



CCRN Newsroom

NEW DREAMS, NEW MISCONCEPTIONS

James E. Rosenbaum, professor of sociology, education and social policy - Northwestern University

The past 40 years brought three radical social transformations that together have dramatically increased the percentage of students who want to attend college. First, the earnings advantage of college graduates has grown. Second, college (especially community college, a minor factor in the prior generation) has become much more accessible. In the past four decades, while enrollments at four-year colleges doubled, enrollments increased five-fold at community colleges. Third, virtually all community colleges adopted a revolutionary policy of open admissions. Unlike many four-year colleges, almost all two-year colleges opened their doors to admit all interested high school graduates, regardless of students' prior academic achievement. Even high school graduates with barely passing grades are routinely welcomed because almost all two-year colleges offer a wide array of remedial courses. Indeed, in many cases, students do not even have to be high school graduates because most two-year colleges offer these students access to some non-credit courses, including GED courses.

These three transformations have dramatically altered the rules of college attendance and given students remarkable new opportunities. However, as with all revolutions, there are also unintended consequences. The revolutions spawned a set of myths or *misconceptions* that combined to send a message to students: *Don't worry about high school grades or effort; you can still go to college and do fine.*

This message has not been sent to high achievers aiming for prestigious colleges, where grades and scores matter, and the students headed there know it. But it is the message that students who know little about college have received, particularly those whose parents did not go to college. These students (and their parents) are being misled with disastrous consequences. Their motivation to work hard in high school is sapped; their time to prepare for college is wasted; their college savings are eaten up by remedial courses that they could have taken for free in high school; and their chances of earning a college degree are greatly diminished. Further, the effect on many colleges has been to alter their mission and lower their standards.

Too often, we think students' problems are inside of them, and we blame students' poor motivation. However, most students tend to be motivated if they see incentives for effort. But in the case of high school performance, we obscure what is at stake for most students. While top quartile students (those aiming for highly selective colleges) are told the incentives for better grades and test scores, the vast majority of students get the impression that high school achievement, grades and test scores are irrelevant.

The American educational system has taken a bold step in making college accessible to so many students. However, the revolution is still incomplete, and research has identified a number of difficulties in educators', parents', and students' understanding of college and what it requires. This revolution poses new challenges and a set of unintended consequences. We will need thoughtful solutions to address them.

VIRTUAL SCHOOLS

A non-profit collaborative of over 200 high schools offering full-semester, student-centered, on-line courses supports this growing system. High schools in 25 states and 8 countries participate in 'Virtual High School', allowing their students to select from nearly 150 accredited on-line courses including core, elective, advanced placement and international baccalaureate offerings.



For more information, visit www.goVHS.org



Vast Majority of Older Workforce is Employed

"Herman Trend Alert" 4/28/04, by Roger Herman and Joyce Gioia, Strategic Business Futurists

More older workers are saying "no" to retirement and continuing to work. Retirement, as we have known it for the past couple of generations, is gone. People will not retire the same way anymore. They will experience phased retirement, gradually working fewer and fewer hours. Some will not end full-time employment for years to come.



Figures from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics verify our assertion. Recent measurements of the American workforce reveal that of the 4,864,000 people who are over 65 and willing and able to work: 4,657,000 (95.7%) of them are working today. Of this number 2,550,000 people work full-time and 2,107,000 are working part-time (less than 35 hours a week).

Breaking the statistics down even further, we learn that there are 2,705,000 people in the labor pool (working or seeking work) in the 65 to 69 age range, with 2,614,000 (96.6%) working. Of the workforce in the 70 to 74 age range, 1,156,000 of the 1,208,000 (95.6%) in the labor pool are employed. There are 888,000 in the 75 and over labor pool, an astonishing 472,000 (53.2%) currently work full-time and 416,000 (46.8%) work part-time. There are 319,000 in the 80+ age range workforce, with 309,000 (96.9%) of them working.

