

Before we get started....

If you could take any class at your college, what would it be?-Answer in the chat



EAB

Preparing New Graduates for an AI- Driven Workforce

Rethinking Career Readiness in Community Colleges

Strategic Advisory Services

Meet Your Presenters



Rufus Glasper, PhD
*President &
CEO, League for
Innovation in the
Community College*



Tara Zirkel, Ed.D.
*Director,
Strategic Research*

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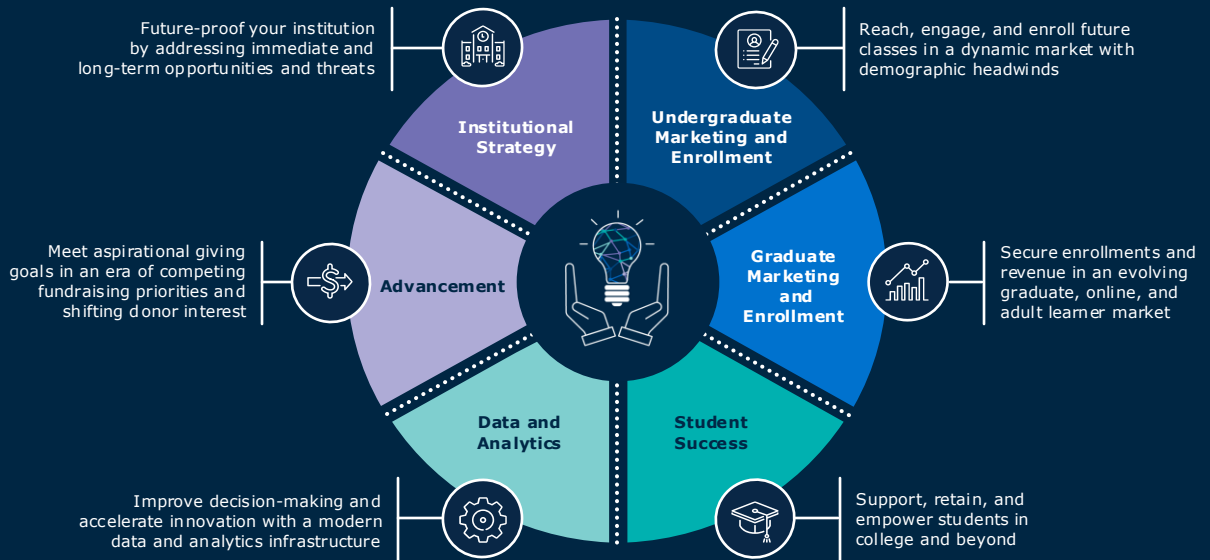


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95%+ of our partners return to us year after year because of results we achieve, together.

League for Innovation in the Community College



Cultivating Innovation in Community Colleges

- Leadership & Organizational Development
- Learning & Teaching
- Student Services
- Workforce Preparation & Development

www.league.org

A Generation Shaped by Socially Disruptive Technology



A Contracting Labor Market for New Grads



Quick Poll

How prepared do you think new graduates are to enter an AI enabled workforce?

1. A Generation Shaped by Socially Disruptive Technology

Gen Z:

Born 1997-2012
(13-29 years old in 2026)



Key Observations



Delayed markers of adulthood



Social isolation, particularly among young men



Declining extroversion and conscientiousness



Growing political polarization, which social media exacerbates



Increased reliance on parasocial substitutes (i.e. AI companions)



