

# Dean & Provost

Practical Advice and Strategies for Academic Leaders

VOLUME 21, ISSUE 8

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## SNAPSHOTS

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#### 2015 Winner

Specialized Information  
Publishers Association Awards

*Best Education Interpretive  
or Analytical Reporting*



## CAREER READINESS

### Increase student satisfaction, ROI by bringing career services into the classroom

By Halley Sutton, Contributing Editor

CHICAGO — It's no secret that many students expect higher education to secure a career for them after graduation. But how well is your institution providing them with the skills they'll need to succeed in the marketplace? Moving career services into the classroom, and integrating them as part of the university experience, is one way to ensure your students find the career counseling and professional opportunities they're looking for.

That's what Purdue University Global has done by integrating career-related touchpoints throughout the student's life cycle, so that career development is baked into the curriculum. At a session at the annual conference of the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, Guilene Williams and Jennifer Katz, who both hold the title Director of Career Services at Purdue University Global,

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## INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

### Company's retention needs lead to enrollment boost

By Halley Sutton, Contributing Editor

CHICAGO — A few years ago, supervisors at FedEx realized they had a retention problem. For employees who worked at the company, turnover was about 92%. For the Memphis warehouse, which employed about 12,000 people, that meant replacing approximately 10,000 employees annually. "It cost them about \$3,500 to train a new employee," said Courtney Brafford, Coordinator of Student Success Initiatives and Retention Specialist at the University of Memphis. As an initiative to retain employees and build lasting skills, FedEx partnered with UM to develop online pathways to degrees available to employees with no upfront tuition cost.

**Continued on page 6.**

## Rate of associate degrees awarded increases

Colleges awarded associate degrees and certificates at the same rate as bachelor's degrees in 2016, according to a report from Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce.

The report also found that, depending on the field, those with associate degrees earn as much, if not more, than those with bachelor's degrees.

Read more at <http://bit.ly/36VjvJB>. ■

## Blockchain credentials take step forward

The National Student Clearinghouse announced in a press release its intention to join with Velocity Career Labs, along with other enterprise labor organizations, to launch the Velocity Network Foundation. The VNF will use blockchain technology to provide individuals secure access to their career credentials, while also allowing higher education

institutions and employers the ability to verify credentials.

Users will have exclusive access to a self-sovereign identity via blockchain, portions of which they can share with prospective employers or others. ■

## Professor not teaching after calling cops

A Ball State University professor who called the police to report that a black student wouldn't change seats after being asked to do so is no longer teaching at the institution for the remainder of the semester. According to *The Star Press*, the incident received national attention after a video was posted to social media.

Ball State's general counsel said no charges had been brought against the professor, nor any disciplinary action taken that prompted the leave. ■

## Recent college grads are underemployed

The unemployment rate of recent college graduates is higher

than that of the general population, and more than 40% of recent graduates are in jobs that do not require a degree, according to data published by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

However, the data showed that the unemployment rate for recent graduates was lower than for peers without a degree.

Read more at <https://nyfed.org/2HzaP8i>. ■

## Review resources for coronavirus preparations

If you are involved in your institution's coronavirus preparations, several organizations have created resources that could help:

> American College Health Association: <http://bit.ly/2VC7BsS>.

> College and University Professional Association for Human Resources: <http://bit.ly/2T70cQF>.

> National Association of College and University Business Officers: <http://bit.ly/3adbkBl>. ■

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## Don't waste other people's time

By Dawn Z. Hodges, Ph.D.

One of the worst things a leader, manager, or boss can do, in my opinion, is waste their employees' time. By doing so, you are keeping your employees from being productive.

I once worked for a boss who would keep me waiting 15–20 minutes for meetings she had scheduled. Not once or twice, but every time I met with her. She didn't keep me waiting because she had someone else in her office or because she was on the phone. I could hear the shuffling of papers and the clicks of a keyboard.

She was consistently late for her own meetings. Once the meetings started, they would last four to five hours. I once went to a meeting at an off-site location. She kept a county superintendent of schools, leaders from other organizations, and me waiting for 30 minutes. Oddly enough, the superintendent was at the same meeting with her before our meeting. He made it on time, but she didn't.

She could have been overwhelmed with her duties or was having difficulty managing her schedule. But the message I received was "I'm more important than any of you. You can wait for me."

