

269

MAGAZINE

inside:

SCOTT HARRISON'S
PERSONAL
JOURNEY TO SELF
AWARENESS

THE LIST:
FIREWORKS,
FARMER'S MARKETS
& FESTIVALS

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(AND ANXIETIES) ARE ON THE

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COLLEGE COSTS *(AND ANXIETIES)* ARE ON THE RISE



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“Big Boy hybrid tomatoes, basil,
and white radishes.”

“Asparagus, green beans,
cantaloupe, and apples.”

What's your favorite locally grown and handmade
Michigan farmers market items?



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“Fresh mozzarella, pizza
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“Sun-ripe tomatoes, hardy
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jam for balance.”

“Michigan-grown, fresh
and healthy garlic from
‘the Garlic Brothers.’”

Our hope is that the readers of *269 MAGAZINE* will become active participants in the world around them and join our mission to make *Southwest Michigan* the place to make a home, go to work, and bring dreams to reality.

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THAT'S WHERE I LEARNED GREAT CARE TAKES COMMUNICATION

For Dr. James Jastifer, teaching his sons to farm helped him become an even better Orthopedic Surgeon.

“They both take communication and teamwork,” he said. “Each person on the team plays a vital role in caring for the patient.” Working with highly skilled doctors, nurses and rehabilitation specialists, he and his team focus on delivering highly coordinated care that yields the best possible results.

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Chasing that Rainbow over the *Field of Dreams*

Sometime after the eldest of my children turned seven, it dawned on me that I was going to need somewhere between \$234,576 and \$527,052 in eleven years. Not for retirement... that's how much it would cost to send my three children to college, public or private respectively, for four years in 2015 dollars according to the College Board's Annual Survey of Colleges.

So, I did what the parents of 40% of the children in the U.S. did: I signed them up for travel sports. Yes, that idea sounded like a much better plan than putting money away in a savings account!

You see, I was hedging my bets. Surely, my children, the children of two Division I athletes would become Division I athletes themselves. On top of it all, I wasn't taking any chances. I was keeping their options open—three kids, three sports each at any given time—surely, one of those sports would be “the one” leading to that pot of scholarship gold under the rainbow.

The hotels full of parents I encountered each weekend were a rubberstamp that I was doing the same as other good parents.

Things were going well, since most weekends, the teams my kids played on made it to the championship game. But, when college time came around, the sheer numbers of whom my kids were competing with and for what started to get me a little nervous.

A 2011 study by the Sports and Fitness Industry Association for *ESPN The Magazine* totaled up sports participation and found that 21,470,000 kids between the ages of 6 and 17 were playing on organized teams. The 2011 U.S. Census Estimate puts the total population of that same age group at 54,046,686. To put the number of 21,470,000 in further perspective, only two states—California and Texas—have bigger populations than that number. My kids were competing against 21,470,000 for the coveted scholarship.

Exactly how many scholarships were out there? I should have looked in to this before I signed them up because, here's where

The chances of striking out without a scholarship were pretty high. ScholarshipStats.com did the math for me: Of the 371,891 girls playing high school softball, only 8.3% would go on to play in college—most for only partial scholarships.

the panic started to set in. There are roughly 138,000 athletic scholarships available for Division I and Division II sports. For those of you thinking that your kid has one of those in the bag, let me point that the “odds are remote” as I found out in a 2010



STORY HEATHER BAKER
IMAGE PITER1977

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U.S. World and News Report. For example, 1,000,000 boys play football under the Friday night lights; yet, there are only about 19,500 gridiron scholarships. Almost 603,000 girls compete annually in track and field for 4,500 scholarships. My two daughters play softball. Guess what? The chances of striking out without a scholarship were pretty high. ScholarshipStats.com did the math for me: Of the 371,891 girls playing high school softball, only 8.3% would go on to play in college—most for only partial scholarships.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics puts the total number of professional athletes at 11,710 with a median pay of \$80,490 per year, with most making half of that.

Partial scholarships? Yes, the average athletic scholarship is only about \$10,400 annually. Only four sports offer “full rides” to athletes: football, men’s and women’s basketball, and women’s volleyball. If you exclude football and men’s basketball, the average scholarship is only \$8,700. My kids were not focused on any of those sports.

As my kids entered college or are close to entering college, I have had to come to terms with those statistics. What has further opened my eyes is that I’m now more concerned about their job prospects after college. They’ve spent all that time training for their sport and what now? Will they be one of those professional athletes with the TV commercials and million dollar contract?

I hate to break it to the parents of those 40% of children in travel sports who hoped for that too. Probably not. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics puts the total number of professional athletes at 11,710 with a median pay of \$80,490 per year, with most making half of that.

In hindsight, I took a bet with only a 0.0064% chance of a positive outcome in order to pay for my kids’ college. Instead of putting aside money each week for college, I traveled the U.S. spending money on training time, teams, gas, food, hotels, and gate entry fees. For what? For the chance that my kids would be one of the 21,470,000 who got one of those 138,000 scholarships.

How did it turn out for my pocketbook? One of my children is playing softball for the University of Michigan-Dearborn. One decided after several knee surgeries that she didn’t want to play at one of the colleges that offered her a scholarship. She wants to go to a school to focus on academics. (Insert the smiley face emoji here with the gritted teeth.) As for my youngest child, he’s a freshman in high school and we’ve already booked our hotels for this summer. But I’ve put that athletic scholarship into perspective as I’ve long been saving for my kid’s college experience to help them minimize the debt with which they might graduate.

For those young adults who are fortunate enough to get a scholarship, academic or athletic, may they cherish them and use them to their fullest extent. The pot of gold at the end of the rainbow is not that scholarship—it’s the degree that it will help them earn!



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What Do You See As The Biggest Challenge With Nabbing That New Graduate For Your Workforce?



BJORN GREEN

President and CEO, Tower Pinkster

This question definitely has more than one variable in the equation of attracting the new graduate to our firm. Yet, trying to narrow what the challenge is down to one item brings me to culture—both the DNA of the firm and the community...ok, that's two.

More and more, the new generation of graduates is looking for an engaging, flexible and dynamic workplace. At TowerPinkster, we pride ourselves on a progressive and collaborative work environment and continue to pursue new and innovative ways to make our firm a “great place to work.” This takes many forms which includes our open office team environment, a balanced work-life philosophy, performance-based goal setting, and a “family environment.” We are constantly evaluating and enhancing our efforts to attract (and retain) talent!

We are also receiving feedback from new graduates about the greater community and the desire to find a vibrant, diverse and exciting community to live, work, and play. We love West Michigan, and believe that our communities are exciting and rich with culture. We hope to continue to invest and engage in our community to expand the cultural diversity and dynamism of this place.

Having “culture” that works with the new generation is a key to keeping young talent in West Michigan for our future growth!



MIKE SMITLEY

Engineering Section Leader, DENSO Manufacturing Michigan, Inc.

The short answer is “fit.” DENSO offers a world-class manufacturing environment and the challenge of a fulfilling career path, but not every new engineering graduate will thrive here.

After more than 30 years in Battle Creek, we know a candidate's success at DENSO is not tied solely to a degree. So, we have a highly selective process that explores their communication skills and alignment with our core values of foresight, credibility, and collaboration. The result is that both DENSO and the graduate are confident in that new employee relationship from the start, setting the stage for that engineer to be a leader within our team-oriented organization.

These high expectations, coupled with the current high demand for entry level engineers, means we are operating within an extremely competitive market both regionally and globally. That makes close collaboration with the education community to promote careers in manufacturing and engineering absolutely essential.



LAURA VAN POPERING

Associate Director Talent Acquisition, MPI Research

Our challenge, like many companies, is hiring in a robust market. Business throughout our industry is strong, which makes securing good candidates more competitive.

Many of our jobs are entry level which can lead to tremendous careers, but initially are at a pay scale similar to other local companies hiring new graduates. Outside factors also play a role, such as increased financial pressures, often associated with student debt. We are challenged to not only find good people, but finding those that want to build a career versus taking the highest paying job. MPI Research wants great people who are ready to pursue a terrific career in the pharmaceutical and biotech development industry. Although a college degree is preferred, it is not necessary for some of our positions—which in turn challenges us to ensure we are communicating with candidates with varying levels of education. MPI Research addresses this obstacle through our participation in multiple hiring events at colleges, universities, community colleges, and high schools, in addition to our own career fairs.

COLLEGE COSTS RISE (AND ANXIETIES) ARE ON THE



Bridge Magazine is Michigan's leading nonprofit provider of in-depth news and analysis. Bridge provides exclusive, independent reporting to 269 MAGAZINE. www.bridgemi.com

A junior at Western Michigan University (WMU), Thye Fischman prefers not to dwell on the FIVE-FIGURE bill that is soon headed his way.

"I'll probably be about \$30,000 in debt when I graduate," says Fischman, 21, a double major in marketing and public relations.

"It's inevitable. It's one of those things you just have to deal with, so I try not think about it. Worrying about it doesn't help."

Fischman says he is by nature an optimist, so he is hopeful he will land a decent job at graduation and then begin to chip away at his college loan.

"I'm pretty confident I will be able to pay it back, but I wonder, when will I be able to buy a car or buy a house?"

Fischman has plenty of company at Michigan colleges and universities, as rising college costs and diminished state aid to higher education are leaving thousands with burdensome loan debt. For those who take longer than four years to complete a degree, the debt piles even higher.

Indeed, Michigan's average debt level for 2014 college grads—\$29,450—ranked ninth highest in the nation.

Fischman mentioned a friend, a recent graduate of WMU. He's working three jobs, at Planet Fitness, driving for Uber, substitute teaching—as he scrambles to pay his loan.

"I would say it's pretty typical," Fischman says.

As Millennials can well testify, the cost of a four-year college degree has more than doubled in a generation, even when taking inflation into account. The average sticker price of a



THYE FISCHMAN WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY JUNIOR
"I'll probably be \$30,000 in debt when I graduate."

year of tuition, fees, room and board at a public university in the United States was \$7,938 in 1975, when adjusted to 2014 dollars. By 2014, the cost had ballooned to \$18,943—a jump of nearly 140 percent.

That increase outran the cost of many goods and services during the same time frame. By comparison, the average price of a new car increased by about 90 percent, when adjusted for inflation, during this period. The average price of a new home, adjusted for

inflation, increased by 20 percent. The cost of a gallon of milk fell by 50 percent when adjusted for inflation.

In Michigan, the share of public university budgets coming from state funds fell from 48 percent in 2001-2002 to 21.5 percent in 2013-2014, according to analysis by the nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency.

In 1990, Michigan sent \$1.06 billion to the state's 15 public universities. If state spending on higher education had remained steady in 2014, when adjusted for inflation, universities would have received \$1.92 billion. But colleges got \$1.26 billion—a drop of 34 percent after inflation.

In just six years, per-pupil spending on higher education fell by more than one fourth. From 2008 to 2014, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, per student spending on higher education in Michigan declined by 28 percent, when adjusted for inflation.

As state funding fell, colleges hiked tuition to make up most of the difference. According to the Senate Fiscal Agency, average tuition at Michigan public colleges and universities



CHARLES BALLARD MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY ECONOMIST
Rising college debt is squeezing middle class families and creating a two-track state.

"Indeed, Michigan's average debt level for 2014 college grads—\$29,450—ranked ninth highest in the nation."

climbed from \$4,928 in 2001 to \$11,142 in 2013—an increase of 71 percent when adjusted for inflation.

Nonpartisan state fiscal analysts concluded that decreased state support for higher education is the main culprit behind the recent Michigan tuition increases. Clearly, WMU's 76 percent tuition increase from 2001 to 2013 would have been considerably lower had the state not slashed higher education funding.

And the economic plunge of the last decade only made it more difficult for Michigan households to afford college.

In the 2006-2007 school year, the first year for which data is available, the net cost of attending a Michigan public university consumed 17 percent of the Michigan median household income—ninth-highest burden in the nation. By 2011-2012, the latest year data is available, the annual net cost was 23 percent of the Michigan median household income—third highest.

Michigan State University (MSU) economist Charles Ballard says this constellation of factors has, in effect, created a two-track state.

"For the children of the most affluent families, there isn't any thought of not being able to afford college, or of getting out of

college with a huge burden of student loans,” Ballard says. “Those worries are reserved for children from families of modest means. That’s just one of many ways in which policies have helped the affluent, while ignoring the economic needs of the middle and bottom parts of the income distribution.”

At WMU, the average debt of graduates in 2013-2014 was \$32,720—with 64 percent owing money at graduation.

WMU’s average debt was fourth highest among Michigan public universities and colleges. In 2006-2007, average debt at WMU stood at \$18,400—which means it jumped by 54 percent in just seven years when adjusted for inflation.

Debt is even higher at some of Southwest Michigan’s private colleges and universities. At Albion College, the average debt in 2013-2014 was \$37,151, with 65 percent of graduates in debt. At Andrews University, the average debt was \$36,536, with 62 percent in debt.

And it’s not just the cost of tuition—it appears that Michigan’s college debt load is also linked to the length of time it takes students at many schools to graduate. Twelve of Michigan’s 15 public universities have four-year graduation rates below the national average of 31 percent, with only the University of Michigan (U-M), MSU, and Grand Valley State University (GVSU) at or above the U.S. norm of 31 percent.

A U-M, 76 percent of students graduate in four years, tops in the state. But at WMU, just 24 percent graduate in that time,

which means they face extra tuition and room and board costs as they stay in school longer. That helps explain why U-M students owed less at graduation in 2013-2014—\$26,510 to WMU’s average of nearly \$33,000—despite the fact that U-M’s in-state tuition was one-third higher than WMU’s. It’s also true that fewer students graduate with debt at U-M, 45 percent in 2014 compared to 64 percent WMU.

“Those worries are reserved for children from families of modest means. That’s just one of many ways in which policies have helped the affluent, while ignoring the economic needs of the middle and bottom parts of the income distribution.”