Economic pessimism driven by rising costs of living

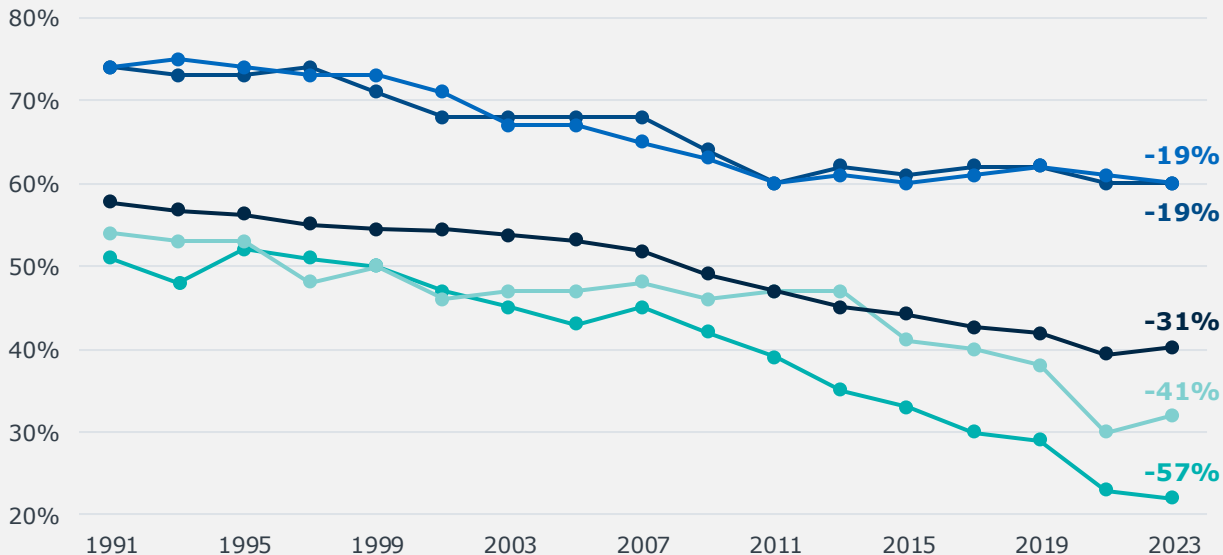


A silver lining—positive early results from K12 phone bans



Same Milestones, Different Timeline

With Adulthood Delayed, Colleges Shoulder Even More of the “Growing Up”



■ Percent of High School Students Who Drank Alcohol in Past 30 Days

■ Percent of High School Students Who Have Had Sexual Intercourse

■ Percent of 18-Year-Olds With a Driver's License

■ Percent of 16- to 24-Year-Olds Participating in the Labor Force

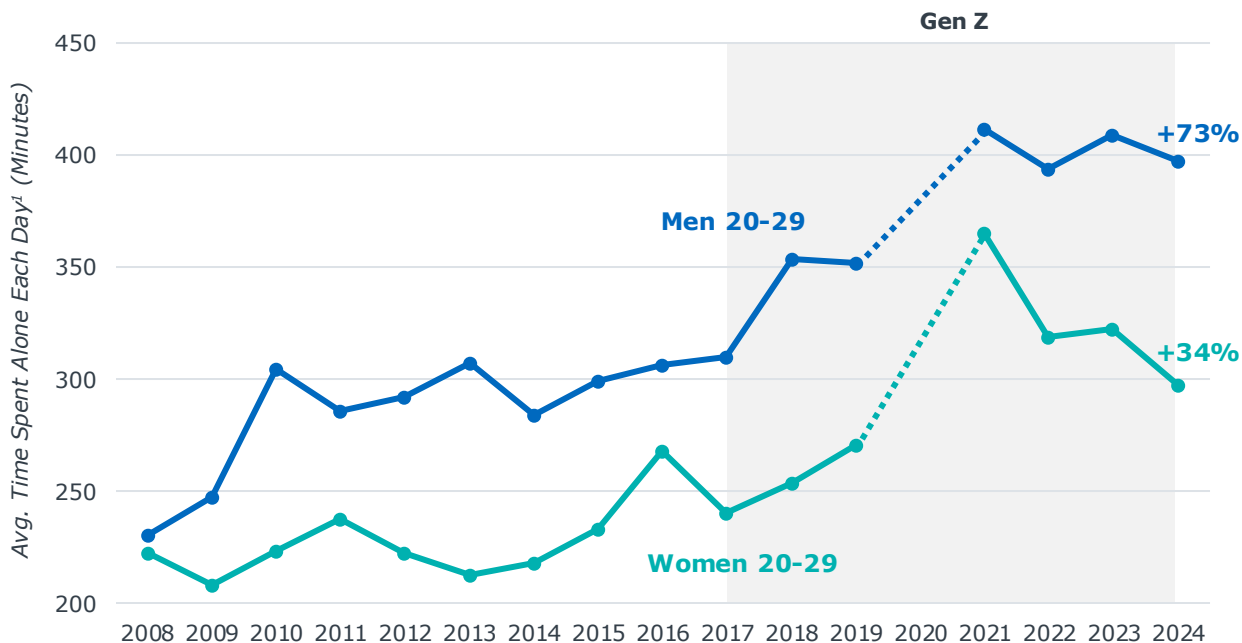
■ Percent of Married Individuals 25- to 34-Year-Old

