



**Press Clippings
August 2015
Print**

TRANSFORMATIONS IN EDUCATION

5 ways Philadelphia is getting smarter about higher education

Greater Philadelphia's colleges and universities don't look the same as they did 10 years ago.

The digital age has made the learning process more flexible than ever in the region. At no point has the need to physically be in a classroom been less necessary. Today, the learning process often commences from a computer monitor, which historically has been the site of homework and supplemental assignments. Now, building on knowledge can take place in the classroom, where students forgo lectures and presentations in place of immersive exercises conjured up by professors. Or it can take place online, where today's adult students sometimes find it more convenient to earn their degrees. Change is all over campus, and at some universities it's more tangible.

One West Philadelphia school is already ahead of schedule for a 30-year master development plan, intended to remove it from the shadow of its local counterparts. And then there's the endgame of all educational institutions: the career success of its students. A couple of local universities have sought new ways to connect students directly with their futures. A high grade point average isn't enough anymore. In 2025, these campuses will look different to the left, to the right, and against the sky. They'll look different from the window of a classroom and the glare of a computer monitor. And they'll look different through the eyes of their 10-year alumni, many of the whom will be the region's next business leaders. Here's what's transforming in education now that will leave its imprint on the future.

For adult learners: Online, in the classroom, maybe a mix, it's the student's choice

Peirce College's curriculum is geared toward adult learners who can't always make it to class.

To accommodate its students' other commitments, Peirce now allows them to select whether they'll attend class in-person or online on a week-by-week basis. There is no minimum for how much a student must attend a class on each platform, so theoretically a student may pass without ever meeting his or her professor.

“This puts that flexibility in each course and allows students to plan ahead and respond to those life events that happen to them spontaneously,” said Rita Toliver-Roberts, Peirce’s vice president of academic development.

Right now, the option is only available for some IT, health and graduate courses. But Toliver-Roberts said Peirce plans to make the option available for all of its classes by September 2016. This fall, it will officially roll out with four degree programs.

Attendance rates — this counts online and in-person — have gone up since the implementation of the program, and Toliver-Roberts said student satisfaction is high.

“They like the opportunity to choose,” she said. “They can jump into virtual rooms or chat sessions, interacting with our faculty members in different ways.”

Grades have gone up, too.

“Based on the market’s needs, it is clearly time to take this flexibility to the next level,” she said.



FORTUNE

Will movie theaters ever respond to the mass shootings?

by Erik Sherman AUGUST 7, 2015, 12:55 PM EDT

There have been three mass shootings in movie theaters since 2012. Yet there's been no beefing up of security.

Wednesday saw a sad milestone, another movie theater [shooting](#), in the Nashville, Tennessee area. A few weeks ago, there was a [shooting](#) that left three moviegoers dead in Lafayette, Louisiana, and the July 2012 shooting of 12 people at a theater in Aurora, Colorado is still etched in people's memories (defendant [James Holmes was found guilty](#) of that shooting last month).

So, the question arises: what changes are theaters making to protect customers and to keep their businesses going?

The answer? Probably not much, if anything, has changed, nor is it likely to in the near future. Fortune contacted some of the largest U.S. theaters chains — Regal Entertainment, AMC Entertainment, and Cinemark Theatres — but none responded to requests for comment. And despite the fact that there have been three mass shootings in movie theaters since 2012, overall, movie ticket sales have remained relatively strong. In 2014, American box office receipts of \$10.4 billion were down 5% from the previous year. The number of tickets sold and the average number sold per person declined by 6% over the same period.

Consumers seem to still trust going to theaters.

Chris Johnson, CEO of Classic Cinemas, which runs 104 screens in 13 Illinois locations, said that business was initially off after the Aurora, Colorado shooting three years ago in which [12 died and 70 were injured](#). However, sales didn't drop.

"We had a real positive attendance last night and there was no step back yesterday when [the Tennessee shooting] happened," Johnson told Fortune. "It's a very unfortunate situation, but people still fly, still go to school, still go to church, still go to malls, and every other place where there's been an unfortunate incident. I don't want to disregard it because it bothers me immensely, but really, from a long-term perspective, you're basically [asking whether] people are going to go outside ever again, and I don't see that happening. People are going to continue to go out."

The cost of beefed up security

Additionally, moviegoers don't seem to want to turn the experience into something like entering an airport. Immediately following the most recent

shooting in Tennessee, some theatergoers told the Arizona Republic that [movie operators should](#) beef up security through activity like checking bags. But metal detectors don't appear to be popular. According to [a July study by research firm C4](#), conducted days after the Lafayette shooting, moviegoers had mixed feelings over the installation of additional security in theaters.