Acknowledging the role delayed graduation plays in college costs, GVSU has found innovative ways to raise its four-year graduation rate. Since 2008, GVSU has dangled a cash incentive to students to stay on track and graduate on time. Students who earn at least 90 credits through their junior year are given \$1,000 off tuition for their senior year. With 120 credits needed to graduate in four years, 90 credits in three years is a benchmark for on-time graduation.

GVSU students also have access to an online academic career tracker, called myPath, which students can use from their first day of class to monitor how close they are to graduation.

In 1990, GVSU’s four-year graduation rate was just under 16 percent. For students enrolled in 2000, it reached 19.4

TUITION BY SCHOOL (INFLATION ADJUSTED)

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Central Michigan University	\$5,586.50	\$6,146.99	\$6,619.01	\$6,628.61	\$6,999.47	\$7,670.47	\$8,250.15	\$8,861.58	\$10,042.03	\$10,752.84	\$11,122.88	\$11,110.42	\$11,220.00
Eastern Michigan University	\$6,054.79	\$6,509.56	\$7,124.18	\$7,105.87	\$7,801.04	\$8,037.94	\$8,438.91	\$8,754.46	\$9,120.14	\$8,972.99	\$9,015.33	\$9,180.55	\$9,386.00
Ferris State University	\$6,669.08	\$7,014.58	\$7,652.13	\$7,633.69	\$8,039.61	\$8,319.89	\$8,847.88	\$9,738.00	\$10,293.95	\$10,608.62	\$10,812.19	\$10,866.90	\$10,988.00
Grand Valley University	\$6,241.57	\$6,666.25	\$7,031.75	\$7,261.26	\$7,555.32	\$7,802.21	\$8,336.67	\$9,088.80	\$9,604.43	\$9,950.52	\$10,313.00	\$10,481.33	\$10,716.00
Lake Superior State University	\$5,700.94	\$6,161.23	\$7,095.06	\$7,073.81	\$7,521.92	\$7,780.25	\$8,169.26	\$8,574.85	\$9,028.93	\$9,396.05	\$9,729.93	\$9,812.68	\$9,991.00
Michigan State University	\$7,829.26	\$8,357.41	\$8,918.20	\$9,066.71	\$10,359.64	\$10,269.28	\$11,134.28	\$11,566.58	\$12,360.34	\$12,467.53	\$13,224.21	\$13,404.54	\$13,579.00
Michigan Technological University	\$8,025.26	\$8,534.82	\$9,419.56	\$9,384.88	\$9,773.97	\$11,162.52	\$11,885.93	\$12,568.51	\$13,332.19	\$13,895.90	\$14,406.93	\$14,659.66	\$14,861.00
Northern Michigan University	\$5,731.20	\$6,189.72	\$6,596.22	\$6,578.05	\$6,987.54	\$7,145.86	\$7,594.01	\$7,712.50	\$8,155.89	\$8,256.13	\$8,771.96	\$8,894.42	\$9,094.00
Oakland University	\$6,102.14	\$6,516.04	\$6,955.79	\$7,076.27	\$7,587.53	\$8,037.94	\$8,907.43	\$9,116.93	\$9,976.88	\$10,379.99	\$10,769.72	\$10,862.84	\$11,108.00
Saginaw Valley State University	\$5,165.58	\$5,674.34	\$5,980.91	\$6,058.86	\$6,300.48	\$6,405.16	\$7,031.11	\$7,024.34	\$7,492.43	\$7,807.43	\$8,093.60	\$8,238.96	\$8,423.00
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor	\$9,306.46	\$10,307.56	\$10,737.54	\$10,756.23	\$11,687.25	\$11,949.44	\$12,484.78	\$12,701.60	\$13,464.66	\$13,450.40	\$13,916.03	\$14,021.45	\$13,977.00
University of Michigan-Dearborn	\$6,692.76	\$7,149.25	\$7,655.93	\$7,664.52	\$8,298.45	\$8,685.04	\$9,111.91	\$9,344.15	\$10,007.29	\$10,229.36	\$10,600.91	\$10,772.54	\$10,989.00
University of Michigan-Flint	\$5,756.19	\$6,197.49	\$6,725.36	\$7,104.64	\$7,682.95	\$8,028.69	\$8,305.21	\$8,466.65	\$9,047.39	\$9,247.55	\$9,572.51	\$9,714.26	\$9,907.00
Wayne State University	\$6,156.07	\$6,609.27	\$7,207.74	\$7,202.06	\$8,287.71	\$8,493.22	\$9,493.91	\$9,468.58	\$10,119.13	\$10,397.08	\$10,955.11	\$11,149.99	\$11,967.00
Western Michigan University	\$6,223.16	\$6,676.61	\$7,463.48	\$7,317.99	\$8,092.09	\$8,395.00	\$8,628.79	\$9,069.32	\$9,618.55	\$10,159.91	\$10,501.49	\$10,690.35	\$10,928.00

SOURCE: Senate Fiscal Agency (Bridge Magazine inflation calculations)

percent. And for students enrolled in 2006, 31 percent graduated in four years. Internal tracking at the school found the four-year graduation rate was nearly 37 percent for the class of 2009. The task of improving four-year graduation rates may seem daunting, but it can be achieved.

MSU economist Ballard says there's one obvious way to change this debt equation: Raise taxes to better fund higher education in Michigan. But, he adds that's easier said than done.

“The funds, if they come, will come from tax revenues. It is easy economically to come up with tax policy changes that would do the job. The economics are easy, but the politics are hard.”

At age 31, WMU senior

Cory King has taken a circuitous route to his college degree.

A native of South Haven, Michigan, he initially decided to forego college because

he didn't know how he could pay back the loan. But after working in big box grocery stores and factories—and not earning enough to get ahead—he took the plunge.

He enrolled in 2007 at Lake Michigan College, a community college in Benton Harbor, and then at WMU in 2012. A political science major, he was set to graduate in April 2016—along with debt of about \$40,000.

With his mother living on disability income, King realizes he can't expect help paying back his loan. But as of yet, he's not been able to line up any job prospects.

“I have friends who were political science majors who graduated a year ago. One is working in a bar, the other helps out disabled people in a nursing home. They still haven't found the work they are looking for. It's something I worry about. I know you have to make the connections before you graduate. You can't expect the job to come to you. You have to go out and work for it.”

Unless state funding priorities change, stories like King's are likely to be commonplace in Michigan in coming years. Cuts to higher education over a long period of time have left

colleges and universities with little choice. They can make drastic cuts in programs—or they can hike tuition to maintain the quality of education.

It is handicapping a generation, as graduates

enter the workforce with debt many will paying off into their 40s. Research suggests it now takes an average of 21 years for a college degree holder to pay off debt.

That should be a wake-up call to policy makers and the higher education industry alike. Many students and families are already wide awake to these realities.

“At WMU, the average debt of graduates in 2013-2014 was \$32,720—with 64 percent owing money at graduation. WMU's average debt was fourth highest among Michigan public universities and colleges.”



CORY KING WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY GRADUATE graduated this spring with \$40,000 in debt: “It's something I worry about.”

AVERAGE STUDENT DEBT BY SCHOOL (OF THOSE GRADUATING WITH DEBT; INFLATION ADJUSTED)

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	Change, 2003-04 to 2013-14
Central Michigan University	\$20,652	\$20,394	\$20,713	\$25,570	\$27,230	\$28,797	\$30,558	\$31,396	\$32,644	\$33,058	\$33,545	62.4%
Eastern Michigan University	\$27,765	\$26,387	\$27,145	\$29,056	\$23,527	\$24,204	\$25,701	\$26,851	\$26,029	\$26,268	\$25,781	-7.1%
Ferris State University	\$18,991	\$18,498	\$17,892	\$32,913	\$35,230	\$37,618	\$38,513	\$37,900	\$38,247	\$37,872	\$35,720	88.1%
Grand Valley State University	\$20,510	\$20,479	\$21,474	\$22,948	\$24,128	\$26,000	\$27,449	\$28,751	\$29,752	\$29,924	\$30,222	47.4%
Lake Superior State University	\$22,103	\$21,530	\$23,648	\$24,436		\$23,342	\$26,790	\$30,207	\$29,516	\$28,896		
Michigan State University	\$26,634	\$25,943	\$26,417	\$24,469	\$19,490	\$21,311	\$23,691	\$25,346	\$25,878	\$26,199	\$26,122	-1.9%
Michigan Technological University	\$21,523	\$20,965	\$16,469	\$16,435	\$15,936	\$28,959	\$32,439	\$35,406	\$36,184	\$35,414	\$36,041	67.5%
Northern Michigan University	\$19,974	\$20,754	\$18,845	\$22,799	\$20,783	\$26,048	\$29,417	\$31,348	\$30,418	\$30,027	\$29,618	48.3%
Oakland University	\$19,641			\$19,682	\$20,705	\$21,604	\$22,437	\$25,979	\$20,399	\$28,248	\$26,724	36.1%
Saginaw Valley State University				\$26,040	\$26,472	\$25,487	\$25,577	\$25,640				
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor	\$27,000	\$27,516	\$28,071	\$27,449	\$28,747	\$29,018	\$30,217	\$29,533	\$28,807	\$27,561	\$26,510	-1.8%
University of Michigan-Dearborn	\$16,568	\$25,292	\$27,325	\$20,801	\$25,441	\$31,988	\$21,134	\$23,128	\$24,273	\$24,623	\$22,168	33.8%
University of Michigan-Flint	\$25,334	\$26,993	\$23,039	\$22,319	\$27,066		\$28,173	\$27,405	\$27,858	\$29,249	\$32,107	26.7%
Wayne State University	\$24,768	\$23,837	\$23,056	\$22,026	\$22,042	\$21,403	\$21,989	\$23,952	\$25,183	\$23,475	\$23,785	-4.0%
Western Michigan University				\$21,262	\$21,235		\$21,717	\$29,531	\$31,967	\$33,056	\$32,720	
Avg of all schools (non-weighted)	\$22,420	\$23,216	\$22,841	\$23,880	\$24,145	\$26,598	\$27,054	\$28,825	\$29,082	\$29,562	\$29,313	30.7%

SOURCE: House Fiscal Agency (Bridge Magazine inflation calculations)

Detouring debt: Community College Tech Programs Offer a Quicker Path to Prosperity for Some



Recently working his way through a machine technician training course, Dalton Smith could be the poster child for how to get ahead without a four-year college degree.

An employee of automotive supplier Denso Manufacturing Michigan, Smith's training at Kellogg Community College's Regional Manufacturing Technology Center (RMTc) in Battle Creek was funded by his employer. On top of that, Denso paid his hourly wage of \$18 an hour during his time at school.

DALTON SMITH, 20, finished 200 hours of machine technician training at the Regional Manufacturing Technology Center debt free and earned \$3,600 for his time in school from his employer.

When he finished the 211-hour course in March 2016, Smith, 20, bumped up in pay to \$20 an hour, with the prospect of grossing upwards of \$50,000 a year with overtime. That's much more than some four-year college graduates make straight out of school, many of whom are saddled with tens of thousands of dollars in debt. To the contrary, Smith earned more than \$3,600 from Denso for his time in school. If he goes on to complete a journeyman certificate, he could earn \$27 or \$28 an hour.

"It feels really good, not to have any debt," said Smith, a 2014 graduate of Harper Creek High School in Battle Creek.

Smith said he recently took out a loan for a 2006 Ford F-350 truck.

After that, he says, "My next plan is to get a house."

To be sure, the evidence says that Smith is still the exception to the rule that more education equals more income.

In 2014, the Pew Research Center released a study that stated college-educated Millennials were doing considerably better than those with a high school degree or two-year degree. It found that the unemployment rate for 25-32 year olds with a bachelor's degree or higher was 3.8 percent; for those with a two-year degree or some college it was 8.1 percent; and for those with a high school degree 12.2 percent. The median full-time income for those with a four-year degree was \$45,500; two-year degree or some college \$30,000; high school degree \$28,000.

But it doesn't hold true across the board. In 2013, Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce found that nearly 30 percent of Americans with associate's degrees made more than those with bachelor's degrees.

When debt is factored into the equation, community college could seem like an even better bargain for certain students—especially those in skilled trades.

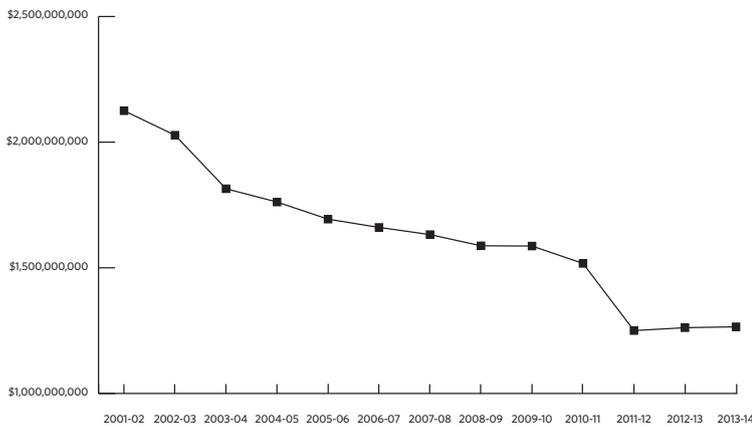
Tom Longman, director of RMTc, estimated that 70 percent of students enrolled in its industrial training programs do so at no cost to them. Employers pay for training that can range from a few weeks to four years—at one day a week—for some programs. Its certificates include industrial electricity and electronics, robotics, pipefitting, welding and industrial heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration.

"When they finish, they can be a journeyman in their field and they don't have any debt at all," he said.

Longman said these trainees are earning anywhere from \$15 to \$27 an hour, depending on the job. He said some, with a lot of overtime, can earn \$90,000 a year.