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, [Labor Force Participation Rates](#); CDC, [Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System](#); Federal Highway Administration, [Highway Statistics](#); IPUMS, [Current Population Survey](#); EAB interviews and analysis.

Hyper-Connected Online, But Socially Isolated



Time Spent Alone Per Day Has Spiked, Especially for Young Men



1) Excludes sleeping, grooming, and personal/private activities.

2) Data collection was suspended in 2020 due to COVID-19.

“I’m Sorry, What? I Was Distracted.”

Everyone’s Attention Span Is Shrinking...

69%

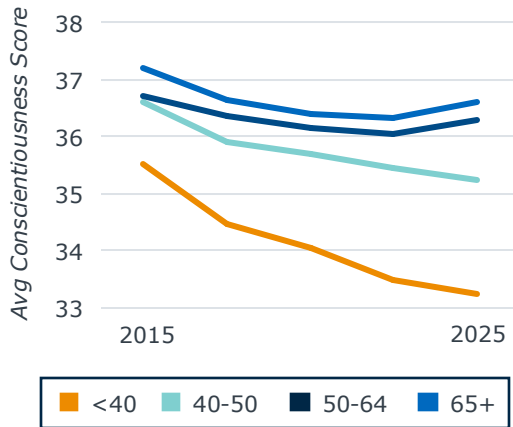
Decline in the average amount of seconds spent focusing on one screen before switching to a different screen (2003-2021)

...Particularly Young People’s

48%

Of Gen Z report their attention span for work is shorter this year than the previous year, compared to 33% of all workers

Young People’s Conscientiousness, Based on Big 5 Personality Test¹



Sample Conscientiousness Items

- Perseveres until the task is finished
- Does things efficiently
- Tends to be disorganized
- Can be somewhat careless

“For most of my career, I assigned around 30 pages of reading per class meeting... Now **students are intimidated by anything over 10 pages** and seem to walk away from readings of as little as 20 pages with no real understanding.”

- Adam Kotsko, North Central College

League Insights

In your talks with college leaders, what traits are they seeing in Gen Z that are different than in the past?

A Generation Shaped by Socially Disruptive Technology



A Contracting Labor Market for New Grads



Quick Poll

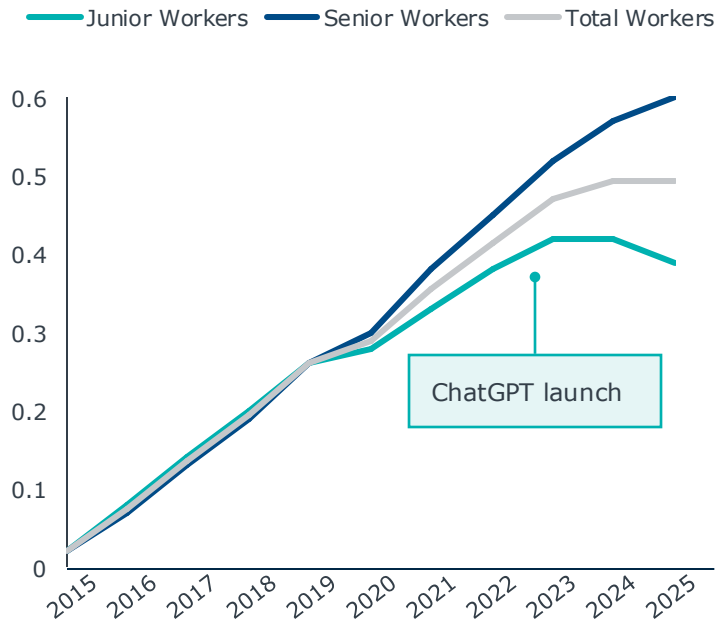
How concerned are you about how AI is changing the job market for new graduates?

