

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Learning To Improve Career Prospects

(NAPSA)—There may be at least one upside to a down economy: Many adult workers are furthering their education.

A growing number of displaced workers are heading back to school for the first time in years as they look to branch into new careers or advance skills in such areas as business management, health care management and fashion merchandising. Many are looking to career colleges that offer industry-specific professional instruction with flexible, online classes.

In fact, undergraduate enrollment at career colleges in the U.S. has averaged an annual growth rate of 9.9 percent since 2003, according to the U.S. Department of Education, with enrollment at Westwood College, a career college with 17 campuses around the country, mirroring that trend.

Dr. James M. Dorris, the college's dean of the master's in business administration and professional studies program, credits much of that growth to its business-focused, distance online learning programs.

In salary terms alone, in 2007, the median annual earnings of working career college students 25 years and older with a bachelor's degree was \$50,856 and \$63,856 for a master's degree, versus \$32,862 for their high school graduate counterparts, according to the Career College Association and the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Westwood's new School of Professional Studies offers career-focused, online classes designed to accommodate working adults' schedules and also targets to meet changing business and economic demands.

The college offers bachelor degree programs including fashion merchandising, business management, health care management,

Who attends career colleges?

Career college students are predominantly working adults looking to achieve the American dream by obtaining an education directly related to their career goals. In some cases, they started pursuing the degree years earlier but quit for a variety of reasons.

- Forty-three percent are minorities and almost 50 percent are the first generation in their families to pursue higher education.
- Over 50 percent of dependent career college students come from families with an income of less than \$40,000.
- More than 75 percent of the students are employed while enrolled in career colleges.

Source: Career College Association



marketing management, and accounting and financial management. The School of Professional Studies also offers a master of business administration degree, with a choice of majors in e-business management, financial management and information technology.

Other programs offered by Westwood include:

The School of Technology—Degrees include gaming software development, and game art design.

The School of Design—Degrees include animation, computer-aided design/architectural drafting, and Web design and multimedia.

The School of Justice—This school provides career-focused criminal justice and paralegal degree programs.

The School of Healthcare—Degrees include medical assisting.

For more information, visit www.westwood.edu.