Florence Tate

The Commission changes faces every year due to the ending of terms, elections and appointments. This year is no different, other than the number leaving and coming is greater than usual. This time, two of our departing commissioners, who were at the end of their terms, are Guy Euliano and Jim Buffington. Read more about another departing commissioner, Randy Nikola on page 2.

Jim will be remembered best for his ability to capture our minds with salient points and his passion for students. He always asked us to contemplate how a deliberation would impact the smaller institution and the students served. Jim’s contributions confirmed the reason member participation is so important on the Commission.

And then there is Guy Euliano, Past Chair. I am sure many of you have experienced his humor, wit and wonderful stories. Consequently, any time Guy wanted to make a point, he would begin with a story. He provided us with a totally different perspective of institutional operations and listened attentively to each commissioner’s position during deliberations. I will always admire his perspective and his ability to calm the masses when a logical voice was desperately needed.

Thanks to the many activities created by Dr. Linda Swisher, a more recent past chair, we shared many fun moments with both Jim and Guy as Linda was able to gain so much information on each of us. It was during these times that we enjoyed personal stories on Guy and Jim that, as you can imagine, will forever cause a chuckle among those of us there to hear the tales. We will miss both gentlemen greatly and we thank each of them for the many hours given to ABHES.

CHRISTOPHER J. EATON SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Thank you to all who have donated generously in honor of our friend, Christopher (Chris) Eaton, former Associate Executive Director, who passed away unexpectedly in August 2013. The support ABHES has received highlights the dedication to quality and student success that Chris exhibited throughout his nearly two decades of service to ABHES. Your contribution will be a perpetual testament of what Chris meant to us all. We anticipate awarding a scholarship at ABHES’ annual conference.

The following information summarizes the scholarship program and explains how to nominate a deserving student and how to make an appreciated and invaluable donation. Time is running out for this year’s student.
A Word from the Executive Director

Having recently completed the July Commission meeting, I can say that your commissioners and staff are truly a great group of professionals who are working diligently for your schools and, in turn, for your students. You can read more about our newest commissioners and staff on pages 2-3. As with our accredited institutions and programs, change is imminent and necessary and we will always remember our former commissioners and staff with great fondness coupled with amazing memories and advances for ABHES. This has been a challenging year for this sector of education, and accreditors are no exception to the twists and turns. Know that ABHES is here to work with its members who may be facing difficulties and adversities in this time of economic instability.

This past year has brought great loss to ABHES, both personally and to accreditation. We publicly remembered Chris Eaton during the annual conference and are excited to continue our efforts to have continuous scholarships awarded annually in his memory, with the first award to be presented in February 2015. Read more about this special program on the cover page and members are invited to nominate a deserving student.

I would like to thank Judy Burke and Laura Tache, who both left ABHES this past year to pursue other interests. Judy worked tirelessly as Office Manager and was well-known by all for her genuine desire to help answer any question and to make things right had an error occurred. She was, for ABHES, the epitome of what was expected and needed to smoothly run an organization. Laura, Accreditation Specialist, whose travel schedule would tire anyone just looking at it, managed her other responsibilities in concert with a high level of interest and energy. Her personal desire to make the world a better place, as she continuously promoted “going green” was just one special quality respected by her colleagues. Both Judy and Laura are missed and we thank them both for their years of dedication to ABHES.

Thank you for your continuous support of quality education. Enjoy this latest issue of The Advantage.

Carol Moneymaker,
Executive Director

Welcome

The Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES) is very pleased to welcome the following commissioners to its July 2014 meeting!

JILL CARLSON

Appointed Seat - Practitioner in Specialty Area: Office Manager/Medical Assistant, Friend Health Care, Colorado Springs, Colorado

Ms. Carlson has an extensive background as a medical assisting practitioner and as an educator and administrator, formerly working in postsecondary institutions. She has been a Registered Medical Assistant with the American Medical Technologists (AMT) since 1989 and is this year’s recipient of the AMT’s prestigious Medallion of Merit Award. Ms. Carlson has served ABHES as a Medical Assisting program specialist on site visits. She holds an Associate of Occupational Studies from IntelliTec Medical Institute, Colorado Springs, Colorado, and a diploma in Medical Assisting from PPI Health Careers School, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

A Commissioner Bids Farewell

At its meeting in July 2009, the ABHES Commission was provided the opportunity to meet and work with an individual who would quickly become a respected colleague and friend. Randy Nikola served as a commissioner for nearly five years, during which time he was elected to the Executive Committee. Randy’s calm demeanor and influential insights led the Commission to decisions that both protected students and made its accredited institutions and programs stronger. While Randy’s tenure on the Commission has come to a close, we are thrilled to have him continue as an active representative on significant ABHES committees where we know his impact will be felt for years to come. Thank you, Randy, for your service and dedication to ABHES!
Commissioners

George Grayeb

Elected Seat - Administrator in a Healthcare Related Area:
President/CEO, Ross Education, LLC, Grand Rapids, MI

Mr. Grayeb has been part of postsecondary education for the past 20 years. He earned a bachelor’s degree from Anderson University and a master’s degree from the University of Denver. Currently, he serves as the President and Chief Executive Officer of Ross Education, LLC. Ross provides health related programs in 30 communities throughout Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, Tennessee, and West Virginia. Mr. Grayeb holds a Master of Arts in International Relations and a Bachelor of Arts in Math, Computer Science and Political Science.

Richard Luebke, Jr.

Elected Seat - Ownership Representative: Chief Operating Officer, Pima Medical Institute

Mr. Luebke has been involved in postsecondary education since 1983, beginning as Campus Director, Pima Medical Institute, Tucson, Arizona. His previous background was with the Boy Scouts of America where he served since 1976, most recently as Director of Finance. A family-owned educational company, Mr. Luebke has served the organization since the first year it was accredited by ABHES. He holds a Bachelor of Science from Idaho State University.

Dennis Stover

Elected Seat - Ownership Representative: President, Meridian Institute of Surgical Assisting

Mr. Stover began his career in 1986 at Ft. Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas, where he trained as an emergency medical technician and surgical technologist. He has worked as a surgical technologist and first assistant since 1990; and, in 1999 launched a surgical assisting educational program. He currently serves as president of the Association of Surgical Assistants and holds both the Certified Surgical Technologist and Surgical First Assistant credential. Mr. Stover has served ABHES in such areas as appeal panelist, site visitor, and as a member of the Preliminary Review and Annual Report committees.