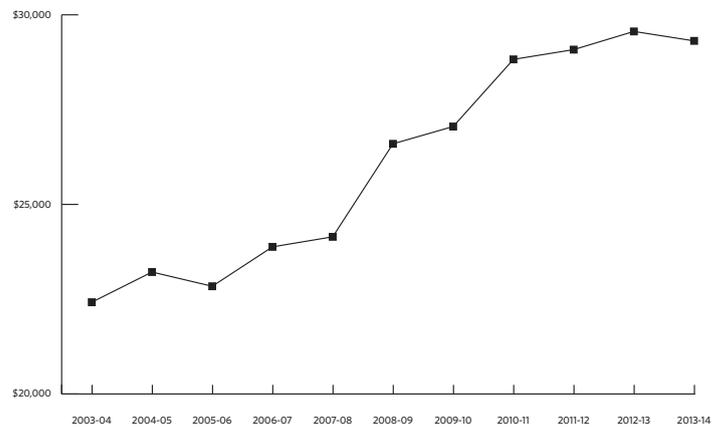
In 2011, concerned about a shortage of candidates for entry level and advanced

HIGHER EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS STATE OF MICHIGAN



SOURCE: Senate Fiscal Agency

AVERAGE GRADUATE DEBT (OF THOSE GRADUATING WITH DEBT) STATE OF MICHIGAN



SOURCE: Institute for College Access & Success



TOM LONGMAN, director of the Regional Manufacturing Technology Center: "When they finish, they can be a journeyman in their field and they don't have any debt at all."

manufacturing jobs, dozens of Southwest Michigan companies partnered with Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC) to form the Advanced Manufacturing Career Consortium.

Soon after, KVCC launched programs for production technicians and developed course training in advanced manufacturing systems and computer numerical control (CNC) operation. A CNC operator mounts cutting tools and fixtures and sets machine parameters for the machining process.

Employers "basically said to us, 'This is what we need,'" said Trish Schroeder, director of corporate training for KVCC.

But as unemployment fell, Schroeder said, some manufacturers were looking to

upgrade the training of existing employees in more narrow skill sets, rather than a complete certification. As a result, the Kalamazoo Valley Groves Center now offers training in the specific "module" asked for by employers. Training that could have taken months can be accomplished in weeks, with a flexible schedule to accommodate the worker.

"This is all employer-driven. We have to be agile and responsive to the employer," Schroeder said.

In 2013, local manufacturers also got behind a drive to build a better foundation in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) concepts, with a hands-on learning approach directed at students in grades 6 through 12 in Kalamazoo County schools. As part of this Project Lead the Way program, engineers and skilled trades workers from local companies visit classrooms to introduce

students to the real-world job prospects in their fields.

But there is another way community colleges can help fill the jobs niche in Michigan: Make it easier to transfer credits to four-year programs.

In 2015, WMU and KVCC joined to launch a craft brewing program, noting the \$1 billion economic impact of the industry in Michigan and the presence of West Michigan craft brewers like Bell's Brewery, Inc. and Arcadia Ales. It is the first such higher education program in the nation. The program offers a two-plus-two option that allows students to complete an associate degree at KVCC and then transfer for the final two years to WMU. Given that annual tuition at KVCC was just \$2,790 in 2014—compared to \$10,355 at WMU for 2013-2014, that will shave a considerable amount off the price tag for a four-year degree.

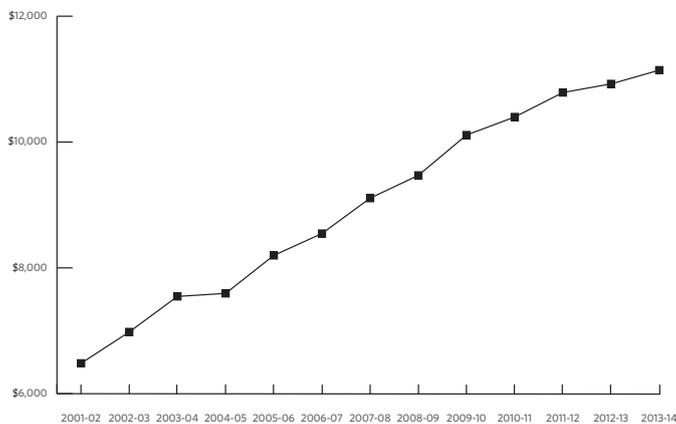
The same year, KVCC announced creation of a new University Center, which allows students to transition to four-year programs without leaving the campus. Its first partner is Davenport University, a program in which students can earn a two-year degree in various business programs, and then transfer to courses taught on campus by Davenport instructors. The program guarantees that all credits will qualify for transfer toward the four-year degree.

Michael Collins, KVCC Executive Vice President of Enrollment and Campus Operations, says the school is in discussion with WMU, Grand Valley State University, Ferris State University, Kendall College of Art and Design of Ferris University and Spring Arbor University about similar programs in nursing, business and art and design.

"We hope to have many more partners," Collins says.

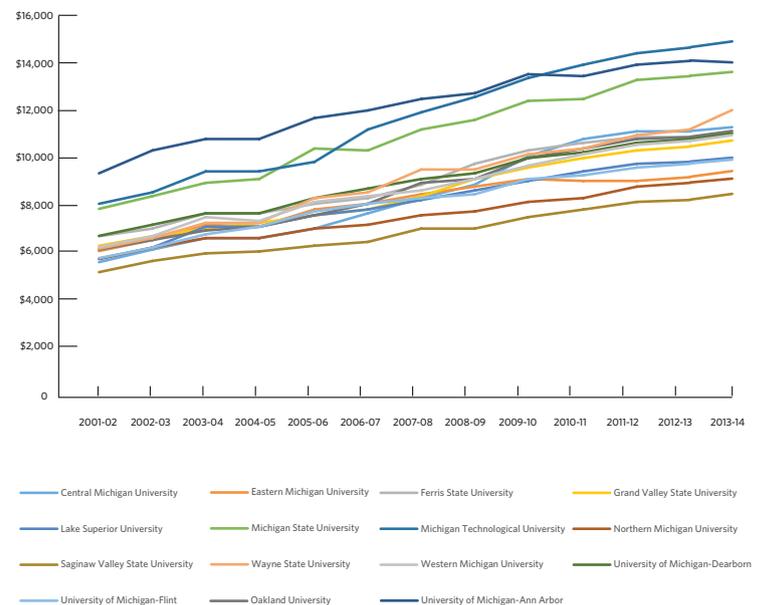
These KVCC initiatives are evidence that education must be flexible and innovative in a rapidly-changing economic front. Whether it's imaginative partnerships leading to four-year degrees or workforce training success stories, like that of machine technician, there is more than one path to career prosperity.

AVERAGE TUITION STATE OF MICHIGAN

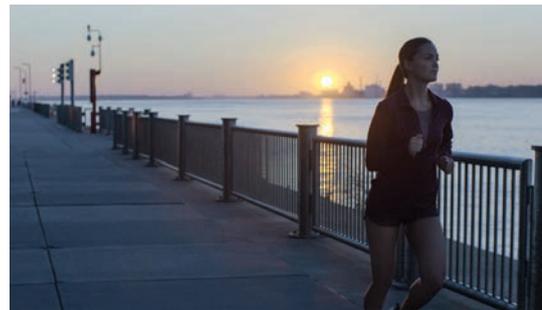


SOURCE: Senate Fiscal Agency

TUITION CHANGES BY SCHOOL



SOURCE: Senate Fiscal Agency



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COVER STORY VIEWPOINT

The Path to Debt Free College

America should always be a place where a person who is willing to work hard has a fair shot to get ahead and have success in life, no matter his or her background. People like Tina Reyes, from Flint, who earned the grades that got her accepted into one of our top Michigan universities. When she graduates this summer she will be the first person from her family to achieve that important milestone.

Unfortunately, this accomplishment came at a heavy cost. Tina's family couldn't afford to pay for her tuition, housing and all the other costs that come with college, so she had to take out a lot of student loans, and by the time she accepts her diploma she will have roughly \$100,000 in debt.

It will be incredibly difficult for Tina to find an entry level job that pays enough for her to cover her costs of daily life and keep pace with her loan payments. Tina told me that having debt like this is like having "monsters under my bed."

And Tina is not alone. Last month, I talked to students via Google "Hangout," and I visited campuses around the state of Michigan so I could hear directly from students about how we can reduce student debt, which is currently \$1.3 Trillion—and growing. The average college graduate in Michigan graduates with \$30,000 in debt. As a result of this debt, people like Tina will have difficulty buying the car they need to get to work, putting a down payment on a home or starting a new business.

Our policies should make it easier for Americans who work hard to join the middle class, not harder. That is the purpose of a new piece of legislation I am co-authoring called the In The Red Act.

Introduced in Congress in March, the In The Red Act would ease the burden of debt for recent graduates at the same time as it makes college affordable to low-income students.

If passed, the In The Red Act will allow student borrowers—with either private or federal loans—to refinance those loans at lower rates offered to new borrowers in the 2013-2014 school year. That means rates of 3.86 percent for undergraduates, 5.4 percent for graduate students and 6.4 percent for parents.

The Pell Grant makes it possible for millions of students from low- and moderate-income families to go to college. But as the costs of college have gone up, more and more of those students have had to go into debt to finish college. The In The Red Act would increase Pell Grant awards by tying future

Pell Grant increases to inflation. In 10 years, the maximum Pell Grant award to a Michigan student would be \$1,300 larger than under current law.

Getting a degree or job training from a community college opens the door to a lifetime of higher earnings, but for many, the tuition costs make it impossible to enroll. The In The Red Act would provide federal matching funds to states so they can waive tuition fees for two years of community and technical college programs. In other words, two years of tuition free college!

The In The Red Act is based on the belief that the American Dream should be available to every person and that a degree from a community college or a university is the most effective way to achieve that dream.

The In The Red Act would provide federal matching funds to states so they can waive tuition fees for two years of community and technical college programs. In other words, two years of tuition free college!

Massive student debt makes no sense! It's time for our country to get on the path to debt-free college!

Born in Gladwin, Michigan and raised in Clare, Michigan, **Debbie Stabenow** learned the value of a hard-day's work from her parents. She received her Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Michigan State University. Elected to the United States Senate in 2000, she serves as a Ranking Member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, and is a member of the Senate Energy, Finance, and Budget Committees. Learn more at stabenow.senate.gov.

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The logo for 269 Magazine features the number "269" in a large, bold, white serif font, enclosed within a white circular outline. Below the number, the word "MAGAZINE" is written in a smaller, white, all-caps, sans-serif font.

269
MAGAZINE



COVER STORY VIEWPOINT

DOUG ROTHWELL

PRESIDENT AND CEO

BUSINESS LEADERS FOR MICHIGAN

Making Michigan a Top Ten State

It's been a while since we Michiganders felt a collective sense of optimism. Recession, job losses and hardship made it difficult to quickly recover the spirit necessary to look forward and say an unequivocal yes to the opportunities we know are possible.

Here at Business Leaders for Michigan (BLM), we continue to say yes to things that will grow our state. Yes to opportunity. Yes to skilled talent. Our priorities have never been more focused on driving the changes we need to build the workforce and opportunities of tomorrow. We're solidly backing plans to help Michigan compete, invest and grow into a future we know is possible, if we say YES to the tools people and businesses need.

Michigan has already improved business costs and achieved astonishing levels of growth—but this is not enough. As a state, we still need to fix some key structural issues if our transformation is to continue in the years ahead. With our Building a New Michigan Plan, BLM is focused on the following core priorities:

- **YES** to more skilled and educated talent. Too many Michiganders still think a high school diploma is enough. Consider this: Within the next five years, 70 percent of jobs are going to require some education beyond high school—unfortunately, too many Michigan workers don't have the credentials they need to be successful.

Even more alarming is the fact that Michigan is the 10th oldest state in the U.S. As our current population ages out of the workforce, we lack qualified talent capable of backfilling the jobs of today—not to mention the jobs of tomorrow. We must make job training and higher education more affordable if we are to properly prepare our people.

- **YES** to economic tools for attracting and keeping job providers in Michigan. While our business tax climate has improved, we still aren't competitive with other states on other factors that determine where employers locate. For example, our competitor states dedicate as much as seven times more resources to attract and retain jobs than we do.
- **YES** to reducing debt and unfunded liabilities. Our financial future is jeopardized by Michigan governments' long term liabilities. In fact, each and every Michigan resident bears \$5,695 in unfunded state liabilities right now, which will soon prevent us from investing in critical areas like talent development.
- **YES** to strategies that leverage Michigan's economic strengths. BLM and its partners have identified six areas with the highest potential to create thousands of good paying jobs over the next decade. From life sciences and mobility to natural resources and engineering, it's time we

focused more effort on leveraging our key assets so we can attract new job providers and create the jobs our workers need. The Pure Michigan campaign is a great example. In 2014, it boosted our travel economy by stimulating 4.1 million trips to our state, \$1.2 million more in new visitor spending (up 50% from 2010) and a \$6.87 return to the state's economy for each advertising dollar expended.

All this makes sense, right? So why would anyone say no?

The simple truth is we've become conditioned to do so. During times of economic contraction—when resources are withering and jobs are fading away—we learned to say no. Expand access to job training and higher education? No. Strengthen economic incentives for job providers? No. We've said no instead of prioritizing our precious resources to grow our people and our state.

Unfortunately, what started as a temporary set of circumstances has become a bad habit. We need to recondition ourselves to start saying yes to Michigan again.

If we make wise decisions now, we'll reap the kinds of rewards that will last. More jobs and higher incomes. A skilled, educated workforce. Opportunities for all.

We know what it takes. And if we do it right—if we start saying YES to economic strategies that have been proven in other states and nations—we'll continue the change we know is needed to make Michigan a "Top Ten" state for jobs, personal income and a healthy economy.

It's time for all of us—policymakers, business leaders, educational and nonprofit executives, taxpayers and families—to unite behind a strategy that makes sense for our state. We all know what's required to make Michigan a strong place to live and work; many of the principles upon which we can agree are included in the Building a New Michigan Plan.

This plan is a critical element in building talent and driving workers' success. The only thing missing is the optimism required to break our habit of saying no.

