the state are in desperate need of skilled employees.

As president and CEO of South Whitley-based Ag Plus, Mize employs 131 associates at the agricultural supply and marketing co-op. But 36 of them will be eligible to retire in the next three to five years. His workforce needs are time sensitive.

"I'm not the only one – everybody is faced with that same thing," Mize offers. "(Farming) has skipped a few generations; opportunities weren't there for youth coming out of college. They've gone to different areas or decided that the revenue stream was a little better (elsewhere)."

But demand has rebounded out of necessity: Nine billion people will need to be fed by 2050. And an Indiana Business Research Center report from several years ago notes that agriculture is a nearly \$38 billion industry in the state.

Opportunities are bountiful in the field (no pun intended).

A new degree program at Huntington University, a small, private Christian-based college, might hold some of the answers to the workforce dilemma Ag Plus (and others) are facing.

Named for Dale and Elaine Hauptert, longtime Huntington trustees and supporters, the Hauptert Institute for Agricultural Studies has a two-fold mission: training new employees through an agribusiness degree and preparing new teachers through an agricultural education degree.

"I think the opportunities are endless in agriculture," Mize explains. "It takes good, intelligent people to feed the world. There are a lot of opportunities for these kids in feeding the population and the growth we're going to have. It's a fulfilling industry."

Faith. Family. Farming.

Students who are seeking a small, faith-based university to earn

their agricultural degree can now look to Huntington and the Hauptert Institute. The first classes were offered in the 2015-2016 school year.

Sherilyn Emberton, Ph.D., Huntington's president since 2013 and a native of Texas, recalls flying into the Fort Wayne airport and being amazed by the expansive farm surroundings.

"I realized the significant role (of farming) in the families and began to ask the questions. It's obvious that agriculture is a warm and fuzzy opportunity; they love that part of the legacy. But the reality is, it's a \$37 billion (plus) business and who is supplying the next generation of talent and workforce?" she asks.

"People would very kindly say, 'Purdue.' I'm not asking the question right. Purdue is one of the best in the world. Who are the other schools that offer agriculture or agribusiness? It was Purdue. So, we began to do our homework of what are the other faith-based institutions that offer agriculture and there are less than a handful in the United States."

Purdue, a national and global ag leader, has worked with Huntington on developing the Hauptert Institute.

"Simply, as we all know, every student doesn't elect to go to a large school," Emberton asserts. "If we can walk alongside (Purdue) with an alternative, intimate experience, I think they're more than willing (to assist). And these are all potential pools for them for graduate students."

The "Faith. Family. Farming." motto of the Hauptert Institute resonates with students and their families, Emberton asserts.

"You cannot separate faith and farming. It will be and has historically been the industry that depends on rain and weather conditions and the support of the community or a family," she notes. "Everywhere we talk about how faith, family and farming tie together, and people share their stories with us about how their family or their faith helped them thrive or survive in this industry."

Exploring the symbiotic nature of faith and farming is one of the critical pieces, says Raymond Porter, Ph.D., director of the Hauptert Institute. And it goes beyond farming in Indiana or the United States,



Students seeking an agriculture degree now have the option to attend a small, faith-based university. An agriculture education program was approved by the Indiana State Board of Education in 2016.

as missionary work and ministry are also highlighted.

“There are discussions going on right now about what does it mean to be a good steward. How do we take care of the resources, and what’s the basis for it in the Christian scriptures?” he says. “We make sure students understand this is connected with who we are as spiritual beings as well as human beings.”

Business engagement

Rex Schrader II, president of Schrader Real Estate and Auction Co. in Columbia City, is involved with the Haupert Institute Ag Advisory Board, as is Ag Plus’ Mize. Both companies also partner with the university to offer internships to agriculture students.

“We love being exposed to kids that could be potential employees down the road and feel an obligation, whether or not they come work for us, to expose kids to the ag industry and opportunities within the ag industry,” Schrader offers. “It’s tougher and tougher to find well-rounded students with education and a real willingness to work and continue to learn post-college.”

Porter says companies were eager to be involved.

“Day one, when I started, there were companies and area agribusinesses that said, ‘We want to help with a scholarship, provide a place for an internship.’ There has been some solicitation going out and talking to people, but it’s, ‘How can we be involved?’” he marvels.

“They are hungry for graduates who understand things from the same kind of perspective that they do. ... It resonates with what we’re doing and they’ve been very supportive.”

Emberton highlights the need for students who are comfortable in the classroom and in the fields.

“We ask, ‘What kind of worker do you need?’ (They say) ‘someone who is proficient in business skills, great communicators, and can put their boots on and walk into the field and talk to the farmer.’ They gave us some good guidance and we’ve tried to follow that, and we keep them at the table.”

The university has received a number of monetary donations as well toward the institute, including a \$250,000 gift in November.

Mize’s company also donated \$10,000 toward the institute in 2015 and plans to continue investing on an annual basis.

“The reason we want to support that ag program is that Huntington sits right in our territory. We feel we want to be a strong supporter of that university, and a strong supporter of youth in agriculture, and we will continue to do that,” he adds.

Plowing ahead

Huntington’s agriculture education program was approved by the Indiana State Board of Education at the end of 2016. The goal is to stem the shortage of agriculture teachers here and nationwide.

“Many of these students who have good FFA teachers as role models, they look at that and think, ‘That’s what I want to do,’”

Porter contends. “They see coming here as an opportunity to follow in their footsteps and be part of that next line of ag teachers that can carry on that tradition. They see there is a need and a shortage.”

About 20 students are majoring in agribusiness in some form, Emberton points out. Others take agriculture courses, but might not choose it as their major. The first student graduates are likely next school year.

“They’ve been pioneers. They’re so cute,” Emberton quips in her Texas drawl. “We go and set up booths at the National FFA and at the farm show. I think they’ve taken great pride and great ownership, and they’ve also walked us through the bumps. We are indebted to their commitment to us, and they have helped us navigate this.”

In a “growing phase” currently, a new faculty member will be added and a second building is in development.

“We’re building our first additional ag facility. It will be a large crop science production facility. You and I would call it a greenhouse. There will be research stations in there and different staging in that, and it will be connected to our science building. We raised those funds this fall,” Emberton shares. “We hope to have shovels in the dirt no later than May or June.”