No Time to Wait and See



AI's Disruption Already Visible at the Entry Level

Average Number of Total, Junior, and Senior Workers
(Normalized to 0 in January 2015) at 285,000 U.S. Firms¹



-7.7%

Decline in junior headcount
across firms that adopted AI
(Jan 2023 - Jun 2024)

-40%

Decline in junior hires in
wholesale and retail trade per
quarter at firms that adopted AI
(compared to non-adopters)

-20%

Decline in junior hires in
manufacturing per quarter at
firms that adopted AI (compared
to non-adopters)

1) Harvard University researchers' analysis of LinkedIn resumes and job postings data; n=62 million workers across 285,000 U.S. firms.

I'm a Doctor. ChatGPT's Bedside Manner Is Better Than Mine.

A panel of healthcare practitioners rated ChatGPT answers to patient questions as better and more empathetic than doctors in **79%** of cases.



She Is in Love With ChatGPT

A busy 28-year-old woman spent **\$200** per month and endless hours talking to her AI boyfriend for advice and consolation.



What Happens When AI Becomes a Better "Human" Than Humans?

They're Famous. They're Everywhere. They're Fake.

AI influencers like Lil' Miquela and Lu of Magalu have more than **2M** followers. They earn millions of dollars, generating as high as \$73K per post.



A '60s-flavored band blew up on Spotify. They're AI.

The AI-generated band, Velvet Sundown, gained more than **1M** monthly listeners in one month. Their most popular song has 2M streams.

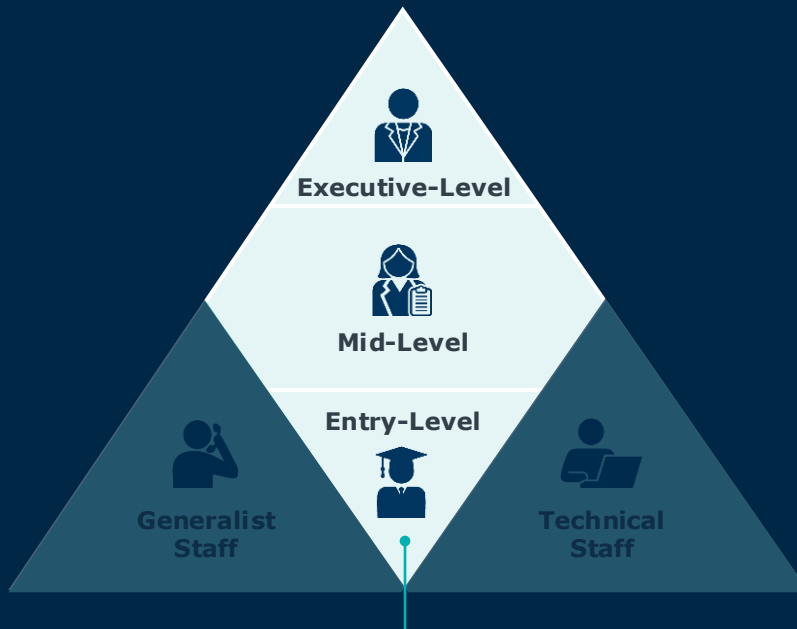


The Old Career Ladder



- Abundant, accessible starter jobs
- Accessible with minimal professional experience or polish
- Progression assumed—time and loyalty yield advancement
- Employers expect to train and socialize junior hires

From Pyramid to Diamond



- Entry points are scarce, tightly gated, and reserved for already-skilled candidates
- Employers demand more polished, experienced hires from day one
- First jobs feel less like “learning roles” and more like immediate proving grounds

How Can We Help?



What Topic Are You Interested In?

I'd like to schedule a call to discuss...



- 1 How **AI can absorb high-bandwidth tasks** so teams have more time to focus on career readiness
- 2 How **data warehousing tools** can help colleges organize graduation, employment, and earnings data in one place
- 3 How technology **can support colleges in defining career readiness milestones** and monitoring student progress

League Insights

How are you seeing AI impact the workforce for new graduates?