The article "What to Do When Someone Makes You Wait" (<http://bit.ly/38B7XmF>) offers some good information on the subject. The article suggests, "Making you wait is a common social power move in ... business." It shows that the person letting you wait is:

- The chooser — you need something from them.
- More powerful, and it's a sign of disrespect.
- Of higher value — what they are doing is more important than you.

You can restore the power imbalance in a few different ways. You can prevent giving them the full decision-making power by suggesting you meet at your convenience, meeting close to your office, confirming the meeting ahead of time, or having a plan B, such as listening to an audiobook via headphones. If you're in a meeting with multiple people, you could start without them. You could even make them pay — he came late, so you'll leave early.

As the article states, "The more you inconvenience yourself to meet someone, the more power you are giving them."

I'm sure that as a boss, I sometimes wasted other people's time too. You may have done the same. There are many articles in the literature regarding this phenomenon.

In "10 Ways You're Wasting Other People's Time" (<http://bit.ly/2wDMQTr>), the writer offers examples of ways you might be wasting other people's time. These include calling when you could send the message in an email; interrupting the workflow to chat; failing to respect time boundaries (such as calling on the weekend for a minor

issue); failing to follow through on what you say; sending multiple emails in the place of one; creating last-minute urgent situations due to disorganization; not being prepared for meetings; "knocking twice" (such as sending an email message, then calling to see if they got it); being late; and more.

Don McMinn offers the following suggestions in his article "Don't waste people's time" (<http://bit.ly/2WbHadZ>) so that you don't waste anyone else's time during meetings:

- Be punctual.
- Be organized.
- Plan ahead.
- Be decisive.
- Monitor conversations and keep them on track.
- Anticipate questions.
- Pay attention.

Dorie Clark, a marketing strategist and professional speaker who teaches at Duke University's Fuqua School of Business, offers these additional strategies for maximizing efficiency in meetings in "5 Ways to Avoid Wasting Other People's Time" (<https://amex.co/2IDQ10b>):

- Don't misrepresent why you're meeting.
- Don't just "drop by."
- Don't create endless communication loops.
- Don't skimp on preparation.

She concludes, "In today's busy world, wasting ... time is one of the worst sins .... You'll benefit more by being viewed as someone who prepares thoroughly and is respectful of others' schedules."

I agree. It's absolutely rude and particularly unproductive to waste others' time. ■



DAWN Z. HODGES

### About the author

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shared how the university's touchpoints make career planning unavoidable for students.

### Make professional expertise unavoidable

"So many times, students come to Career Services only a month or two before graduation and say they don't know what they'll do with their career," Williams said. Purdue Global made the decision to integrate career services into the curriculum by adding three distinct touchpoints from career services into the classroom: once at the beginning of the student's enrollment, once at the middle, and once at the end. During each touchpoint, students are presented with career information specific to their field of study.

The first touchpoint occurs in the first few terms of a student's enrollment, but not during the first term, Williams said. It's too overwhelming for students to be introduced to the institution and their new course load, and on top of that, be introduced to career services, she added. The first touchpoint provides an overview of career services; Purdue Global's homegrown "LinkedIn-esque" online system, CareerNetwork; career options associated with the program of study; and professional organizations students may want to join.

The second touchpoint occurs at the student's academic midpoint. It covers topics such as how to conduct a job search, how to create an outstanding résumé and cover letter, how to prepare for interviews, tips for starting your own business, and information about other graduates' success stories. At this point, many of the courses include a résumé assignment, where résumés are submitted to Career Services for critique, Katz said.

The final touchpoint occurs shortly before students graduate from Purdue Global. It involves an exit interview, where they discuss their career plans with a counselor at Career Services and have their résumé reviewed again. It also offers students the

opportunity to conduct a mock interview to prepare for the workforce.

### Integrate career planning into your curriculum

Williams "does a great job of presenting this as though it was a seamless process. You're probably thinking, Wow, I could never get this into my classroom," Katz said. But the process wasn't easy at Purdue Global, she said. Katz and Williams shared the following tips for incorporating something similar at your institution:

- > **Be flexible with faculty.** Katz said the initiative received pushback from faculty, who resented having to add more content to the curriculum, or potentially bump over content to make room for Career Services. One way Katz and Williams worked around that was to offer a variety of solutions for faculty, including the option for faculty to show a video from Career Services rather than let them take over the classroom, or add watching the video asynchronously to a student assignment, rather than use up lecture time.