ABHES is happy to welcome back to the Commission Christallia Starks and John (Jack) Yena. Ms. Starks was recently re-elected and Mr. Yena recently re-appointed; both to a second term. Each has served ABHES exceedingly well during the past few years and we look forward to their continued contributions!

Update on former Commissioner Michael Schafer

Many ABHES members and friends have reached out to us for information on former commissioner Michael Schafer. We are happy to report, with Michael’s approval, that he has made a full recovery and is hard at work again. “Rumors of my demise have been greatly exaggerated”, said Schafer who also stated, “I cannot begin to thank all the people who extended good wishes to me and to my family, and I consider those sentiments to be directly responsible for my full recovery”. Michael noted if you want to contact him directly, just send him a note at schafer.michael@gmail.com.

Officers Elected

At the July 2014 Commission Meeting, *officers were elected who serve on the Executive Committee for a term expiring July 2015.

Executive Committee

* Florence Tate, President (Chair)
* John (Jack) Yena, Vice President (Vice Chair)
* Effie Dubis, Treasurer
* Nancy Last, Secretary
Dr. Dolores Gioffre, Commissioner at Large
Carol Moneymaker, Executive Director (non-voting member)
News from the Dental Assisting National Board

Certification Helps Educators Lead by Example

Educators play an important role in their students’ lives and career development, as well as in the future of the profession itself. One way to encourage students and support professional standards is for educators to earn certification.

In the dental assisting field, for example, the Dental Assisting National Board, Inc. (DANB) offers four national certifications:

- Certified Dental Assistant (CDA)
- Certified Orthodontic Assistant (COA)
- Certified Preventive Functions Dental Assistant (CPFDA)
- Certified Restorative Functions Dental Assistant (CRFDA)

Educators who hold DANB certification serve as examples to students and show their commitment to the profession. There are many reasons to earn and maintain DANB certification, including personal pride, increased earning potential and greater career mobility. Additionally, some colleges or programs may consider certification when making hiring decisions.

Many dental assisting educators and program directors said DANB certification was something they felt they had the responsibility to earn — for themselves, their programs and their students. “I decided to earn certification to further my professional career and show my students what is out there and how much they can achieve,” says Kim Plate, CDA, CPFDA, CRFDA.

Heather Muller, CDA, CRFDA, says that certification demonstrates her pride and expertise. “Having my DANB certification shows my students how proud I am to be a dental assistant, and provides the credibility my students are looking for in an instructor.”

Preparing for Certification

There are many resources available to educators who are interested in earning DANB certification for themselves or helping their students prepare. DANB offers materials such as exam blueprints and exam materials lists.

The DALE Foundation, the official DANB affiliate, offers online review courses and practice tests to help dental assistants prepare for DANB exams and earn CE credits. These interactive study aids can be accessed anytime, anywhere, making it easy to do additional studying outside the classroom.

As educator Angela Smith, CDA, says, “I always stress that outside the classroom, learning doesn’t stop.”

Educators have a lot to gain from earning certification. And, encouraging students to earn certification can help set them up for career success and lifelong professionalism.

To learn more, visit www.danb.org or www.dalefoundation.org.

Note: The Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES) requires specific program accreditation standards for dental assisting programs. Visit www.abhes.org/publications/accreditationmanual and refer to Chapter VIII.
News from the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA)

By: Ronald Kruzel, Chief Executive Officer, NBSTSA

So you want to be a Certified Surgical Technologist (CST)? It seems like everyone does as our credentialed community continues to grow and grow. The CST is widely recognized in the surgical community as the consummate credential in surgical technology. More and more states (through the incredible efforts of each state assembly) are requiring the CST in statutory language for practice. The CST is recognized by a growing community of professional nursing associations. Everyone is a CST, right? Wrong.

Not everyone is a CST. Not everyone has earned the credential. Not everyone should be recognized as holding the credential. Not everyone should have “CST” displayed on their name badge. As recognition and acceptance of the CST grows, so does the number of individuals who want that recognition and acceptance. It is the NBSTSA’s responsibility to educate our fellow surgical colleagues, hospitals, and communities about what it means to be a CST. There is no “equivalency” when it comes to your credential. Take a look at some basic facts:

• The National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA) is an independently incorporated 501c6 not for profit organization whose sole purpose is the development and administration of the CST and CSFA examinations. All profits go to the ongoing development and administration of the CST and CSFA examinations. The NBSTSA is the only not for profit organization in surgical technology certification with this mission.

• The CST credential is fully accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). The NCCA is a national accreditation agency which has established standards related to examination development and administration. The CST is the only NCCA accredited examination for surgical technologists in the nation. Organizations like the NBSTSA must undergo rigorous third party external review by the NCCA to maintain accreditation. Similar to the NBSTSA, the Competency and Credentialing Institute (CCI), who sponsor the CNOR and CRNFA credentials, is fully accredited by the NCCA.

• The NBSTSA has been developing and administrating the CST examination since 1970, a 44 year history of examination development. There are currently 48,000 active CST’s in practice around the country.

• The CST examination is the only credential named and required for practice in statutory regulation in multiple states around the country.

• The CST examination enjoys the sponsorship of the American College of Surgeons, and is exclusively named in the College position statement related to credentialing of allied health personnel in the operating room. Additionally, the College has direct representation on the NBSTSA Board of Directors, with input into the operational and credentialing functions of the NBSTSA.

• Similarly the Association of Surgical Technologists (AST), the only professional organization for surgical technologists in the nation, sponsors and has Board of Director representation on the NBSTSA.

• The CST is the only recognized examination for outcomes assessment purposes for accredited education programs in surgical technology. The NBSTSA and the CST credential are fully recognized by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) and the Accreditation Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES).

• There is only one CST credential.

Educate your operating room. Advocate for your credential. Don’t allow it to be misrepresented. It’s up to all of us who hold the CST credential. The NBSTSA stands ready to support you in the process. Let’s do it for our credential, for our profession, but most importantly, our patients.

Note: as of the date of publication, the following states require the CST for employment:

Idaho          New York
Indiana         South Carolina
Massachusetts  Tennessee
New Jersey      Texas
STAFF NEWS

ABHES ANNOUNCES NEW STAFF MEMBERS!

Naomi Blake, Accreditation Coordinator

Ms. Naomi Blake began her position with ABHES in June 2014. She received her Bachelor of Science degree from Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland, where she studied Psychology and later went on to earn her Certification in Industrial-Organizational Psychology from the Chicago School of Professional Psychology. After graduation, Naomi was employed within the mental health field and soon moved to contracting for over 5 years within the human resources, recruitment, and customer service fields. Her responsibilities include coordination of on-site accreditation visits and serves as staff liaison to the Programmatic Accreditation Committee for Medical Laboratory Technology.

