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Career Education Review

A Publication of CECU, the Voice of Career Education

Standing Out From the Crowd

Unique Programs at Career Schools

Tom Savini provides a seminar for Tom Savini's Special Make-Up Effects program students at Douglas Education Center.


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A Publication of CECU, the Voice of Career Education

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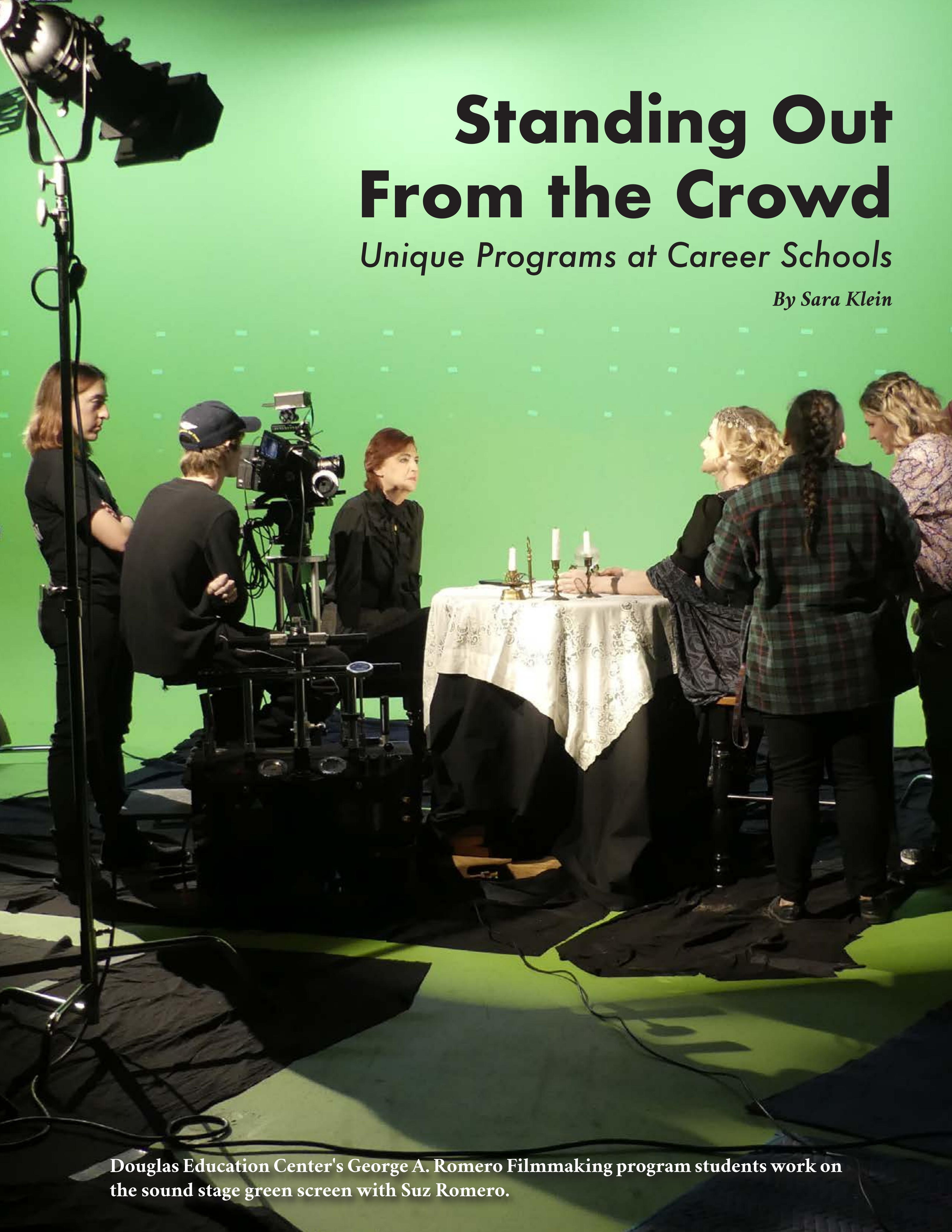
Standing Out From the Crowd

Unique Programs at Career Schools

By Sara Klein



Douglas Education Center's George A. Romero Filmmaking program students work on the sound stage green screen with Suz Romero.

Career schools have developed distinctive programs tailored to meet the needs of their students, industry and local communities. At the Douglas Education Center, programs centered on filmmaking and special effects are available, while Carnegie Institute offers programs focused on advanced cardiovascular health. And at Cannabis Career Academy, programs have been established around the burgeoning cannabis industry.

The Tom Savini's Special Make-Up Effects program and George A. Romero's Filmmaking program, both at the Douglas Education Center, help students turn their passions into careers. Jeff Imbrescia, the President, CEO and owner, and Kevin Fear, the chief marketing officer, discuss how this collaboration came to be and the unique benefits it offers students and the community.

Warren Douglas founded the Douglas Education Center in 1904 as a business and secretarial school. Imbrescia purchased the school in 1989, and for 10 years, it ran career programs like others in the area. In 1999, he realized he needed to make a change.

A declining base of students and many career schools with similar programs led Imbrescia to look for a new path for Douglas Education Center. He found that path while reading the Pittsburgh Business Times' ranking list of the top 20 career schools. At the top of the list was The Art Institute of Pittsburgh. Imbrescia was intrigued by this and saw an opportunity to establish creative art programs. As fate would have it, a former employee of The Art Institute of Pittsburgh, doing consulting work on the side, was friends with Tom Savini, best known for his groundbreaking special effects, and introduced the two. In 1999 a deal was struck to create the Tom Savini's Special Make-Up Effects program.

At Douglas Education Center, fourth semester Tom Savini's Special Make-Up Effects program student Sean Wessman sculpting a monster head out of clay.

Students passionate about special effects learn four main areas, including make-up application, mold making and casting, animation fabrication, and exhibit and display design. The associate degree program is taught by prominent industry professionals. Dick Smith, "who was the godfather of make-up," said Fear, would come and do portfolio reviews with students, giving them real-world advice. When it became too much for Smith to travel, other top industry experts like Greg Nicotero and Howard Berger took over.

Like Savini, filmmaker George A. Romero had roots in Pittsburgh. Romero, best known for Night of the Living Dead, worked with Savini on many film projects. Through Savini's relationship with Romero, he was able to bring him into the fold, and the George A. Romero's Filmmaking program was born. The intensive hands-on associate program prepares students to become filmmakers, producers, editors, gaffers, grips and directors. "They learn everything from cinematography to sound editing, script writing and then they learn the whole business side as far as budgeting, producing and that whole thing, too," said Imbrescia. With more than 30 buildings on the campus, film students have access to basically a back lot studio in addition to state-of-the-art equipment.

The filmmaking students work in teams to put together a production, and in their last semesters, they work on a final product, where they will each work in a position from script writers to directors, producers and even post-production. "They put [a portfolio] together and then high-end industry professionals come in and sit one-on-one with the students and critique their work," Imbrescia explained. "Not only do they see the work, but they also start hiring them."

There is a lot of "outside interest to use our facilities and use our students to do some of the work," said Imbrescia. A lot of local work comes down to the students to give them real-life experiences and help them build their portfolios. Because Pennsylvania has a huge tax credit, a lot of major motion pictures and streaming series are shot in Monessen, with students being extras or getting actual work. "The instructors get gig work all the time, and they are turning it over to students to have them be able to work. Some of it is for pay and some of it is just gaining experience," Imbrescia said. "But it is a very entrepreneurial climate and culture here. It is about replicating where they would work once they graduate."

It is not just local commercials being done, but bigger features as well. "We have had big film productions come in here like Dance Moms, the TV show, which filmed its

George A. Romero's Filmmaking program students set up for a shot on location in one of the many Douglas Education Center campus locations.

pilot episode here on our sound stage," Fear said. "WWE wrestling has filmed some productions here. The Misfits Band filmed music videos. Extreme Makeover, Home Edition. And The Masked Singer. One of our graduates is one of the key developers of those masks they wear on the show. The SYFY show Face Off, which went about 14 seasons, actually did some recruiting here. We had about 28 of our graduates from the make-up effects program compete on that show, with two of them actually winning it."