As employers seek mature, experienced, reliable, and stable employees to form the core of their workforce, the demand for older workers over the next few years will increase. Younger workers will change jobs more frequently, while more stable older employees will remain at their posts. Some commentators attribute current and future labor shortages to the Baby Boomer generation, even though the first wave of the Baby Boomers won't even reach 65 until 2011. Retirement will not come soon for most Boomers (born 1946-1964).

As the composition of the workforce continues to change, older workers will play an increasingly significant role. Their values emphasize the importance of being productive members of society, driving them to continue working, at some level, as long as they can.

Archived editions of the weekly "**Herman Trend Alert**" are posted at www.hermangroup.com



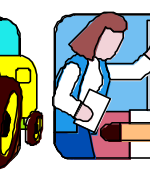
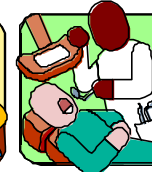
3rd Annual Asian Pacific American Federal Career Advancement Summit

WASHINGTON - Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao leads the Office of Personnel Management and five new department partners in hosting the third annual Asian Pacific American (APA) Federal Career Advancement Summit held on 5/10/04. This year, the Departments of Defense, Agriculture, Justice, Treasury, and Housing and Urban Development are among the federal government partners of the Summit.

"May is Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, a time to recognize and celebrate the many accomplishments and contributions of Asian Pacific Americans to our country. Asian Pacific Americans are an under-represented minority in the federal government. We host training sessions and workshops for other population groups. This Summit with its many interactive workshops, mentoring sessions, and panel discussions is meant to reach out and help Asian Pacific Americans gain additional skills to advance to leadership positions within the federal government," said Secretary Chao.

At this year's Summit, the U.S. Department of Labor also unveiled a new *APA Federal Career Guide*. The purpose of the Guide is to help more Asian Pacific Americans become fully aware of the rewards of public service, the skills required for federal jobs, and the resources available to pursue them. Secretary Chao said, "There are many opportunities in the federal government. Today, I am pleased to announce that the Department of Labor has produced a Federal Career Guide targeted at Asian Pacific Americans. We hope it will encourage and be a helpful reference to those who wish to enter federal government service."

Asian Pacific Americans comprise 4.8% of the total federal workforce and 3.2% of the federal management positions. Secretary Chao is the first Asian American woman to serve in a federal cabinet position.



What Are You Doing This Summer?

Cindy Weirich, a student at the University of Washington in Seattle, spent a summer working at the granddaddy of all amusement parks--Disneyland. She recounts her experience below:

As a person who has spent most of her life living in one place within an hour of her family, hearing of an opportunity to spend three months at Disneyland was a dream come true. I could not think of a better summer job than working in sunny California with hundreds of other college students.

Our campus newspaper advertised an informational meeting for the Disneyland College Program, so the day that the recruiting officer was at the local college, my best friend and I were there to find out more about this opportunity. The first meeting consisted of a video which explained the different jobs that would be available, housing arrangements, and employee benefits. After the video, a representative talked with the group about the "Disneyland look" that was required. The appearance was a basic, wholesome look with no extremes such as unnatural-colored hair or nose rings. Upon hearing their high Disneyland standards for employment I decided that I was still perfect for the job, so I took an application and made an appointment to take the next step--a group interview.

The next two days were filled with anticipation of what to wear and say at the interview. When the time came for me to file into the room with the four other people that I was interviewing with, I was fairly calm on the outside, but inside I was still nervous at the thought of spending the summer working for such an exciting company. Overall, each of us probably had to answer just four or five questions throughout the interview and those were mostly about why we wanted to work for Disneyland and what jobs we were willing to accept. The jobs ranged from operating rides, to working in the restaurants and retail shops, to doing custodial work around the park. Two days later I received a postcard offering me a position in the Disneyland "cast." At this point I was as excited as a 16 year-old with a brand new driver's license; I was off to California in June! I later received in the mail a description of my future job as a Culinary Hostess, my rate of pay, and an application for housing. Through the college program, Disneyland set us up with apartments to rent for the summer, as well as roommates.