Tammy Bridgeman, Manager of Operations

Ms. Tamara (Tammy) Bridgeman joined ABHES in November 2013. As the Manager of Operations, Ms. Bridgeman is responsible for ABHES office administration activities including human resources and benefits administration, general accounting, accounts payable and receivable, annual budget, and payroll administration. Ms. Bridgeman serves as staff liaison to the Finance Committee and coordinates external service contracts and facilities management activities. Ms. Bridgeman holds 30-plus years experience in association, corporation, and small business management and has extensive background in employee benefits administration, accounting, and payroll.

Tiffanie Montague, Operations Specialist

Ms. Tiffanie Montague joined ABHES in March 2014 as its Operations Specialist. Her responsibilities include administrative support to the Executive Director and other senior personnel, coordination of membership notices, response to membership inquiries, Commission meeting and other meeting preparation, assistance with the annual national conference- and workshop-related activities, database management, and other administrative support related to the operation of ABHES. Ms. Montague possesses over 10 years of administrative assistant experience working in the Washington, D.C., area.

Kellie Mularkey, Accreditation Coordinator

Ms. Kellie Mularkey was employed with ABHES in October 2013. Ms. Mularkey holds a Bachelor’s of Arts degree in history from the University of Mary Washington and has spent the last few years working with many different aspects of museums and historic sites, including assisting with the process of museum accreditation. Her responsibilities include coordination of on-site accreditation visits and serves as staff liaison to the Financial Review Committee.

STAFF PROMOTIONS

Peter Etchells, who began employment with ABHES in 2011 as an Accreditation Coordinator, was promoted to Senior Accreditation Coordinator in June. Pete has evidenced an exceptional grasp of accreditation standards, policies and procedures and has worked diligently to continuously enhance the ABHES operation. Aside from continuing to coordinate accreditation site visits, Pete’s other responsibilities include service as staff liaison to the Financial Review Committee and Commissioner Nominating Committee and coordination of surveying activities.

Also joining ABHES in 2011 as an Accreditation Coordinator, Amanda Ludwa was promoted to Program Specialist earlier this year. Amanda has proven herself to be an incredible asset to ABHES and, while still coordinating site visits, is now responsible for consideration of various program revisions. She serves as staff liaison to the Programmatic Accreditation Committee for Surgical Technology (PAC-ST) and the Association of Specialized Professional Accreditors (ASPA).

We thank both Pete and Amanda for their continued contributions to ABHES and congratulate them on their promotions!
Can We Expect Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act Anytime Soon?

The Higher Education Act is set to expire at the end of September, 2014. Both sides of the aisle have been holding hearings since 2013 and a number of bills have been thrown into the hopper, but there is not much urgency. After all, there is an automatic extension and elections are coming up in November. During the 2003 reauthorization, in addition to the automatic extension, Congress passed thirteen additional extensions and eventually passed the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008.

Recently, there has been a frenzy of activity in the Senate and House. It started on the Senate side when on June 19, 2014, Senators Lamar Alexander (R-TN), Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Health, Labor, Education and Pensions (HELP), and Michael Bennet (D-CO) introduced the Financial Aid Simplification and Transparency (FAST) Act. Designed to simplify the Title IV federal student aid programs, the FAST Act introduces provisions that would simplify the application process while improving transparency and access. What does the bill do?

- Eliminates the FAFSA by reducing the 10-page form to a postcard that would ask two questions: What is your family size? And what was your household income two years ago?
- Advises families what the government will provide them in grant and loans using earlier tax data and a look-up table to allow students in their junior year of high school to see what they would be eligible for.
- Streamlines the federal grant and loan programs by combining two federal grant programs into one Pell Grant program and reducing the six different federal loan programs into one undergraduate loan program, one graduate loan program, and one parent loan program.
- Restores year-round Pell Grant availability to permit students to complete college sooner.
- Discourages over-borrowing by limiting the amount the student is able to borrow based on enrollment.
- Simplifies repayment options by creating two simple plans, an income-based repayment plan and a 10-year repayment plan.

Senators Alexander and Bennet said: “At a time when a college degree is more important than ever for getting a job and making a good living, red tape and confusion are the adversary for millions of students. Adopting a two-question postcard for federal student aid is a sure step toward offering millions of Americans a brighter future.”

Not long after, Senate Democrats introduced the Higher Education Affordability Act, which was released by Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, on June 25, 2014. The Higher Education Affordability Act is a comprehensive approach to ensure that the financial aid system better serves students and families. Upon releasing the bill, Senator Harkin said: “College affordability, skyrocketing student debt, accountability, and transparency – these are all very high-stakes issues for students and families. The Higher Education Affordability Act seeks bold changes in our system of higher education in order to make a college education more affordable and accessible.”

Although Senator Harkin claimed that the Higher Education Affordability Act was a bipartisan bill, consistent with the approach used in the reauthorization hearings, it was reported that the Republicans were not even consulted during the bill’s drafting.

While this is a very comprehensive bill, some of the provisions that are of particular interest would:

- Change the 90/10 rule to 85/15, and include any federal student assistance as federal funds.
- Require the mandatory use of a federally-developed financial aid award letter.
- Prohibit Federal funds from being used for recruiting or marketing.
- Establish a government-wide proprietary education oversight coordinating committee that would annually publish a “warning list for parents and schools” of institutions that have engaged in illegal activity.
• Re-establish a year-round Pell Grant.
• Allow ED to recalculate a school’s CDR in cases of default manipulation.
• Use prior-prior year tax information for needs analysis.
• Reinstate ability-to-benefit eligibility.
• Strengthen entrance and exit counseling by ensuring that more comprehensive and easy to understand information is given to borrowers.
• Prohibit institutions and their service providers to provide incentive compensation based on success in securing enrollments, performance in coursework, graduation, job placement, or any other facet of enrollment. Revenue-sharing with a third-party based on these factors would be prohibited.
• Streamline repayment plans to create a single income-based repayment program currently available for new borrowers beginning 7/1/2014.
• Require automatic enrollment of borrowers who are 150 or more days delinquent (though a borrower can opt-out) into income-based repayment program.
• Eliminate origination fees on Direct Loans.
• Allow private student loans to be discharged in bankruptcy.
• Reform the collections process to eliminate abuses.
• Require each institution to establish a system for disbursement of credit balances through electronic payments and preferred providers would be prohibited.
• Require consumer testing of the following:
  o Universal net price calculator;
  o College Scoreboard;
  o Master promissory note;
  o Standard notification format for delinquent or at-risk borrowers;
  o Institutional financial aid letter;
  o Online entrance, exit, and interim counseling tools; and
  o Personalized periodic statement required for borrowers who are automatically enrolled into an income-based repayment plan and consent form for borrowers with $0 payment.