Doug Rothwell has worked as an executive in the public, private and non-profit sectors. He's served four state governors in two different states, including as Chief of Staff and in cabinet positions, and worked at General Motors and Bank of America. He currently is President and CEO of Business Leaders for Michigan (businessleadersformichigan.com), the state's business roundtable, composed of the top executives from the state's largest job providers and dedicated to making Michigan a Top Ten state for economic growth.



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COVER STORY VIEWPOINT

AARON MICHEL

CO-FOUNDER AND CEO OF PATHSOURCE
BURLINGAME, CALIFORNIA

How America's Lack of Career Education is Breaking our Educational System

At every level, our educational system is broken, fragmented, and leads to disastrous outcomes for young people and adults. It's a waterfall of mistakes, where shortcomings in elementary school and earlier are exacerbated in high school, in college (for those who make it that far), and ultimately in adulthood.

There is no silver bullet here, but it's not possible to solve the problem until we understand it. We'll explore one key piece of the puzzle—how a lack of career exploration guidance and career-focused training from K-12 to adulthood is wreaking havoc on America.

Following the Money in K-12 Education

My career exploration company, PathSource, started by working with some of the largest K-12 school districts in the nation, including Chicago Public Schools and the San Francisco Unified School District. It was an eye-opening experience.

Today, there's a national battle being waged over the future of Common Core, the state-driven, federal-supported initiative to have every state teach and get tested on similar content. One of the key reasons that many communities don't like Common Core is because they think it gives the federal government control of what happens in the classroom. This line of thought suggests that classrooms should be under local control.

But they weren't under local control to begin with, not really, with 11% of public school budgets directly funded by the federal government. While some of these funds are grants that can be used for any purpose, most of the money is earmarked for specific programs. Schools can't use the funds for the priorities their local communities set. The slightly under 50% of public school funds that come from the states tend to similarly tie the hands of local communities to some degree. There are reasonable arguments for and against this type of funding mechanism. But, a key impact of it is that, if the federal government and states aren't allotting funds for career exploration, the schools will have difficulty engaging in career education in a meaningful way.

And, that is consistently the case across the country. In district after district, our team saw administrators who wanted to incorporate career exploration into their curriculum but who were incentivized by the funding they received and the

standards they had to meet to focus on other issues. Career exploration as well as soft skills received lip service but little actual class time.

Why is this important? Because the #1 complaint that students have about school in survey after survey is that they don't see a connection between the classroom and the real world. They don't know why they're learning what they're learning. It means that everything that's thrown at them in school is based on extrinsic motivation. But people don't learn unless they're intrinsically motivated to do so.

Would 18% of students in the U.S. fail to graduate from high school and only 66% go onto college if they were motivated and knew where they wanted to go with their future?

Misplaced Priorities in Higher Education

With less than two-thirds of all U.S. students making it to college at all, one might think that the ones who have made it are well positioned for success, have a reasonably good understanding of what they want to do, and are receiving appropriate guidance from their schools.

Here's a scary number: Approximately 50% of students in college switch majors

Approximately 50% of students in college switch majors two to three times. Switching majors that many times is the academic equivalent of flailing while drowning in a swimming pool. It means these students have no idea what they want to do and have thrashed around at least twice in search of the answer.

two to three times. Switching majors that many times is the academic equivalent of flailing while drowning in a swimming pool. It means these students have no idea what they want to do and have thrashed around at least twice in search of the answer.

These are the students who somehow have managed to find the intrinsic motivation to seek a career path but lack the guidance required to do so. So why aren't the schools helping them?

My team at one point tried to sell some of our services into colleges. We found that college career service centers were universally excited about what we had built, but the amount that they could pay was surprisingly small. How could that be? It turns out that, according to the National Association for Colleges and Employers, the average budget for college career centers is a shockingly low \$34,000 per year.

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Colleges are spending millions upon millions of dollars on athletic facilities and nicer dorms while giving students short shrift where it matters—in helping them find the job that they’ll get after school. A good example is Louisiana State University, where the administration is spending \$85 million on recreational facilities, like a lazy river that spells out “LSU,” while making broad cuts to parts of the university that truly need the money.

Colleges are spending millions upon millions of dollars on athletic facilities and nicer dorms while giving students short shrift where it matters—in helping them find the job that they’ll get after school.

Is it any surprise that when students don’t know what they want to do, they switch majors frequently, causing them to stay in school longer, incur more debt and ultimately fail to graduate? Only 56% of students in the U.S. graduate within six years. And those who succeed in graduating often don’t have a major that will get them a job because no one told them what it takes to get a job in the first place.

What is Happening in Adult Education?

So what do the stats mean? With 18% of students failing to graduate from high school, 66% of high school graduates progressing to college and only 56% of those students graduating within six years, that means that a young adult today has about a 30% chance of graduating from college. That’s a very bad number.

It wouldn’t be so bad if there were plentiful good jobs for people with only a GED or a high school degree. However, as Michigan knows well, those days are long gone.

As many others have pointed out, a post-secondary education is becoming critical to reaching and staying in the middle class in the U.S.

The support mechanism for Americans who didn’t make it to the “finish line” of college graduation is adult education. The federal government is trying to provide that through its Career One Stops, which are intended to house a range of education, career and job-related services under one roof. These centers tend to be populated by hardworking, smart people who are given resources that are utterly insufficient to meet the challenges that they face.

Having visited a number of these facilities, I regularly hear from their directors about the fact that they often can only devote a brief half hour of guidance to someone trying to figure their life out. Counselors at these centers frequently have to give the people they serve a career assessment, a fleetingly brief meeting, a good luck pat on the back and then point them in the direction of their state’s job-related website, which tends to look as though it was

made in 1996 and hasn’t been updated since. It’s not their fault; with few exceptions these centers are not given the resources to do more.

The more tech savvy centers will point people towards the Career One Stop’s online career videos. This video library, which is overseen by the Department of Labor, is painfully bad and outdated. For instance, the video about the software engineering profession features a VCR, extraordinarily old computers and some very big hair.

The Department of Labor recognizes this is a problem and refuses to do anything about it. In fact, at one point I had a conversation with some of the top officials in the Department of Labor about replacing their videos. Their perspective was nothing short of flabbergasting.

They responded they recognized their videos were no longer helpful. I offered to license PathSource’s library of 3,000+ informational interviews on video to them to replace their dated library. They refused because, as they put it, they had purchased third party services in the past and, whenever they did, they found that there was something better out there. So they weren’t going to pay for any third party services anymore. I asked whether they were planning to make new videos themselves to replace the old ones. The answer was no. So while they recognized the problem, they absolutely refused to do anything about it.

Why does this matter? Millions of Americans need help and the federal and state governments are not providing tools that are up to the task. As a result, people across the country lack the education that can lead to social and economic mobility. When their plant closes, they fall out of the middle class without

America’s lack of career education seems so pernicious as to resemble an enormous octopus of incompetence and neglect spreading its tentacles across the entire American education system.

options to find another good paying job. At the same time, we’re seeing rising heroin usage and suicide rates across the country. There’s certainly a correlation between these problems and the shrinking of the middle class combined with a growing lack of opportunity. All of this stems, at least in part, from the failure of our educational system and America’s lack of career education.

Can These Problems be Solved?

America’s lack of career education seems so pernicious as to resemble an enormous octopus of incompetence and neglect spreading its tentacles across the entire American education system.

While the debate on U.S. education includes both wise as well

A photograph of two women sitting at a wooden table, looking at a notebook together. The woman on the left has dark curly hair and is wearing a yellow cardigan over a colorful patterned shirt. The woman on the right has blonde hair and is wearing a denim jacket and glasses. The scene is overlaid with a vibrant watercolor wash in shades of orange, red, and purple. The word 'MIX' is printed in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image.

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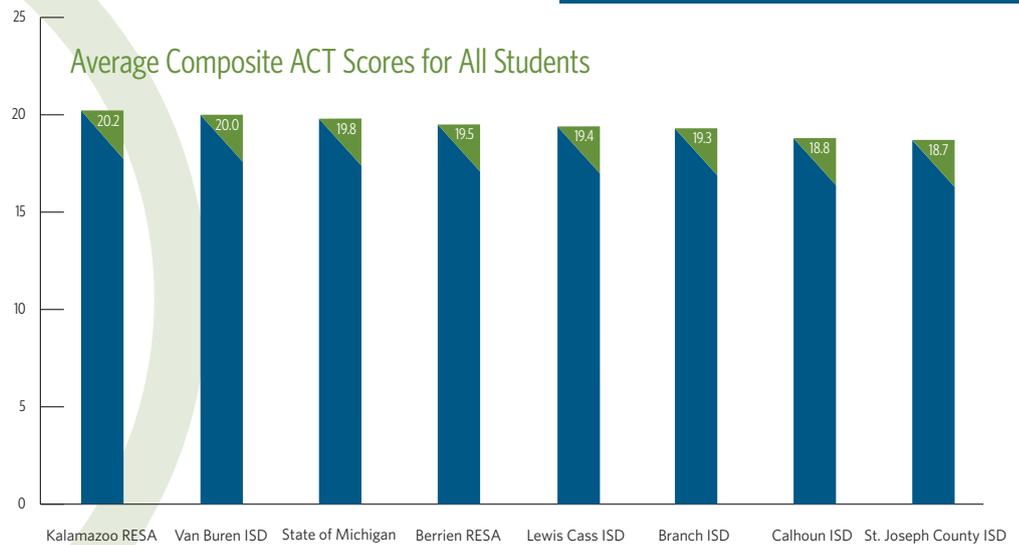
UPCOMING EVENTS

May 25 Field Trip to Holland, Michigan with stops at Tiara Yachts, Herman Miller Design Yard and New Holland Brewery **September 8** Design Day

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SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN COLLEGE STATISTICS

REGIONAL SCORECARD



SOURCE: Michigan Department of Education, ACT Four-year Proficiency Data File, 2013-2014

KEY: ISD (Intermediate School District)
RESA (Regional Education Service Agency)

UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT AT SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

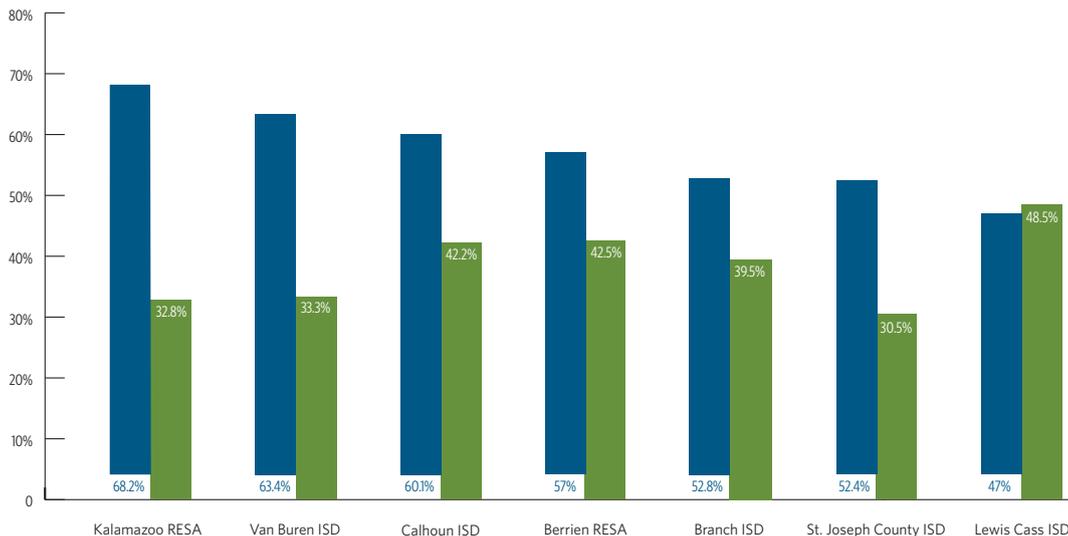
Institution	Location	Level	Control	Enrollment
Western Michigan University	Kalamazoo, MI	Four-year	Public	18,889
Kalamazoo Valley Community College	Kalamazoo, MI	Two-year	Public	9,489
Kellogg Community College	Battle Creek, MI	Two-year	Public	5,929
Lake Michigan College	Benton Harbor, MI	Two-year	Public	4,219
Southwestern Michigan College	Dowagiac, MI	Two-year	Public	2,567
Andrews University	Berrien Springs, MI	Four-year	Private	1,805
Kalamazoo College	Kalamazoo, MI	Four-year	Private	1,461
Albion College	Albion, MI	Four-year	Private	1,268
Glen Oaks Community College	Centreville, MI	Two-year	Public	1,104

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Fall 2014

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF ATTAINMENT (PERCENT OF POPULATION)

Level	Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Masters, Professional or Doctorate Degree
Kalamazoo County	9.7%	20.59%	13.59%
United States	8.00%	18.32%	11.05%
State of Michigan	8.83%	16.23%	10.31%
Berrien County	9.29%	14.80%	9.95%
Calhoun County	10.24%	13.14%	7.12%
Van Buren County	7.72%	12.44%	7.36%
Cass County	9.69%	11.15%	5.02%
St. Joseph County	7.73%	9.23%	5.12%
Branch County	7.57%	8.86%	4.58%

SOURCE: The Nielsen Company, Pop-Facts Demographics, 2016



College Enrollment Rates for Southwest Michigan Students

Source: Michigan Department of Education, College Enrollment Rates 2013-2014

Students Enrolled In College Remedial Coursework

Source: Michigan Department of Education, College Remedial Coursework, 2012-2013

Data includes number of high school graduates who took at least one remedial course after enrolling in a Michigan college or university the year after high school graduation

Fireworks

South Haven



Kick back on the beach to take in one of Lake Michigan's premier fireworks synced to music live on local radio station 103.7 FM.

www.southhaven.com/south-haven-events.shtml

July 3 | South Haven

Battle Creek



Pyrotechnics will take control of the skies over the W. K. Kellogg Airport for one of Michigan's longest fireworks displays. www.bcballoons.com/

July 2 & July 4 | Battle Creek

Niles Bentsidoun French Market



Lose yourself in European charm at the Niles Bentsidoun French Market featuring local artisans and the best farmers have to offer.