What's Does This Mean for 2-Year Program Portfolios? ²²

Programs Cluster at Both Ends of the AI Exposure Spectrum

High AI-Exposed Jobs

Common themes: back-office, communication- and information-heavy, routine, volume-driven

Examples:

- *Operations:* production planners, telephone operators, computer user support specialists
- *Service:* customer service reps, concierges, travel agents

Low AI-Exposed Jobs

Common themes: physical, contextual, safety-critical, regulated, non-scalable

Examples:

- *Healthcare:* phlebotomists, surgical assistants, massage therapists
- *Skilled trades:* automotive glass installers, bridge and lock tenders, truck operators

Current Exposure Doesn't Mean Disappearance—Or Permanence



High-exposure jobs often use AI for task support and assistance, not just for full task replacement

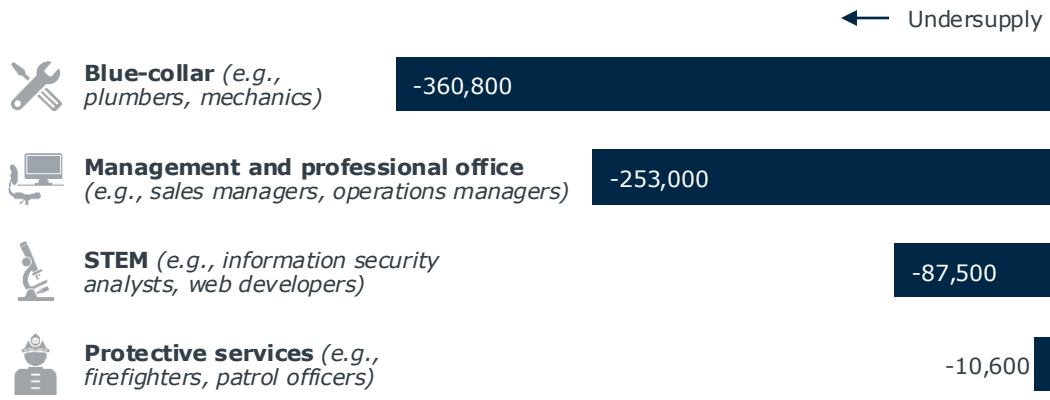


Low-exposure jobs today may face greater exposure in the future as AI becomes embedded in physical systems

Unmet Labor Market Demand Aligned with 2-Year Programs 23

712K Annual Shortage in Middle-Skills Credentials¹ in High-Paying Occupations²

Annual Supply of High-Paying Middle-Skills Credentials by Five Occupational Groups Through 2032



Fastest-Growing High-Pay Roles That Require an Associate's Degree

Bureau of Labor Statistics, Based on 2024 Median Pay (\$75,000 to \$99,999)