Like the Senate, the House recently began taking action on the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, but is taking another approach, a more step-by-step approach, rather than a more comprehensive approach. On June 25, 2014, the Republicans on the House Education and the Workforce Committee, chaired by Congressman John Kline (R-MN), released a white paper outlining the Committee’s priorities for the upcoming reauthorization. Chairman Kline said: “Too many Americans are struggling to turn the dream of a postsecondary education into reality. Our current higher education system is too costly, too bureaucratic, and outdated. Families and students deserve better...These principles will help keep college in reach for every American looking to higher education as a pathway to a successful career.” The four principles outlined in the white paper are:

• Empowering students and families to make informed decisions;
• Simplifying and improving student aid;
• Promoting innovation, access, and completion; and
• Ensuring accountability and a limited federal role.

On June 26, 2014, various members of the House Education Committee introduced three separate bills related to college affordability and transparency. The three bills passed the full Committee on July 10, 2014 and will now move to the full House of Representatives for consideration. Chairman Kline believes that the “step-by-step approach” is better because this approach may lead to more bipartisanship. Chairman Kline said: “You can sit there with comprehensive bills and make no progress.”

During Committee debate, the Democrats offered amendments that would allow borrowers to refinance their student loan debt at current interest rates and would have counted veterans benefits and Department of Defense tuition assistance toward the 90/10 calculation. Chairman Kline expressed sympathy for struggling borrowers but suggested that improving the economy would be a more effective approach for making student debt more manageable and changing the 90/10 rule would restrict veterans’ access to many educational institutions. The Republicans moved to dismiss the two amendments as not germane and rejected them. The bills that passed are as follows:

• **Empowering Students Through Enhanced Financial Counseling Act, H.R. 4984**, would promote financial literacy through enhanced counseling for all financial aid recipients. The one-time entrance counseling requirement would become an annual counseling requirement that must be completed before accepting a loan. The exit counseling content would be expanded to include more borrower-specific information. Annual counseling of Pell Grant recipients would also be required prior to the first disbursement in an award year to include explanations of a Pell Grant, approved
educational expenses, the maximum number of semesters or quarters of eligibility, how the student may budget, and how the student may seek additional financial assistance.

- **Strengthening Transparency in Higher Education Act, H.R. 4983**, would eliminate the College Navigator and its associated affordability and transparency lists and state higher education charts released by ED. In its place would be a College Dashboard website, which would be developed by ED and include institutional-level information, such as enrollment, completion rates, costs, financial aid, and cohort default rates.

- **Advancing Competency-Based Education Demonstration Project Act, H.R. 3136**, would promote innovation in higher education by directing the Secretary of Education to implement competency-based education demonstration projects.

Another bill, the **Simplifying the Application for Student Aid, H.R. 4982**, which was introduced on June 26, 2014, would have required the use of prior-prior year family income data when determining financial aid eligibility. However, it was reportedly removed from consideration because of its high estimated cost.

While both the Senate Democrats and House Republicans focused on making college more affordable, helping students make more informed decisions, and holding institutions accountable to students and taxpayers, the two sides clash over the government’s role in the student aid process. At the same time, there is much overlap between the proposals. Both parties support:

- Making Pell Grants year round;
- Streamlining repayment plans;
- Make Federal data more useful;
- Improving financial literacy; and
- Reducing the size of the FAFSA.

Whether it is a piece meal approach or a comprehensive approach, the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act will not happen very soon - certainly not until after the November elections! Many provisions will come and go before there is any meeting of the minds as to how and when to reauthorize the HEA. 😊

Sharon H. Bob, Ph.D.
Higher Education Specialist
Powers Pyles Sutter and Verville, PC
Washington, DC
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The National Conference on Allied Health Education is hosted by ABHES annually and features a variety of breakout sessions focused on those issues most current and relevant to allied health care educators. Speakers and sessions are selected based upon their focus on health care education, coupled with the current climate in higher education. Exhibitors are always on hand showcasing the products and services most wanted and needed by educators and constituents of the allied health care community.

For general questions regarding the conference, contact Ms. India Tips at itips@abhes.org. For information and questions regarding exhibiting, contact Ms. Kelli Blocher at kblocher@abhes.org.

**Pre-conference workshops:**
The following workshops require separate registration and fees, as applicable. For details and to register online, visit https://www.abhes.org/workshop_registration.

Programmatic Accreditation - Monday, February 23
Institutional Accreditation - Tuesday, February 24
Evaluator Training – Wednesday, February 25 -- (includes program specialists, distance education, surgical technology, team leader)

**Commissioners’ Welcome Reception**
Wednesday, February 25, 5:00 p.m.

Conference Registration to Open Fall 2014
Visit www.abhes.org
Preparing Students for the Workplace and Why “Soft Skills” Matter

Case Study
You may know a student like Amanda. Amanda was often late for class, or missed classes entirely. Her written work was consistently sloppy, as was her appearance, and there were murmured complaints that Amanda often did not do her share of work on group projects. When I would try to speak to Amanda privately about these issues, she avoided eye contact and her responses expressed indifference. Furthermore, there was no missing the evidence of Amanda’s tobacco use when we were together in my small cubicle. Despite all of that however, Amanda’s grades were mostly all A’s or B’s, and she performed skills in the lab flawlessly.

The first time I visited Amanda at her externship site, her mentor seemed less than thrilled about Amanda’s performance. I was told that, yes, she was able to perform the basic Medical Assistant Skills, but there were “problems” with her interactions with patients and staff. Her sloppiness persisted and her mentor said that Amanda appeared aloof and unmotivated. The mentor was becoming frustrated, but was willing to continue working with Amanda. The next time I visited, the mentor told me that while the practice was looking to hire a Medical Assistant, they would not consider hiring Amanda. The word used by the mentor was “unemployable.” Amanda had met all the established criteria for completing the externship course, so I had no choice but to pass her. She graduated, but as far as I know, Amanda was never placed.