RESOURCES: Sherilyn Emberton and Raymond Porter, Huntington University, at www.huntington.edu | Jeff Mize, Ag Plus, at www.agplusinc.com | Rex Schrader II, Schrader Real Estate and Auction Co., at www.schraderauction.com

2016 Indiana College Completion Report

Four-Year Colleges: Percentage of Full-Time Students Who Graduated (cohort year is starting year)

College/Cohort year	Percent Within Four Years (same campus and degree level)					Total Completion Within Six Years (2009 cohort)	
	2006	2010	2011	1-Year Change	5-Year Change	Percent	3-Year Change
Ball State	32.5%	44.7%	47.4%	+2.7	+15.0	72.4%	+4.1
Indiana State	21.3%	19.4%	23.6%	+4.3	+2.3	51.5%	-0.3
IU-Bloomington	54.8%	59.8%	62.7%	+2.9	+7.9	83.2%	+0.1
Purdue-West Lafayette	39.0%	49.1%	52.1%	+3.0	+13.1	82.7%	+5.3
University of Southern Indiana	16.2%	18.7%	20.7%	+2.0	+4.5	55.0%	+4.1
IU-East	4.6%	14.3%	16.5%	+2.2	+11.9	36.6%	+2.1
IU-Kokomo	8.0%	17.3%	18.1%	+0.8	+10.0	41.4%	+6.4
IU-Northwest	6.4%	6.7%	8.4%	+1.7	+1.9	34.0%	+0.5
IU-South Bend	4.3%	7.3%	9.2%	+1.9	+5.0	34.7%	+1.5
IU-Southeast	8.7%	12.0%	13.6%	+1.6	+4.8	41.2%	+5.5
IUPUI	13.4%	18.9%	21.1%	+2.2	+7.7	55.6%	+6.9
IPFW	5.5%	8.6%	13.0%	+4.3	+7.5	40.5%	-0.1
Purdue-Calumet	7.1%	11.8%	19.3%	+7.4	+12.1	48.0%	+8.5
Purdue-North Central	7.9%	7.2%	18.2%	+11.0	+10.3	37.5%	-3.0
Statewide	31.5%	36.2%	39.6%	+3.5	+8.1	66.5%	+1.7

Two-Year Colleges: Percentage of Full-Time Students Who Graduated (cohort year is starting year)

College (Ivy Tech regions)	Percent Within Two Years (same campus and degree level)					Total Completion Within Six Years (2009 cohort)	
	2008	2012	2013	1-Year Change	5-Year Change	Percent	3-Year Change
Ivy-Bloomington	3.5%	2.5%	4.1%	+1.6	+0.7	32.0%	+6.5
Ivy-Central Indiana	1.8%	3.6%	5.5%	+1.9	+3.7	23.8%	+4.5
Ivy-Columbus	6.5%	3.4%	6.6%	+3.2	+0.1	28.3%	-1.0
Ivy-East Central	2.3%	1.2%	7.0%	+5.8	+4.7	26.0%	+1.1
Ivy-Kokomo	6.2%	1.3%	5.6%	+4.2	-0.6	32.7%	+4.5
Ivy-Lafayette	3.6%	7.2%	11.4%	+4.2	+7.8	31.1%	+3.6
Ivy-North Central	2.2%	1.6%	7.1%	+5.5	+4.9	27.7%	+6.1
Ivy-Northeast	1.6%	3.9%	5.1%	+1.1	+3.5	26.3%	+6.4
Ivy-Northwest	2.6%	10.0%	4.6%	-5.3	+2.1	24.5%	+5.3
Ivy-Richmond	8.4%	1.5%	2.0%	+0.5	-6.4	34.1%	+2.2
Ivy-South Central	6.0%	3.7%	4.6%	+0.8	-1.4	32.3%	+3.7
Ivy-Southeast	2.4%	1.6%	7.4%	+5.8	+5.1	37.0%	+14.3
Ivy-Southwest	4.9%	6.2%	7.4%	+1.2	+2.5	31.8%	+0.9
Ivy-Wabash Valley	3.7%	2.0%	8.7%	+6.7	+5.0	26.9%	+0.4
Vincennes	13.3%	15.6%	16.5%	+0.8	+3.1	35.2%	-0.9
Statewide	5.0%	5.9%	8.2%	+2.3	+3.2	29.3%	+2.0

Source: Indiana Commission for Higher Education

A note about campus comparisons: Each higher education institution faces different challenges to its efforts to improve completion and student success. Indiana colleges have different missions, different admission standards and different student populations with varying levels of academic preparation. When comparing completion rates, a campus is best measured by its improvement over its own past performance.

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HIGHER ED EVOLUTIONS

By Symone C. Skrzycki

Striking a Balance in Learning Methods

“Totally fascinating.”

That’s one way Barry Bandstra, professor of religion at Hope College in Michigan, describes a hybrid learning project through the Midwest Hybrid Learning Consortium (MHLC).

“One of our instructors at Hope College is a specialist in jazz organ,” Bandstra conveys. “Jazz organ is quite a specialization. Not every faculty or college can afford to have on staff a jazz organist. He lives in Ohio. But he’s developed over the last couple of years a way of teaching jazz organ to students remotely.

“Working one-on-one with students (at Hope and at Grinnell College in Iowa), they’re both at their organs. He can play something and they not only hear it, but they get the musical transcription (and vice versa). It’s the most amazing thing. And on a couple of occasions, he travels to meet them.”

Four additional institutions comprise the MHLC: Wabash College and DePauw University in Indiana, Albion College (Michigan) and Lawrence University (Wisconsin). A group of 16 faculty members works in pairs across institutions to promote hybrid learning, which blends in-class and out-of-class instruction.

“They’re going to be working with a colleague in roughly similar academic fields – whether it be kinesiology or religion or biology,” Bandstra offers. “What they’re doing is brainstorming ways and developing materials they can share.”

The basic concept? Students will take greater control of their learning and preparation before they enter the physical classroom. The benefit? They’ll engage in the material and discussions at a higher level.

Funded by a \$330,000 grant from the Teagle Foundation (focused on advancing the liberal arts education), the MHLC kicked off in 2014.

Debbie Seltzer-Kelly, associate professor and chair of education studies at Wabash College, partnered with a Hope English professor on peer-to-peer writing instruction.

“We weren’t being encouraged to collapse things into simple, objectively measured criteria,” Seltzer-Kelly asserts (such as), ‘Watch this video and answer these 26 multiple choice questions,’ which is what an awful lot of online education turns into, I’m afraid. We were looking for robust conversations using a variety of means to introduce new materials to students, and having them reflect on them and learn from each other.”

Bandstra adds, “This is not the monster class with anonymous students you might find in what are called MOOCs (massive open online courses) that were the rage back in 2012 and 2013.

“The possibilities are very exciting.”

RESOURCE: Midwest Hybrid Learning Consortium at hybridliberalarts.org

‘Free’ to Engineer Their Own Pace

Jeff Rhoads, professor at Purdue University, inspires students about how engineers can impact people’s lives. They can only do that if they continue in their course of study.

“Traditionally, as a field, engineering has not done a terribly good job marketing itself. People always talk about (the brilliance of) rocket scientists. But the reality is that the people who put rockets into space aren’t scientists – they’re engineers,” he points out with a good-natured laugh.

The Purdue Mechanics Freeform Classroom is helping to prepare students for diverse careers by adopting an approach that appeals to a variety of learning styles.

“If I have a criticism – which is maybe a harsh one – of the academic community, it’s that sometimes we do research on what’s the best way to teach students, but that doesn’t mean we always adopt what the conclusion is,” Rhoads asserts.

Determined to prevent that outcome, he and others established an innovative course blog.

