



BOOSTING GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT

Admissions or Career Services?

By Vincent Scaramuzzo

Now that Gainful Employment mandates require that students get jobs, not just graduate—and have to make enough money to pay their student loans off—one would expect career service professionals to become equal players with admissions specialists. I know I thought so. The recruiters in my office were convinced. And other search firm owners with whom I spoke thought things might trend in this direction. So far, we have all been wrong!



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In my office, we have noticed no change in the demand for career service professionals from previous years. In fact, we have worked on fewer career service searches this year than last. One would think there would be some premium for individuals who could get students placed in well-paying jobs. So why no spike in demand?

I believe schools have decided that career services was not the problem, instead a symptom of a much bigger issue—whom schools were enrolling. Rather than change their career service departments, many schools have chosen to completely change the way they enroll students ... and what type of students. Some education corporations took drastic measures by changing policies overnight. Bold moves like no longer enrolling ATB (Ability to Benefit) students were enacted.

The goal seems to be enrolling students who have a much higher probability of being successful at their schools. This means students with a lower risk of dropping out, higher aptitude on entry, and better means to pay their own way. Statistically these students have higher retention, completion and job placement rates. Schools aren't taking as many "chances" on the disadvantaged or those students who typically have higher percentages of failure. Rather than try to fix the problem on the back end, schools are dealing with it on the front end.

Is this class warfare on the poor? Someone has to

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serve these students. I once heard a school administrator when asked what he does answer, "we advantage the disadvantaged with education and training." With community colleges at capacity, where will these students find their advantage? Could strengthening the Career Services function along with increasingly better retention techniques be an answer?

So just when we all thought career service professionals would finally get their moment in the spotlight, admissions folks have out-stepped them again. If 2011 is an indicator, for-profit schools will once again turn to the lifeblood of their schools—admissions—for the answers to new regulations.

The demand for admissions professionals who can still perform in this new environment is larger than ever. We are currently working on some Director of Admission searches in which candidates can almost name their price if they have a track record of doing things the right way successfully. It appears for now career service professionals will have to watch big brother admissions get all of the attention once again. **TC**



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