New Nanodegree Certifications and Additional Workforce Development Funding at Community Colleges

There are two clear trends emerging at community colleges over the past few years in an effort to better support local employers and better prepare students for the next step of their journey: new nanodegree certifications and additional workforce development funding.

The additional funding coming from local employers and the state government to support workforce development is tied to performance. Virginia recently announced it would allocate $5M to transform workforce programs offered through the community college system. JPMorgan Chase announced $350M in funding for community colleges with $125M allocated to improve collaboration and communication between employers and educators. And just last month the West Virginia House of Delegates passed a "Free Community College Bill" providing free college tuition for qualifying students at the state's technical colleges.

Despite this news, in recent conversations with Director-level individuals at more than 50 community colleges over the past 90 days, it's also clear that there is still a lack of technology and resource funding in the career centers across the community college space. As part of our end of year "Career Center Challenges Survey" with over 200 respondents, 54% reported that there is not enough time, money, people or resources available to them. And 38% reported challenges with reporting and data analytics.

It's clear the industry is changing. As the labor market evolves, so are schools. In order to teach students the unique skills needed for new job requirements – which are increasingly tech-related – community colleges around the country are creating new hyper-specific learning programs. These new nanodegree certifications have become an attractive alternative for some job-seekers compared traditional four-year degrees. And in the U.S., where the average job length is 4.6 years and salaries for tech jobs can reach as high as $200,000 per year for AI software engineers, more and more Americans are going back to school to switch careers.

Does your college have the right technology in place to properly prepare and connect these students to jobs? Can you prove the ROI of the education you provide? Do you believe there is an opportunity to better serve your students, your employers, and your career center staff? GradLeaders provides robust-yet-easy-to-use technology that's proven to create more meaningful connections between students to employers. I'd love to do an analysis of your career center's processes and needs and make recommendations that could impact your:

- Students' job interview preparedness
- Employers' experience with your college and satisfaction with hires
- Career center's job placement outcomes reporting
- Student and employer engagement with your career center

Feel free to reach out to me at bdonnelly@gradleaders.com to initiate a conversation.

Sources:
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