- > **Share data.** Career Services conducted a satisfaction survey among students and found that 96% of students felt more confident in their job search after the Career Services presentations; 99% of students believed the Career Services presentation was helpful; and 96% of students thought the presenter was knowledgeable. Katz said Career Services leveraged that data to convince faculty members who were reluctant to participate of the importance of the touchpoints.

- > **Maintain strong relationships with employers.** Providing students with information is only helpful as long as information is accurate, up to date, and likely to help students get a job, Williams said. Make sure you're regularly touching base with employers in your community and updating your information as needed, she advised.

"Never, ever, ever again do I want to hear a student come to us and say 'What can I do with this degree?' We've failed if that's happening," Katz said. ■

## Build digital spaces for students to network

At the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning annual conference, Guilene Williams and Jennifer Katz, both Director of Career Services at Purdue Global University, shared how an online, homegrown system gives students additional access to career-prep tools, such as mock professional interviews, salary and hiring information from employers, and more.

Students don't just come to higher education to get a degree: they come to get a degree that helps them attain a career goal, Katz said. To that end, Purdue Global created

the CareerNetwork, a "LinkedIn"-like site only for Purdue Global students, where users can access information on career opportunities associated with their academic field of study. The site is "game-ified," Katz said, allowing students to score points by completing career-prep activities, and compare their progress with their peers on a leaderboard.

Resources on the site include videos, employer show-cases, information about networking opportunities, and more. Students can post their résumés and ask for feedback from other students on the site as well, Williams said. ■

## Report reveals millennial graduates' satisfaction with college investment, careers

By Joan Hope, Ph.D., Editor

There's a popular narrative that college is not worth the time and money. Even a Gates Foundation initiative is examining the value of higher education, said Larry Chiagouris, a Professor in the Lubin School of Business at Pace University and author of *The Secret to Getting a Job After College*. But how do recent graduates feel about the investment they made, especially as it relates to their career?

That answer could impact recruitment and retention of current students.

Chiagouris recently released his first of several reports based on a survey of millennials and their perceptions of their college experiences. The first part of *The Millennial College Graduate Report* compares the views of older and younger members of the generation. Online survey results from 1,023 graduates ages 25 to 35 were divided into younger and older cohorts.

The survey showed that most students thought college was a good investment. Many graduates, however, admitted to not making full use of the career services offered to them and wished they had done more in that area.

Key findings in the report include:

- Among all millennials, 62% would recommend the college where they earned their degree to friends and colleagues, with younger millennials slightly more likely to do so.

- Nearly 70% believed their college prepared them for employment, but about the same proportion wish their college did more to encourage them to plan for employment opportunities after graduation.

- A sizeable minority (31% of younger and about 24% of older millennials) believed their college over-promised and underdelivered in terms of how much they would learn.

- About 40% admitted to not fully utilizing career services offered, and nearly half admitted to not doing enough career planning.

- Older millennials were more likely to believe college was not a good use of their time (34%, compared with about 27%) and money (43%, compared with about 35%).

For a copy of the report, go to <http://bit.ly/35puqSY>. ■

### Take career services to students

When prospective students and their parents look at colleges and universities, they consider what types of jobs the student might be able to get after graduation. Many colleges and universities share information about their Career Services Office in their promotional literature and on campus tours and in information sessions.

But are students taking advantage of the services offered to them? Officials in the Center for Career and Professional Development at the City University of New York, College of Staten Island have changed how they deliver their services. They now take career preparation out into the community, said Caryl Watkins, Director of the center.

Efforts that have worked well include:

- **Career pop-ups.** Career services professionals set up in academic buildings, where they offer résumé review, answer questions, and advertise upcoming career-related events in the major. Peer mentors attend the events, and the familiar setting makes it easier for students to connect.

Students often start conversations with "I was just curious," but then they move on to "I want to get a job. What do I have to do?" Watkins said.

- **Career lounge.** Students can use the computers or just chat or eat, and career services staff members

drop in and have informal conversations with students.

- **Employer appearances and tables.** Employers give presentations about their businesses. They might talk about a day in the life at the company or what skills they look for when hiring mechanical engineers. Students don't need to dress up to attend. The college hosts two a week, lasting from 45 minutes to two hours. They are held during club hours when students don't have class, and 50 to 80 students typically attend, Watkins said.