“The blog is the backbone of it all,” he energetically relates. “It’s not a blog like we might think of today. It’s more evolved from the old-school blog. It’s a file repository. I like to think of it as a 24/7 access portal to your peers and the instructor.”

The class primarily targets sophomores, but includes students from all grade levels. Employing multiple mediums is key.

“My colleagues and I recorded hundreds and hundreds of problems. Not only all of the examples in the lecture book, but everything they’d do in homework. And we created these rather stripped-down videos. They’re short because we want to be conscious of attention spans. They demonstrate best practices on how to solve problems and – more importantly – not necessarily always the nuts and bolts but, ‘What’s the thought process?’”

Online experiments that may be difficult to attempt in the classroom, often featuring students assisting, add another element.

“One of the reasons we see students not continue in their engineering studies is, frankly, the subject’s tough. And one of the things we do is show that, ‘We’re not asking you to get this the first time. We’re not asking you to get it the 10th time.’ We want to provide the resources so you can learn how to perform at a high level, but at your pace that makes sense for you.”

He marvels at the breadth of careers engineering graduates enter.

“We’re increasingly seeing more people going into law and politics and business,” Rhoads notes. “We’ve actually, in recent years, seen a strong uptake in people going to medical school.”



Professor Jeff Rhoads (left) likens the Purdue Mechanics Freeform Classroom to “an educational buffet. Students can kind of pick and choose what they want to engage with and find the formula that works best for them. We know there’s different types of learners out there.” Charles Krousgrill (right), a Purdue professor of mechanical engineering, pioneered the concept (*Purdue University/Mark Simons photo*).

RESOURCE: Jeff Rhoads, Purdue University, at www.Purdue.edu/freeform

More Internships Going Virtual

Consider these statistics.

A *Forbes* survey of its top 100 companies conducted in 2016 revealed a 36% increase in virtual job listings over the previous year.

According to the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, 80% of employers prefer to have students who have completed an internship.

WGU Indiana – the state’s nonprofit, online university – is bringing the two worlds together with its virtual internship program.

“It helps our students gain valuable work experience and it allows Hoosier employers to work with qualified interns, especially ones that aren’t bound by semester timetables or geography,” comments WGU public relations manager Sharon Smith. “There’s a real benefit on both sides of the table when it comes to this sort of internship. It could be a real win-win.”

In partnership with Indiana INTERNnet, WGU Indiana developed a virtual internship guide.

“There’s two playbooks: one for the student and one for the employer,” Smith outlines. “We really tried to create a roadmap for each to understand how best to pursue these opportunities and how best to create them.”

Robert Bryant, a 59-year-old WGU Indiana student, is pursuing a degree in accounting. He’s a customer service specialist with Amazon and devotes 20 hours each week over four evenings. Virtual training, virtual team meetings and virtual resources are all part of the package.

“We ran through 50 to 60 training modules in a couple weeks and then, boom! Right into the fire you go,” Bryant declares. “They said you’ll learn fastest this way because it will stick with you. And it’s true. I learn every night.”

Bryant’s career – and life – took an unexpected turn seven years ago when he shattered his humerus bone falling on ice.

“I was a ceramic tile setter. After I got

VIRTUAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Student Playbook



WGU Indiana – average student age of 37 – provides a platform for adult learners to study online.

hurt, I had to find something else to do.”

Concerned about job prospects in his 50s, he went back to school. He earned his associate’s degree before enrolling at WGU Indiana, where he says he feels like he’s “part of something.”

RESOURCE: Sharon Smith, WGU Indiana, at Indiana.wgu.edu/virtualintern



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It's been a whirlwind year for Australian Chris Belli. Intrigued by career and cultural opportunities in Indianapolis, he packed up his family and relocated to the city last summer.

AUSSIE TO INDY

City Proves Attractive to Career Changer

By **Symone C. Skrzycki**

Australian native Chris Belli knows how to make an entrance – and an unforgettable first impression.

A recent example, and perhaps the most life changing to date, was a cross-continent move from Melbourne to Indianapolis in 2016.

Belli joined Studio Science, a leading design and innovation consultancy, as director of business development in August. Company president Nathan Sinsabaugh instantly knew there was something special about him.

“When we first were introduced to him, it was through a video he’d made and put on YouTube,” Sinsabaugh recalls. “He taught himself how to use the video

tools and told his story of coming to the United States from Australia. Every other resume we got was a (traditional) resume. It was clear from the beginning that he took a different perspective and approach to things.

“What’s been awesome is to see him continue to do that here as he’s become part of the team. That’s important when you’ve got a bunch of designers who are kind of idealistic and perfectionists – and to have somebody come in that’s willing to say, ‘Let’s try things a little differently,’ or ‘Maybe it doesn’t have to be that kind of perfect.’ That’s really powerful as a team.”

Life in the Outback

Belli plops down in a colorful office chair, offering a greeting with a friendly – and thick – Australian accent. A quick look around his office reveals that sports isn’t the only passion in his life.

Gazing at a tall bookcase, he points to his three children’s photos and mementos.

“That’s the baby at the top,” Belli gestures. “That’s my little boy fishing on the left. And that’s (a picture) my oldest did.

“She was getting to school age and I thought, ‘If she starts school in Australia, it’s going to be very difficult to move her.’ So it was, ‘Make a decision now to go or put her in school in Australia and be locked into Australia.’ ”

At the same time, Belli’s heritage holds a special place in his heart.

“I was born in Australia,” he explains. “Dad was from Italy, straight off the boat as a four-year-old. Mom was born in Australia, but both of her parents were Italian. We had this interesting upbringing. It was a good mix (of cultures). My brother and I spoke Italian before we spoke English, but we spoke both languages.

“We grew up doing the whole Australian thing. We played cricket. We played Australian football.”

And there were the summers.

“Australian summers are awesome,” he observes wistfully. “As you could imagine, the beaches, cold beers, barbecues – you guys call them cookouts – and that type of stuff.”

He also yearns for one of life’s simple pleasures.

“I miss the coffee,” Belli declares. “The coffee out here isn’t very good.

There are a couple of really good coffee shops here in Indy, (but) I miss that a lot.”

His move to Indianapolis wasn't his first foray into the country. Itching to travel, he left Australia at age 18 for a job in Colorado.

“What a lot of Americans don't know is that (people in) foreign countries grow up on U.S. things: sitcoms, movies, basketball,” he comments. “I had posters of Michael Jordan on my wall as a kid. America always had this draw as a place I wanted to travel to and experience.”

Upon returning to Australia a few years later, he met his wife, Erica. She was an exchange student from Indiana University. Soon, an internship at the Louisville Sports Commission brought Belli to Kentucky. He majored in sports and recreation.

“Part of the commitment of the sports commission is to attract events that put bums in beds,” he emphasizes. “People need to eat at restaurants. People need to fill their cars up before they go out of town. We worked on the Ryder Cup. We worked to attract a Mike Tyson fight to Louisville. We also worked on all of the other smaller events that go along with promoting a city, such as a junior World Series of baseball or a volleyball tournament.”