Even with one third saying they wanted to see metal detectors and even armed security, [only 13% of them would pay \\$3 more](#) per ticket for the additional security.

Given that [operating a checkpoint](#) can run between \$250,000 and \$1 million a year, beefing up security would likely result in higher ticket prices for consumers.

Would more security prevent tragedies?

Not only can security be expensive, but there's also the question of how well it can work. In Aurora, the convicted shooter [James Holmes was allegedly unarmed](#) when he bought his ticket. Only after entering did he prop open an emergency door and return with body armor and weapons.

Still, Bob Brzenchek, an assistant professor of criminal justice at Philadelphia-based Peirce College, argues that there is more theaters could — and should — do to prevent future tragedies. “It's crucial that they address where their vulnerabilities are,” he said. “There needs to be an emergency action plan in place. They need to get in the minds of these folks and think of every different scenario,” working with local authorities.

Because, if there's a sequel to Wednesday's shooting, theater operators may have no choice but to beef up their response.

The Inquirer

philly.com

At GreenLight philanthropy, sowing seeds

What if a philanthropy were run like a venture capital-funded start-up? Welcome to the GreenLight Fund.

With seed money of about \$12 million, GreenLight gives money to local organizations here, in Boston, and the San Francisco Bay Area. Local grantees then raise additional rounds of money - \$32 million for social-impact work so far.

How does GreenLight Fund work here? Venture capitalist John Simon and Margaret Hall cofounded GreenLight as "a way to do philanthropy using the approach a VC firm would take," Philadelphia executive director Matthew Joyce said.

GreenLight's vetting process is similar: interviews with management teams, board members, and clients, plus a review of financial information and local landscape analysis.

Three organizations here were "greenlighted": Single Stop USA, Year Up, and the Center for Employment Opportunities.

Single Stop partnered with Community College of Philadelphia to screen every college student for benefits outside of financial aid, such as food stamps or tax credits for child care.

"The hope is to draw down resources students don't know they're eligible for and build marginal income, so they graduate," Joyce said. Typically, Single Stop helps students double their \$5,000 in annual student aid income.

Year Up students spend six months at Peirce College in credit-bearing programs and another six months at an employer.

And in 2015, GreenLight gave seed money to the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO), which helps reduce recidivism among men and women coming out of prison.

"Folks released from jail transition into work right away. We partner with the city and the parks department," Joyce said. "Within a short time, CEO connects them with private-sector positions. Most of our money is spent in partnership with a public entity or other funders."

GreenLight typically seeds \$600,000 annually for a few years, "as early-stage funding giving them runway to build relationships in Philly," Joyce said.

What about return on investment? The metric shouldn't just be numbers of people served, but cost per impact, said Katherina Rosqueta, founding executive director at the University of Pennsylvania's Center for High Impact Philanthropy.

"For CEO, their big outcome is reducing recidivism. But there's also the cost savings to state governments of people not going back to prison. We help them do the math on the positive impact if CEO is successful," Rosqueta said.

Saj Cherian, vice president at the VC firm Kynetic in Conshohocken, said of GreenLight: "They can't just write a check and leave. We help [local grantees] along, because they have our money. Our goal is to identify worthy organizations,

hire the social entrepreneur as executive, and bet on the jockey and the horse." Kynetic is the company formed by Michael Rubin, who sold GSI Commerce to eBay in 2011, and owns Fanatics, Rue La La, and ShopRunner.

GreenLight seeds newer, innovative nonprofits with the expertise of businesspeople, said Jeff Berstein, president of ImageFIRST Healthcare Laundry Specialists in Radnor.

"Philly is challenging," said Berstein, also a GreenLight board member. "Other nonprofits are in the same space and may look at the new entrant as a threat. There's a limited funding base."

New Mutual Fund

Local money manager Ted Aronson, who founded Aronson Johnson & Ortiz (AJO) here in Center City, said the \$26 billion-in-assets firm launched its first mutual fund for retail investors.

Long patronized by institutional investors such as SEI and TransAmerica, AJO's first open-ended mutual fund is the BPV Large Cap Value Fund (symbol: BPVAX). The fund's expense is 0.80 percent a year. (AJO charges 0.30 percent as its fee, and BPV, for which AJO is subadviser, receives 0.50 percent).

AJO is a quantitative investment firm and hews close to the mutual fund indexes. This fund aims to outperform the Russell 1000 value benchmark by 2 percent a year before fees.

Currently, AJO is favoring insurance shares and underweighting bank stocks.

