



Path to Career Success Doesn't Necessarily Lead to a University

By Laura Byrnes, APR, CPRC



Show of hands, how many of you still think of a four-year college degree when you think of higher education?

If that sounds about right, then allow me to say for the umpteenth gazillion time, it's time to put hire education in higher education.

We've been repeating this for years, and maybe you're sick of hearing it. But this summer, Georgetown University's McCourt School of Public Policy's Center on Education and the Workforce came out with a new study that confirms that a bachelor's degree isn't the only path to career success.

I first noticed the study in a Chicago Tribune story that concludes "... the four-year degree doesn't guarantee top pay ... 28 percent of people who get associate degrees from community colleges end up with better jobs than those with bachelor's degrees."

I'm not saying there is anything wrong with going to one of our fine universities, or starting at a college and transferring to a four-year institution, if that's where your career path leads you.

But it isn't the only path to success.

According to the study, while the national decline in the manufacturing economy eliminated many good jobs for high school graduates, there are still 30 million good jobs in the U.S. that pay

well without a BA. These good jobs have median earning of \$55,000 and are changing from traditional blue-collar industries to skilled-service industries.

I don't like to say, "I told you so," but, well ... I told you so.

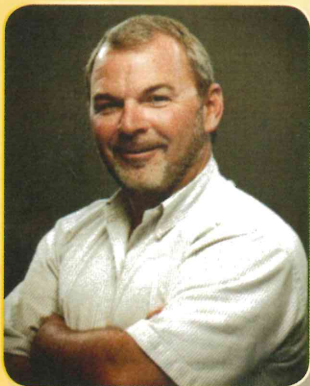
Let's start with the numbers. Florida jobs forecasted for 2018 by education level suggest that 5.6 million or 59 percent of all projected jobs require postsecondary credentials. Of those, more than half – 3.06 million or 54.6 percent – require some college, certificate or associate's degree, while 2.54 million or 45 percent require a four-year or graduate degree.

Florida ranks third behind California and Texas in providing the largest number of good jobs for workers without a BA, the study found.

Comparing 2018 and 2008, we are seeing projected growth statewide in new jobs and jobs created through attrition at all education levels, which is both a good thing and expected/hoped for as we continue to recover from the recession. But we are specifically seeing the greatest growth among those requiring postsecondary training.

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