While I had taught her Medical Assistant theory and skills, I had not helped Amanda develop “soft skills.” Some curriculum developers call them “Core Abilities.” In the publication, Core Abilities: Bringing the Mission to the Classroom by Judith Neill, Project Director for the Worldwide Instructional Design System (WIDS), core abilities are described as essential workplace skills that cut across occupational and academic titles. In addition to developing competencies, businesses and schools that use WIDS to develop curriculum identify specific core abilities and core ability indicators for their institutions. Indicators are specific behaviors that demonstrate attainment of core ability.

For example, my school identified “Demonstrate responsible and professional workplace behaviors” as a core ability. Indicators included behaviors such as “Attend class as mandated by the instructor,” “Complete assignments neatly and on time,” and “Present a professionally appropriate appearance.” Another core ability we identified was “Work cooperatively,” with several indicators including “Contribute to a group with ideas, suggestions, and effort,” “Complete his/her share of tasks necessary to complete a project,” and “Accept constructive feedback.” Most schools have identified seven to nine core abilities that apply to all of the programs taught at the school.

Once the core abilities and indicators were identified, the next step was to integrate them into the curriculum. Core abilities are different than course competencies in that they are not course-specific. They are not taught in “lessons.” Instead, they are broader skills that run through courses and lessons. They “enable learners to perform competencies.” Not all core abilities need to be taught and assessed in every course, but each core ability is intentionally addressed somewhere in the program curriculum, and most are integrated into several courses. Summative assessments occur in capstone courses or during clinical experiences.

Incorporating core abilities into our Medical Assistant program was a collaborative process that included faculty and advisory committee input. It took a lot of thought and a lot of time. Posters listing our core abilities are now posted in every classroom and lab. Core abilities and indicators appear in every syllabus, course outline, and learning plan. Our students know that demonstration of core abilities is a criterion for successful completion of all their courses and externships. Since we began emphasizing core abilities we have received positive feedback from mentors and employers. If Amanda were enrolled in our program today, we would be equipped to more effectively prepare her for the world of work.
Implementation

Most institutions do a great job teaching the clinical and administrative aspects of medical assisting; however, struggle with the implementation of soft skills throughout the curriculum. It isn’t because these institutions don’t try, they really do; however, many soft skills are inherent or learned over a lifetime. This is why institutions need to start teaching and measuring these skills early in the process.

So what personal characteristics make up soft skills? In general, they include:

- Dependability (Attendance, following through with directions, etc.)
- Professional Attitude
- Flexibility
- Tactfulness
- Integrity
- Initiative
- Ability to get along with others (rather co-workers, supervisors, or patients)

Institutions need to work to create a culture of professionalism. This culture needs to be evident in the leadership hierarchy. It starts at the top with management, trickles down to the instructors and finally to the students.

The school’s expectations need to be published in the syllabi, handbooks, competency forms and in signage around the school. Consequences for non-compliance also need to be clearly stated and enforced when students fail to comply.

Students appear more accepting of these expectations when field experts come into the classroom and confirm the school’s standards with their own company’s standards. Of course, relaying examples of graduates that are currently prospering in the industry, and those that have failed, seem to hit a little closer to home with some students.

Even, when you do everything right, there will be students that perform poorly. Recently, a student was terminated three weeks before graduation because of using social media to “blast” her externship. The entire staff was in shock because they reviewed this topic several times throughout this student’s training. The student was a very good student overall; however, with the damaging evidence of what she wrote, the institution had no other alternative but dismiss her from the program. It broke everyone’s hearts. Of course this will be one of those “bad examples” which will be used for years to come.

Even, when training institutions do everything right, there will be disappointments. We have had to terminate students’ weeks away from graduation because of stealing drug samples, breeching confidentiality, posting negative comments on social media and even being disrespectful to externship supervisors or workers.

More often, I see graduates that never make it in the field due to personality flaws or a poor work ethic. I once had a physician tell me that if he had to choose between an employee with excellent technical skills (with a poor personality) and someone with poor skills (with a great personality), he would choose the latter of the two. His exact words were, “I can help someone improve skills, but I can’t change an individual’s personality.

Thank goodness, there are always many more good stories than bad stories; however, it is the bad stories that creep to the front of our minds thinking most often.

By: Linda Arentsen, MS, RN, CMA, Cleveland, Wisconsin

Gerry Brasin, CMA, CPC, Education Coordinator, Premier Education Group, Springfield, MA

Michelle Heller, CMA, MA Program Director, Ohio Institute of Health Careers, Columbus, Ohio

(Members, ABHES Programmatic Accreditation Committee for Medical Assisting)

Report from Chair, continued from page 1

ABHES-accredited institutions and programs should be aware that there has been significant deliberation as to how the Commission should address those members whose programs have had difficulty meeting the required benchmarks for retention, placement and required credentialing. The current process expects that each program will come into compliance with the 70% requirement using the maximum length of programs offered. The data is reported on the Annual Report, reviewed by the Annual Report Committee and reported to the Commission for action.

Although the deliberations continue on how to best assist the institution while acting responsibly, a pilot commissioner committee has been established. The Outcomes Review and Assessment Committee (OCRA) will use the historical data provided by the Annual Report Committee to determine the next set of actions for programs not meeting the required benchmarks. Depending upon the particular outcome, the institution or program will receive a follow-up notice from the Commission detailing the specific actions that will be required to come into compliance. The conversation continues; however, it is believed that this is the appropriate action for the betterment of both students and programs. We will keep you posted.

Thank you to all who were able to spend time at the ABHES conference this past February and to share our tribute to Christopher Eaton. It was especially nice that his family members heard all of the wonderful words and were able to see what he meant to the ABHES family. His spirit will be with us forever.

I look forward to seeing all in Las Vegas at the February conference.

Florence Tate, ABHES Chair
nomination and contribution, which expires October 1, 2014.

**Summary of Scholarship Program**

**Number**
At least one individual will be chosen for scholarship to be awarded at the annual conference in February 2015. Expenses for the scholarship recipient, as well as conference registration, will be sponsored by ABHES.

**Nominations**

**Eligibility**
The individual nominated must:

1. Be actively enrolled in an ABHES-accredited program at the time of the nomination and actively enrolled at the time of award or have successfully completed the program.
2. Display a high level of integrity and perseverance.
3. Exhibit persistence, dedication and a highly positive attitude.

**Process**
Nominations must be made by the Chief Executive Officer, President or Director of an ABHES-accredited institution or program. The nominations must include the following information:

- Name, address and telephone number of nominee
- Reasons for nomination
- Enrolled program of study
- Tuition including books and fees

**Recipient Institution**
The winner will receive a scholarship to the ABHES-accredited institution or program from which the nomination was made.