At age 24, Belli got married and returned to Australia. But America would come calling once again.

Game changer

Belli's 13-year career in the sports industry covered areas such as international horse racing and Australian rules football. Eventually, he determined it was time for something different.

“I got to a point where I couldn't make the disconnect between professional – what was a job – and what was recreation,” he reflects. “While it was still enjoyable, a change is as good as a holiday, as they say.”

“When I came over here (to Indiana), as much as I wanted to work in sports, I wanted to make sports my recreation again – where it was something I could unwind doing. But I still wanted to stay in sales and marketing, so I started researching marketing agencies.”

Why Indianapolis? Why Studio Science?

“Indianapolis is a funny place compared to Melbourne,” he imparts. “Indianapolis is small. Melbourne's got four million people. In all of the times we kept coming back to Indianapolis (to visit his wife's relatives and friends), we watched it grow. There's always been something new and different that's come to town.”

“It also doesn't have a lot of the problems the big cities have: traffic congestion and affordability. Melbourne is a really expensive place to live. The median housing price today must be well over \$650,000 – you become a slave to your mortgage after a while. Over here, housing affordability is good. The commute to work is good. To be able to go to schools that are as highly rated as they are up in Carmel was a big thing for us as well.”

Reaching for a football sitting on his desk, he smiles.

“I've always got a football in my hand,” Belli shares. “I'm always fidgeting with something.”

Studio Science's location was one of many attributes that appealed to Belli. He wanted to work in the heart of downtown. The open, collaborative workspaces, stunning views, talented employees and culture drew him in.

“There's no excuse to ... not be successful in this place,” he asserts. He laughs when recalling his first day.

“There's a certain culture that goes along with the sports industry and there's a certain (different) culture that goes along with the design agencies, marketing agencies and working with software developers.”

The self-proclaimed risk-taker who “tries to do things my way,” offers, “I know my personality can sometimes be a bit in your face and



During the interview process, “when I reached out to (company president) Nathan (Sinsabaugh, top left), what I was most impressed with versus a lot of other companies I'd already spoken to in the U.S. was how quick he was to get back on the phone and how willing they (the senior team) were to see me straight away and fit into my schedule. That's typical of the way we treat the clients as well.” People (including co-workers) are a primary reason Belli gravitated to Studio Science.



abrasive, so I thought, ‘Day one, I'll try to curb this and see where it takes us!’ ”

It didn't take long before Belli felt at home. Likewise, his energy soon inspired those around him.

No regrets

Belli lights up when rattling off the various sporting events he's attended in Indianapolis.

“I used to wake up at 3 o'clock in the morning on a Monday morning to watch the Colts play at 1 p.m. on a Sunday,” he comments. “Now I can go to the stadium, buy a ticket and watch it! And the ability to go watch an NBA game straight after work is quite phenomenal. It's lost on some people here. You have 41 opportunities at least to go see the Pacers. How have you not been to a game?”

While the transition from a familiar life in Australia hasn't been easy, Belli doesn't regret a single moment.

“You think, ‘I'm young, I'm healthy. I'm educated. I've had a good career. This should be a breeze.’ It doesn't always work out like that, though. I'm glad I've had the experience, but make no mistake, it wasn't as easy as anybody says.”

“But fast forward four or five months into this job at Studio Science, and you've got our awesome people you work with every day. You've got a lot of the same shared interests and passions. You've got an instant network of friends. Every day is a new learning opportunity.”

'Sandbox' Success

Community Internships Offer Many Benefits

By Charlee Beasor

Bowman Creek is one of the most polluted tributaries to the St. Joseph River, which spans about 42 miles through northern Indiana and along cities that include Bristol, Elkhart, Mishawaka and South Bend.

And the neighborhood of Bowman Creek, just to the southeast of the heart of South Bend, has its own challenges, including vacant homes and poverty, caused by an economic decline and urban sprawl.

But the Bowman Creek Educational Ecosystem (also known as BCE2) is providing students of all ages and disciplines the opportunity to help change the ecological condition of the creek – and the problems of the surrounding community – while also getting plenty of experiential learning.

The interns – 22 high school, college and adult interns spanning ages 15 to 59 (in 2016) – put their classroom educations to the test in a real-world “sandbox for innovation,” according to Gary Gilot, director of engineering leadership and community engagement at the University of Notre Dame.

“We have young people who are classroom smart. They’ve got all the theory, but they need an opportunity to put it in practice,” he explains. “We pilot ideas in a participatory process; students listen to pain points and they come up with alternative solutions and we execute.”

Gilot and Jay Brockman, an associate dean and professor at the University of Notre Dame, serve as mentors to the students in BCE2. The first group of interns participated in 2015.

Non-profit organizations and local companies are hoping these experiences help to stem the flow of talented graduates that are leaving Indiana.

“Indiana exports talent. We’re 14th in graduating STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) baccalaureate degrees



Interns, ranging in age from 15 to 58, spent their summer in South Bend learning about conservation, technology and innovation during the second year of the Bowman Creek Educational Ecosystem. One of the 2016 projects was building rain gardens, which help collect and purify rainwater.



and we’re 44th in retaining them,” Gilot says. “The focus with Bowman Creek is to maybe get some folks to feel like we can be successful and have meaningful work and have a decent quality of life here.”

Students come from three local high schools and three universities: Notre Dame, Ivy Tech Community College and Indiana University South Bend.

“This initiative is really demonstrating what the future of community-university

partnerships could look like,” says South Bend Mayor Peter Buttigieg in a provided statement.

“We have professionals, students and community members working side-by-side in order to design and execute innovations and interventions that help with issues ranging from environmental remediation of a complex creek and its water issues to how to make the most of opportunities created by vacant lots that are the result of the city’s efforts to deal with vacant and abandoned homes.”



The interns teamed with local businesses and organizations for hands-on learning about green technology and data collection.



Overflowing with opportunity

Interns work with local partner organizations and employers to study, innovate and execute solutions to problems within the Bowman Creek neighborhood. The team tackled nine projects during the 2016 internship period, one of which was the implementation of 10 rain gardens, which help collect and purify rainwater.

Other projects included studying the economic feasibility of a native tree nursery on vacant lots, designing streetscape artwork and advancing the design of a pedestrian bridge.

Another focus was the study of smart green infrastructure as a unique solution to one of the more pressing challenges facing South Bend: combined sewer overflow. When the city gets too much rain, sewer runoff spills into the neighboring river and tributaries.

Smart infrastructure and data analytics, however, have helped the city reduce overflows by about 70% and decrease the amount of E. coli in the St. Joseph River by half.

EmNet, LLC, a South Bend-based engineering company, designed that smart infrastructure, called CSOnet. The technology includes sensors that are located in the sewer system and communicate data about water flows every five minutes to gates or valves that react and divert water to parts of the sewer system to avoid overflows.

EmNet has partnered with BCe2 and mentored the interns over the past year. Luis Montestruque, Ph.D., company president and chief

technology officer, admits that working with the organization has several motivations.