There are a number of different companies and films graduates of the programs have worked for, like Saturday Night Live, McFarlane Toys, Simetri, Universal Studios, Netflix and Amazon Prime.

"We have had students on pretty much every large production you can imagine," Fear said. "Everything from the Star Wars series that are on Disney now, all the Marvel movies and so many of the TV shows that are out there."

Douglas Education Center offers students the chance to learn from prominent experts in the field, which allows them to get a unique perspective and gain real-world experience in one-of-a-kind programs unlike any others.

Students learn to work in teams to break down scripts and produce large pieces in the Page to Screen class at Douglas Education Center.

Carnegie Institute's Cardiac Program is One of Few in the Country

The Cardiac Electrophysiology Technologist and Invasive Cardiovascular Technologist program offered by Carnegie Institute in Troy, Michigan, is distinct due to the scarcity of schools providing similar programs. Linda Ingraham, the school's co-director, sheds light on the growing need for these programs not only in Michigan but nationally and how they developed the programs based on recognizing this need.

"[We are one of less than five] Cardiac Electrophysiology Technologist programs in the country," Ingraham explains. Devon Roig, a 2020 graduate of the program, said, "My specialized education prepared me well for the job that I currently hold. There are not many schools in the nation that teach this specialty training, so I feel very fortunate that this education opportunity was afforded to me."

The Cardiac Electrophysiology Technologist program is designed to teach students the technical skills necessary to work with physicians who diagnose and treat cardiac arrhythmias. The course curriculum includes standard protocols utilized during an electrophysiology study and diagnostic and interventional procedures performed in the lab. "These technologists are part of a specialized cardiac team in the cardiac ERP lab, so they work side by side with the physicians who are electrophysiologists. They are part of that team to identify why somebody is having atrial fib or a flutter or do they need a Pacemaker, [issues like that.]"

With the aging population in Michigan, there has been an increase in the need for physicians. "The population is going through the roof with the needs of those patients with the increase in pathology and heart diseases and so forth," said Ingraham. The issue is that there are not enough trained Cardiac Electrophysiology Technologists to be part of the cardiac ERP lab, to be part of the team assisting the physician in those procedures.

Recognizing the need for these in-demand programs starts with building strong relationships with hospitals. For decades Carnegie Institute has worked with the hospitals in Michigan on the medical mile, which are highly renowned nationally and internationally. The strong partnership with the hospitals showed that there was a need for this program, especially seeing the increase in physicians in the area to perform these procedures and the increase in patients as well.

There can be 20 students in the Invasive Cardiovascular Technologist program and up to 15 in the Cardiac Electrophysiology Technologist program, depending on clinical sites, and they usually enroll twice a year. The programs are hybrid. Students log in two nights a week to lectures virtually and have hands-on classes on Saturdays. That important hands-on experience at the school prepares students for the clinical rotations they will be performing in their second and third quarters. "They get right into that clinical site and it is reinforced with their theory and their practical," Ingraham said.

Two Carnegie Institute graduates, Mila and Entela, from the Cardiac Electrophysiology Technologist program, prepping for an AF ablation.

Many students go to Carnegie Institute based on a referral from an existing student, graduate, hospital, or health care employee or health care employer. "What we are also seeing is [other locations] are identifying people within their own system and sending them to our school to be trained," said Ingraham.

In early 2022, Jon Hoomes, the Director of the Cardiovascular Service Line at SCL Health & Saint Joseph Hospital in Denver, Colorado, reached out to Carnegie Institute to discuss the potential opportunity of providing Carnegie students a clinical site in Denver. Soon after the meeting, an affiliation agreement between Carnegie Institute and SCL Health & Saint Joseph Hospital was established.

"Carnegie Institute has helped meet the employment need of our hospitals to fill open positions in the departments of Invasive Cath Labs and Cardiac EP labs that otherwise may go unfilled," said Hoomes. "Hospitals are in a critical shortage of technologists in these specialized fields."

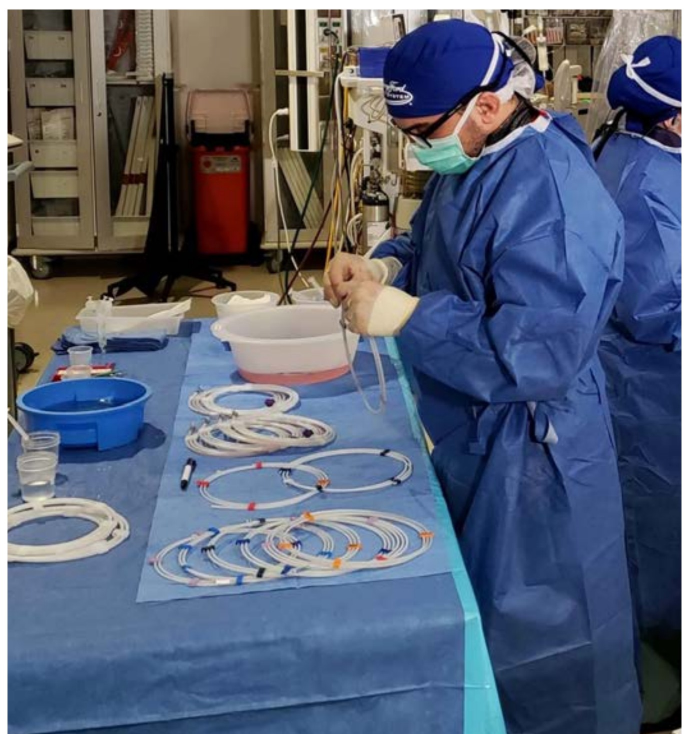
Jon Hoomes, the Director of the Cardiovascular Service Line at SCL Health & Saint Joseph Hospital in Denver, Colorado, with three graduates of Carnegie Institute's Cardiac Electrophysiology Technologist program.

Carnegie Institute students and graduates are well-trained professionals who become credentialed through Cardiac Credentialing International (CCI) and are ready to come to work each day and dedicate themselves to their patients and team," said Hoomes.

The last three years of the annual report for ACCSC showed that Carnegie had a 100% graduation and employment rate for all three years. There are several opportunities for the students based on national needs, including sign-on bonuses and relocation allocation bonuses.

"My specialized, technical training in Invasive Cardiovascular studies combined with my bachelor of science degree was a really nice combination," said Erica Munyan, a 2020 graduate. "I could not get the training I received from Carnegie Institute at a university. They do not teach what I learned at Carnegie. I was prepared with skills and confidence to accept a high-paying job with a lot of responsibilities."

The demand for these programs is growing, and Carnegie Institute is providing graduates the education needed to meet that demand with their unique program offerings.



Graduate of Carnegie Institute's Invasive Cardiovascular Technologist program.

Cannabis Career Academy Launches Courses to Meet Industry Demands

Although a number of traditional postsecondary institutions have created courses related to cannabis, there are only a few proprietary institutions that have created programs centered on cannabis. One institution, Cannabis Career Academy, recently launched two courses, Intro to Cannabis and the Dispensary Agent Certification. Nicole Joseph, Vice President of Marketing at Legacy Education, and Savanna Rakofsky, Director of Marketing, Cannabis Career Academy, share about these new, nationally-accredited online programs.

"[Legacy Education] knew that the cannabis industry was growing, and they wanted to develop a program that would cater to that industry," Ravofsky said. "The general course right now touches a lot of different aspects of cannabis, from how it interacts with the human body to the different routes of administration."

The programs are available online and open to students nationwide. They discuss general compliance since every state is different, and plan to launch a Responsible Vendor Training course soon. There will be more state-specific compliance courses and training as the need arises and as they continue to grow. The Intro to Cannabis course, which is self-paced, takes between two to three hours and the Dispensary Agent Certification course takes about 10 hours to complete.

"If [students] take the Dispensary Agent Certification, they are going to be more likely to go into a role like budtending or something more focused in cannabis retail. Intro to Cannabis is more generalized. From there, [students] will see what sector they are interested in the most," Rakofsky said. "Maybe they want to go into manufacturing or cultivation or maybe they just want to find out more and find out how they can work in the industry. It is also for people who have been in the industry but never necessarily got the proper training or want to learn more."