**How to Donate**
A check or money order for the amount you wish to contribute made payable to ABHES. The notation “Scholarship Contribution 2015” should be made on the check or money order.

**Deadline Date**
Nominations and donations will be accepted through October 1, 2014, and the Scholarship Committee will make a decision by early December 2014.

**Scholarship Committee Members**
Ann Gibson  
Mark Luebke  
Dr. Linda Swisher  
Melvyn Weiner  
Jack Yena

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**Distance Education & State Authorization Reminder**

Although the United States Department of Education has placed a pause on its State Authorization regulations in regard to distance education, please remember that institutions are required to meet all current applicable state regulations within the states they are operating*. This applies to distance education and on-ground programs operating across state borders.

The definition of “operating” within a state varies by state, as do licensure and authorization requirements. Some states require approvals of any institution delivering educational programs to students who reside in said states or have official residency in said states, regardless of on-ground presence; other states require approvals based upon on-ground triggers, such as student participation in clinical experiences or interest meetings, employment of local faculty, or placing local advertising, among others. It is the responsibility of the school to determine if and what types of approvals are required and to secure and maintain required approvals from the states in which it is operating, as applicable. Such information is to be available for review by ABHES during accreditation visits.
Spotlight on: bluedoor

Bluedoor is the publisher whose philosophy puts students and authors first, leveraging our assets and learning models to create a better experience. Bluedoor has created new and unique digital and print assets, reduced voluminous and unnecessary content, and improved Allied Health and Vet Tech art quality. We have served the traditional college and university markets for many years in the sciences and allied health and we are committed to having the same relationships with institutions in the private sector.

Bluedoor offers a new approach with Integrated Text, customized lesson plans, Instructor Resource Guides, Student Activities, Online Testing and Grading, Procedural Videos, and D Animations. Consistent curriculum, support for instructors, improved student outcomes all cross-walked to accreditation standards, and a new level of customer service are all key factors to bluedoor’s success.

We have all heard of “flipping the classroom.” Now it is time to flip the publisher. Our model allows institutions to take control of their publisher! Whatever the need is, bluedoor will provide a solution at a reduced publishing cost. Bluedoor has set up a site that exemplifies and illustrates our skills and assets at www.bluedoorpublishing.com/abhesadvantage.

Finally, a publisher that truly offers Flexible and Affordable Learning Solutions for your Allied Health and Vet Tech needs!

We look forward to seeing you at the National Conference on Allied Health Education, sponsored by ABHES, in February in Las Vegas!

AmeriTecH College’s RN to BSN Degree Completion Program Announces a Successful Programmatic Site Visit

By Dr. Melissa Popovich, Program Director RN to BSN Degree Completion Program

AmeriTecH College launched a completely Online BSN Degree Completion Program in July of 2013. The RN to BSN Degree Completion Program was developed and launched in response to the Institute of Medicine’s call that “Nurses should achieve higher levels of education and training through an improved education system that promotes seamless academic progression.” (IOM, 2010) After the initial launch and admittance of the first cohort of students, AmeriTecH College submitted the program’s candidacy presentation to the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN, formerly NLNAC) in an effort to secure programmatic accreditation for the first graduating cohort, expected to complete the program in June 2014.

ACEN Candidacy was granted in November of 2013 and the site visit was planned for early February 2014. The site visit occurred with citations of excellence in both program oversight and curriculum. The highlights of the site visit included zero violations and site visitor recommendation for programmatic accreditation with ACEN. Currently, AmeriTecH College is waiting for final approval and programmatic accreditation from ACEN.

References


Recent Recognitions Granted To ABHES

THE AMERICAN REGISTRY OF RADIOLOGIC TECHNOLOGISTS

Effective January 20, 2014, the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES) achieved recognition by The American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT). Specifically, this recognition is for the professional education component of the students’ education. If not already recognized, radiography, radiation therapy, nuclear medicine, primary magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and primary sonography programs within ABHES-accredited institutions are now eligible to apply to ARRT for recognition. Once recognition is obtained, graduates may sit for the applicable certification examination.

As a reminder, effective January 1, 2013, ABHES adopted Radiologic Technology standards which are contained in Chapter VIII of the ABHES Accreditation Manual. These standards are designed for review of ABHES-accredited institutions which offer Radiologic Technology (full scope only) programs. While ABHES does not accredit radiologic technology programs at the programmatic level (as it does for medical assisting, medical laboratory technology, and surgical technology), these standards allow for program-level review within an institution’s grant of accreditation.

Anyone taking an examination offered by ARRT and who graduates on or after January 1, 2015, must hold, at a minimum, an earned associate’s degree. This two-year degree, along with successful completion of a program in one of the above-referenced academic disciplines, is necessary to be considered eligible for the ARRT-sponsored certification examinations. Alternatively, the individual must possess a two-year degree in one of the named academic disciplines from a postsecondary institution accredited by an agency recognized by ARRT.

If you have specific questions regarding the ARRT certification process, please visit the ARRT website at www.arrt.org. You may also contact ARRT directly at 651.687.0048, extension 8560, and inquire relative to ‘initial certification’ information.

Board of Certification Board of Governors of the American Society of Clinical Pathologists

By letter dated July 9, 2014, the Board of Certification Board of Governors of the American Society of Clinical Pathologists (BOC-ASCP) approved ABHES’ request that its accredited Medical Laboratory Technician (MLT) programs meet the eligibility requirements for MLT (ASCP) certification. The BOC-ASCP is the oldest and largest certification agency for laboratory professionals and has certified more than 490,000 individuals since it was established. According to ASCP’s 2013 Wage Survey of U.S. Clinical Laboratories, certified laboratory professionals earn more than their non-certified counterparts.

Accredited programs must submit student information to the ASCP so that arrangements can be made to verify the students’ eligibility electronically. Institutions offering the MLT program and programatically – accredited MLT programs were sent letters outlining the ASCP requirements for reporting. The ASCP contact information is as follows:

Renee Allegrucci
Manager, Certification Processing
Renee.allegrucci@ascp.org
312/541-4941

ABHES-accredited institutions and programs are reminded that MLT programs must meet all accreditation requirements, including Chapter VII, Programmatic Evaluation Standards for Medical Laboratory Technology, of the Accreditation Manual.

For additional information on BOC-ASCP, visit www.ascp.org. For ABHES-related questions relative to these credentialing opportunities please contact Thomas J. Cornacchia at 703.917.9596 or at tcornacchia@abhes.org.
Haitian Prime Minister Laurent Lamothe Speaks At Azure College Commencement Ceremony

Laurent Lamothe, Prime Minister of Haiti, attended the commencement ceremony at Azure College School of Nursing in Fort Lauderdale in early August. As a keynote speaker, he stood before a gathering of graduate nursing students, their professors, and the Haitian Diaspora elite.