“We are very interested in participating in community events and activities, not just the ones that have been done by the Bowman Creek Educational Ecosystem. But a portion of that has to do with STEM development of interns, which is obviously an area we are familiar with. We wanted to mentor and help the people that were involved – the interns – of the Bowman Creek Ecosystem project,” he offers.

“Naturally, it may be a little bit of a selfish point of view, seeing what the future employees could be for recruiting purposes. That has been the reason why we decided to get involved.”

It has worked out for the company so far: One of the 2015 BCe2 team leaders, Jon Schommer, is now working as an engineer at EmNet.

“In our particular industry, and it has to be true for other ones as well, I can tell you that the kind of talent we are looking for is talent that is STEM-savvy, multi-disciplinary and that has a true passion for the environment. It’s not the most usual combination of things you can find,” Montestruque adds.

Affiliations are vital to BCe2. Indiana INTERNnet – the free internship matching program managed by the Indiana Chamber of Commerce – is another partner. Britney Arenas, from Riley High School, was one of the 2016 BCe2 interns and was named the High School Intern of the Year during the 2017 Indiana INTERNnet IMPACT Awards (see Page 73).

“It gets contagious. Energy and enthusiasm are hard to resist and everybody wants in. So the thing kind of snowballs. Many hands make light work,” Gilot asserts.

Another partner is enFocus, a non-profit organization that pairs recent graduates – “fellows” – with local mentors in an effort to keep those graduates in the region.

Between enFocus and BCe2, Gilot says the statistics for graduate retention from the two organizations are around 81%.

Out of the bubble

Alicia Czarnecki is among that 81% planning to stay in the area. She is a senior studying environmental engineering at the University of Notre Dame and was the 2016 BCe2 team leader.

Originally from Michigan and graduating in May, Czarnecki has accepted a job offer from a South Bend-based engineering firm.

“I think the work I was able to do through the Bowman Creek project and the people I was able to meet and network with through the different projects we took on really set me up to have a good network in South Bend and be a good candidate for a job in that region,” she acknowledges.

“It definitely had a lot of influence on my decision to stay here. ... It’s not that I didn’t see myself staying in South Bend. I was looking at a lot of different opportunities, but I kept coming back to the connections and network and meaningful experiences I had here.”

Czarnecki, who was also a nominee for the Indiana INTERNnet IMPACT Awards, notes that University of Notre Dame students tend to exist in the “bubble” of the campus and that BCe2 helped her and others reach out into the community.

“As a person and an engineer who wants to help society, it was cool to be using my STEM skills where I can directly see the benefit to this community. ... These are not unique challenges to South Bend, but we have a unique solution,” she adds. “I have a passion for the environmental aspects, but also for the social good and innovations that make economic sense for a neighborhood that’s facing challenges.”

“It’s kind of become a little addictive to stay and do this kind of work. It’s very rewarding.”

RESOURCES: Alicia Czarnecki and Gary Gilot, Bowman Creek Educational Ecosystem, at www.bowmancreek.org | Luis Montestruque, EmNet, at www.emnet.net

STAPLES

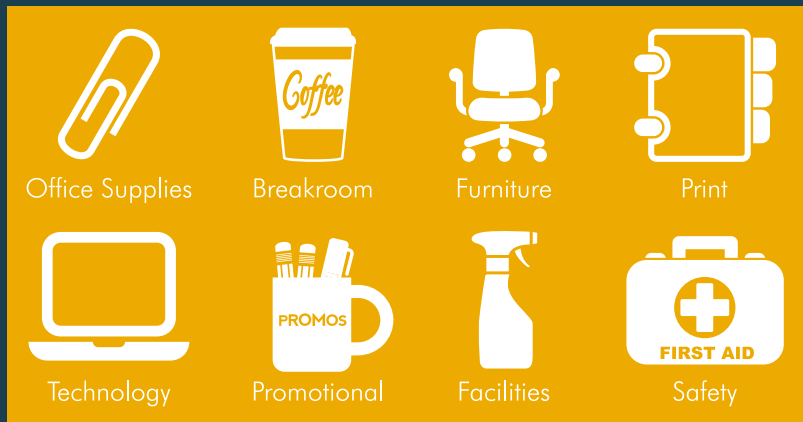
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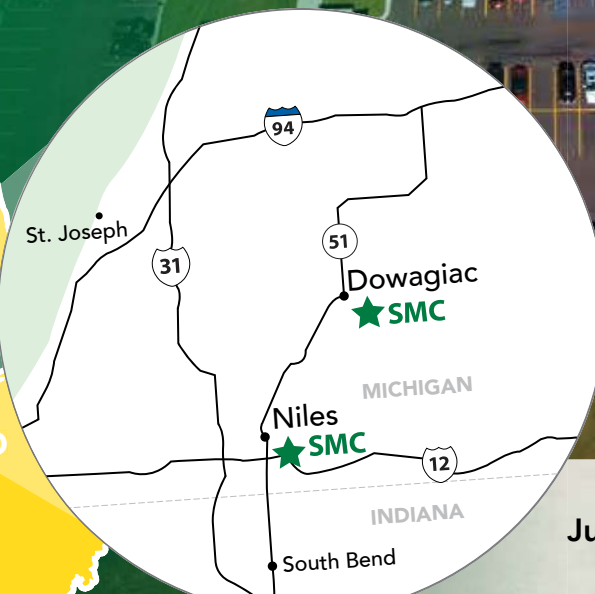
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Shooting for Internship Success

Hundreds Attend IMPACT Awards Celebration

By Karissa Bash

Experiential learning is a critical ingredient in Indiana’s workforce development strategy. With that in mind, the IMPACT Awards winners and nominees offer a promising indicator of our state’s future.

Indiana INTERNnet (IIN), managed by the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, is a statewide organization focusing on talent retention through increased work-and-learn experiences. On February 8, IIN recognized internship excellence at the 11th annual IMPACT Awards luncheon, sponsored by Ivy Tech Community College. Over 80 individuals and organizations were nominated for their leadership, hard work and ingenuity in their internships and intern programs in 2016.

The luncheon theme was “Shooting for Success.” Tamika Catchings – four-time Olympic gold medalist, former WNBA All-Star with the Indiana Fever and founder of Catch the Stars Foundation –

delivered the keynote address, “Scoring Big with Your Career.”

Catchings described her internships with the Phoenix Mercury and the WNBA league office. In addition, she shared four keys that helped her along her path to success and noted how everyone can apply these approaches to their lives.

1. Be open to new experiences and opportunities
2. Go over and beyond the call of duty
3. Never stop learning
4. Enjoy the process

The following winners were honored:



A record number of nominations were received for the IMPACT Awards. In inspiring remarks, Tamika Catchings demonstrates her greatness is not limited to the basketball court.



Hannah Dodd (Indiana Institute of Technology)
Intern of the Year – College/University



When Hannah Dodd started her geographic information systems (GIS) internship with the city of Butler, she had little knowledge of the field. That would quickly change as Dodd was contributing to projects within just a few days of beginning in her position.