The tables allow informal conversations with employers. Students learn communication skills from dropping by, Watkins said. They need to know something about the company and be able to talk about themselves, rather than just asking what job openings the company has, she added.

- **Faculty engagement.** Faculty members have students in front of them every day, Watkins said. Her center asks them to include a career piece in their course, such as résumé writing. Professors also incorporate National Association of Colleges and Employers career competencies in their course objectives so students can name the competencies they have developed. And the center has a Blackboard site where faculty members can learn from one another. ■

Continued from page 1

At the annual meeting of the Council on Adult and Experiential Learning, Brafford; Katie Sharpe, Ph.D., Instructional Designer; Scott Vann, Ph.D., Assistant Director of Digital Learning; Barrett Schwarz, Coordinator for Virtual Learning Services and Facilitator for the Learning inspired by FedEx Prep Academy; and Tracy Robinson, Director of Innovative Academic Initiatives, shared strategies for successful partnerships between Fortune 500 companies and higher education institutions.

### Changes to existing program to draw more users

Although FedEx had an existing tuition assistance program before partnering with UM, only 3.5% of employees were using it, Brafford said. And under the old program, students had to provide the tuition upfront and then be paid back by FedEx after the

semester was over. “But if you’re only making \$14 or \$15 per hour, fronting thousands of dollars, even if there’s a promise of return, is a major barrier [to enrollment],” Brafford said.

To make the program more attractive for employees, the company decided to switch the model to pay the costs upfront. That also meant the tuition cap per student could be only \$5,250 per semester so students didn’t have to pay tax on the tuition assistance as income, Brafford added. That’s great for students, and it’s also great for FedEx: Now they get only one bill a semester, Brafford said.

But tuition assistance alone wasn’t enough to draw employees to the UM online degrees (or retain them in their positions at FedEx): UM and FedEx worked together to show how the competencies mastered in the online programs would lead directly to better job opportunities at FedEx, promotions, and higher wages. The program was marketed to

### Unexpected pathways to college credit without testing

At the annual meeting for the Council on Adult and Experiential Learning, staff from the University of Memphis shared how a recent partnership with FedEx had boosted enrollment, and revenue, and led to a more skilled workforce in the area. Tracy Robinson, Director of Innovative Academic Initiatives, shared how awarding credit for prior learning played into the partnership.

Robinson gave credit to FedEx’s prior relationship with UM, where UM evaluated training and prior learning for credit for the company, as part of the reason for the extended partnership. “We evaluated management training,” Robinson said. Besides the credit offered for students through the LiFE Prep Academy program, UM also offers FedEx employees credit for prior learning via exams and through portfolio evaluations.

For FedEx employees to receive credit from UM for their workplace training, they send their training transcript to the university for review, Robinson said. Possible credit awards have already been determined by review from faculty discipline experts, so that the work on the UM side is relatively standardized at this point, she added. “We offer experiential learning credit at the undergraduate as well as the graduate levels,” Robinson said. The maximum amount of credit students can earn via their training transcript is 30 credit hours

at the undergraduate level. FedEx employees who submit a training transcript for credit receive an S for satisfactory if their transcript meets requirements, so the training transcript credit has no bearing on their GPA, Robinson said. If students receive credit via an exam, the Registrar’s Office uses a generic course number for the credit earned that can be substituted for course requirements the student may need, she added.

“A lot of managers [at FedEx] have been with the company 10, 15, 20 years and haven’t finished their degree,” Robinson said. Those workers are ideal candidates for the UM prior credit evaluation, because their training transcript is likely to meet the 30-credit maximum and provide significant movement on their progress to a degree with little extra effort on the part of the employee.

FedEx employees pay \$75 per credit hour for credits from their training transcripts, rather than the regular tuition average of \$415. “To date, we are 14 months into this partnership, and our office has evaluated 143 training transcripts. Those transcripts have garnered 1,808 credits at the undergraduate level, with the average amount of credit awarded per students at 13 credit hours,” Robinson said. She estimates this has saved FedEx employees more than \$600,000 in tuition. ■

employees under the tagline “Learn to Earn,” and competencies were mapped to career paths in FedEx to show that there was a direct correlation to the increase in wages employees could expect from completing the program and advancing at the company.

FedEx employees are eligible to begin using the benefits on their first day of employment. Within a month of the retooled FedEx and UM programming, UM had fielded more than 1,000 inquiries from FedEx employees about the programs.