www.localharvest.org/niles-bentsidoun-french-market-M16850

Niles | (269) 687-4332

Festivals

Marshall Blues Festival



This may be the most fun you'll ever have singing the blues! Music and entertainment sweep over Marshall's Michigan Avenue for a packed day at Marshall Blues Festival. June 25 www.marshallbluesfest.com/ Marshall | (269) 781-5163

Three Rivers Water Festival



Hop in your car and cruise to the 60th annual Three Rivers Water Festival where over 10,000 are expected to enjoy the parade, carnival rides, live bands and fireworks. June 16—June 18 www.facebook.com/ThreeRiversWaterFestival/ Three Rivers | (269) 278-8193

Coloma Glad-Peach Festival



Celebrate the perfect concoction of locally-grown gladioli and peaches with live music, parades and a classic car show. August 5—August 7 www.colomapeachfest.com/ Coloma

National Blueberry Festival



The 53rd Annual National Blueberry Festival will tantalize your taste buds with blueberry pies and pancakes galore. August 11—August 14 www.blueberryfestival.com/ South Haven | (269) 637-5171

Colon Magic Festival



With a wave of the wand, the "magic capital of the world" will captivate you with some abracadabra, Magic Camp and magicians competing for your applause. July 20—July 23 www.colonmagicfest.com/ Colon | (269) 432-4017

Farmers Markets

South Haven Farm Market



The fruits of South Haven's labor are evident at this market celebrating the importance of agriculture to the local heritage. www.southhavenfarmmarket.com/ South Haven | (269) 637-5171

Marshall Area Farmers Market



Smiles and cinnamon bread welcome you to the Marshall Area Farmers Market. Stroll the grassy knolls to select local produce, flowers and baked goods. cityofmarshall.com/departments/140 Marshall | (269) 558-0343

Battle Creek Farmers Market



With a history dating back to the late 1800s, Festival Market Square houses vendors in a covered walkway for all-weather accessibility. www.battlecreekfarmersmarket.com/ Battle Creek | (269) 720-2279

Kalamazoo Farmers Market



Buy local produce to make your own omelet or drop in for breakfast cooked on-site at the Kalamazoo Farmers' Market. farmersmarketkalamazoo.com/ Kalamazoo | (269) 342-5686

St. Joseph Farmers Market



Vendors share tips for cooking or planting as you browse jams, fine pastries and cut flowers at what has become St. Joseph's Saturday tradition. mifma.org/farmers-markets/st-joseph-farmers-market/ St. Joseph | (269) 985-1111

Niles Family Fun Fair and Bluegrass/Americana Music Festival



Local and national touring Bluegrass and Americana music groups will get your feet tapping with their fiddles, banjos, washboards, and acoustic guitars. June 2—June 5 www.michianafestivals.com/ Niles | (269) 479-8795

Polish Festival



Authentic Polish food and fare anchor the 47-year old tradition in Bronson for an authentic cultural delight! July 21—July 23 www.bronson-mi.com/polish-festival Bronson | (517) 617-0612

Kalamazoo Ribfest



Roll-up your sleeves and dig into the best BBQ chicken and ribs around. Later on, you can work it off jamming to live bands on center stage. August 4—August 6 kalamazooribfest.com/ Kalamazoo

Battle Creek Field of Flight Air Show & Balloon Festival



Experience the world of flight with attractions like the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds and a vast array of hot air balloons floating through the sky! June 29—July 4 www.bcballoons.com/ Battle Creek | (269) 962-0592

IMAGES

KEITH HOWARD, BATTLE CREEK CVB CREATIVECOMMONS.ORG/LICENSES/BY/2.0/LEGALCODE, STEPH ANDERSON MLIVE.COM, DANIELE CREVIER, SUSAN DIEPEN CHRIS RIGOZZI-SOLANO, LUCKY-PHOTOGRAPHER ISTOCKPHOTO.COM, BRIGETTE LEACH, VALENAPHOTO ISTOCKPHOTO.COM, CSFOTOIMAGES ISTOCKPHOTO.COM, CHRIS B. REMAINDER COURTESY OF THE RESPECTIVE ORGANIZATIONS



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WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY'S HERITAGE HALL



A CONVERSATION WITH **RENEE PEARL**, DIRECTOR OF ENGAGEMENT

WHAT THEY DO Home of the Western Michigan University (WMU) Alumni Center and Office of Development and Alumni Relations.

LOCATION 601 Oakland Drive, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49008

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES 45 employees, with an additional 75 students supporting the call center and other roles.

THE VIBE You'll notice a lot of brown and gold—from paint to granite—true to WMU's colors. The public spaces keep to the building's classical history, but our office spaces are very modern.

SIZE 53,000 square feet, sitting on a 20-acre site on Prospect Hill overlooking the city of Kalamazoo.

BACKSTORY We took a building built in 1904, completed in 1905, and fallen into disrepair, and turned it into the most energy efficient building on campus. In the past, it was a library, administrative offices, classrooms, faculty offices, archives, and even a high school. We took off extra wings and put on three additions—for comfort and accessibility. Comfort meaning restrooms in each wing, and accessibility meaning we needed to add stairwells and an elevator to get people into the building and meet today's codes. The building is now heated and cooled by a geothermal field. We're pursuing a LEED platinum certification. It now has a new life, a new purpose, a new mission.

THE SPACE SAYS Up and down the hallways, we curated displays out of archives to tell the story of WMU in six themes—student life, alumni, community, athletics, the arts and academics. It has everything from a “living room” to a ballroom that can seat 200. The Zhang Financial Room, or the “living room,” boasts a 7-ton fireplace from North Hall taken down piece by piece and reassembled here. Furniture was selected and donated by one of our alumni, Dick Haworth and his Haworth Company. Conferences rooms are used by our team, other WMU teams and outside groups. Office space is intentionally positioned on each floor so space is always filled with activity. And, then there's “the vault.” Back in the early 1900s, people didn't go to the bank everyday so tuition dollars were put in the basement's vault. Architecturally and structurally, this space had to stay so, we worked to make it a fun with unique seating, laptop plugins, and even a TV.

BITS OF HISTORY Memorabilia from when the space was University High School; three original LED-retrofit lights; original handrails on extensions; exposed original brick; radiators serving as décor; and backsteps where it was “hip” to be kissed in the 1940s and 1950s.

STORY HEATHER BAKER
IMAGES COURTESY WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Burr Oak Tool, Inc.

SECOND to NONE

STORY PAMELA PATTON
IMAGES MATT CARUSO



WEBSITE

www.burroak.com

HEADQUARTERS

Two locations in Sturgis, MI—one for manufacturing, including business sales, and engineering offices and the other for assembly.

FOUNDED in 1944

OTHER LOCATIONS

OAK Eurasia s.r.o. in Pilsen, Czech Republic with global representatives in Sorocaba, Brazil; Bangkok, Thailand; Nagoya, Japan; Guangzhou, China; Puebla, Mexico; Seoul, Korea; Gurgaon, India; and Smolensk, Russia.

LAST EXPANSION

A 120,000-square-foot assembly facility was constructed in Sturgis to meet the growing global demand for the company's products. Completed in July 2014, the building continues to be an enabler for lean manufacturing initiatives, further developing the company's global brand and market reach.

ANNUAL REVENUE

+/- \$70 million.

ANNUAL PRODUCTION

Approximately 130 total machines and dies.

WHO WORKS THERE

Engineers (Mechanical, Electrical, Manufacturing, Sales), Machinists, Painters, Programmers,

Electricians, Technicians (Quality, Fluid Power, Field Service, Maintenance, R&D), Die makers, Welders, Machine Builders, Production Schedulers, and Accountants.

EMPLOYMENT

Burr OAK Tool is a family-friendly company where employees are encouraged to interact with their families and communities. Employee benefits are strong, which is one of the many reasons why employees tend to stay until retirement. Employees' ideas for continuous improvement are encouraged and frequently implemented. The company lives by its core values. Jason Halling, Manager of Business Development & Marketing says, "We work hard, we have good people that are doing the right things, and we innovate to meet and anticipate our customers' needs."



IT'S WHY

Burr OAK Tool was started to provide head exchange and tube processing solutions for multiple manufacturing and heavy industries. Its vision still today is to be regarded as second to none by its employees, customers, partners, and communities. Its globally known brand is well respected, and its exposure operating from worldwide locations gives it a holistic view of its global market which includes manufacturers like Goodman, Carrier, Lennox, Rheem, Midea, and Hisense.

WHAT IT MAKES

Fin, coil, and tube processing equipment used in the manufacture and fabrication of many consumer, industrial, and commercial products solutions.

Its products serve the air conditioning, heating, refrigeration, appliance, automotive, plumbing, and tube component production industries.

WHAT ITS PRODUCTS DO

Customers use OAK equipment to produce proprietary fins, return bends, and hairpin bends that are assembled into a heat exchange coil. Once put together, other OAK equipment is then used to form or shape the coil into the desired pattern or geometry for its end use.

WHAT SETS ITS PRODUCTS APART FROM THE PACK

Family-owned for three generations, Burr OAK Tool differentiates its products by manufacturing equipment that is built to last, made of the highest quality materials, and innovatively

solves production constraints and challenges. Machines the company built and delivered in the 1970s are still in high production operation.

NOW HIRING

Electrical/Controls Engineers and strong mechanical individuals to build machines and dies are needed. Apply online or complete an application in the lobby of its Sturgis location at 405 West South Street.

FLYING HIGH WITH DUNCAN AVIATION

Ensclosed along the main runway at W.K. Kellogg Airport in Battle Creek, Michigan, the Duncan Aviation complex looms as three large and spotless hangars. Inside each structure, bright lights shine and polished floors gleam almost as brightly as dozens of business jets arranged neatly in various states of disassembly and refurbishment.

Outside, and just up the runway, Western Michigan University's (WMU) College of Aviation occupies 92,000 square feet of airport real estate. The space includes the old flight control tower and hangars converted to brief/debrief rooms, a hypoxia testing chamber, a flight planning room with tables large enough to accommodate sectional flight charts, and a cross-country map with concentric rings: 50 nautical miles for private pilot students, 100 miles for instruments, 250 for commercial pilots. Flight options range from Niagara Falls to Green Bay to Kentucky.

Over the past 18 years, the relationship between Duncan Aviation and WMU has blossomed into a mutually beneficial symbiosis. Terry Michmerhuizen has seen the alliance from both sides: He worked as an engineer at Duncan

from 1999 to 2011, and today he's an assistant professor at the College of Aviation. "Duncan has a culture, as any company has a culture, and having been there 12 years I know and understand that culture," said Michmerhuizen—"Mr. Mich" to his students. "Our methodology seems to fit very well with Duncan's desires."

In 1998, as the Duncan-WMU alliance was germinating and a year before Michmerhuizen started working at Duncan, Justin Merklung was a senior at WMU. Back then, the aviation program was operated through WMU's College of Engineering. Duncan hired him right out of college; today he serves as Engine Service Manager at Duncan and sits on the WMU College of Aviation Advisory Board. Back then, WMU aviation students were largely left to their own devices to augment their academics. "I was working full time throughout my college career," Merklung said. "There were a couple internships available at the time, but I don't think there was anything associated with Duncan."

Early on, the relationship between Duncan and WMU consisted of sharing parts and donating services. "We're right next to each other on the field, and so sometimes we would donate un-airworthy scrap parts to them to utilize in their maintenance classes," Merklung said. Michmerhuizen recalls a time when Duncan reupholstered seats from a 172 Cessna. "I asked the manager of

the interior department, “Do you have somebody that’s new to work on these seats? They don’t have to be airworthy, they just have to look nice,” Michmerhuizen said. “Two or three weeks later, we got back some really nice leather-covered seats. The benefit to us is we got some nice-looking seats; the benefit to them is a new employee got to work through the process of covering some seats.”

Internships soon followed—one or two at first, and eventually five or six each summer. “They tell us what they want and we post it as an internship,”

Michmerhuizen said. “We screen the students and give them the best three or five, of which they’re going to take three. They get the cream of the crop of our student body. The employer gets a good employee; the employee is excited to work for a company like that. It’s really a win-win. And then when (the interns) come back and ignite the fire under other students, it’s a win-win-win.”

WMU maintains supportive relationships with aeronautical entities other than Duncan—Aerodynamics Inc., Cirrus, Express Jet, American Airlines, the Air Zoo—and has internship relationships with other corporate partners. But the deal with Duncan is special. “The quantity of internships is higher at Duncan than with other relationships we have,” Michmerhuizen said. “As the program has matured, we’ve given them better candidates and they give us a better understanding of their wants. The process has matured. I don’t think anyone else gets five or six students out of the application process.” Duncan, for its part, maintains internship programs with other schools, including Purdue University. However, due to proximity and the availability of year-round student internships, WMU remains a Duncan preference. “It really gives us a three- to six-month long interview with these students,” Merkling said. “If it turns out to be a good partnership, we’ll look at bringing them on full-time after they graduate.”

Amel Mujakic is a WMU College of Aviation senior from Warren, Michigan majoring in aviation maintenance technology. When 269 *MAGAZINE* spoke with Mujakic, graduation was less than two weeks

away. But he wasn’t sweating his future. “Last summer I had the opportunity to do an internship at Duncan,” Mujakic said. After the internship, Duncan offered Mujakic full-time employment as an airframe team member, specializing in Bombardier Global and Challenger aircraft. “I think that (the Duncan internship) adds to Western’s program a lot of experience and just a lot of help in general,” Mujakic said. “We have our classes and our labs and our teachers do a great job getting us prepared, but it’s always different when you get in the field. Duncan has been amazing,” Mujakic added. “I’ve learned so much from there. And being given the opportunity to work there my senior year of college has been great.”

In addition to internships, the WMU-Duncan partnership also exerts academic leverage. “As they’re shaping and developing their curriculum they’re consistently asking us, ‘Hey, what do you want our technicians to be prepared to do when they graduate? Where do you see the holes right now? How can we improve?’ Merkling said. “So we’re offering constant feedback to them on how they should be shaping their curriculums, what they’re teaching.”