Dental hygienists



Diagnostic medical sonographers

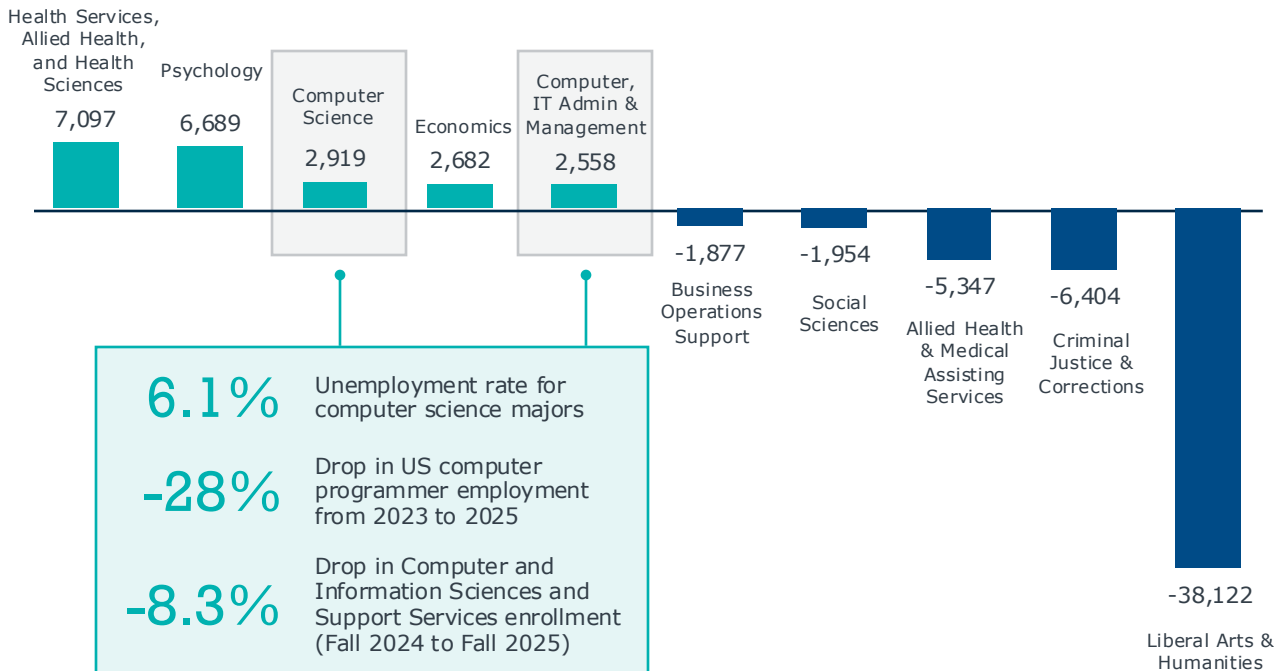


Respiratory therapists

Some Historically “Safe” Majors Under Pressure



Top and Bottom Five Associate’s Programs by Change in Completions, 2018-2024

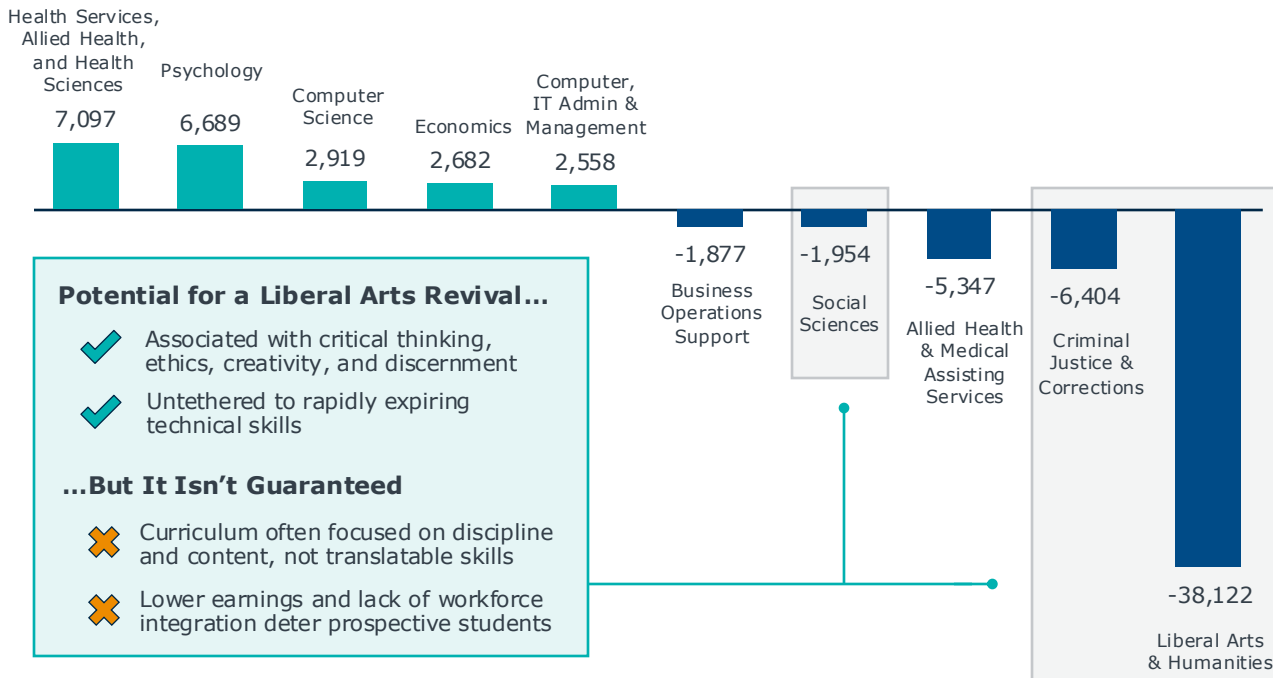


Source: Federal Reserve Bank of New York, [Labor Market Outcomes](#); NSC, [Final Fall Enrollment Trends \(Fall 2025\)](#); NYT, [Goodbye, \\$165,000 Tech Jobs: Student Coders Seek Work at Chipotle](#); The Atlantic, [The Computer Science Bubble Is Bursting](#); The Washington Post, [More than a quarter of computer programming jobs just vanished](#); EAB analysis of IPEDS data.

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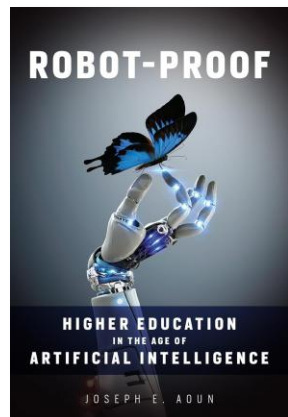


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Towards a “Robot-Proof” Graduate



Years Before AI Took Center Stage, Joseph Aoun Sketched the Playbook



2017

Humanics Curriculum

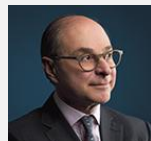
- Integrate tech, data, and human literacies across the curriculum
- Prioritize cultivating literacies and competencies over content delivery
- Increase interdisciplinary, applied, project-based learning in classroom

Experiential Learning

- Connect classroom learning with practical, real-world experiences
- Expand co-ops and internships, recognize co-curriculars as learning
- Provide a secondary transcript to document applied learning

Lifelong Learning Mindset

- Offer reskilling to help grads thrive amid ongoing tech changes
- Support alumni with lifelong access to learning and career services



“Instead of educating college students for jobs that are about to disappear under the rising tide of technology, twenty-first-century universities should liberate them from outdated career models and give them ownership of their own futures.”

