

Career Corner

Higher Education Evolves To Meet Changing Workforce Needs

(NAPSA)—In an economy where skilled professionals are still in demand, many Americans are finding that a postsecondary education is a necessary requirement to jump-start a career and boost income potential.

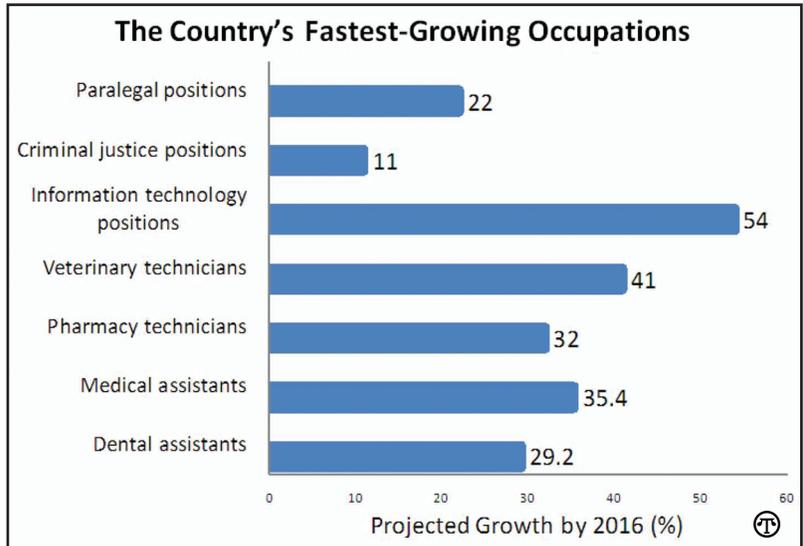
According to the National Center for Education Statistics, individuals who hold an associate degree have an 18 percent higher median annual earning than those with a high school diploma or equivalent.

But, with only approximately 16 percent of students enrolled in postsecondary education falling between the ages of 18 and 22 and attending full-time, experts say the traditional approach of many four-year institutions doesn't work for everyone. Whether students are looking for quick entry into the workforce or simply want to change career paths without dedicating four years to a traditional university, many individuals are now turning to diploma or associate degree programs for answers.

Designed to prepare students to enter the workforce quickly, the programs are offered in a variety of high-demand fields. For instance, Kaplan Higher Education, a leading provider of market-funded postsecondary education, offers diploma and associate degree programs in the business, health care, information technology, nursing, trade and paralegal fields. Many can be completed in less than 18 months and aim to equip students with the job skills necessary for an entry-level position in their field of study. Try these tips for choosing a program:

Meet Employer Needs

According to Department of Labor data, 90 percent of the fastest-growing jobs require some



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form of postsecondary education. Look for programs that are responsive to community and national employment needs by focusing their diploma and associate degree programs in some of the country's fastest-growing occupations, as reported by the U.S. Department of Labor.

Stay Career Focused

Look for programs focused on helping students acquire the skills necessary to be successful in the working environment. Kaplan Higher Education works with local employers to ensure curriculum is current with the demands of related fields. Advisory boards made of local employers give campus staff the opportunity to meet regularly and discuss the demands of today's job market, and the

career-focused programs also offer labs designed to simulate the work environment. Many of its diploma and associate degree programs also include an externship, requiring students to receive on-the-job training to graduate.

Get Support

Flexibility can be an important ingredient for success when providing practical career training to busy adults. Look for programs that offer day and night classes, monthly program start dates and a year-round calendar.

Additionally, market-funded postsecondary education institutions frequently provide support services to help students succeed. They can include financial aid guidance, academic advising, study skills workshops, time management skills building and career services. By catering to the needs of each specific student, these nontraditional institutions help students achieve their career and life goals.

For more information, visit www.portal.kaplan.edu.