Other joint operations include senior projects and job fairs like Aviation Outlook Day and Michigan Career Quest, geared toward middle school students. “The Michigan Career Quest Southwest was an event held in Kalamazoo, Michigan for 8th and 9th grade students,” said Elizabeth VanDussen, Human Resource Manager

for Duncan-Battle Creek. “Duncan Aviation partnered with WMU and the FAA to promote post-secondary training opportunities along with careers in the aviation industry.”

With so many successes on both sides, The Duncan-WMU partnership is likely to continue and expand. “I see it continuing if they continue to be happy or even ecstatic that we’re providing them with top quality students,” said Michmerhuizen.



Duncan Aviation bills itself as the world's largest privately owned business jet support facility. It provides maintenance, repair and operations services, referred to in the aeronautics industry as MRO. Battle Creek is one of Duncan's three full-service MRO facilities; the others are in Lincoln, Nebraska and Provo, Utah. Founded in Nebraska in 1956, Duncan is a privately held company with more than 2,000 employees.

At any given time, Duncan's service bays at the Battle Creek airfield can house three dozen jets worth up to \$60 million apiece. Aircraft spend time at Duncan in one of five shop areas—airframe, engine, avionics, paint, and interior. Although Duncan encourages customers to maximize the aircraft's downtime by taking advantage of their full capabilities, a typical aircraft spends three to four weeks at Duncan's Battle Creek facility at a cost of \$200,000 to \$225,000. More complex repairs require longer stays—up to six months for a complete refurbishment,

according to Justin Merklng, Engine Service Manager at Duncan. "For the more comprehensive projects, you're probably looking at \$1 million to \$1.5 million."

Duncan clients are mostly corporations and businesses that operate small jets. Customers include prominent regional companies, but 90 percent of Duncan Aviation-Battle Creek's customers come from outside of Michigan and 25 percent from other countries, according to the company. Customers also include athletes, celebrities, and regional corporate clients whose anonymity the firm is careful to protect. In addition, Duncan's clientele includes fractional ownership companies—kind of like timeshare airplanes—and private aircraft managed by third-party management firms. "Management companies will take a customer's aircraft and manage it for them," Merklng said. "They'll also manage the pilots, the maintenance, and all of the technical and regulatory requirements that come with aircraft ownership. So we'll

provide maintenance for those types of entities, also."

Duncan prides itself on manifesting its core values. "As you walk around here, you'll see the core values on posters all over the place," Merklng said. "We're very passionate about those core values. And it wasn't a senior team that developed them. They were developed by the whole company, every employee giving their input on what made the company special for customers and team members alike." Community service is a primary component of the company's ethic. An employee committee meets quarterly to discuss volunteer opportunities. Past initiatives include a clothing drive, an annual food drive, and service projects at Cheff Therapeutic Riding Center in Augusta, Michigan; planting organic vegetables at Leila Arboretum in Battle Creek; and painting buildings at S.A.F.E. Place in Battle Creek.

It's that strong commitment to customer service and community that keep Duncan Aviation flying high!



W

Western Michigan University (WMU) operates an esteemed aviation program with more than 800 students. The aviation program was established in 1995, moved to its current location at Battle Creek's W.K. Kellogg Airport in 1997, and became the university's College of Engineering in July 1999. The College of Aviation offers three areas of study—aviation flight science; aviation management and operations; and aviation maintenance. Of the student population, two-thirds study flight; the rest are split between maintenance and administration. Virtually without exception, the students who make use of the school's partnership with Duncan Aviation are in the maintenance program.

The school maintains a fleet of 26 single-engine Cirrus SR20s; seven Piper Seminoles for multi-engine and commercial training; and two Cessna 150 aircraft, plus flight simulators, classrooms, and maintenance labs. Thanks to air traffic from WMU, the Battle Creek airport ranks as the state's third busiest in takeoffs and landings—behind Detroit Metro and Pontiac.

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Investing in Family Culture Yields Dividends

STORY CATHY KNAPP
IMAGE MATT CARUSO

With the war for talent raging on, employers are continually reminded about the importance of developing and keeping valuable team members. Turnover interrupts productivity, causing quality and service challenges. It's also expensive.

An independent analysis by the W.E. Upjohn Institute has determined in the cost of turnover in Southwest Michigan is approximately \$3,500 per lost employee. Everyone matters as companies continue to grapple with possible solutions for workforce challenges. In their book, *Everybody Matters: The Extraordinary Power of Caring for Your People Like Family*, co-authors Bob Chapman and Raj Sisodia detail the experience of Chapman himself, Chairman and CEO of the manufacturing technology and services company Barry-Wehmiller.

Chapman's day-to-day management style creates high morale, loyalty, creativity, and business performance. Under his leadership, Barry-Wehmiller abandoned the idea that employees are simply operators to be moved around, managed with rewards and penalties, or discarded at will. Instead, the company, valued at \$2 billion today,

demonstrates that every single person matters, just like in a family. His theories seem to be paying off.

Everyone Matters to Local Company

In White Pigeon, Michigan, Banks Hardwoods has been exemplifying a family culture since Steve Banks started the company in 1985—long before Chapman and Sisodia wrote their book.

A hardwood lumber dry kiln concentration yard, shipping over 60 million board feet to customers in six countries, Banks Hardwoods employs 165 team members at three locations in White Pigeon and Newberry, Michigan and Menomonie, Wisconsin. Like Barry-Wehmiller, Banks Hardwoods goes by the mantra that everyone matters. With an average length of employee service in excess of 12 years, the company's investment in its employees seems to be paying off.

The culture at Banks Hardwoods is felt immediately upon entrance to its St. Joseph County site. The feeling of a home-away-from-home has been created with a beautifully manicured lawn leading up to the sprawling front porch of the log cabin corporate offices. Visitors who enter the front door are greeted enthusiastically by the warm smile of Regina King, Director of First Impressions. Fellow team members and customers alike agree that Regina has the gift of making one feel immediately like family.

However, Regina is no anomaly. Warm smiles and friendly introductions emanate from all offices, the large dining room table where employees gather for lunch and the plant floor. Banks Hardwoods employees even state that they miss each

“The culture at Banks Hardwoods is felt immediately upon entrance to its St. Joseph County site. The feeling of a home-away-from-home has been created with a beautifully manicured lawn leading up to the sprawling front porch of the log cabin corporate offices.”

other when they're out of the office and are excited to return from vacations.

Why is it that Everyone is so Happy?

"To talk about our culture and why people are here, it all begins with how Steve started the company," says CFO Jim Clarke. "It's a grassroots culture that started at the beginning. The culture is not just from the top, but it's more like an upside down pyramid. We set a base with the key players committed. They're the ones who instill the company culture to all the new people that come on board."



Sales executive Scott Dickerson agrees with Clarke. "Steve's actions, approaches, and philosophies feed into the second person and then into the third person. The net starts to grow and everybody gets intertwined in that culture. The culture is truly embedded."

Clarke explains that part of the reason the company has been so successful is because they don't treat people like employees. "I call it individualization. If somebody has problems with their family, if they have personal things going on, we help them through their issues. We care for them 24 hours

a day, not just from 6:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. I've sat down and counseled people who are having financial troubles. There are people who need a shoulder during marriage issues and child bearing issues. We let them know they matter to us. Workers are encouraged to go to their supervisors and let them know what's going on."

"I've sat down and counseled people who are having financial troubles. There are people who need a shoulder during marriage issues and child bearing issues. We let them know they matter to us. Workers are encouraged to go to their supervisors and let them know what's going on."

According to 19-year employee and Plant Manager, Mark Bojanich, Banks has been known to arrive in the morning, throw his briefcase in his office and head directly out to the plant where he'll work on the line with his team. "He asks for a photo of every new employee I hire and wants to know the names of their family members," Bojanich said. "He then seeks them out personally and introduces himself." These gestures make team members feel important and build morale.

"Steve even handwrites birthday cards," continues Bojanich.

The Caring Goes Beyond Greeting and Birthday Cards

"We had a man miss more work than was normal. We found out that his family's home burned down with no insurance. Steve told me to make sure to take care of them." Company leadership led the way, but the man's working family quickly followed suit as well with team members raising money and donating coats, shoes, and boots. "It makes you proud you hired them," says a visibly touched Bojanich.

Chapman and Sisodia's book illustrates how organizations can reject the traumatic consequences of rolling layoffs, dehumanizing rules, and hypercompetitive cultures. "Once you stop treating people like functions or costs, disengaged workers begin to share their gifts and talents toward a shared future. Uninspired workers stop feeling that their jobs have no meaning.

Frustrated workers stop taking their bad days out on their spouses and kids. And everyone stops counting the minutes until it's time to go home."

Banks Hardwoods' employees echo these sentiments. Gary Harding, a grader who has been with the company for nine years says that he feels trusted and empowered. Tallyman and 11-year

company veteran, Gabriel Guerra, says that everyone is in it together from the lowest to highest ranking positions.

Export Sales Manager Phil Dodyk worked in China and Chicago before coming back to Banks Hardwoods where he'd interned years previously. "I came back to connect with the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 51



2854 S. 11th Street, Kalamazoo



From left to right: Molly Lacy, Practice Administrator,
Chris Mars, Vice President Commercial Lending, Marcia Johnson, M.D.

Growing a practice is easy when you have the right partner.

“One of the best problems to face in the medical field is outgrowing your current space. Once we decided to build a larger, amenity-rich facility, Chris Mars and First National Bank of Michigan made securing a construction loan as easy as a routine check-up.

We appreciate First National’s efforts to treat our practice holistically,
just like we do our patients.”

– Molly Lacy, Practice Administrator, OB-GYN, P.C.



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SCOTT HARRISON

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SEL

Scott Harrison's path to self-awareness led him from the hot spots of the New York City club scene to the shores of Liberia. A series of seemingly unrelated experiences brought him to where he is today—Founder and CEO of charity: water.

Self-awareness. When one has it, one can look within to get a clear snapshot of thoughts, beliefs, emotions, motivations and personality traits. An individual can see himself or herself as separate from surroundings and other people. Becoming self-aware is the first step on the journey to finding the best you, and how to direct that energy into positive directions.

A 2010 study by Green Peak Partners and Cornell's School of Industrial and Labor Relations found that self-awareness is one of the "top predictors of overall success" in leadership. The study called *When it Comes to Business Leadership, Nice Guys Finish First* finds that "leadership searches give short shrift to 'self-awareness' ... Executives who are aware of their weaknesses are often better able to hire subordinates who perform well in categories in which the leader lacks acumen. These leaders are also more able to entertain the idea that someone on their team may have an idea that is even better than their own."

STORY PAMELA PATTON
IMAGES COURTESY OF SCOTT HARRISON &
IVARS LINARDS ZOLNEROVICS IStockPHOTO.COM

The book, *Heart, Smarts, Guts, and Luck*, by Anthony K. Tjan, Richard J. Harrington, and Tsun-Yan Hsieh too notes that self-awareness is one quality that trumps all, evident in virtually every great entrepreneur, manager, and leader. The best thing leaders can do to improve their effectiveness is to become more aware of what motivates them and their decision-making.

Scott Harrison's path to self-awareness led him from the hot spots of the New York City club scene to the shores of Liberia. A series of seemingly unrelated experiences brought him to where he is today—Founder and CEO of charity: water. Its mission: To give people easy access to clean, safe drinking water. How did he get to where he is today? Self-awareness.

HARRISON

Waking Up to SELF-AWARENESS

Harrison grew up as a healthy, happy kid in New Jersey. Despite the fact that his mother used an actual cereal bowl when cutting his hair, his was a loving Christian home. But, all that changed when Harrison was four years old. That's when his family moved to the suburbs and an energy efficient house with a faulty furnace, resulting in a carbon monoxide leak. As his mother was fixing up the basement in their new home, she was breathing in the noxious fumes, slowly dying. She collapsed and was taken to the hospital for treatment, transforming from a vibrant, healthy mom to a woman with a compromised immune system who constantly wore an oxygen mask with a charcoal filter.

As a boy, Harrison was active in his church youth group, played in the worship band, and helped take care of his mother, often doing the cooking and the cleaning. At age 18, he rebelled and left home for New York City where he became a nightclub promoter. The job was almost too easy for him: All he had to do was get the right people inside the club and then the club would charge the people astronomical prices for cocktails.

Harrison's fame grew. He was paid thousands to be seen drinking certain beverages. He worked three nights a week. He had a BMW, a model for a girlfriend, and a grand piano in his apartment.

Then, it hit him. He says, "I gradually realized that I had changed into the worst person I knew. I was morally bankrupt. I was spiritually bankrupt. I'd come so far from the faith and the values that I'd been raised with. I realized something had to change."

Harrison's life became a series of contradictions. "I started reading the Bible and about theology—even though I was hung over. I was trying to find my way back to faith and visiting churches, but I was still doing my job—getting people drunk for a living."

Finally, Harrison went all in. "I sold all my possessions and made a deal with God that I would give one of the ten years that I'd selfishly wasted. I would try to make my life exactly the opposite. I would become involved in some service to the poor."

He applied to some of the world's most renowned humanitarian organizations and was turned down by each one. Finally, one organization wrote him, saying that if he paid them \$500 per month, and was willing to go to Liberia, he could volunteer. A few weeks later, Harrison and 14,000 United Nations peacekeeping troops—one of the largest peacekeeping forces ever deployed—set sail aboard *Mercy Ships*, a hospital ship staffed by doctors and surgeons from all over the world. He landed in a country coming out of a 14-year civil war with no electricity, no running water, no sewage, no mail, and where its people lived in bombed-out apartment buildings missing walls and roofs.

A Personal Journey

What did Harrison have to offer to a medical program? "I said I could be a photojournalist. I had a lot of people on my nightclub list. I'd tell them this story and raise awareness and money for the need."

Harrison recalls, "On my third day of the mission, I knew that we had 1,500 surgery slots to fill. We were going to be able to help 1,500 people if enough people turned up. That day 7,000 people were waiting for us."