"We've been recently selling biotech names, since they've gone up a lot, and moving into big-name pharmaceuticals," Aronson said.

AJO is fully invested at all times, and Aronson said the stock market's "richly valued. The fly in the ointment is interest rates. When rates go up meaningfully, the stock market is vulnerable. I tell investors to put your seat belt on, and don't do anything rash. Stay the course. We know people, including myself, freak out when they shouldn't. It's almost trite to say, but it's proven to be true."



The Philadelphia Inquirer Erin E. Arvedlund column [The Philadelphia Inquirer]

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The logo for Philly.com, featuring the word "philly" in a lowercase, sans-serif font, followed by a red circle with a white dot inside, and the word "com" in a lowercase, sans-serif font.

Temple cancels classes the Friday before Francis

Another major city institution has announced that it is temporarily halting operations when Pope Francis comes to town.

Temple University's campuses in Philadelphia, Ambler, Center City, Fort Washington, and Harrisburg will close Sept. 25 for the World Meeting of Families, president Neil D. Theobald announced in an email Monday.

Noting that "city officials are expecting more than 1.5 million people to attend the papal visit, and Mayor Nutter has projected this to be the largest event in Philadelphia's history," Theobald said that the call to close was made due to the anticipated impact on transportation across the region.

Essential staff and selected offices will remain open, and the university's health care system is planning "to ensure uninterrupted access to care during these events."

Temple joins other local universities closing for the pope's visit.

The University of Pennsylvania also canceled classes on Friday. Community College of Philadelphia will close Friday and Saturday; Drexel University canceled classes Friday through Monday; Rutgers-Camden canceled Thursday evening, Friday and Saturday classes. Thomas Jefferson University canceled classes and events scheduled for Friday through Monday at noon. Peirce College will close Friday through Sunday.

The logo for Philly.com, featuring the word "philly" in a lowercase, sans-serif font, followed by a red circle with a white dot inside, and the word "com" in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The entire logo is set against a light gray rectangular background.

Philly's adult literacy problem



Public schools are a perpetual worry for Philadelphia, and scant attention is often paid to another weighty educational problem: adults who struggle to read.

But nearly half of all adults in the city - more than half a million men and women - lack the basic skills necessary to qualify for postsecondary training or hold jobs that permit them to support a family. Many function below eighth-grade levels.

The Mayor's Commission on Literacy is making inroads. Its work is attracting national attention: praise from the U.S. Department of Education, and designation as a model site from Digital Promise, a nonprofit established by act of Congress in 2008 to use technology to improve education for all Americans.

In 2011, Mayor Nutter revamped the commission, decrying the city's "serious literacy crisis." Three years later, the commission became the nation's first provider to offer free, online, interactive courses for men and women with low literacy and math skills.

And since the launch of myPLACE - Philadelphia Literacy and Adult Career Education, a citywide system to advance adults' skills - nearly 1,500 Philadelphians have completed classes in basic education, GED preparation, or English as a Second Language, and gotten help planning their educational and career paths.

Marcella Matthews, 54, is one of them. The South Philadelphia resident had always worked - as a nurse's aide, an administrative assistant. But with her daughter approaching college graduation, Matthews wanted more for herself.

She hoped to study health information technology at Peirce College, but found that her math skills weren't up to par. She was steered to myPLACE's Center City location, at the District 1199C Training and Upgrading Fund offices on South Broad Street, where she had a quick assessment, then began an online course to shore up her basic skills.

Matthews last sat in a classroom 30 years ago, when she graduated from South Philadelphia High. The idea of taking a math course - especially one online - was daunting.

"It was like being a baby again," she said. "I was kind of shaky, but I got used to it. It was visual, it was good - if I didn't know fractions, I would see a whole pizza pie, and then three-quarters."

She liked her instructor. (Online courses have facilitators who check in with texts, emails, even postcards home.) She liked that she was part of a cohort, a group of other Philadelphians moving through the six-week class with her. And she liked that materials were tailored to her field of interest.

Matthews proved herself a star student, showing up at 9 a.m. each day to motor through lessons at her own pace. She has now finished her math class, and is about to begin studying for her associate's degree at Peirce.

"I have the skills now," she said. "I'm more confident, definitely."

In Philadelphia, as nationally, adult-education programs are a mishmash. There are hundreds of providers and little oversight.

"Adult education is all over the map," said Diane Inverso, the commission's senior director. "That stymied how we're able to help the 550,000 adults who have literacy needs in the city."

A conversation two years ago between Inverso and Judith Renyi, the commission's executive director, spurred change.