I had been hired as a Culinary Hostess for the various restaurants on Main Street along the entrance to Disneyland. This meant various things, depending on which restaurant I was assigned to for that shift. When working at the Town Square Cafe, I had to seat the guests as well as cashier. This was basically the same for the Carnation Ice Cream Parlor. The fun came when I was given a shift at Coke Corner, where all that was sold was basic junk food such as pop, hot dogs, and potato chips. When I was not taking orders and cashiering, I had the pleasure of cooking hot dogs in the kitchen.

As a temporary seasonal employee, I was guaranteed at least thirty hours per week with varying days off. It was normal to work a forty-hour week in eight-hour shifts, ranging from as early as 7:30a.m. to as late as 2:00a.m. Actually, I preferred working the late night shifts because at night they had the Electric Light Parade and at midnight Tinkerbell would fly through the sky and start the nightly fireworks show. It just seemed to make Disneyland even more magical with everything brightly lit up.

Even though I desperately missed my family and friends by the end of the summer, I would not trade the experience that I had for anything. It was definitely the adventurous summer that I had anticipated at the start and the memories were worth the hard work. Plus, as an employee I had a constant free pass into Disneyland to play when I was not working!

The Disneyland College Program is something that I would recommend for anyone who has a generally happy disposition and can feed off the energy of the guests who come to enjoy themselves for a day at "The Happiest Place On Earth."

Visit www.wdwcollegeprogram.com for more info about this exciting opportunity!

CT Department of Labor - Connecticut Career Fairs CT's #1 Choice for Recruitment

Attending a Career Fair is a great way to get exposure to multiple employers and develop a network of career contacts. They also provide an opportunity to find out valuable information about various industries, corporations, and different job positions.

Employers participate in career fairs to meet students and recruit employees. They will provide job seekers with general information about career options, as well as specific information about current job openings within their company.



For more info on upcoming career fair events, visit www.ctjobfairs.com

2004-05 Editions of the 'Occupational Outlook Handbook' and 'Career Guide to Industries' Available on the Internet

Published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, these publications provide comprehensive, up-to-date, and reliable labor market information that has helped millions of Americans plan their future work lives. The 2004-05 editions will help guide workers in the new century by presenting essential information about prospective changes in the workplace and the qualifications that will be needed by tomorrow's workforce. These publications reflect the Bureau's latest employment projections, which cover the 2002-12 decade.

Visit www.bls.gov/oco and www.bls.gov/oco/cg to obtain a copy of the Handbook and Career Guide.

Print versions of both publications are expected to be available in Spring 2004.

"The Best Annual Conference to Date!"

Guest, CT Learns and Works Conference

YANKEE INGENUITY ~ May 11, 2004



This event had the makings for success from the start as it was held at the beautiful waterfront facility *The Water's Edge* located in Westbrook, CT. Once the event began, all attendees received a well balanced diet of workshops on topics such as **Tomorrow's**

Jobs, Proactive Students, Career Coaching, and Internships & Co-Ops for High School and Post-Secondary Students. The workshops were complemented by two brilliantly animated Keynote speakers. **Doug Manning of bridges.com** and **Ken Gronbach of KGC Direct** put on thoroughly engaging shows with their ideas on Proactive Living and the Changing Workplace.

All those present, including attendees, speakers, keynotes and staff, enjoyed the day as it was "a breath of fresh air" according to one guest.

For more information on this year's conference, please visit www.ctlearnsandworks.org This website will be updated soon and maintained throughout the year, so check back often to see what is in store for next year's conference!

The next edition (2004) of the **Connecticut Career Paths**

publication is on the way.



Watch for it at your school,
CT Works Center, or library.

Whenever you are asked
if you can do a job,
tell 'em, 'Certainly I can!'
Then get busy and find
out how to do it.

~ Theodore Roosevelt

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Available on-line at:
www.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/ccrn.htm

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