The cannabis industry is much more than just retail. There are a number of unique careers surrounding cannabis.

"One of our instructors is a Pediatric Pharmacist by day, but on the side, he educates different health care professionals on cannabis and the endocannabinoid system," Rakofsky said.

"We have another instructor who was an environmental biologist who started out as a budtender and is now helping by being a consultant to help other companies set up their growth facilities. Another of our instructors is very involved in the advocacy and policy side. He started the Veterans Cannabis Coalition. He was a veteran himself, used cannabis, and has helped plenty of other veterans get free medicine with his different programs and initiatives that he started. I think that by having these different viewpoints from our different instructors, we [show] that there are all these various things you can do and ways that you can be tied to the industry without necessarily having to work frontline retail."

Cannabis Career Academy video discussing the cannabis business sector and career opportunities.

The Dispensary Agent Certification course is a deeper look into the cannabis industry. The course discusses the history of cannabis, how it interacts with the body, what cannabinoids are, and the number of different cannabinoids that have been discovered by companies that are focusing on isolating cannabinoids for different functions. The course also discusses administration routes and their pros, cons and effects. Lastly, it discusses cultivation, budtender skills, and business-level skills like customer service and sales. The school plans on adding the entrepreneurial aspect of it in the future with cannabis business and marketing.

As Cannabis Career Academy grows, it will align its programs to meet industry needs. Rakofsky says, "For instance, in California, cannabis will be allowed to be prescribed by veterinarians, so we will be looking into how we can create a course that aligns with cannabis for pets and then integrate that into our veterinary programs that we already have. And then we also want to continue building our business-focus programs. So the Dispensary Agent Certification course will have a Manufacturing Agent Certification and Cultivation Agent focus. And since we are focused on allied health-aligning programs, we will want to have more programs that cater to that as well."

"As of January of last year, the current employment for the cannabis industry was over 428,000 jobs. That was January of last year, with only 11 adult-use states actually operating. Since then, we have 21 states that are shifting into adult-use markets," Rakofsky concluded. "That boosts the market potential up to 1.5 million to 1.75 million job opportunities."

Cannabis Career Academy is growing, and the future is bright for the school as it continues to expand its offerings to meet the needs of the growing cannabis industry.

From Pennsylvania's Douglas Education Center's filmmaking and special effects programs to Michigan's Carnegie Institute's focus on advanced cardiovascular health, to California's Cannabis Career Academy developing programs around the growing cannabis industry, each institution has carved out niche programs in the career education sector. These programs not only provide students with the skills they need to succeed in their chosen fields but also contribute to the growth and vitality of their respective industries and communities, making them stand out from the crowd.

New and Emerging Academic Programs for 2023

By Mary Ann Romans, Director of Marketing and Elaine Rowles, Principal and Director of Research, Gray Associates

From plants that are best friends to batteries made from salt, 2023's emerging academic programs are surprising and dynamic.

Gray Associates, a software and services firm serving higher education, has witnessed the success of colleges and universities that make bold and data-inspired decisions to launch innovative new programs. Every January, Gray hosts a webinar highlighting five promising academic program areas to watch. Creative AI (e.g., ChatGPT), cybersecurity, data analytics and esports are among past years' successful programs.

Early adoption of a new emerging program can result in positive outcomes for students and schools. A few years ago, Gray suggested a program that might raise a few eyebrows: Cannabis. A small rural school decided to risk the launch and address the growing demand for professionals trained in dispensary operations and cannabis science. "The program changed the landscape for the school and the community, creating significant revenue and jobs," Elaine Rowles, Principal and Director of Research at Gray Associates, says.

Launching an emerging program may also carry some risk, ranging from slight embarrassment to revenue loss. "Leveraging existing courses and revamping them to fit a new program can reduce that risk," she says. A successful emerging program has the power to put a school on the map and uniquely position it to capture all the existing demand in its market.

In 2023, Gray identified the following programs that run the gamut from research-based programs to those with broad appeal across award levels. The programs address cultural and economic shifts, modern technologies and scientific innovations.

Creator Economy

When the word "selfie" was added to Merriam-Webster's Dictionary in 2014, along with "tweep" and "hashtag," it may have been the creator economy in the embryonic stage. After some years and maturing, professional creators have grown a rich economy, inspiring the next generation of content-building entrepreneurs, including product and service influencers, bloggers, vloggers, writers, gamers and artists. Dreams of launching to the moon have morphed into dreams of launching huge follower streams on YouTube.

"Gray recognized the creator economy as a timely academic program area because it reflects a cultural phenomenon driven by the younger generation, one that is changing how people interact, play and shop for goods and services," Rowles says. "Some might think this is not a real career path, but it can be very lucrative." The NCAA's new name-image-likeness (NIL) policy also creates opportunities for student-athletes. To succeed, these entrepreneurs will require various skills, such as photography, communication, accounting and product marketing. They need to know how to run their business. "If colleges and universities do not address this program opportunity, other providers will," she says.

Energy Storage

One of the key challenges facing the energy industry is how to generate more energy and store it for future use. Better energy storage could cover a multitude of suns. "As energy demand increases, and interest in renewables such as solar and wind grows, storage innovations are needed to increase capacity, improve security, lower costs and bolster the transition to green energy," says Rowles. "This industry has the potential to make a huge impact economically, environmentally and politically if we can figure it out."

Current research is captivating.

Sand is being explored as a low-cost, high-efficiency thermal storage solution. Salt batteries may one day replace lithium batteries. Quantum batteries could prove ideal for a wide range of applications.

Energy storage programs allow schools to capture more students interested in chemical engineering, material science, mechanical engineering and electrical engineering. Research institutions may quickly "level up" existing programs to establish a niche and attract students who want to significantly impact the world around them.

Climate Change Adaptation

Unless you have been hiding under a polar icecap, you have likely heard about melting ice sheets, rising sea levels, extended wildfire seasons and enough tornados to bring all of Kansas to Oz. There is an increasing need for a workforce that knows how to adapt to the varied impacts of climate change.

"The economic impact of climate change is expected to be measured in the trillions of dollars," says Rowles, "both in terms of direct losses from climate-related events and the cost to implement adaptation strategies." One example is the six-mile, $119 billion sea wall[1] New York City is planning. However, as we all know, just building a wall is an inadequate solution to most problems.

Higher education can prepare students to address physical and structural adaptation projects and institutional and social policies and plans that will be required. These include public health strategies, emergency response actions and occupational upskilling. Consider the opportunities in architecture, engineering, economics, political science, agriculture, human resources and communication.

Science of Well-Being

What makes us happy? That age-old question may finally be answered. A staggering 4.3 million learners have enrolled in Yale's Science of Well-Being course on Coursera, making it the platform's most popular course of all time.

Well-being is a broad term. It encompasses physical, emotional and mental health practices and economic policies that help individuals and communities thrive. Growing interest in personal fitness and mindfulness apps and services such as health, wellness and lifestyle coaching indicate a strong interest in personal well-being.

"Some economists are reconceptualizing wealth as happiness," says Rowles.

"The World Health Organization has been studying well-being at a societal level for years. Its annual 'Happiness Report' ranks people's happiness in countries across the globe using such metrics as per capita GDP, social support and life expectancy."

Programs in this discipline could include all award levels, from certificates to graduate degrees. They can be focused on specific topics, such as positive psychology or wellness coaching. Schools could also take a holistic approach to the science of well-being by incorporating curriculum across many disciplines, including psychology, neuroscience, philosophy, economics, fitness, nutrition, public health and public policy.

Smart Plants

Your next best friend may be found under the forest floor or on your windowsill.