He continues, "You have these moments in life. It hit me. Thousands of people were going to be turned away, people who had come with hope, simply because we didn't have enough doctors. We didn't have enough resources. Some of them walked for more than a month from neighboring countries."

During the next few days of screenings, Harrison saw people with missing faces, missing ears, no noses, or no eyes. Yet all the while, he had been sending emails to his 15,000-person club list. Some opted out, but others began to give money and others began to volunteer.

An Idea is Born

Harrison took 15,000 photos in that first year. Then, he went back on a second tour, where he began spending more time in the rural villages, and where he discovered Liberia's water problem. "In my nightclub days I would sell a bottle of Pellegrino water for \$10, and most people didn't drink it. In Liberia, half of the people were drinking water from swamps,

or ponds, or dirty rivers contaminated with feces, leaches, microscopic worms and countless diseases. I didn't want to live in a world where 663 million people—twice the population of the U.S.—drink dirty water. I came back with the idea for charity: water.

“Clean water is one of the most transformative agents on earth. It can lift people out of extreme poverty. If kids are drinking clean water, they're healthier. If a school has water and toilets, you get better students. If women aren't walking hours every single day, they can do incredible things with that time. They start small businesses, selling rice at the market, or selling peanuts, earning an extra dollar or two a day.”

A New Giving Model

As Harrison spoke to friends he quickly realized he would need a new charitable model to change the way Millennials thought about charity.

So he decided that charity: water would give away 100 percent of the public's money without exception. And to prove it, every water project charity: water funds

in 24 countries would be visible on Google Maps. But, what other ways could he encourage the public to give? Harrison went back to his nightclub promoter roots.

“It started with my thirty-first birthday nine years ago. I went back to a nightclub and threw a party. 700 people turned up. They all donated \$20 on the way in, and then I gave them an open bar for an hour. We raised our first \$15,000. We immediately took every penny to a refugee camp in Northern Uganda where we did our first few projects.

“We continued to close the loop. We embraced social media early on. We became the first charity to get a million Twitter followers. We're the first charity to use Instagram to spread our stories. We partnered with brands. Macallan Distillery took a 64-year-old bottle of Macallan scotch on a world tour. If you wanted to taste it, you had to donate at least \$5,000. That single bottle raised \$605,000.”

He Donated His Birthday

As Harrison approached his thirty-second birthday, he knew he didn't want to throw another club party. Instead he asked everyone to give \$32 to charity: water in honor of his thirty-second

birthday. His birthday party raised \$59,000, and the idea took hold.

“Adam Lambert, a runner-up on American Idol, tried to raise \$29,000 for his birthday on Twitter—and raised \$320,000. Will and Jada Smith not only gave up their birthdays, but actually came with us to Ethiopia. But what was more exciting was to see everyday people catching our vision. People like 89-year-old Nona who wrote, ‘I'm turning 89. I'd like to make that possible for more people in Africa.’ A four-year-old raised \$5,100 by selling her paintings.”

But out of all these success stories, the story of nine-year-old Rachel Beckwith stands out. “Rachel's church had raised hundreds of thousands of dollars, and I went there to thank them. I challenged the audience to donate their next birthday. Rachel gave up her ninth birthday and tried to raise \$300 but fell short, raising \$220.”

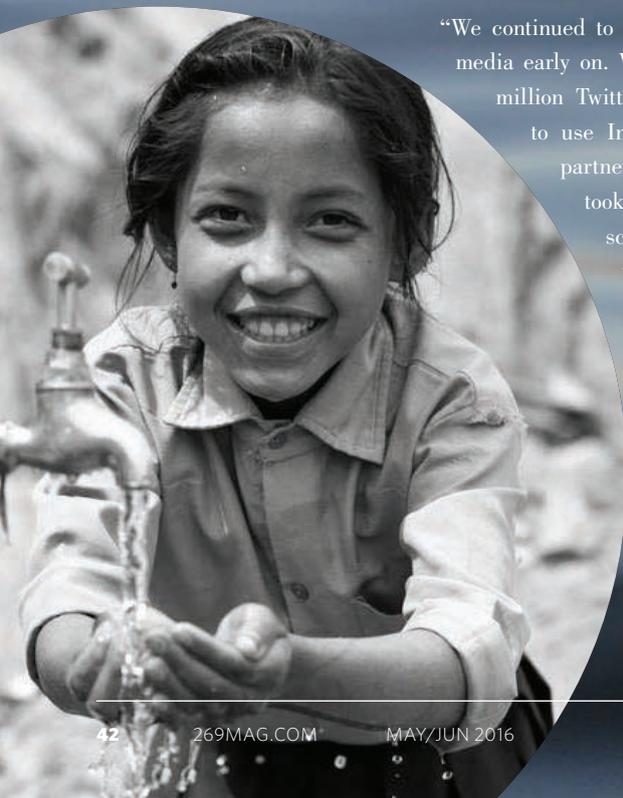
A decade after Harrison changed from a self-involved promoter to a self-aware humanitarian, over one million people have contributed more than \$207 million to charity: water, giving over six million people around the world access to clean water.

“I was in Africa during her campaign, and upon my return to New York I learned that Rachel had been the only fatality in a 20-car pile-up. Her family wanted to honor her last wish by reopening the campaign. The donations began to pour in, as her church, then the Seattle community, and then the entire world learned of Rachel's birthday campaign. Rachel's birthday raised over \$1.2 million. On the anniversary of her death, Rachel's family and pastor joined me in Ethiopia to meet the thousands of people helped by Rachel's birthday campaign.”

A decade after Harrison changed from a self-involved promoter to a self-aware humanitarian, over one million people have contributed more than \$207 million to charity: water, giving over six million people around the world access to clean water.

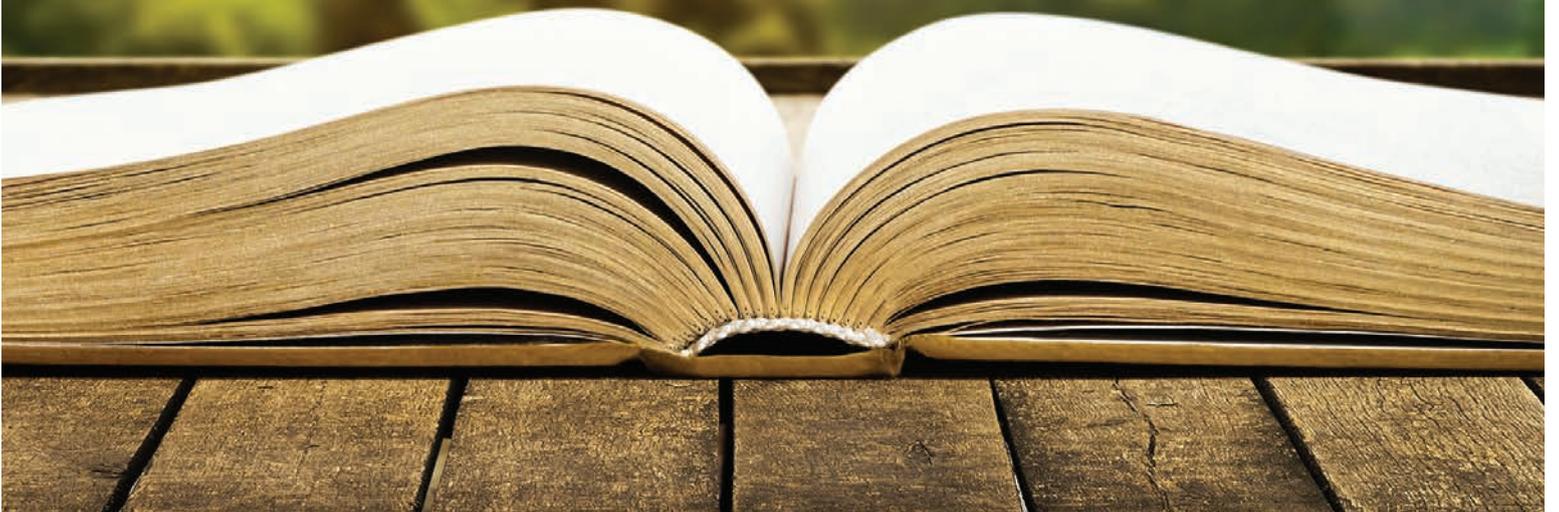
Harrison is a living, breathing example of self-awareness. He opened himself up to the power of coming to terms with who he was, who he could be, and who he wanted to help.

He concludes, “Thousands of years ago, Rabbi Hillel said, ‘If not us, then who? If not now, then when?’ From the day I gave up my former lifestyle, I have lived by those words.”



EDUCATION
IS THE MOST **POWERFUL WEAPON**
WHICH YOU CAN USE TO
CHANGE THE WORLD.

Nelson Mandela



(269) How did I get here?

The early years

“Since childhood, I’ve always been analytical, to the point that I would get my little league team’s baseball scorecards and chart and track team stats by hand. Pre-computers, mind you!”

1999 | Graduated from Brother Rice High School in Bloomfield Township, Michigan

“I played football and baseball throughout high school. Not to sound cliché, but sports teach you important life lessons: hard work, discipline, and the ability to work within a team.”

2001 | Current Dark Horse location opens

2000 - 2003 | Attended and Graduated from Albion College

“From the first time I drank a Dark Horse Crooked Tree IPA, I was hooked. Every Monday, I would make the short drive over from Albion College to get my growler filled at the Dark Horse taproom. After graduating, I worked for Ernst & Young in the Audit practice for two years, and subsequently in the Transaction Advisory Services practice for four years.”

2005 | Obtained my Certified Public Accountant’s license in the State of Michigan

2007 | Homebrewing: From hobby to obsession

“After sampling several different craft brands, I decided to give homebrewing a shot. I was instantly hooked. With my homebrews, I won awards at several competitions, and that success culminated with winning gold at the National Homebrewing Competition in 2013 for ‘Split Open and Melt,’ a Russian Imperial Stout.”

2010 | Failure creates success

“With the boom of the craft beer industry, I left Ernst & Young for General Motors, so I could focus on opening a brewpub. Throughout the process of creating a business plan and shopping for investors, I bounced all of my ideas off of Aaron Morse, owner of the Dark Horse Brewing Company. My proposed brewpub never opened, and it ended in a legal dispute. The lessons I learned along the way were invaluable, and the experience opened the door for my current position.”

2014 | CFO of Dark Horse Brewing Company

“From the moment I walked in the door, the Morse Family accepted me with open arms. I’m honored to be a part of what we’re building here at the Dark Horse. I would say the two things I am most proud of since arriving are implementing a fully integrated ERP system that has assisted both operations and finance/accounting to operate more efficiently and in tandem, and improving the existing relationship with our primary local bank.”

2016 | Present

“When it comes to the finance and accounting here at the Dark Horse, I always tell people that I’m a bit of a one-man band. However, our personnel continues to evolve, and we’re going to need a solid team in place when the other planned Dark Horse businesses—coffee shop, bakery, creamery, distillery, wood shop, bike shop and overnight cabins—are firing on all cylinders here on ‘The Compound.’”

Community involvement

“I joined the Marshall Area Economic Development Association (MAEDA) to speak on behalf of the Dark Horse. That participation allows us to stay current and involved in local events and activities. In addition, we host numerous events at the brewery, and all proceeds are donated to local charities. For example, our annual Smoke Off generated approximately \$13,000 for Marshall Area Community Services in 2015, and the Cancer Benefit auction helped generate approximately \$8,000 for the American Cancer Society.”

PAT CRADDOCK

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER OF DARK HORSE BREWERY

STORY KEITH KEHLBECK
IMAGE MATT CARUSO



Talk To A Professional Before Picking Your Home!

Mortgage pre-approval is the fertilizer to your home buying plan. It is an important step because it helps your real estate agent narrow down the focus of house hunting. A mortgage consultant will help you hone in on how much house you can afford, keeping you from going house-poor. Talking with a mortgage consultant first can help you:

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- ▶ Find the right mortgage for your needs
- ▶ Plan your dream home discovery

Talk with a consultant when you're ready to pick your dream home!

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Around (269)

GETTING READY TO PICK OUT THAT NEW BIKE?

HERE'S MIKE'S ADVICE:

- "Don't be afraid to start!"
- Whether you plan to be an occasional recreational rider or hope to participate in a marathon, there's a bike for you.
- Team Active bicycles range from \$400 to as much as \$20,000. That kind of investment means that ongoing support from businesses like Team Active is more important than ever.

SOME OF MIKE'S FAVORITES

- Road Bikes
- Mountain Bikes
- Fat Tire Bikes

TO READ THE FULL INTERVIEW,
GO TO 269MAG.COM.

IMAGES MATT CARUSO



MIKE WOOD

Founder of Team Active
22 Michigan Ave W
Battle Creek, MI 49017

RIDE ON!

IT ALL STARTED WITH A SCHWINN TYPHOON™

Mike Wood, of Team Active located on Michigan Avenue in downtown Battle Creek, Michigan, first fell in love with bikes growing up in Jackson, Michigan. Even with the many increasingly sophisticated bicycles available to him today, the Schwinn Typhoon Mike got in 1969 still holds a special place in his heart. "It gave me the freedom to go places...to venture outside of my yard, outside of my block. I didn't need a driver's license to do it, and I could go places that my parents didn't even know I went." That feeling of freedom led him to pursue the dream of doing something he loves for a living.

When he purchased what was essentially a mom and pop bike shop in 1986, Mike had a vision to grow the business, building on his own experience in the athletic industry. In the intervening years, personal service, technology, quality, and growing public enthusiasm for bicycling all were aspects of Team Active's success.

New partner Alan Parr—a longtime customer who approached Mike in 2015 to purchase and expand the business—is thrilled to continue to have Mike involved in the store. He says the most important thing for their team to remember is that every customer should have an experience at Team Active that they can't get anywhere else. For Parr, that, and expanding the business to different markets, has become a shared passion with Team Active's founder.