Miami Gardens, Fl August 10, 2013 – Haitian Prime Minister Laurent Lamothe delivered the keynote speech Saturday at Azure College’s third commencement ceremony. Azure College is the first fully accredited educational institution whose owners are of Haitian descent in the United States.

The Head of the Haitian Government who is also a graduate of two South Florida universities (Barry and St-Thomas Universities) is considered a successful model. He addressed the new graduates as he acknowledged their efforts and motivated them to be role models as they continue to project a positive image of Haiti in their community abroad. Prime Minister, Laurent Lamothe stated these words of encouragement to the assembly, “This graduation day without a doubt will impact the rest of your life, as it was the case for me. Today is the day for which you have worked hard for years. This is the time where your life is set on track”

The Prime Minister said he was impressed by the results that Azure College has shown although it was founded only in 2004.

Mr. Lamothe took the opportunity to make an assessment of changes underway in Haiti. He reiterated the importance of the social assistance programs under way and received his biggest ovation when he announced construction of new international airports in the City of Les Cayes and on the island of Ile A Vaches.

In his remarks, Azure College’s President Mr. Johnson Napoleon calls for continuing solidarity among Haitians abroad and those living in Haiti. He presented Prime Minister Lamothe a symbolic check for $400,000 representing a package of 10 scholarships offered by Azure College to train students for the country of Haiti. Azure College will also facilitate the students to obtain the proper student’s visas.

“We were elated to have so many professionals entering the health care field. We are also happy to receive Prime Minister Lamothe’s endorsement of the level of education provided by Azure College” added Napoleon.

Several personalities attended the ceremony including Florida State Senator Oscar Braynon II, Miami-Dade County District 2 Commissioner Jean Monestime, City of North Miami Beach Councilman, Mr. Frantz Pierre, Haitian Ambassador-at-Large Ruben Lamothe, Consul General of Haiti in Miami, Francois Guillaume II and former Presidential Press Secretary, Mr. Herold Israel.

Azure College, Miami Gardens, Florida, has held institutional accreditation by ABHES since 2011. It operates two non-main campuses in Sebring and Boca Raton, Florida.
Medical Assistant Program Chair Awarded Citizen Award of Merit

By: Michelle Barsness, Director of Career Services at Minnesota School of Business-Brooklyn Center Campus

Have you ever been driving down the road and witnessed an accident? What did you do? Did you stop and attempt to help? Did you call 911? Did you ignore the situation and continue on with your drive? Tracey Stoeckel, medical assistant program chair and one of Minnesota School of Business-Brooklyn Center’s newest employees, did what most cannot fathom doing. Stoeckel not only pulled over, but she assisted the victims at the scene.

On August 20, 2013, Stoeckel was driving down the road heading home after teaching an afternoon class at MSB-Blaine. Traffic began to slow down, and eventually she was at a complete stop. She did not know what was going on; however, she noticed that eight cars ahead of her found a way to turn around because they could not drive any further. Stoeckel realized that there was an accident up ahead and decided that she should pull over. “I did what I thought anyone in my shoes would do, and I approached the vehicles to see if I could help as EMS had not arrived at the scene,” she said. Three other individuals had also pulled over to help, and a teenager had stopped on the side of the road to call 911. According to Stoeckel, “My first thought was that I could help. I had been trained to help in a situation like this. I had no idea what the severity of the injuries were, but I saw that one driver was bleeding. I just kept telling myself that I could help.”

Stoeckel realized that there was an accident up ahead and decided that she should pull over. “I did what I thought anyone in my shoes would do, and I approached the vehicles to see if I could help as EMS had not arrived at the scene,” she said. Three other individuals had also pulled over to help, and a teenager had stopped on the side of the road to call 911.

Stoeckel is a 2010 medical assistant graduate from MSB-Blaine. Following graduation, she spent time working at University of Minnesota Physicians as well as Allina. In 2013, she returned to MSB-Blaine as an adjunct instructor. In March 2014, she accepted the position as the medical assistant chair at MSB-Brooklyn Center. “Because of my education at MSB, I had the skills and the knowledge to actually be of assistance to the injured and frightened victims.”

While on scene, Stoeckel assisted with the care of three of the four patients. She even used some of the Spanish that she learned in high school after realizing that the driver and passengers in one of the vehicles did not speak English. Since the accident, Stoeckel has taken a Spanish class through MSB to expand her vocabulary.

Stoeckel said, “It got real for me when I noticed that a helicopter was hovering over me while I was helping to support the head and neck of one of the victims who was pinned in the vehicle.” Three of the victims were airlifted to local hospitals, and one was taken by ambulance; they all survived.

In thinking back, Stoeckel said, “It was crazy and surreal, and I will never forget those people. All four of us that stopped to help had medical training: a nurse, a medical assistant, a laboratory technician, and a retired fire fighter. My advice to everyone -- if you see an accident happen, stop to help if it is safe to do so. You may not be able to offer medical help like we could; but you can help direct traffic, offer comfort to those involved, or simply call 911. Summer is here, so do your part to be careful on the roads. Be cautious, be safe, and be aware of motorcycles.”

In February 2014, Stoeckel and the other three volunteers were recognized in a ceremony by the Anoka County Sheriff’s Office. According to a letter written by Sheriff James Stuart, “Our awards ceremony provides us an opportunity to commend citizens and employees for their exceptional performance.” All four volunteers received “...Citizen Awards of Merit for your teamwork, conscientiousness, initiative, and willingness to render aid to others in need.”

We, at the MSB-Brooklyn Center campus, are very proud to have Tracey as a part of our team!

Minnesota School of Business in Brooklyn Center, Minnesota, has held programmatic accreditation for its medical assisting program since 2011.
Alumni Spotlight: Josh Johnson

Josh Johnson is a graduate of the medical assistant program at Minnesota School of Business in Blaine. He is currently working as a Certified Medical Assistant at Tria Orthopedic in Bloomington, MN. Josh works in the Acute Injury Clinic, which provides same day access for acute bone, joint, ligament and muscle injuries. We caught up with Josh to find out what life is like after graduation.

Why did you decide to attend MSB?

MSB was the first school I looked at. I met with Jessica Hamre, Admissions Representative at MSB-Blaine, and felt very comfortable right away. The option to take some classes while in high school (High School Advantage) was also great.