### **LiFE coaching guides students through intricacies of higher education**

Many of the employees who would be strong candidates for completing a degree through UM either had never been to college or hadn't been to college for many years. The median age for students taking advantage of the benefits is 36, Schwarz said. To help prepare them for the rigors of higher education, and to ensure that the program was accessible to all employees, UM and FedEx created an online prep academy, the LiFE Prep Academy.

The LiFE Prep Academy was developed to allow employees to move at their own pace through four modules of increasing difficulty to be ready for a college course load, Sharpe said. And students who complete all four modules earn 12 units of college credit at UM, she added. “We talked with FedEx about competency-based education and what they wanted their employees to come away with,” Sharpe said of the program design.

At first, the LiFE programming was designed at a graduate student level, with material written for your typical college-level student, Vann said. But he and Sharpe quickly realized that they needed to scale back the language and tailor it to be more like the language FedEx employees were used to. Instead of learning objectives, LiFE Prep Academy uses “to-do lists” and “key takeaways.” Students unlock the next

module in the series once they complete the learning objectives for their current module.

Although the learning is self-paced, students have due dates for assignments, but no end dates for the program, Vann said. And as students advance through the modules, more emphasis is put on marking the amount of time they'll be expected to complete assignments in, once they join the typical UM online programming. “The first unit is very supportive of students taking their time. The messaging that there's no failing this module is front and center,” Sharpe said. By the third unit, typical due dates are front and center. “Our modules begin to say, ‘Here's how long you should expect to spend working on this assignment,’” she added.

The emphasis on career advancement was baked into the program from day one: “We wanted to think about the degrees these students will be getting, to find areas to practice the skills they'll need [for career advancement] and find ways to attach them to that job,” Schwarz said. The program seeks a balance between building academic skills and professional skills, he said. That's often accomplished by creating workplace scenarios that illustrate concepts students have been learning, so they can practice problem-solving in real time. “It's aimed at showing students how what they're learning is all intertwined: There is no difference between professional and academic,” Vann said. ■

### **Submit an article**

What initiatives are working well on your campus? What leadership strategies help you do your job effectively?

Share your ideas with your colleagues by submitting an article.

For submission guidelines, email Editor Joan Hope at [jhope@wiley.com](mailto:jhope@wiley.com). ■

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## Address faculty bullying with these strategies

By Leah P. Hollis

Workplace bullying in higher education is a burgeoning behavior that hurts faculty productivity and department collegiality. And bullying behaviors often perplex academic administrators, who are just starting to formulate policies prohibiting workplace bullying.

Title VII harassment complaints must invoke a protected class (i.e., race, gender, age, or disability) to trigger an investigation; workplace bullying complaints, by contrast, would not have such a clear threshold, just reports of destructive behavior and escalating conflicts.

Administrative apathy and inactivity create the perception that they are complicit and tacitly condoning bullying behaviors. Further, workplace bullying disproportionately affects women and people of color. Unchecked workplace bullying can lead to a tumultuous and expensive discrimination scenario.

### Collective strategy

A first step to curbing toxic dynamics could include comparing bullying behaviors across academic departments and understanding the damage done to faculty and students. With this idea in mind, chairs and deans might wish to generate a brief anonymous climate survey. Avoid asking about gender and department. Instead, use broad categories, such as arts and letters, social sciences, or physical sciences.

Further, graduate students should have an important voice. One may be surprised to learn that the best and brightest rising stars endure ogre-like advising and punitive directives from their advisors. Such bullying treatment creates anxiety, depression, and, in the worst cases, suicidal ideation for graduate students.

Once this data is collected, the coalition of department chairs and deans can work with faculty development units, faculty unions, faculty senates, and human resources to devise data-driven expectations of collegiality. It requires a universitywide commitment with leaders who are empowered to broach such problems in annual evaluations.

### Academic bullying behaviors

The following examples, although not an exhaustive list, constitute some workplace faculty bullying techniques:

- > Challenging academic freedom.

- > Using meetings and departmentwide email to publicly admonish others.
- > Criticizing colleagues.
- > Suppressing information critical to productivity.
- > Giving the silent treatment.

- > Interfering with computers, printers, and lab equipment.

- > Stealing intellectual material and not giving credit.