“Hannah’s ability to learn, to understand the purpose and focus on what we do here, and her strong work ethic made her an integral

and indispensable part of the team within only a week or two,” shares James Otis, GIS/IT coordinator for the city of Butler.

On her second day, Dodd and Otis were working on a time-sensitive project when they received another time-sensitive task of collecting data for a water service repair. Instead of delaying the second task, Dodd offered to collect the data on her own. She had only been shown the procedure once before, but she completed the work with ease.

“It was at this point I realized I didn’t have just a student, but a partner,” Otis affirms.

As a junior studying computer science, Dodd relied on her educational knowledge to assist with various aspects of her internship. She was able to work on public speaking and problem solving skills by conducting training sessions on a new technological system for the organization’s operations personnel.

“I have come to depend on Hannah and she will be sorely missed when her tenure has come to an end,” Otis admits. “It’s hard for me to imagine how I could be more pleased with an intern.”

Kayleigh Duerksen (Indiana University)
Intern of the Year – College/University



An internship in one department can be challenging at times. Kayleigh Duerksen, however, interned in two departments at TASUS Corporation. Duerksen filled the need for someone to connect marketing and human resources (HR) for recruiting and outreach initiatives.

Duerksen, a junior majoring in human resource management and minoring in marketing, demonstrated excellent leadership

and responsibility by owning two major initiatives during her internship. One project was launching Facebook pages for each facility and developing a marketing plan to engage with the organization’s employees.

“Kayleigh recognized that Facebook wasn’t the place to promote our company or products; it was the place to promote and connect with our people,” explains Zoullin Ballman, business development and marketing coordinator for TASUS Corporation. “She has weekly posts highlighting a different employee from one of the manufacturing plants, she shares community and educational outreach activities our employees participate in and posts photos from company events such as the TASUS softball tailgate.”

The other project Duerksen completed was standardizing employee uniforms at all facilities to create a consistent brand image and cut down on costs. This was a major undertaking with both marketing and HR needing to collaborate to coordinate the logistics.

“The standardization and centralization of many tasks has ruffled feathers, and due to Kayleigh’s leadership during the uniform transition she was often in situations with unhappy employees,” Ballman describes. “She navigated through these times like a seasoned professional and ultimately brought all parties together and achieved the end goal.”

Britney Arenas (South Bend Riley)
Intern of the Year – High School



The youngest of the summer interns at Bowman Creek Educational Ecosystem (see story on page 68) last year, Britney Arenas overcame her nerves and demonstrated her confidence during her internship. Her optimism, drive and skill in brainstorming sessions were among her greatest assets for the organization.

Arenas owned her suggested project of building a lending library in the community.

With the help of her father, Arenas designed and executed the lending library in a neighborhood park. She documented the whole process to share templates and the project budget for others to replicate.

“Britney was perceptive in taking into account the need to research and integrate multiple stakeholder needs and perspectives, including the addition of artwork on the side of the lending library, which promotes South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg’s commitment to the Mayor’s Monarch Butterfly Pledge,” according to Alicia Czarnecki, previous team leader at Bowman Creek Educational Ecosystem. “She successfully implemented the lending library during the summer internship and worked to promote its purpose and uses by appearing on the local news.”

Following the completion of the lending library, Arenas was offered the opportunity to include the Food Bank of Northern Indiana in a lending pantry. She is pursuing her goal of working to develop similar building plans for the Little Free Pantry, which will have a further-reaching social impact.

“Participating in an engaged internship helped to transform a clearly talented young student into a leader with the confidence to articulate and employ her skills in a real-world setting,” Czarnecki boasts. “While previously planning to leave her neighborhood and South Bend after graduation, Britney shared that she felt she could use her interests and talents to improve quality of life in her own backyard.”

Katherine Larrabee
Intern of the Year – Non-traditional



Student, intern, single mother and caretaker are just a few terms to describe Katherine Larrabee. She tackled her busy schedule to complete an internship with DirectEmployers Institute (DEI) and graduate from Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne.

From day one of her internship, Larrabee showcased her professionalism and leadership. She was placed as a leader over her fellow

interns to help ensure efficiency and timely completion of projects. This display of professionalism was awarded by receiving more responsibility in her role, including representing DEI at important meetings.

During her internship, Larrabee was tasked with acquiring food donations from local restaurants to feed students during DEI’s summer program. Instead of securing food for the five days she was assigned, Larrabee doubled the amount of food and was able to feed 90 individuals for 10 days. This was accomplished by creating positive relationships and professionally following up with each restaurant to adhere to a time-sensitive schedule.

“Katherine always excelled in these situations by making lasting connections with everyone she met and by representing DEI in a way that was positive and refreshing,” offers Kasey Cross, DEI vice president of programming. “She did such a wonderful job that she has now been hired as DEI’s project manager to lead and guide the partner organizations DEI works with daily in several of their programs within Indiana schools.”

Darshini Render (Purdue University College of Engineering) Career Development Professional of the Year



As the assistant director of student success for the Purdue University College of Engineering, Darshini Render does exactly as her title suggests – direct student success. She supports and empowers students to accomplish their internship and career goals. Her impact on the program is clear as she received two nominations. Both individuals noted Render’s excellent leadership,

professionalism and passion for student achievement.

“One can tell that she genuinely cares about you and is genuinely driven by other people’s successes,” notes Kaushik Manchella, one of the nominators and now a Purdue University graduate. “When students go to her for help, she goes above and beyond in connecting with them.”

Render started at Purdue University as career services consultant for international students. Almost three years later, she was promoted to her current role. Two of her major accomplishments are developing the Cross Cultural Leadership Program (CCLP) and managing the International Student Peer Coaching Program.

“Darshini Render’s stand-out qualities in communicating with students and employers are something that can be seen in the success of the organization,” describes Tony Orr, student leader of CCLP. “She is very good at checking in on all of her students consistently to make sure they are on the right path and keeping up with what they need to get done.”

Render is a motivator and a teacher of career development strategies. One noteworthy approach she is known for is relaying advice from previous students to those currently looking for internships. In addition, she facilitates connections between students to improve their networks and prepare them for the professional world.

“I would not be the same person I am today if I had not had the honor of meeting and working alongside Darshini Render at Purdue University,” Orr confides. “She has made me a better candidate and person for the future.”

Ambassador Enterprises, LLC Employer of the Year – For-Profit



The Fort Wayne-based Ambassador Enterprises, LLC internship program is centered around the development of four professional skills: leadership, problem solving, project management and teamwork.

Interns participate in 11 weeks of programming that mimics a higher-education atmosphere; it is nicknamed “Corporate University.” The program’s syllabus details seven goals, six professional development outcomes, three reading assignments and additional information. Each intern will complete five deliverables during the program: personal assessments, various projects and assignments, performance evaluations, individual

development plan and a work journal.