New research in the understanding of plants and plant systems points to an emerging program that could have broad appeal across institutional sectors and disciplines. This program area encompasses disparate fields such as botany, computer science, agriculture, engineering, mycology, nanotechnology and environmental studies. Plants, like humans, interact, communicate with and react to the world around them, giving off visual, chemical and electrical signals. "I like to call them 'Plantennas,'" says Rowles. "Scientists are also exploring the possibility of an intricate 'Wood Wide Web' under the forest floor. By harnessing plants' sensing and communication abilities, we might see a new 'Internet of Plants' in the not-too-distant future."

Plants can remove toxins that are harmful to humans, known as phytoremediation. "Suction flowers," says Rowles, "or maybe 'Bloombas'." Scientists are also researching the possibility that plants can detect odors. Akin to service dogs, plants could one day help monitor certain medical conditions. Although the idea of smart plants as an academic program is somewhat speculative, it could have a wide-ranging impact on our everyday lives if the science of smart plants is fully developed and achieved.

Conclusion

New and emerging programs can offer unique opportunities for colleges and universities. "As you think about which programs might suit your institution, consider how they fit with your mission, capabilities and resources," says Rowles. "For early adopters, the risk may be worth the reward."

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1. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/17/nyregion/the-119-billion-sea-wall-that-could-defend-new-york-or-not.html

Mary Ann Romans is the Director of Marketing at Gray Associates. Her favorite emerging program to talk about is Cellular Agriculture (See Cellular Agriculture Programs: When "Tastes Like Chicken" Takes On New Meaning, https://www.grayassociates.com/academic-strategy/cellular-agriculture-programs-when-tastes-like-chicken-takes-on-new-meaning/ Gray Associates, March 3, 2022).

Elaine Rowles is the Principal and Director of Research at Gray Associates. Elaine works with Gray's education clients on strategic planning projects, program portfolio evaluations, program feasibility studies, price benchmarking, and research-intensive custom project work. She has performed in-depth analyses of existing programs and institutions, as well as assessed demand and employment opportunities for new and emerging programs.

Visit www.grayassociates.com for more information.

Four Social Styles of Potential Students

By Shane Sparks, President and CEO, Enrollment Resources

Analytical

Analyticals love data, facts and
figures. As 'no-nonsense' people,
they'll look past a fancy pitch and get
straight to the facts. Be prepared to
field severa… …s, and
don't b… …an
analyt… …the
inform…

Amiable

Amiables value personal relationships
and want to trust those they do
business with. They like the
excitement of n… …llenges and are
enthusiastic … …ting
creative sol… …they
might not c… …esearch
before mee… …ll be
looking to y… …rough
the buying …

Expressive

Expressives are also sometimes called
"humanists" for a good reason -- like
Amiables, personal relationships are
very important to this personality type.
Expressive… …d with others'
well-bei… …eir
employ… …ers, the
expres… …will want to
know … …ake affect
the pe…

Driver

Drivers are assertive, goal-oriented
and competitive. Results are more
important than personal relationships
to these prospects. They might not
be the custo… …get a holiday
card from, … …deliver on
your comm… …ill maintain
a healthy … …ers care
deeply abo… …line.

I have a friend who will not buy anything before they run it by the group chat. Another friend does tons of online research and prefers not to have to talk to a sales associate, while her husband appears to know someone in every industry and seemingly cannot purchase anything until he first develops a relationship. Our buying decisions tend to follow predictable patterns based on personality type.

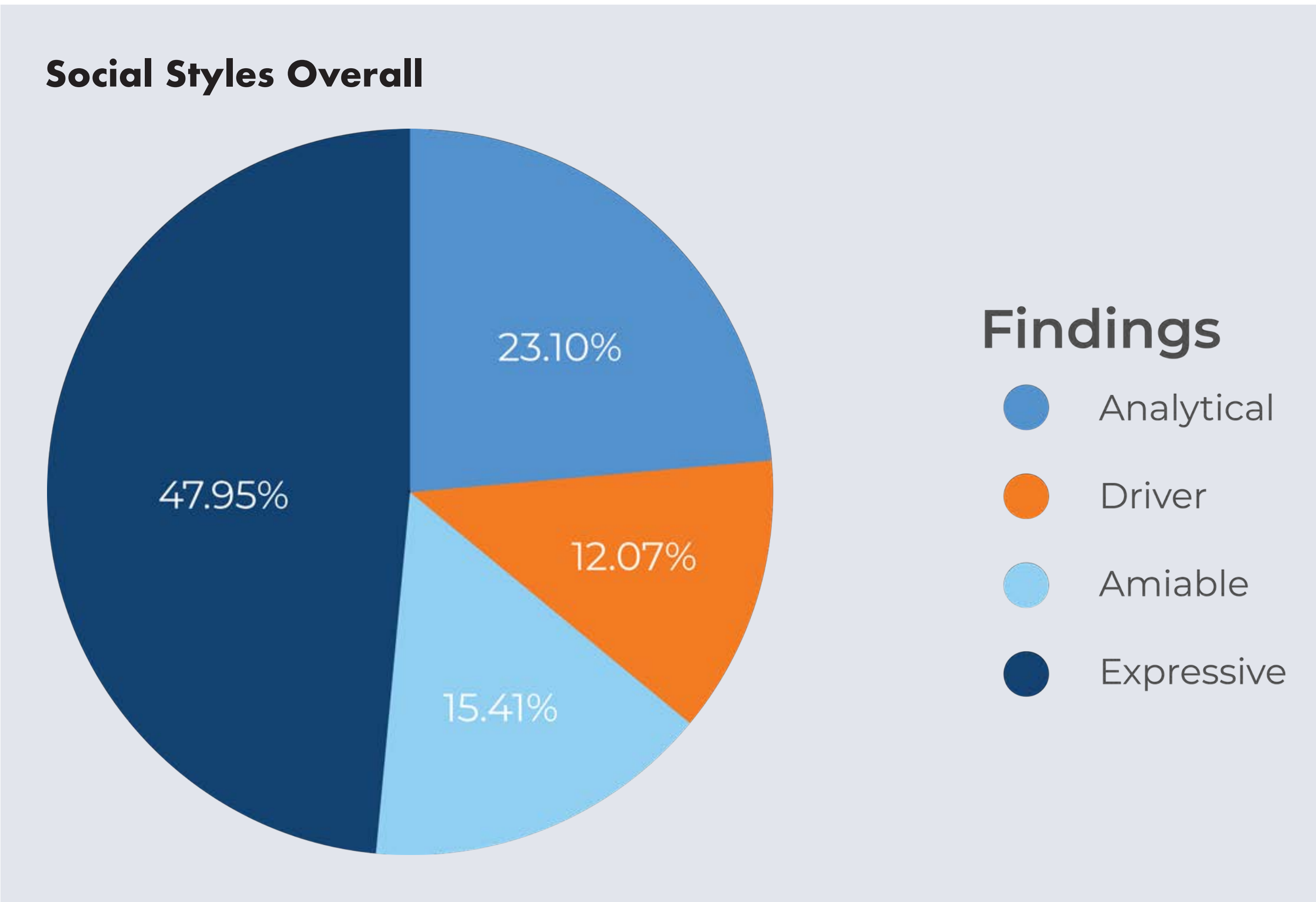
While everyone is unique with their own set of experiences and nuances, in a broad sense, we can all be categorized into four basic "Social Styles:"

- **Analytical:** Serious and more exacting
- **Driver:** Strong-willed and more emotionally controlled
- **Amiable:** Easy-going and more supportive
- **Expressive:** Outgoing and more dramatic

These Social Styles impact the way we approach all situations, including buying decisions. For education marketers and admissions professionals, the social style of prospective students can have an enormous impact on the enrollment process.

At Enrollment Resources, we recently published a research paper, "The Hidden Motivations of Prospective Students," that included extensive education market research from data of over 250,000 prospective career education students across North America. As part of the research, prospective students from a wide variety of program disciplines completed a personality traits questionnaire where they rate how strongly they self-identify with various attributes. For example, they selected whether they consider themselves more outgoing or reserved, or more cooperative or competitive. Based on their responses, each prospect was assigned to one of the four Social Styles.