Graduate students report experiencing the following bullying behaviors by faculty:

- > Giving harsh and punitive feedback beyond constructive criticism.
- > Employing extensive wait times before giving feedback on papers and theses.
- > Exploiting graduate assistant contracts—asking for 30 hours of work a week when the student is paid for only 20 hours.
- > Publishing graduate student work without giving credit.
- > Delaying defenses and hearings unnecessarily, thus forcing students to pay additional fees for extra academic terms.
- > Defaming students in front of peers and other faculty.

### Collective follow-through

When climate surveys are conducted, academic administration should avoid falling into the common trap of not following through. Too often, such surveys have the data to solve contentious organizational problems, but then those with the power to affect change get distracted by competing tasks or personal problems.

Leading educated, independent-minded faculty to change behaviors, without clear federal laws prohibiting bullying, can be particularly difficult. In the absence of clear and actionable regulations, the administration has minimal scaffolding on which to build expectations for civility. Therefore, the scaffolding is often homegrown and includes self-policing expectations.

Collectively addressing workplace bullying on campus involves less stress and less time than public lawsuits, intrusive depositions, and the arduous discovery process if a bullied colleague sues for emotional and psychological damage. ■

### About the author

Leah P. Hollis is an Associate Professor in the Community College Leadership Program at Morgan State University in Maryland. Her article first appeared in *The Department Chair*, also published by Jossey-Bass, A Wiley Brand. For more information about that publication, please go to <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/19364393>. ■

## PUNITIVE DAMAGES

**Judge rules against athletic director**

**Case name:** *Nace v. Faith Christian Academy, et al.*, No. 15-333 (E.D. Pa. 03/29/19).

**Ruling:** The U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Pennsylvania allowed a claim for punitive damages to continue against an athletic director.

**What it means:** An athletic director at an institution of higher learning who learns that a coach may have sexually harassed a student has an obligation to report that information to the appropriate authorities.

**Summary:** In December 2009, an investigation conducted by the Faith Christian Academy headmaster allegedly revealed that one of its coaches had sent an underage student over 3,000 texts in the previous 90 days. Although no physical contact had occurred, some of those texts had purportedly indicated the coach's desire to marry the student.

Based upon the advice of school counsel, the headmaster asked the coach to resign.

The accused coach resigned, citing health reasons.

However, he was hired as a coach by the Pennridge School District two years later.

In 2013, the former Faith Christian coach allegedly engaged in a sexual relationship with a minor Pennridge student-athlete.

That student eventually filed a suit against Faith Christian and others that asserted several claims. One was a claim for punitive damages against both the headmaster and the AD at Faith Christian.

Those two defendants filed motions for summary judgment.

The district court judge said punitive damages were available in negligence claims if a plaintiff could demonstrate that a defendant had acted with either an evil motive or reckless indifference.

She then ruled that a reasonable jury could find that both the headmaster and the AD exhibited reckless indifference to the rights of others because: (1) the AD knew some of the details of the headmaster's investigation, (2) neither Faith Christian official reported the accused coach to any authorities, and (3) both had assisted that coach in concealing what had occurred.

She allowed the punitive damages claims to continue. ■

## DISABILITY

**Judge rules against university**

**Case name:** *Burton v. Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System, et al.*, No. 17-cv-36 (W.D. Wis. 03/29/19).

**Ruling:** The U.S. District Court, Western District of Wisconsin refused to dismiss a claim against the University of Wisconsin-Platteville.

**What it means:** To prevail on a claim of a failure to accommodate in violation of the Rehabilitation Act, a plaintiff must demonstrate: (1) she was a qualified individual with a disability, (2) the employer was aware of the disability, and (3) the employer failed to reasonably accommodate her. A "qualified individual with a disability" is someone who can perform the essential functions of her job with reasonable accommodations.

**Summary:** The plaintiff was a University of Wisconsin-Platteville associate professor with a serious ulcer disorder.

In August 2016, UWP officials began investigating an unspecified complaint against her.

In September, the plaintiff applied to human resources for a 30-day postponement of the investigation "to lower the chance of serious health consequences," and attached a doctor's report to her application.

However, her request was denied.

She unsuccessfully submitted another postponement request a few days later.

The plaintiff filed a suit against several defendants that made a host of claims.

One was a violation of the Rehabilitation Act by failing to grant a postponement.

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The defendants filed a motion to dismiss, contending there weren't any allegations that she needed the postponement.