“My major project was compiling a comprehensive analysis of the competitors of one of their holdings. They gave me a rubric and contact information for the CEO. I then had to develop the plan for how I would complete this project,” says Paige Stark, a summer 2016 intern. “I asked a lot of questions and was definitely out of my comfort zone, but grew immensely as a result of this experience.”

In the 2016 Ambassador Enterprises (AE) program, 12 interns worked on 150 projects across eight areas of business. They met every Friday for group development sessions led by Larry Rottmeyer, senior operations manager and director of the AE Intern Experience. This includes various learning activities or local business tours.

The interns also travel to another city for their Intern Business Study Tour and Retreat. The cities have included Indianapolis and Nashville, Tennessee. The retreat lasts four days and includes business tours, presenters and team-building activities. This is an opportunity for students to explore other cities and further their professional development.

DirectEmployers Institute Employer of the Year – Non-Profit



DirectEmployers Institute of Indianapolis is a double winner in 2017, adding this honor to serving as the home for the non-traditional intern of the year. The program gives high school and college students the opportunity to learn and grow through innovative programming, group project work

and networking.

Interns begin the program with several days of “professionalism” training – punctuality, professional attire and behavior – to prepare them for the internship. They continue to learn and develop these skills through group projects, assignments and engaging activities.

The majority of the interns’ role is contributing to the coordination of a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Youth Enhancement Summer Camp. Interns are divided into groups to work on social media, student registrations, food donations and more. In 2016, the interns more than tripled the number of student registrations they were asked to secure.

Another major aspect of the internship program is networking. Interns attend biweekly meetings at the Rotary Club of Indianapolis to network with professionals and listen to engaging presenters. The interns are challenged to collect at least five business cards and the intern with the most cards wins a prize. This entices the interns to engage with professionals and grow their networks.

“DirectEmployers Institute’s summer internship program is one-of-a-kind in its ability to adequately prepare young people to take on the business world with confidence and poise, all while engaging their minds and hearts with projects that not only better their community, but themselves as well,” explains Kasey Cross, the company’s vice president of programming.

21st Century Scholars

Continued from page 45

She praises the Scholars Success program for teaching invaluable life lessons.

“By 12th grade (when students are wrapping up ScholarTrack requirements), they’re organized. They’re thinking long term. Those

are skills – God! I didn’t learn that until I was probably 30 – the school of hard knocks. It’s a fantastic preparedness program for people for life. Not just for this educational piece you’re going after, but for life. For jobs that aren’t just jobs, but that are careers.”

RESOURCE: 21st Century Scholars at www.scholars.in.gov

Hobart High School, St. Mary's Earn New Award

Teamwork and the results it delivers are at the core of a new School Counseling-Business Partnership of the Year award presented by the Indiana Chamber Foundation. The inaugural winners are Hobart High School and the community's St. Mary's Medical Center (SMMC).

The honor was developed to recognize innovative approaches to college and career readiness of Indiana students. And since schools and businesses are teaming for that specific purpose, the award also presents a \$1,000 scholarship to a Hobart senior. Rachael Gayton, a 21st Century Scholar who will be attending Ball State University in the fall of 2017, was selected by the school to receive the scholarship.

Among the reasons the Hobart-St. Mary's alliance earned the award:

- Hospital sponsorship of Hobart's Promise Indiana 529 college savings program
- Establishment of a health care clinic in the schools to meet the needs of both students and their families
- St. Mary's providing a wide range of work-based learning experiences and credential opportunities for high school students

More specifically, the medical center provides over 50 students each year with the screening tests required to take part in the Emergency Medical Services program. It hosts approximately 30 students a year in a variety of internship and other learning opportunities. To accommodate one student's interest in health care administration, a SMMC team member changed his hours of work to ensure the student was able to participate in meetings and experiences.

Gayton is in her fourth year of the school's biomedical sciences program and interning at St. Mary's in the pediatric unit. She says that



The honorees include Janice Ryba (left), CEO of St. Mary's Medical Center; Rachael Gayton (third from left), Hobart High school senior and scholarship recipient; and Peggy Buffington, School City of Hobart superintendent.

her interaction with nurses and their willingness to share their experiences have solidified her plans to become a nurse practitioner.

"We are encouraged by the various work-and-learn and career mentoring partnerships between schools and local businesses and look forward to expansion of those programs," shares Christy Huston, executive director of the Indiana Chamber Foundation. "Congratulations to St. Mary's, Hobart and Rachael for their excellent work."

Danielle Adams, director of guidance at Hobart High School,

Continued on page 78

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DEBT, GUARANTEES AND THE WORKFORCE

By Tom Schuman

Fewer Loan Worries, You Have Their Word On It More Workers?

A 2016 report from *Kiplinger* identified a new tactic – helping to pay down workers’ student debt – in the talent attraction and retention game.

There’s little disputing the numbers (\$1.3 trillion total debt or more than \$37,000 for the average 2016 graduate) that reveal higher-than-ever loan obligations. But Sharon Basile, a senior HR specialist for Insperty, says the clients she works with are more typically offering sign-on bonuses that provide prospective employees with greater flexibility.

“For recent college grads, it’s usually \$5,000, up to \$10,000, which the new hire can apply to that student loan debt,” reports Basile, who has more than 30 years of human resources experience. For Insperty, a national HR services provider that expanded to Indiana in 2016, she works with approximately 75 companies that have between 30 and 150 employees.

Some clients, Basile adds, have implemented additional tuition reimbursement or further emphasized their bonus programs for employee referrals. Those more likely to offer the sign-on bonuses, she says, include marketers, consulting organizations and sometimes non-profits.

The bonus, instead of direct student loan assistance, is important for several reasons.

“When working with our clients, we make sure they are compliant – treating employees similarly across their business. One downfall I see with student loan reimbursement is that it’s not a benefit everyone can take advantage of,” Basile shares. “Sometime individuals are embarrassed (about loan debt) and don’t want their employer to think less of them.”

Asked whether it was currently an employees’ market, she enthusiastically offered, “You better believe it,” citing telecommuting and reduced work schedules among other growing options.

Kiplinger also notes that public sector job recruiters are trying to make that work more appealing by potentially forgiving student loans entirely. That perk, though, comes with long-term commitments to remaining in the government role.

The connection between students and their college or university is far from complete on graduation day. For the University of Evansville (UE), a Loan Repayment Assistance Program (LRAP) for certain grads evolved into a UE Guarantee that is proving popular today.

“We knew being in southwest Indiana that we still attract and recruit first-generation students from rural areas as part of our enrollment mix so affordability was a major concern,” explains Shane Davidson, university vice president for enrollment services. “We’re always talking about what we can do on an affordability front. Many students still have a gap.”

LRAP was introduced in the fall of 2015. The premise was that eligible students who did not obtain full employment with annual earnings of at least \$37,000 would receive a quarterly check to reimburse some or all of their student loan payments.

Davidson reports that 22 students on that program “basically borrowed their federal loans and the university was responsible for that premium on those students while they were enrolled. There are still 19 enrolled.”