What if they fashioned a citywide system of hubs for adults with basic education needs? What if the system incorporated existing technology to both maximize the number of people served and get adults more comfortable with the skills they need for a changing workforce?

"In this economy, a lot of our adults don't have the digital literacy skills they need," Inverso said.

Before myPLACE launched, there was no central registration and enrollment system. If someone took a course with one provider, that information stayed siloed. Now, 30 providers are linked to track progress and need.

And the need is great. In myPLACE's first three months of operation, double the expected number of adults showed interest in its services.

"The phone was ringing off the hook," said Jennifer Kobrin, associate director.

Most adult basic-education courses are still face-to-face, but the online pilot has been a success, and organizers hope to expand it. The commission's budget from the city is about \$1 million, supplemented by private donations.

The city's learners - a diverse group, from high school dropouts to longtime workers who find themselves suddenly jobless and lost in a digital age - are clamoring for more spots.

Take Adanna James. She came to the United States from Trinidad 11 years ago with no high school credentials.

"Everybody said, 'You have to get your GED in order to get a good job,' " said James, 32, who found work as a nanny.

James learned of myPLACE through her brothers, whom she had encouraged to try for their GEDs. She found herself enrolling, too, taking a math class to help her prep for the test.

She's seen success after success. James earned her GED, and the next day, she got a job in customer service with US Airways.

"I knew I had the potential," James said. "I tend to downplay myself a lot, but my teacher said, 'No, you're ready.' "

**PHILADELPHIA
BUSINESS JOURNAL**

► EDUCATION



Uva Coles



Brad Hodge

Peirce College in Philadelphia promoted Uva Coles to VP of institutional advancement and strategic partnerships and Brad Hodge to VP of student services and retention management

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Peirce College Board of Trustees Elects Barbara A. Prutzman Board Chair

Peirce College Trustees have elected **Barbara A. Prutzman** as the new board chair of the 150-year-old nonprofit Philadelphia institution. **Keith Daviston, CPA**, and **David A. Silverman** were also newly elected to the board.

Prutzman, a trustee since 2008, is the CEO of BB&E Consulting, an information technology strategy and organizational design consultancy. She is an experienced corporate IT leader, with more than 20 years in leadership positions at major companies including ARAMARK, Scott Paper Company and Univar.

“Peirce will benefit greatly from Barbara’s extensive experience and insightful perspectives as we move forward with our new strategic plan,” said Peirce College President and CEO **James J. Mergioti**. “She embraces Peirce’s mission on a personal level and is firmly committed to our students and to the College’s continued success.”

“I am honored to serve as Board chair of such a high quality organization and to be involved in higher education at such a critical time,” said Prutzman. “For 150 years, Peirce has evolved in alignment with employers’ demands in the Philadelphia region. Consistent with that legacy, the Board’s focus is to work with the College’s leadership team as it executes an aggressive plan that provides students with customized paths to workplace relevant skills and credentials.”

A seasoned finance veteran with more than 25 years of both non-profit and for-profit experience, Daviston is currently Senior Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer for the Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA). He is also Board President for the Philadelphia Housing Authority Development Corporation, a non-profit subsidiary of the PHA. Previously, Daviston served as CFO of the Urban Affairs Coalition, and has worked for more than a decade in various management roles in the banking industry, including positions with MBNA and Bank of America. Additionally, Daviston attained the rank of Major (retired) in the Delaware National Guard.

Silverman is a partner at Curley, Hessinger & Johnsrud LLP in Philadelphia. Previously, he was general counsel and part of the senior management team of several of the region’s top financial services companies, including Sovereign Bank and Meridian Mortgage Corporation. Silverman also serves on the board of directors for the Support Center for Child Advocates, has chaired and served on the Board of Directors of Opportunity House, and is a member of the Finance Committee of the Caron Foundation.

“Keith’s financial leadership experience at both for-profit and non-profit organizations is extremely valuable for Peirce as we make investments to expand our reach and further differentiate the College in the marketplace through

innovative course delivery and high quality student support services,” explained Mergiotti. “David greatly enhances our board with his firsthand knowledge of the legal employment landscape and outstanding business acumen. His network will assist us in building stronger ties to the region’s legal community and serving its human capital needs

“The Peirce community could not be more elated with Barbara’s election as board chair and the additions of Keith and David to a highly talented and engaged Board of Trustees,” continued Mergiotti. “We are very grateful for their decisions to join with us in successfully positioning Peirce to serve the Philadelphia region for another 150 years.”