The pie chart is a breakdown of the cumulative findings of the Social Styles section of the research:



What These Results Mean for Your Admissions Team

Results of this research show that most prospective students, almost 48%, were categorized as "Expressive." Individuals within this Social Style tend to be outgoing and relate well with others. **Most Admissions Advisors also tend to be Expressive** since the nature of the role favors individuals with strong communication skills who thrive in an interactive, social setting. Individuals who share a Social Style tend to relate well with one another, which is great news in the case of almost half of career school prospects.

The next largest group, at just over 23%, were identified as "Analytical." These individuals favor logic and hard data in decision-making, which can **represent a possible disconnect between almost one-quarter of student prospects and Admissions Advisors.** Individuals with an Analytical Social Style are less concerned with rapport and personal stories than individuals in other Social Style groups, which potentially puts these prospective students at odds with the default communication style of an Expressive Admissions Advisor.

For example, an Analytical person takes a lot longer to come to a buying decision than an Expressive. Analytical types will:

- Collect concrete data
- Comparison shop
- Mull over pros and cons lists

To an Expressive Admissions Advisor, Analytical prospective students may seem non-committal about coming in for a tour or setting an appointment.

Without empathy for the needs of prospects with different Social Styles, the Expressive Admissions Advisor naturally relies on conversation techniques that fail to address some prospects' immediate concerns and may even make prospects uncomfortable. For example, when an Analytical prospect opts not to commit to a tour right away, many Admissions Advisors read this as disinterest and let the prospective student go unserved when the reality is that Analytical prospects need a little more information, reassurance and patience to comfortably move to the next step.

As shown in the table, **Analytical individuals are just over 10% less likely to book a tour**, compared to the average of all Social Styles. For these individuals, the in-person walk-through holds less immediate importance compared to personal research. For these prospects, the decision cycle can be longer. Admissions Advisors who show patience and are open to a longer interaction can provide good service to these prospects and will ultimately help more students through to successful enrollment.

The research findings around tour rates suggest that lead-to-enrollment conversion rates are influenced by prospects' Social Styles.

Opportunities to better serve prospective students

Social Style and Booked Tour Rate

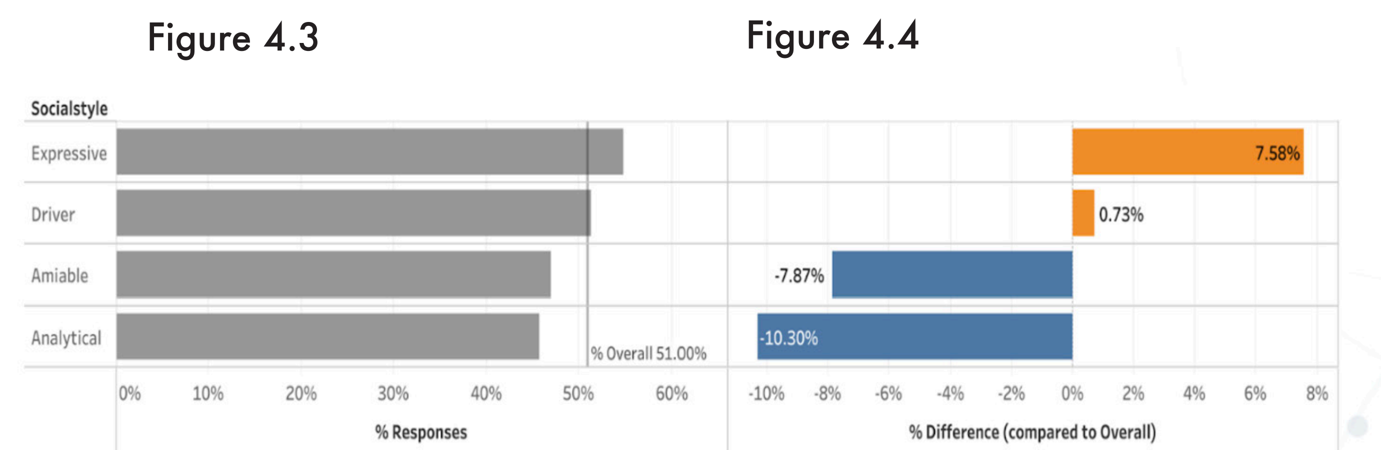


Fig 4.3: The bar chart on the left shows the percentage of prospects that booked a tour segmented by Social Style.

Fig 4.4: The bar chart on the right highlights how much more/less likely each Social Style is to book a tour compared to overall. For example, we see that Expressives are 7.58% more likely to book a tour.

and ultimately boost enrollment exist for schools that can subtly adapt processes to serve the diverse needs of prospects across Social Styles.

So, How do you Know What Social Style a Prospect is?

Most experienced Admissions Advisors have practice reading an individual and reacting in real-time to the energy and personal communication style of that person. But that type of assessment takes time, a resource in high demand these days, especially in the often all too short window an Admissions Advisor has to connect with an interested prospect. It can also be a challenge to pick up cues from an individual over the phone or even on video, where you do not have the benefit of complete body language and the full array of nonverbal cues.

Enrollment Resources' innovative EDU inbound lead capture platform, *Virtual Adviser*, includes the *Lead Capture Quiz*, the lead generation and qualification tool proven to boost overall leads, increase contact rates and aid enrollment. Every lead that comes in through the *Lead Capture Quiz* includes the opportunity for the prospect to take the Social Style assessment and provide that valuable insight at the first point of contact before a school representative ever reaches out. Create more meaningful connections with your prospects when you are armed with the insight to communicate with them in the way they will most appreciate.

About the Research: "The Hidden Motivations of Prospective Students" is an in-depth research paper published by Enrollment Resources in 2022. The full paper is available at www.enrollmentresources.com/motivations.

Shane Sparks is a marketing and communications specialist with more than 25 years of experience and co-founded the company in 2003. He has led service delivery, and product development, including Virtual Adviser – Enrollment Resources' flagship lead capture SaaS solution – and now serves as President and CEO. He is passionate about helping schools grow enrollment in the most cost-effective way possible. Practical and results-oriented, Shane and the team at Enrollment Resources are focused on uncovering insights that make a meaningful difference in student recruitment.

About Enrollment Resources: Enrollment Resources is a leading innovator in the Career Education Sector dedicated to helping schools prosper and are the creators of Virtual Adviser, the powerful lead capture platform developed specifically for EDU. Founded in 2003, Enrollment Resources helps schools to increase enrollment through empowerment and access to the best practices in marketing and admissions.