A Return to Relationships



Students Are Frustrated With Job Postings... And So Are Employers

61%

Of Gen Z job seekers submit at least 100 applications

11K

Applications per minute on LinkedIn, hundreds of applications per post

43%

Of HR professionals use AI to manage volume of applications

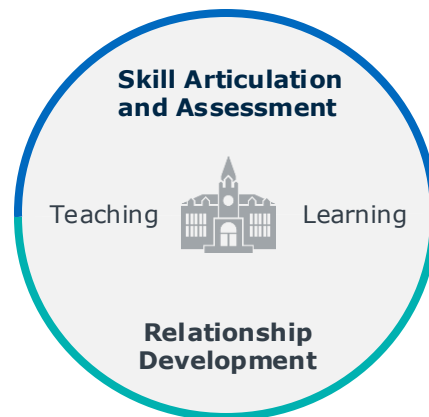
25%

Of job applicants worldwide could be fake by 2028

Networks May Matter More Than Ever

- ✓ Referred applicants have a **50%** chance of advancing past resume review (compared to 12% for non-referrals)
- ✓ Employers are investing more in referral programs to boost verified candidates
- ✓ Recruiters are posting fewer jobs publicly to avoid application overload, fake profiles
- ✓ Smaller, local firms may hire junior talent at higher rates moving forward

Higher Ed's Pivotal Roles



Source: Ashby, [Are referred candidates more likely to get hired?](#); Forbes, [Networking- It's Not What You Think](#); NYT, [Employers are Buried in AI-Generated Resumes](#); RippleMatch, [Navigating Next-Gen Talent](#); SHRM, [Uncertain Economy Adds to Recruitment Challenges](#); WSJ, [Landing a Job is All About Who You Know \(Again\)](#); EAB interviews and analysis.

WSU Tech Partners On FutureReady Centers



Multi stakeholder approach to dual enrollment pathways

The **FutureReady Centers** are a Wichita Public Schools and WSU Tech partnership that provide students with hands-on training, learning opportunities, and mentoring from industry experts while still attending their base high schools.

Students are enrolled in two courses and attend every other day on an A/B schedule.