The district court judge said it was reasonable to infer the plaintiff needed the accommodation, because the doctor's report submitted with her first application had recommended it.

He refused to dismiss that claim but cautioned the plaintiff that she would ultimately need to prove: (1) the failure to accommodate her disability prevented her from performing an essential function of her job and (2) the postponement she sought would have been effective. ■

## SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

### Judge rules against university

**Case name:** *Noakes v. Syracuse University*, No. 5:18-cv-43 (N.D. N.Y. 02/26/19).

**Ruling:** The U.S. District Court, Northern District of New York refused to dismiss a suit against Syracuse University.

**What it means:** A suspended student asserting a violation of Title IX because of an erroneous outcome must allege: (1) facts sufficient to cast some doubt on the accuracy of the disciplinary proceeding and (2) circumstances suggesting that gender bias was a motivating factor behind the erroneous finding.

**Summary:** The plaintiff was a Syracuse University graduate assistant for the varsity football team.

In 2016, he was charged with groping female classmate "Jane Roe" outside an off-campus bar after two football players identified him as the probable culprit.

A student conduct board held a hearing and suspended him indefinitely because it decided he had violated the student conduct code.

The plaintiff filed a suit that made several claims.

One was an erroneous outcome in violation of Title IX because of gender discrimination.

The plaintiff alleged: (1) he never touched Roe, (2) she originally was unable to identify the attacker, (3) her subsequent identification of him had been inappropriately influenced by the investigators, and (4) the investigators ignored evidence that he couldn't have been involved.

Lawsuit court records are summarized  
by Richard H. Willits, Esq.

The plaintiff also claimed gender bias because: (1) students, public media, the federal government, and the state had all previously claimed Syracuse wasn't taking sexual assault complaints seriously; (2) female accusers were immediately labeled "survivors" and accused men were labeled "suspects"; (3) Syracuse failed to investigate Roe's credibility; and (4) Roe didn't participate in the hearing.

The district court judge said the plaintiff was required to allege: (1) facts sufficient to cast some articulable doubt on the accuracy of the disciplinary proceeding and (2) circumstances suggesting that gender bias was a motivating factor behind the erroneous finding.

The judge dismissed other portions of the suit. However, he refused to dismiss the Title IX claim, ruling that the plaintiff had met both requirements. ■

## SEX DISCRIMINATION

### Judge rules against college

**Case name:** *Stanton v. Jarvis Christian College*, No. 6:18-CV-00479 (E.D. Tex. 02/13/19).

**Ruling:** The U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Texas refused to dismiss a suit against Jarvis Christian College.

**What it means:** To establish a case of retaliation in violation of Title VII, a plaintiff must show: (1) she participated in an activity protected by the statute, (2) she suffered an adverse employment action, and (3) there was a causal connection between the protected activity and the adverse action. It is irrelevant in a retaliation suit that the plaintiff's employment contract was renewed.

**Summary:** In February 2018, a Jarvis Christian College woman's basketball coach filed a charge of gender discrimination with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

The plaintiff was fired three weeks after her contract was renewed in June and filed a suit that asserted several claims. One was retaliation in violation of Title VII because of her EEOC complaint.

Jarvis filed a motion to dismiss, arguing that the firing wasn't in retaliation for anything because her employment contract had been renewed after the EEOC complaint was filed.

The district court judge said establishing retaliation in violation of Title VII required a plaintiff to show: (1) she participated in a Title VII protected activity, (2) she suffered an adverse employment action by her employer, and (3) there was a causal connection between the protected activity and the adverse action.

The judge dismissed other parts of the suit. However, he refused to dismiss the retaliation claim, stating that the renewal of her employment agreement wasn't a valid defense. ■

## RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION

### Court rules in favor of college

**Case name:** *Dinnerstein v. Burlington County College*, No. 17-3623 (3d Cir. 03/08/19).

**Ruling:** The U.S. Court of Appeals, 3d Circuit affirmed a summary judgment in favor of Burlington County College.

**What it means:** A plaintiff claiming discrimination must show: (1) he is a member of a protected class, (2) he was qualified for the position he sought to retain, (3) he suffered an adverse employment action, and (4) the action occurred under circumstances that could give rise to an inference of intentional discrimination.

**Summary:** Burlington County College hired the plaintiff as a maintenance mechanic in 2007.

During 2008, the college addressed violations of its civility policy with the plaintiff on several occasions, and it gave him a final warning after he allegedly yelled profanities at a co-worker in August 2011.