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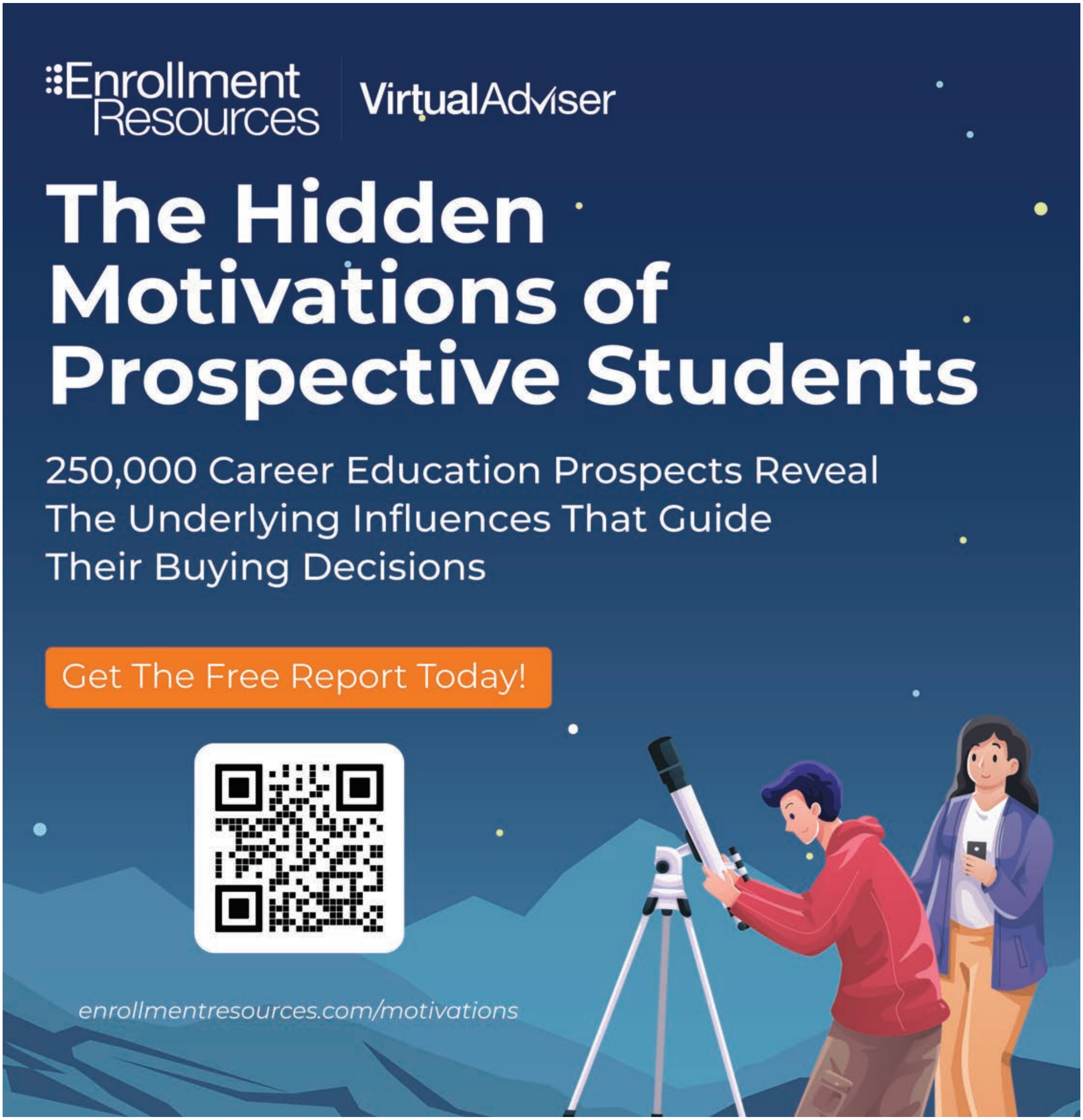
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EXPECTATIONS EXCEEDED

Hire Superstar Admissions Advisors Using Custom-Tailored Pre-Employment Tests

By Michael Mercer, Ph.D., Mercer Systems, Inc.

During presentations, I always ask this question to the audience: What is the fastest, easiest and cheapest way to have productive, dependable employees?

Responses from the audience always suggest answers like pay well, train managers, have nice work conditions and buy the latest technology. Unfortunately, those responses will not help you hire a "superstar" employee.

The correct answer is to hire applicants who are productive, dependable people!

An enormous problem exists. Most managers do not have the knowledge to predict which applicants consistently and scientifically will become productive, dependable Admissions Advisors.

Fortunately, there is a readily customizable and scientific way to help hire superstar employees, which leads to *both* low turnover *and* high productivity.

Three Methods to Predict Applicant on the Job Success

Postsecondary career education institutions often use three methods when hiring employees:

1. Interviews
2. Reference checks
3. Tests

An important question to ask is: "How well does each method predict actual job success?" Unfortunately, the two commonly used methods, interviews and reference checks, to assess job applicants have been proven by research to be lousy, imprecise methods to evaluate applicants. Specifically, research shows that:

- Interviews predict actual job performance as well as flipping a coin.
- Reference checks predict actual job performance as well as flipping a coin while rubbing a rabbit's foot.

Yikes! Two of the most common applicant assessment methods are proven to be horrible at predicting actual job performance. Fortunately, research also found two applicant assessment methods proven terrific at predicting success on the job:

- Mental abilities (brainpower) tests do superbly at predicting on-the-job success.
- Behavior/personality tests do very well at predicting employee performance.

It is important to use pre-employment tests researched and validated for testing job applicants. Never use 'assessment' questionnaires that are meant for training or team building; these are not specifically for pre-employment testing of job applicants. For postsecondary proprietary career institutions clients, I recommend three steps.

1. Test you superstar Admissions Advisor.
2. Statistically find specific scores of your organization's superstar. These are the "benchmark" test scores.
3. Administer the two tests - mental abilities and behavior/personality - to applicants and compare each applicant's test scores to the benchmarks.

When the school tests applicants – using the benchmark test scores of its superstar Admissions Advisors – it focuses on finding applicants whose test scores are the same or remarkably close to the benchmark test scores of its superstar Admissions Advisor. Using research-founded benchmark test scores of its superstar Admissions Advisors will result in applicants who are like its highly productive, low-turnover superstar Admissions Advisor.

Customizing Tests for Your Institution's Jobs

Custom-tailoring behavior and mental abilities tests – to help you *scientifically* see if an applicant has qualities like your superstar Admissions Advisor – can be quick when you use scientifically validated pre-employment tests to do your custom-tailored research. In fact, test customizing can be completed in one day, and testing applicants can start the next day. For others, the customizing can take one or two weeks. Customizing is done via a "Benchmarking Study" using these steps:

Step 1: List jobs for which you want customized tests, such as Admissions Advisor jobs (or other jobs, e.g., DoA, instructor, admin employee, etc.).

Step 2: List your superstar (highly productive and low turnover) employees in this job.

Step 3: Test your superstar employees using carefully validated mental abilities tests and behavior/personality tests.

Step 4: Identify the typical test scores received by your superstar employees. These are the benchmark test scores.

The obvious goal is to compare each applicant's test scores scientifically and objectively versus your custom-tailored benchmark test scores for the specific job. Then, you start testing applicants. You should seriously consider applicants who *both*:

- Score the same or close to your benchmark scores.
- Impress you in interviews, references and other prediction methods.

Example: Behavior Forecaster Page of an Applicant for Admissions Advisor Job

On the Abilities & Behavior Forecaster™ page, you can see the test scores of an applicant – *Terry Terrific* – for an Admissions Advisor job at a proprietary career education institution. The applicant took the Behavior Forecaster™ Test and the Abilities Forecaster™ Tests.

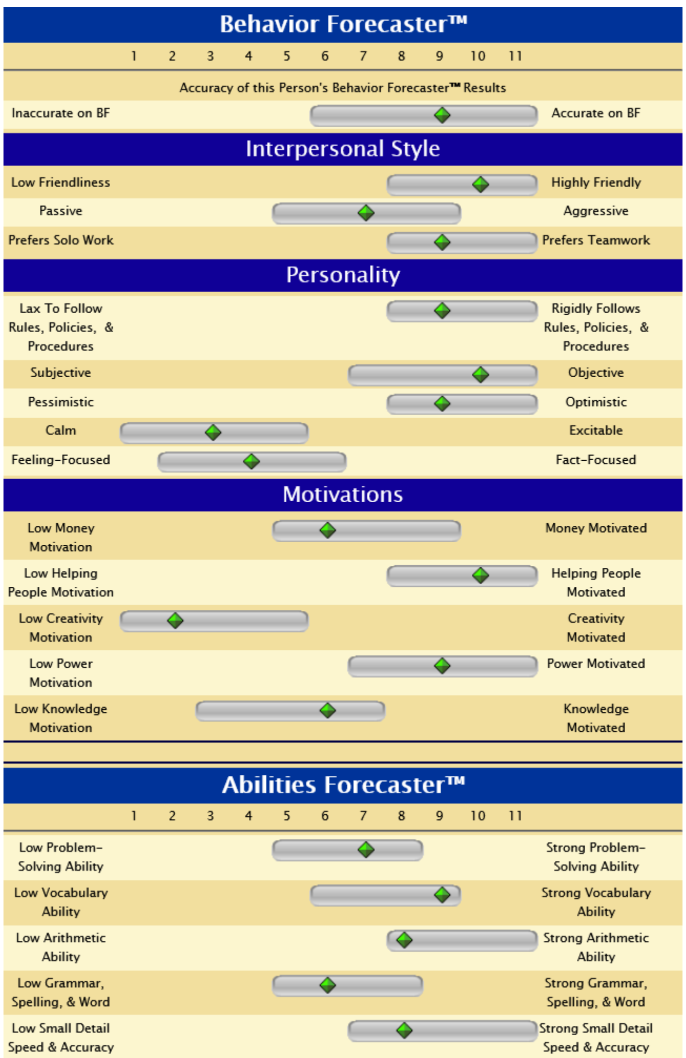
These are pre-employment tests created through four years of test-development research.