But with many still sensitive about loans, additional discussions led to the UE Guarantee. Four of the five commitments include effective mentoring, scholarships to all qualified students, access to at least one internship and the opportunity to study abroad. The fifth reads: We guarantee you will graduate in four years or the fifth year is on us.

Does the four-year pledge garner the most attention? “I would absolutely say that it does – maybe not for a 17-year-old, but for a parent. It will raise their eyebrows,” Davidson contends.

The guarantee was launched with the incoming students in fall 2015. The university has seen moderate increases in the size of the last two incoming classes. Freshman retention improved significantly – from 81% (2014 to 2015) to 89% (2015 to 2016). The jury is still out on the goal of improving four-year graduation rates.

Davidson describes the admissions strategy.

“What we did on LRAP is we used it post-admit, once a student was accepted and got their official financial aid notification,” he relates. “With the UE Guarantee, we lead with that as far as recruitment. This is what is differentiating about the University of Evansville. We use that as kind of an offensive measure in the recruitment process to not only current admits but undergraduate students who are in the prospect pool.”



RESOURCE: Sharon Basile, Insperty, at www.insperty.com

RESOURCE: Shane Davidson, University of Evansville, at www.evansville.edu



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College-Educated Employees Leading the Way

Industry shifts and impacts of the Great Recession helped produce a new first in 2016 – workers with a bachelor’s degree or higher make up a larger percentage of the workforce (36%) than those with a high school diploma or less (34%).

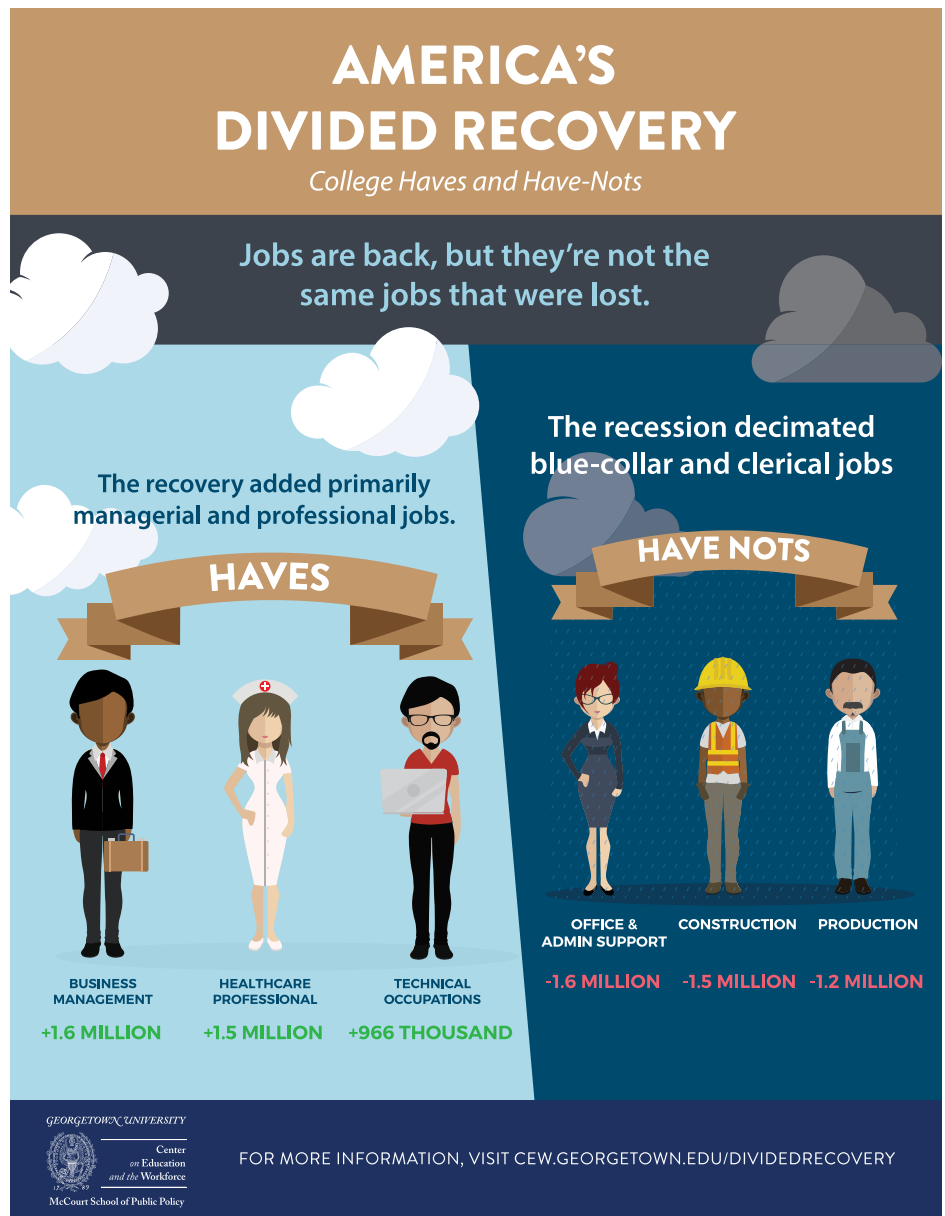
The industry shifts: Production – manufacturing, construction, etc. – employed nearly half the workforce in 1947. Today, that total is 19%. On the other end of the scale, managerial and professional workers in health care, business, finance, education and related industries have increased from 28% of the workforce in 1947 to 46% today.

The recession impacts: 1.6 million office and administrative support jobs were lost, primarily due to automation and improvements in digital information storage. This decline largely affected less-educated workers.

The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce reports that of the 11.6 million jobs created since the recession, 11.5 million went to workers with at least some college education. Of that total, 8.4 million of the workers had at least a bachelor’s degree. That compares to an increase of 80,000 jobs for workers with a high school diploma or less.

According to U.S. Department of Labor data, the college wage premium – a median measure of how much more college grads earn than those with a high school education – was 81% in 2015.

Anthony P. Carnevale is director of the Georgetown Center and author of its report titled *America’s Divided Recovery: College Haves and Have-Nots*. He says, “We really do have a nation of people who are postsecondary ‘haves’ and postsecondary ‘have-nots.’ The modern economy continues to leave Americans without a college education behind.”



Source: Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, (*America's Divided Recovery: College Haves and Have-Nots*)

RESOURCE: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce at cew.georgetown.edu

School Counseling Award

Continued from page 75

writes, “I can’t say enough positive things about our relationship with SMMC. They have truly gone above and beyond to help our students to succeed and pursue their postsecondary goals.”

And in the words of one teacher, “The students truly enjoy wearing their scrubs!”

The Indiana Chamber Foundation has conducted extensive research into effective school counseling practices. It is currently working with 15 districts (78 schools) that are redesigning school counseling programs as part of an up to \$30 million Lilly Endowment Comprehensive School Counseling initiative.

RESOURCE: Indiana Chamber Foundation school counseling work at www.readyindiana.org

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