What inspired you to choose the medical assistant program?

Medicine became an interest of mine during the middle of my senior year of high school. I was leaning toward a career in the automotive industry before making the decision to go into medicine. Starting as a medical assistant was the best option for me, and has allowed me to explore many different paths I can take for my future.

Tell us about your educational experience.

I graduated from the Medical Assisting program from the Blaine campus. I completed my externship at Health Partners Specialty Center in St. Paul, MN. I spent time in Rheumatology, Endocrinology and Travel and Tropical Medicine. It was a really good experience and I learned a lot.

How do you define success?

I define success as setting and reaching personal and career goals. If you’re able to provide for yourself and enjoy what you do, I think you are a successful individual.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

Outside of work and school, disc golfing is my life. It helps with anxiety and allows me to clear my mind. And it’s the best sport in the world!

What motivates you?

In my professional life, I try to be the best at what I do.

What is the best advice you’ve been given?

The best advice I received was from Stephanie O’Malley, medical assistant program chair at MSB-Blaine. She has been great at motivating me throughout my program and into my externship. If I had to point to one specific piece of advice, it would be “to always smile.” It’s easy to do, and can open so many opportunities. Make a great impression!

What advice would you give to current students at MSB?

My advice to current students would be to network now and take advantage of every opportunity. Internships and externships are an incredible opportunity.

Anything else you would like to add?

Smile and nod! You won’t know everything going into a new job. You will make mistakes. Learn from them!

Minnesota School of Business in Blaine, Minnesota, has held programmatic accreditation for its medical assisting program since 2010.
Re-Thinking Graduate Placement

By: RJ Nikola

This article may help school administrators improve outcomes for their students and graduates with a focus on poor placement rates. The plan outlined below may not address or resolve every scenario affecting graduate placement rates, but hopefully it may stimulate ideas to connecting graduates with employers.

There are many factors which affect a school’s placement numbers. Previous articles published in The Advantage have touched on the most common factors such as economic conditions, saturating the local market, poor quality candidates, and failure to connect grads with employers. This article looks at each a little more in depth and search for positive possibilities.

**Economic Conditions**

In general, larger markets tend to be more stable because the base is broad. In metropolitan areas there will be more job opportunities than in rural areas. The reason for more stable markets is because of a broader base of employers and employment fields, which is why people move to larger cities for better employment opportunities. Smaller communities tend to have fewer employers and employment fields to enter, and when a down economy forces an employer to close its doors, that can have a devastating effect on entire communities, counties, or states. So, schools need to inform prospective and current students of the opportunities: possibilities of being hired (the school’s track record of past and current placement rates, which are published in consumer disclosure statements required by the US Department of Education), possible employers and the demographics they serve, possible wage variances depending on different areas of the country and different employer types, and the possibility of relocating to obtain a job.

Let’s look at massage therapy as an example. Depending on the school’s curriculum offering, possible employment opportunities include, but are not limited to: massage clinics, chiropractic offices, day spas, resort/destination spas, fitness centers/health clubs, sport’s rehabilitation facilities, cruise ships, and finally outcalls to homes and hotels. Wages vary depending on the type of employer and area of employment.

On the lower end of the income scale are medical massage offices where Licensed Massage Therapists (LMTs) work with accident or injured persons. Insurance companies limit what practitioners (chiropractors, physical therapists, and LMTs) can charge as well as the number of sessions, which impacts compensation. Resort/destination spas are on the high end with other employers falling somewhere in between.

**Saturated Local Markets**

Sometimes it isn’t so much of a down economy as it is too many schools competing in the same area graduating more students than a local market can bear. Frequently schools rely on national forecasts from the US Bureau of Labor & Statistics as their justification for adding a new program or campus, but fail to research local markets thoroughly in spite of various survey techniques.

Schools could look to fishermen in the third world countries who may have proactive solutions. For example, fishermen in the southeast pacific-jim were competing against each other to harvest the most fish for larger pay and were well on their way to destroying populations of certain species and thereby negatively affecting an entire ecosystem. By working together, however, they determined that by limiting the amount of their individual harvests, they could keep market prices stable and not deplete fish populations. By working together to cap enrollments in “overly fished areas”, schools can actually stabilize a portion of the economy in any given area, maintain acceptable placement rates, and help keep graduate wages afloat.

**Poor Quality Job Candidates**

Schools are too focused on teaching specific trade skills they sometimes offer minimal skills in job-related math, writing, phone etiquette, communication, salesmanship, dress, and career development. Given curricula for
certain professions are dictated and even mandated by professional associations, credentialing agencies, and/or local or state governmental departments, it is important for institutions to provide the necessary skill-set for successful student entry into the workforce.

**Failure to Connect Graduates with Employers**

Most frequently the career services department is responsible for student graduate employment activities. However, it is clearly the responsibility of the school to find jobs for their graduates, and keep their placement outcomes within acceptable benchmarks to stay on good terms with their accrediting agency and the Department of Education. So, how is that accomplished?

Designate one person in career services to every one person in the admissions area (a one-to-one ratio). Treating enrollment and student outcomes on equal footing is important to the long-term benefits of student placement. Consider a midsized city with a population of approximately 150,000-300,000 which has a handful of vocational schools all offering medical assistant programs graduating several hundred students every year with all of them inundating medical offices/centers for employment.

When the school, however, accepts the role of creating potential employer lists, making the calls a month or two prior to graduation and then publishing the current active jobs for upcoming graduates, employers are not inundated but aware of a valuable resource schools have created for graduates. Long-term professional relationships between employers and schools are essential for placement success. These lists can be emailed to graduates, made available on a secured section of the school website, or the career services representative can call individual graduates to help make those initial connections. Another proactive approach is to go the extra mile by creating job fairs for employers to meet students several weeks prior to graduation where letters of introduction and résumés are handed out and interviews can happen.

**Conclusion**

Inform prospective students and current students realistically about job potentials, like types of employers, average wages, and the possibility of relocating at times for better salaries. Incorporate business and professionalism coursework into the program/s, even if you offer free weekend workshops prior to job fairs and graduation. Also, schools need to take a proactive approach to keep markets from becoming saturated with too many graduates. Lastly, by looking for positive solutions to placement issues rather than allowing negative speak to bog down career service personnel, schools can find a sea of possibilities for graduates; certainly more than the examples given in this article.

This entire article can be found on the ABHES website under: forms/annual reports. Mr. Nikola served on the ABHES Commission (member of the Board of Trustees) in a volunteer capacity from 2009-2014. He currently consults on accreditation-related matters.
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