On this behavior forecaster page, it is quick and easy to see Terry Terrific's scores (shown by *green diamonds*) are the same as the benchmark scores of this school's superstar Admissions Advisor (shown by *shaded tubes/ brackets*).

Description of how to read the Abilities & Behavior Forecaster™ page:

- **Diamonds** = Scores of this applicant.
- **Shaded Tubes** = Benchmark test scores of this school's superstar employee.
- **Good Scores** = Inside the shaded tubes.

Example: Abilities & Behavior Forecaster™ Page of Applicant Who Scored the Same as the Benchmark Superstar Admission's Advisor of a Career Education Institution



This is a great applicant because they got *all good scores* (the diamond is *inside* the shaded benchmark tubes/ brackets). This career education company can scientifically and confidently consider hiring this applicant because this applicant got the *same* scores as this organization's custom-tailored benchmark test scores of its highly productive, low-turnover superstar Admissions Advisor.

Make Wise Hiring Decisions

You vastly increase your potential to hire highly productive, low-turnover superstar Admissions Advisors when you hire applicants who do well on *all* prediction methods, including

- Behavior/personality test scores
- Mental abilities test scores
- Interviews
- Reference checks

Remember: Most interviewers and reference checks make inaccurate or incorrect predictions of an applicant's actual job success or failure. In contrast, pre-employment tests using your organization's custom-tailored benchmark test scores give you scientific, objective assessments of each applicant against your institution's most productive superstar Admissions Advisor.

Michael Mercer, Ph.D., is a speaker, business psychologist, and author of six books, including Hire the Best & Avoid the Rest™. Visit www.MercerSystems.com for more information. Dr. Mercer is the creator and researcher of three pre-employment tests, the Abilities, Behavior & Dependability Forecaster™ Tests. Career education companies use his Forecaster™ Tests in their customized + scientific method to hire "Superstars." Dr. Mercer served 16 years as a member of the Board of Directors of a career education company. FREE GIFT = You can try a Forecaster™ Test (and get scores and a report) or subscribe for free to "Dr. Mercer's Hire the Best Newsletter" by contacting Dr. Mercer.

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SAVE THE DATES

Regulatory Update

Potential Challenges to Signatory Requirements for a Program Participation Agreement

By Farnaz Farkish Thompson, Partner, and Maricris Prendingue, Associate, McGuireWoods LLP

The U.S. Department of Education's (Department's) Federal Student Aid Office (FSA) currently requires corporate owners, investors and controlling parties of private institutions of higher education to assume joint and several liability "for the performance by the institution of its obligations" under a Program Participation Agreement (PPA) in the circumstances outlined in its March 23, 2022, Electronic Announcement (EA), (General-22-16) Updated Program Participåation Agreement Signature Requirements for Entities Exercising Substantial Control Over Non-Public Institutions of Higher Education. FSA's authority to promulgate such signatory requirements through an EA is questionable, and the owners of a private institution have grounds to challenge the signatory requirements.

When will FSA require an entity other than the institution to sign a PPA?

To receive federal financial student aid under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (Title IV), a participating school must enter into a PPA.[1] A PPA outlines the terms by which the school must abide or risk termination of funding from FSA.

As acknowledged in the EA, FSA has required that a PPA need only be signed by an authorized representative of the school itself. With the relatively new policy, however, FSA may require a signature from any entity that has "or could have a direct or indirect effect on the institution's administrative capability or financial responsibility." FSA already has been selectively requiring corporate owners of certain proprietary colleges and universities to endorse an appendix to a PPA, including a provisional program participation agreement (PPPA) or temporary provisional program participation agreement (TPPPA). The appendix states that the "owners of the institution agree to be jointly and severally liable for the performance by the institution of its obligations under this agreement," meaning the PPA.

FSA announced that it will use a rebuttable presumption to assume that entities have a direct or indirect effect on a school if they:

- Are the sole member of, or hold a 100 percent direct or indirect equity or voting interest in, the institution;
- Hold less than a 100 percent interest but otherwise exercise (directly or indirectly) substantial control over the institution, ("Substantial control is generally presumed to be any direct or indirect equity, membership, or voting interest of 50 percent or more in the institution, including in combination with other interest holders, whether by affiliation, contract, proxy or other arrangement."); or
- Provide the audited financial statements or other financial submissions on behalf of the institution.

If FSA requires an entity to sign a PPA, that entity's signature will be a necessary condition of FSA's approval or continuance of the institution's participation in Title IV programs. To that end, FSA essentially creates a second rebuttable presumption that an entity will be required to sign a PPA in the following situations:

- If the institution has had a financial responsibility composite score below 1.5 since its last certification (initial or recertification);

1. *See* 34 C.F.R. § 668.14.

- If the institution is on provisional certification status;
- If the institution is on HCM2;
- If the institution goes through a change of ownership;
- If the Department has approved a significant number of borrower defense or false certification claims for the institution, or if there are a substantial number of these types of claims under review that, if approved, would result in the potential for significant liability;
- If the Department has recently identified systemic or significant audit or program review findings, or has unpaid liabilities resulting from an audit or program review; or
- If the institution or any of its principals or interest holders has consented to or has a judgment of fraud or misrepresentation entered against it by a federal or state court, foreign tribunal or arbitration body.

Like the first rebuttable presumption, the second is also non-exhaustive and entities otherwise not covered by a clearly delineated presumption could still be required to sign a PPA.

FSA will not require a signature by an affected entity in all circumstances. Rather, when the school is up for its next recertification, FSA will make a determination as to whether the entity must still be required to be a co-signer with the school. Further, the new guidance provides that the Secretary of Education may exercise discretion as to whether an alternative to a signature is available, such as a letter of credit.

FSA is applying the EA to PPAs issued on or after March 23, 2022, and which concern ownership, reinstatements and initial certification. The EA also applies to PPAs issued on or after July 1, 2022, and which concern recertification. FSA also may apply the guidance to PPAs for schools that have already been informed of the new signature requirement.

What grounds does an entity have to challenge the signatory requirements in the EA?

FSA cannot enforce the signatory requirements in the EA because FSA did not go through negotiated rulemaking to promulgate such requirements. FSA announced signatory requirements for owners of institutions that were never promulgated through negotiated rulemaking under Title IV, 20 U.S.C. § 1098a(b)(1). Ironically, nine days before issuing the EA, the Department conducted negotiations as part of its rulemaking process to amend its current regulations concerning change in ownership March 14 through 18, 2022.[2] The Department may have easily included its new signatory requirements for ownership entities to assume joint and several liability for an institution in specific circumstances as part of its negotiated rulemaking but chose not to do so.[3]

Noticeably missing from the EA is the Department's typical disclaimer that the document is only a guidance document that does not have the force and effect of law and is not meant to bind the public or regulated entities in any way.[4] This omission may have been intentional because FSA has implemented its March 23, 2022, EA as though it has the force and effect of law and as though it is binding on regulated entities.

The EA purports to provide a rebuttable presumption, yet FSA has not allowed any institution to rebut the presumption, confirming the EA is a legislative rule and not mere guidance. Although FSA claims institutions may rebut the presumption that an entity has or could have a direct or indirect effect on the institution's administrative capability or financial responsibility, FSA has yet to allow any institution to rebut the presumption. If a signatory requirement to assume joint and several liability cannot truly be rebutted, such a requirement is indeed a regulation, irrespective of its characterization. The Department rescinded the 2019 partial relief methodology for borrower defense to repayment claims that similarly imposed a rebuttable presumption to resolve the class action lawsuit, Pratt v. Cardona, because the students argued that FSA did not truly give them an opportunity to rebut the presumption, and the same rationale should compel the Department to rescind its EA.[5]

FSA's signatory requirements in the EA may violate the

2. Negotiated Rulemaking Committee, 86 Fed. Reg. 69607 (Dec. 8, 2021) (to be codified at 34 C.F.R. Chapt. VI), https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-12-08/pdf/2021-26571.pdf; U.S. Dep't of Educ., Negotiated Rulemaking for Higher Education 2021-22, https://www2.ed.gov/policy/highered/reg/hearulemaking/2021/index.html?src=rn (last visited Feb. 13, 2023).