The plaintiff was fired in December for the stated reason of using profane language with his supervisors. He then filed a suit claiming discrimination

against his Jewish religion in violation of Title VII. The plaintiff alleged that he was slandered, devalued, harassed, and subjected to unwarranted discipline.

The plaintiff admitted in his deposition that he: (1) had been yelling profanities at his supervisors at the time, (2) was aware of the prior warnings, and (3) understood what those warnings meant.

In support of his claim, the plaintiff testified that one co-worker had said about him "the Jew doesn't know anything." He also testified that the entire maintenance shop said he had been hired only because he was Jewish.

The trial judge granted a summary judgment in favor of Burlington County College.

On appeal, the court said a plaintiff claiming discrimination must show: (1) he is a member of a protected class, (2) he was qualified for the position he sought to retain, (3) he suffered an adverse employment action, and (4) the action occurred under circumstances that could give rise to an inference of intentional discrimination.

The panel ruled that the plaintiff had merely presented "stray remarks" that were insufficient to show discrimination.

It also said that nothing suggested that the stated reason for termination was false.

The appellate court affirmed the trial judge's ruling, stating that the plaintiff's subjective beliefs couldn't support a discrimination suit. ■

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## Community partnerships, passion for student success drive efforts

By Joan Hope, Ph.D., Editor

"I'm going to do whatever it takes to make our young people succeed," said Tunjarnika Coleman, Provost and Dean of Student Services at the Palm Beach Gardens Campus of Palm Beach State College. She leads her campus with a focus on completing each initiative with excellence and the mantra #makeithappen.



TUNJARNIKA  
COLEMAN

Coleman's deep roots in the community help her create the partnerships that result in success for the diverse population of students at the campus. She graduated from the city's high school and took her first college class on the campus

the summer before she headed to a university out of state.

Since becoming Provost, her efforts to support students have ranged from developing academic programs that meet workforce needs to collaborating with local officials on public transportation issues that impact students.

In 2018, Coleman served as the President of the Association of Florida Colleges, an organization with more than 8,000 members that represents the state's 28 state colleges. That role engaged her in advocating for appropriate funding so students can afford a high-quality education. Much is said about education leveling the playing field, Coleman said. The work she did with the organization and continues to do on campus gets higher education closer to where it should be in terms of equality, she said. The goal is to provide opportunity to even the most marginalized students.

Coleman's role with the AFC also allowed her to represent key policy initiatives important to her constituents, address specific problems that impacted employees such as retirement, and provide professional development to staff.

### Collaborations support students

On her campus, Coleman seeks to address specific student needs, and working with community partners is an effective approach. For example, one of her goals is to change the scope of students who enroll. To do that, it's important to take college to the students, she said.

One effort to do just that involves a partnership with a nearby municipality, Riviera Beach. The goal of the partnership is to remove enrollment barriers. The college offers two certificate programs at a city building, and the college and city secured funding to make the programs free to the students. College officials provide wraparound services at the location. Business operations specialist, the first certificate program launched, takes eight months to complete. Riviera Beach pays for students' books, and it guarantees that students who complete the program will get at least an interview for a position or will be considered for promotion if they work with the city. The program is open to any city resident, Coleman said.

Coleman's partners for academic programs also include local high schools. The campus has one of the highest dual-enrollment rates in Florida, she said.

Coleman also works with community partners to provide comprehensive services to students on campus. Many students at the college face housing, food, and clothing insecurities. Coleman is expanding the college's pantry and building a closet along with community agencies.

She is also working with groups to make services available in the campus wellness center. For example, representatives from Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies meet with students on campus. Not all students have health insurance, so having health resources available to them is key, she said.

About 40 agencies have their quarterly meeting on campus. It's important to bring them to the college, Coleman said. If we're truly a community college, people have to feel that they are a part of it, she added.

Coleman says her role is not just to provide formal academic programs. It also includes support for the whole student. "When we ensure access for people, they tend to be successful and become independent, great citizens," she added.

Partnerships also involve future students, Coleman said. For example, a local Boys & Girls Club brings 30 to 50 students to campus each semester to take tours and meet staff members. The goal is to introduce them to college early on. "That's crucial," Coleman said. And the college works with Women of Tomorrow, an organization that provides science, technology, engineering, and math support and encouragement to high school students.

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