About Peirce College

In 2015, Peirce College celebrates 150 years dedicated to providing higher education to working adults. In celebration of this momentous occasion, Peirce is hosting a year-long series of events surrounding the theme, “Many Years, One Purpose.” Peirce College offers bachelors and associate degree programs in the areas of Business, Healthcare, Information Technology, and Legal Studies, and a Master of Science in Organizational Leadership & Management. Located in the heart of Philadelphia, Peirce is a non-profit institution that specializes in serving the unique needs of working adults, many of whom work full time and are raising families. Peirce College is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 3624 Market St. Philadelphia, PA 19104 (267-284-5000). Additionally select programs are accredited by The Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs, the American Bar Association and the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education.

For more information about Peirce College, call 888.467.3472, or visit www.Peirce.edu. Visit Peirce’s blog, Peirce Connections, at <http://blog.Peirce.edu>. Become a fan of Peirce College on Facebook. Follow @PeirceCollege on Twitter. View the Peirce College YouTube Channel.



Peirce College Restructures Top Leadership Positions for Better Strategic Alignment

Peirce College, a 150-year-old Philadelphia college focused on serving the needs of adult learners and providing workforce talent solutions, has realigned and enhanced its leadership structure to support implementation of the College's new strategic plan.

Within the College's executive leadership team, current vice presidents Uva C. Coles and Brad K. Hodge have assumed new roles and Elizabeth M. Krapp has been hired as Vice President, Finance and Administration. Malik Brown has been hired as Assistant Vice President of Employer Relations.

"This reorganization brings more leadership focus to areas that will strengthen Peirce's ties with the Philadelphia business community and drive greater student success," said President and CEO James J. Mergiotti. "Since 1865, Peirce College has met the needs of area employers by providing relevant, practical education to those who live and work in the region. With new guidance in these key areas, the College is poised to impact student persistence and employment, helping our students streamline their journey to graduation and find successful careers."

Uva C. Coles

Coles has assumed the newly created position of Vice President of Institutional Advancement and Strategic Partnerships. In this role, she oversees the College's focus on building strong relationships with employers in the Philadelphia region as well as the institution's fundraising initiatives and alumni network. Coles will also direct the development and execution of Peirce's employer and workforce development partnerships, and the Career Development Services Center, which equips students and alumni with competencies needed to drive a quicker return on their degree. Coles was formerly the Vice President of Student Services at Peirce.

Brad K. Hodge

Hodge has been named Vice President of Student Services and Retention Management. Hodge will manage the College's academic advising, student financial services and student support services, with specific focus on student

success and degree completion. In his new role, Hodge will build and implement a revamped student services model, providing customized tools and resources and a personalized pathway to graduation for every Peirce student. Previously, Hodge was Vice President, Finance.

Elizabeth M. Krapp

Formerly the Assistant Treasurer at Franklin & Marshall College, Krapp joins Peirce College as the Vice President of Finance and Administration. In this executive leadership position, Krapp will have direct oversight for the College's finances as well as information technology and auxiliary services. She adds leadership depth to the organization and will play a key role in directing the financial, technology and facilities components supporting implementation of the new strategic plan.

Malik Brown

Reporting directly to Coles, Brown is the new Assistant Vice President of Employer Relations. In this newly created role, Brown brings his experience in workforce development and talent management to further the College's partnerships with regional employers. Most recently, Brown was the Dixon House Director for Adult and Family Services Division at Diversified Community Services.

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Peirce College Restructures Top Leadership Positions for Better Strategic Alignment

Peirce College, a non-profit four-year college specializing in providing career-focused education for working adults, will begin offering three-week intensive courses this fall to further expand the options it offers to students looking to fit education into their busy schedules. Additionally, Peirce has added a new Winter Session to the 2015-2016 calendar, during which it will offer intensive classes online.

The move is yet another part of the college's efforts to make higher education as accessible and convenient as possible for its working adult students. Peirce's regular class offerings are already accelerated, meeting once a week for seven or eight weeks.

"Peirce students have one goal in mind – getting the degree they need to advance their career," said Rita Toliver-Roberts, vice president of academic advancement. "With intensive courses they can reduce the time it takes to complete their credentials and take the next step in their careers."

Intensive classes during the Fall Session will meet on campus on Fridays from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Winter Session, which runs from Dec. 21 to Jan. 10, will offer online intensive courses. Guest students from other colleges can also take advantage of intensive courses to supplement their current degree program.

This offering complements a variety of other Peirce initiatives intended to meet student needs, including the college's flexible delivery model where students in many courses are able to choose from week-to-week whether to take classes in person or online. This new model will be implemented across the entire curriculum by fall 2016.

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