3. Change in Ownership and Change in Control, 87 Fed. Reg. 65426 (Oct. 28, 2022) (to be codified at 34 C.F.R. pt. 690), https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2022-10-28/pdf/2022-23078.pdf.

4. *Compare, e.g.*, U.S. Dep't of Educ., Office for Civil Rights, Questions and Answers on the Title IX Regulations on Sexual Harassment (July 2021) ("This Q&A resource does not have the force and effect of law and is not meant to bind the public or regulated entities in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding OCR's interpretation of existing legally binding statutory and regulatory requirements. As always, OCR's enforcement of Title IX stems from Title IX and its implementing regulations, not this or other guidance documents."), *with* EA, GENERAL-22-16.

5. U.S. Dep't of Educ., Federal Student Aid, Electronic Announcement, GEN-21-51, Rescission of Borrower Defense Partial Relief Methodology (Aug. 24, 2021), https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/library/electronic-announcements/2021-08-24/rescission-borrower-defense-partial-relief-methodology-ea-id-general-21-51.

Major Questions Doctrine. FSA's requirements for owners to assume joint and several liability for the private institution's actions in specific circumstances violates the Major Questions Doctrine. Title IV does not grant the Department the power to require owners of private institutions to provide financial guarantees or assume personal liability unless certain specific conditions are satisfied,[6] and those conditions are not part of the EA. At least one federal district court determined that the specific conditions for financial guarantees or personal liability apply to individuals and not to the owner entities,[7] and FSA has clearly stated in its EA that "[b]y co-signing the PPA, the entities (but not the individuals who sign as authorized representatives of the entities) agree to assume liability for financial losses to the federal government related to the institution's administration of Title IV programs."

FSA cannot retroactively apply the requirement for owner entities to assume joint and several liability to change in ownership applications that were pending before the EA was published. If a change in ownership application was submitted before FSA's March 23, 2022, EA, then FSA would be retroactively applying the requirements in the EA to owner entities that could not have been aware of the signatory requirements when taking ownership. An entity may argue that when it purchased the institution, FSA required only the institution to execute a PPA. The owner entities could not have foreseen that FSA would delay the change in ownership application, promulgate a requirement to assume joint and several liability in a guidance document and enforce this requirement as though the requirement was properly promulgated through negotiated rulemaking. The retroactive application of FSA's guidance documents to a change in ownership application that has been pending before the EA may violate the Administrative Procedure Act.

What are potential risks that owners and investors now face because of the announcement?

By requiring owner entities to sign the PPA, FSA may take direct administrative action against the owner entities for the school's liabilities, and other third parties may sue the corporate owners under various laws such as the federal False Claims Act, unfair and deceptive acts and practices statutes, or other consumer protection laws. Additionally, some corporate owners and investors, including private equity firms, publicly traded corporations, limited liability companies and limited partnerships, may risk violating U.S. securities laws, the U.S. Securities Exchange Act of 1934, the U.S. Investment Advisers Act of 1940, or their governing documents if they sign a PPA, PPPA or TPPA.

In view of the murky state of the PPA signature requirement, combined with the considerable risks that both enforcement and non-compliance raise, proprietary schools and their corporate owners would be wise to seek counsel before entering into a PPA, PPPA or TPPPA that holds a corporate entity or an individual jointly and severally liable and to potentially challenge any such signatory requirement.

The information provided in this article does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice.

Farnaz Farkish Thompson is the Chair of the Education Industry Team and Partner at McGuireWoods LLP. Prior to joining McGuireWoods LLP, Farnaz served as the Deputy General Counsel for Postsecondary Education at the U.S. Department of Education where she was involved in the negotiated rulemaking efforts and co-authored the 2019 borrower defense to repayment regulations. She also served as an in-house counsel at the University of Virginia and has represented many institutions of higher education in litigation and investigations.

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6. 20 U.S.C. § 1099c(e)(4).

7. *Florida Coastal Sch. of Law, Inc. v. Cardona*, Case No. 3:21-cv-721, 2021 WL 3493311, at *17 (M.D. Fla. Aug. 9, 2021) (stating "the Department's discretion to require the assumption of personal liability from an individual is limited to those circumstances where it is necessary to protect the financial interest of the United States") (emphases in original).


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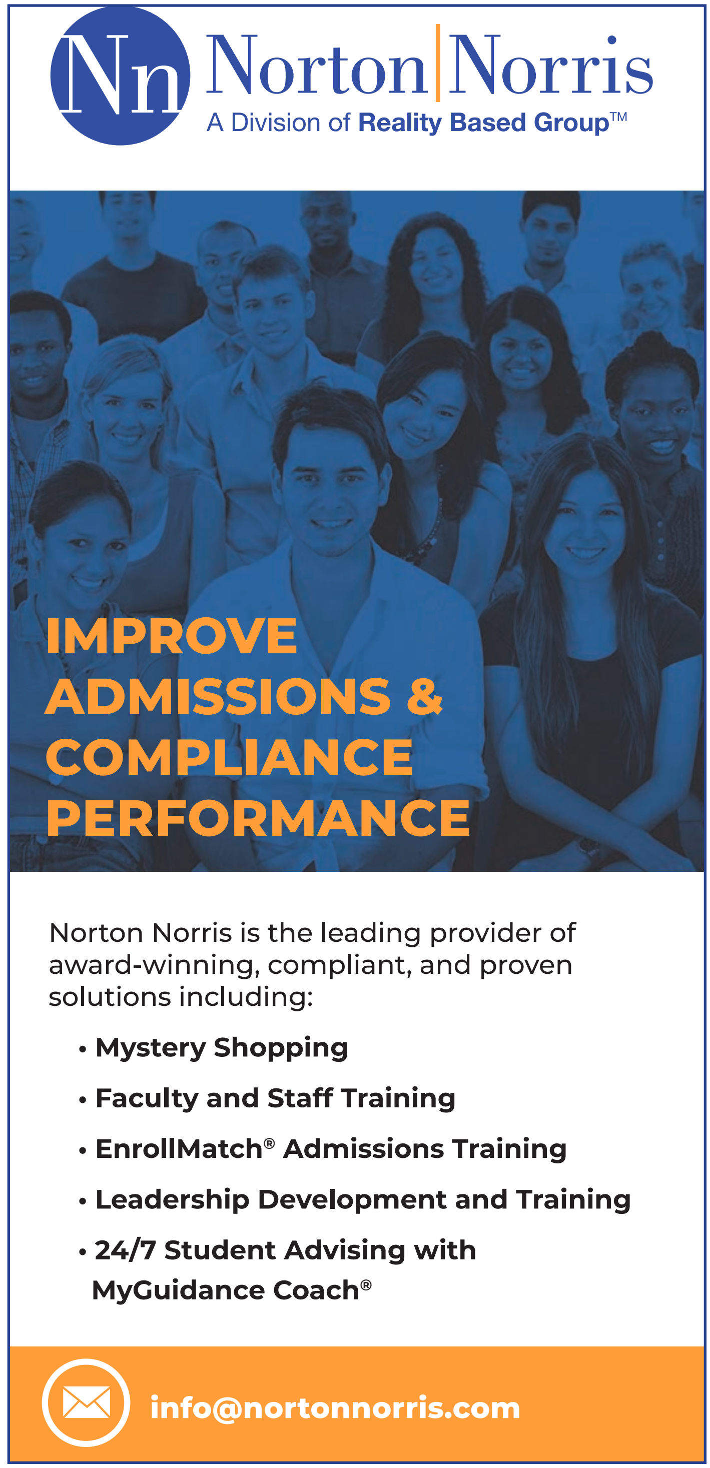
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