- Healthcare and Manufacturing
- 100% Free-- No Additional Cost
- Starts every Fall and Spring semester
- Open to WPS juniors and seniors
- Transportation available
- No books required
- Students earn college credit
- Guaranteed work-based learning internship

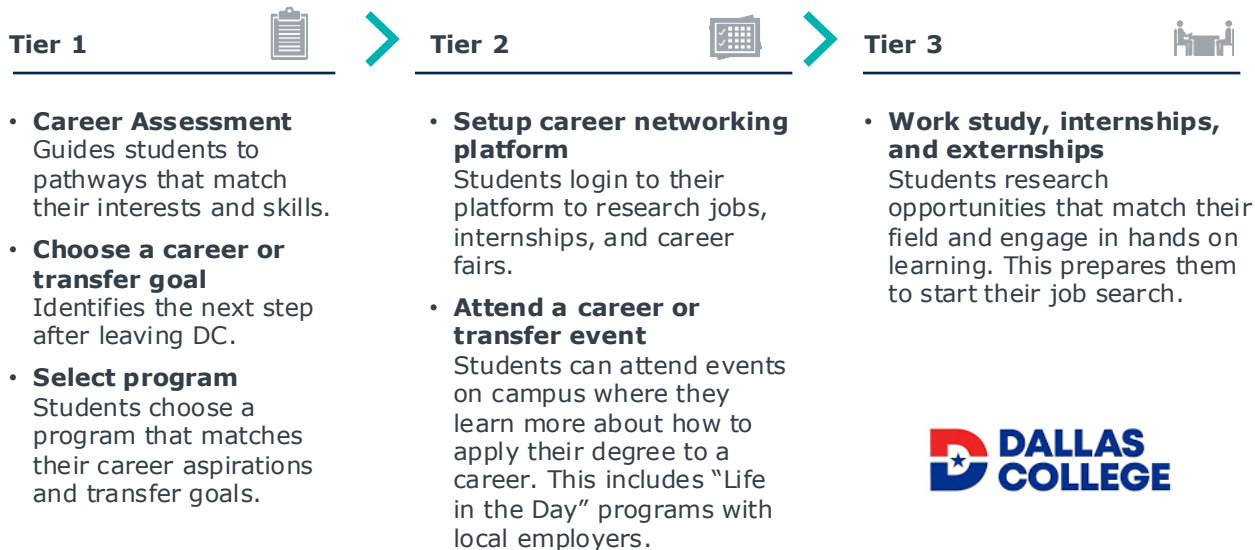


Part of Wichita Public Schools' **Every Student Future Ready** Strategic Plan

Dallas College's Career Readiness Journey



Milestones created in Navigate360 for all FTIC students



How are students guided on their career readiness journey?

After census, all FTIC students are assigned to a career and transfer counselor who prompts them to complete career readiness milestones in Navigate360. Counselors can message students, create campaigns, and prompt appointments all from Navigate360.

League Insights

What are promising practices to prepare students for an AI enabled workforce?

What Thriving Schools Will Do



Hardwire AI Literacy

Embed AI literacy across programs as a credential requirement, rather than an optional add-on



Guarantee Work Experiences

Partner with local employers to embed apprenticeships, internships, and applied learning in every pathway



Elevate Relational Intelligence

Make perspective-taking, trust-building, and conflict navigation core learning outcomes, not just soft skills



Reimagine Career Services

Transition from a coaching center to a talent broker that actively connects students with employers



(Re)design for a Dual-Edge

Ensure all programs equip students with technical fluency and human differentiation



Scaffold Network-Building

Incentivize, enable, and track professional networking with the same intentionality as degree progress



Incentivize Faculty Innovation

Recognize and reward faculty who co-design with employers and integrate AI/technology into instruction



Enable Lifelong Learning

Create flexible on-/off-ramps through stackable credentials to allow students to pause, return, and regularly upskill

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Related Resources For You



1

Send me a copy of **today's slide presentation**



2

Read our insight paper on **building career readiness** at community colleges



3

Read our latest insight paper ***The Future of College Graduates in the AI Workforce***



The Future of College Graduates in the AI Workforce

Four Plausible Scenarios to Inform Strategic Planning and Student Success

4

Learn more about The League's upcoming events





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