Team Active wants "to get more butts on bikes." While the size and scope of the business has changed dramatically in the past 30 years, the passion that Mike and Alan share for encouraging an active lifestyle remains stronger than ever.

"Our name is Team Active. We want people to be active!" says Wood.



AT A CROSSROADS?
WHAT HAPPENS **NEXT**
IS UP TO YOU.

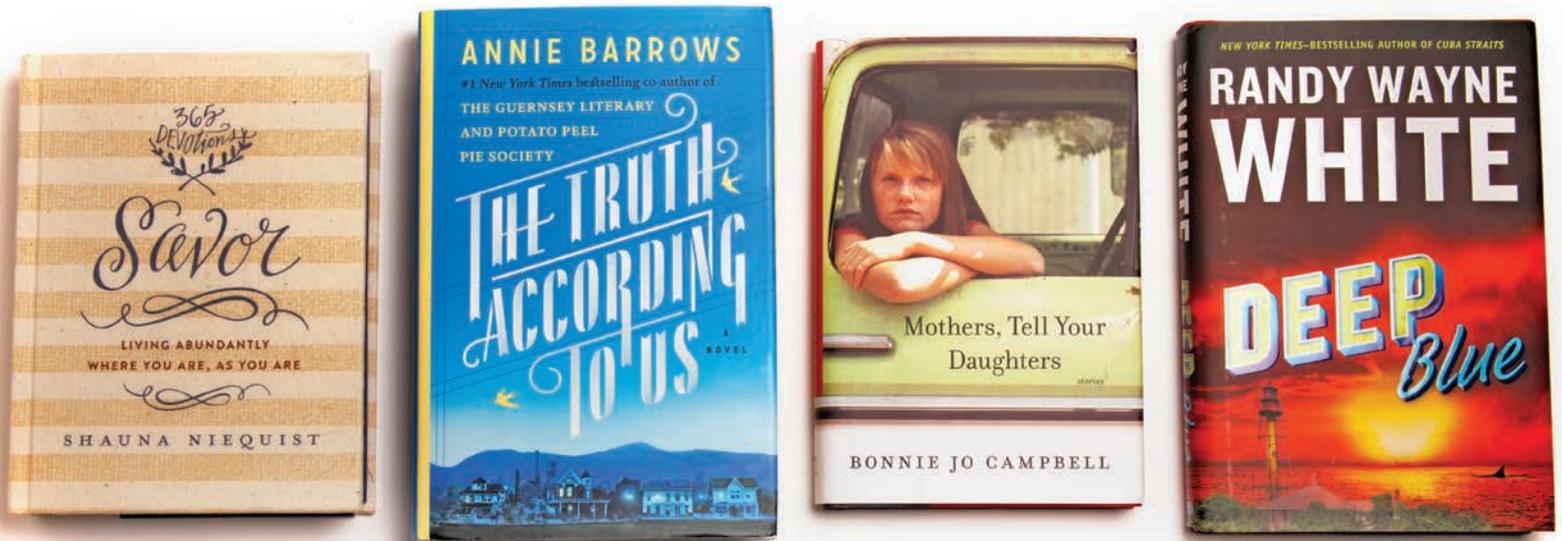


CATALYST UNIVERSITY

PRESENTED BY **SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN FIRST**

01.26.17 catalystuniversity.me/register

(269) Reads



Savor: Living Abundantly
Where You Are, As You Are
Shauna Niequist

The Truth According
to Us: A Novel
Annie Barrows

Mothers, Tell Your Daughters
Bonnie Jo Campbell

Deep Blue
Randy Wayne White

Kick Back and Count Your *Blessings*

Bonnie Jo Campbell, a graduate of Comstock High School and Western Michigan University from which she earned a master's degree in mathematics, headlines our top picks with *Mothers, Tell Your Daughters*. Campbell weaves a fictional tale set in our own backyard—Kalamazoo, Michigan—of the intricacies of female relationships in an area populated by country folk, farmers and blue-collar workers. If you're looking to count your blessings next, why don't you dive

into *Savor: Living Abundantly Where You Are, As You Are* by Shauna Niequist in which the author genuinely shares her recipes both for your soul and your table throughout its cleverly crafted pages. Then to heat up things up as we head in summer, treat yourself to some tales of secrets both past and present in *The Truth According to Us: A Novel* by Annie Barrows set in 1930s West Virginia or *Deep Blue* by Randy Wayne White in present day Sanibel Island, Florida.

IMAGE BARRY ELZ

high technology & GREAT PEOPLE

Scott McIntyre

Director Engineering Project Management & Processes / Site Leader
Bosch Automotive Aftermarket / Automotive Service Solutions
6400 Technology Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49009
us.bosch.com

Where are you originally from?

My wife, Madeline, and I are natives of Carpinteria, California—a beautiful beach community, very close to Santa Barbara. We raised our three daughters in the Santa Barbara area. Three years ago, we said to ourselves, ‘Let’s try something new.’ I volunteered to take a position overseas, if one became available within Bosch. A position was created for me in Germany.

So you came here from California by way of Germany?

We relocated there in March of 2013. I built a brand new network of people and broadened my experiences. In the middle of 2015, I was asked to consider between Kalamazoo, Michigan and Minneapolis, Minnesota. We chose Kalamazoo.

What criteria did you use when selecting your new house?

I found some nice homes on a golf course. I hadn't played golf in a few years and thought, ‘That would be really cool.’ My wife thought, ‘That wouldn't be so cool.’ She really wanted to be near water because we were near the ocean in California. We ended up finding a home on a lake.

How does Southwest Michigan compare to other places you've lived?

We find that Southwest Michigan has this really educated, business-focused, upwardly mobile community.

What kinds of things have you been doing for fun?

Great restaurants. Wonderful outdoor activities. We're looking forward to actually seeing more. My gosh, Kalamazoo has a symphony orchestra and a very good one!

What's been the most unexpected thing that you've been able to do here?

My wife's been surfing on Lake Michigan many a time.

How does surfing here compare to California?

It's not as buoyant as salt water and the waves aren't as nice and formed. She really is trying to figure out how to surf lake waves. It's a challenge she's up to. She's building her lake network—people who she goes surfing with and who she can call to check on the lake conditions.

What would you tell someone who was looking to move here?

In Southwest Michigan, we have this ideal balance where I can go do challenging interesting work—high technology and really work with great people, be around great people outside of work, not have traffic and have open spaces right outside the door or within five or ten minutes. That balance to me, that work life balance, just makes this one of the absolute ideal places to live.



TO READ THE FULL INTERVIEW, GO TO 269MAG.COM.

IMAGE MATT CARUSO

Economic Growth and Industry Diversity are a *Match Made in Heaven*.

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization agrees that “more diversified economies are less volatile in terms of outputs, and lower output volatility is associated with higher economic growth.” In Southwest Michigan, manufacturing, health sciences and medical devices, agriculture and food processing, business services, and logistics all play a key role in keeping the local economies moving forward.

IMAGE VVOEVALE
ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

This issue of *269 MAGAZINE* cheers new jobs recently announced by representatives of the manufacturing, retail and food processing industries. Local Southwest Michigan economic development organizations, like Cornerstone Alliance in Benton Harbor and Southwest Michigan First with locations in Kalamazoo, Three Rivers, and Sturgis, worked with the companies below to make these employment opportunities happen.

Pero Family Farms Food Co.

perofamilyfarms.com

Benton Harbor Township | Berrien County

74 JOBS

Zeigler Auto Group

zeigler.com

Kalamazoo | Kalamazoo County

45 JOBS

Freeman Manufacturing Company

freemanmfg.com

Sturgis | St. Joseph County

10 JOBS

Weber Specialties Company

weberspecialties.com

Schoolcraft | Kalamazoo County

1 JOBS



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23: VIEWPOINT **AARON MICHEL**

as uninformed voices, at least there is a debate. America hasn't figured out solutions yet but we're starting to look at the data and make more thoughtful decisions. Districts

and educational organizations across the country are trying a range of tools to improve graduation rates and drive better career outcomes for their students.

For instance, PathSource partnered with GED Testing Service because its leaders wanted to connect its students with career exploration guidance. They realized that a high school degree wasn't sufficient anymore and that their graduates needed help to build a bridge to their future. GED Testing Service's decision not to accept the status quo represents real vision—and it's spreading.

In Silicon Valley and elsewhere in the country, there are a range of startups that envision a better educational future. These range from Udacity, a low cost online program that teaches people to code, to HBX, a low cost online program offered by Harvard Business School that teaches basic business skills.

These types of offerings are proliferating and represent a future where people can get critical training at a low cost without the help of the government. While there are still plenty of less-than-valuable online degrees, an online education is no longer the Walmart of education. In the decades to come an online degree will only increase in respectability and value.

At the same time, vocational education and community college degrees are finally getting the recognition that they deserve. There are more middle skill job openings— jobs which require education or training beyond high school but not a full four-year degree—than there are people to fill them today. The career schools and community colleges which provide this vital training and the degrees they confer will play an extraordinarily important role in building the new American middle class.

Today, America faces immense challenges. But our spirit, ingenuity and democracy has always led to a better future. That's cause for optimism. And I believe that with hard work, a smarter educational system, improved career opportunities and a better future lie ahead.

Aaron Michel is the CEO of PathSource, a venture-backed career exploration tech company. He has been named an Innovation Rockstar by the *Boston Business Journal* and *Mass High Tech*. Aaron has written for and been covered by *Entrepreneur.com*, *Inc.com*, *SV Magazine*, *USA Today*, *The Huffington Post* and a range of other outlets. He graduated from Harvard Business School and the Harvard Kennedy School of Government and lives in San Francisco with his wife Susan. More about PathSource is found at pathsource.com.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 38: **INVESTING IN FAMILY CULTURE YIELDS DIVIDENDS**

team and knew 95% of the faces who were still here and smiling," he says. "I love continuity. It's a remarkable and strong advantage."

The company even has a way of making applicants feel special. When prospective employees first come in, there is a homey, private application area with soft-glowing table lamps, a writing desk and comfortable chairs. Everything at the company is purposely designed to be a positive interaction.

"When we open up a job, there are a fair number of applicants—depending on market conditions," Clarke said. "Some people that may seemingly be well-qualified due to experience and education might not make the cut because we're not just looking for education or experience. We're looking at personality and how they might fit into the organization. It's culture first. Experience we can teach you. If somebody's smart as hell and doesn't fit the culture, it's not going to work."

Family-first Effect Ripples Down to Customer Service

Banks Hardwoods prides itself on serving a high-end market and attributes

employee retention and culture to having made a huge difference in the company's success.

"We're a high-end producer sourcing some of the most expensive hardwoods in the U.S.," Dickerson says. "Not everybody is looking for that type of product. Our inventory is high-end beginning with the forests it is harvested from to the people who use our quality products." Service is important onsite and after the sale. "Our culture for our customers is very similar to our culture for employees—caring doesn't stop when we leave the product on the truck or at the customer's door."

How do you transform a culture to achieve what Banks Hardwoods has?

Chapman and Sisodia offer some advice. While it isn't easy, it is simple: "Everyone wants to do better. Trust them. Leaders are everywhere. Find them. People achieve good things, big and small, every day. Celebrate them. Some people wish things were different. Listen to them. Everybody matters. Show them."

[READ MORE AT 269MAG.COM](http://269MAG.COM)

The Greatest FORCE FOR CHANGE is a *JOB*



IMAGE
AXEL BUECKERT
ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

Jobs and the economic self-determination they bring are the passion of my life. So this recent quote in the Wall Street Journal article, *Companies Flock to Cities With Top Talent*, hit home for me, “Fifty years ago, companies opened new locations to be near lumber, copper or resources needed for their businesses. Today, people are the natural resources.”

If this true and I believe it is, then there may be no more important critical factor in determining our region’s future than higher education.

I believe that the greatest force for change in the lives of people is a job and the world seems to agree with me. According to Gallup, 3 billion people list above food, shelter or safety that a good job for themselves and their children is their number one priority. The disconnect is that there are only 1.2 billion jobs on the planet. We must understand that every day the world wants the jobs we have and our differentiation is higher education.

According to the Federal Reserve Board, the typical college graduate will earn \$830,000 more over a lifetime than the typical high school graduate. If it is not in your wallet, why should you care about other people’s earnings? That’s easy: the more earnings and wealth in a region, the lower taxes are as more people can share the burden of government. With more wealth, there is less need for basic human services paid for through charity and the more people who share in the cost. The more disposable income people have, the more access they have to healthy foods and medical services, driving health care costs down for all. The more wealth in a region, the greater the

quality of life is for all to enjoy.

So what is holding us back? Lack of pot holes.

There are no educational “pot holes.”

Pot holes are a tangible example of our underfunding of road construction in our state. We as a state spent the last few years debating not whether to fix our roads but how to pay for the fix. Since the pot holes jolt our cars almost every time we hop in the car, we actively talk about them and think of ways to address them.

When it comes to education, not everyone hits the potholes so we don’t hear about the bumps or noisy thuds on a daily basis. While we have universal admission to higher education, meaning if you graduate from high school you can attend college in our region, we do not have universal access due in large part to state and federal defunding of higher education.

College has always been the path to economic opportunity. For some, it is a straight four year path from high school to college to career. For others like me, college is a winding path of stops and starts, economic insecurity, and taking the better part of a decade to achieve.

If the future of our state is tied to the education levels of our citizens, it is time for serious people to have substantive discussions about how we can become the best educated state in America.

Higher education means larger incomes, safer families, stronger communities, better infrastructure (and less pot holes), and a better way of life for all who love and call Southwest Michigan home.

Ron Kitchens, Publisher



**KPS enrollment
has grown by 24%
since 2006**

2/3 of Promise
scholars
attend college
locally

Test scores
have
IMPROVED
for **ALL**
demographic
groups

*What you've done here at
Kalamazoo Central is amazing.*
-President Barack Obama speaking at the
Kalamazoo Central Class of 2010 commencement

Over 1,000
Promise scholars
have completed degrees

ADVANCED
placement
enrollment
has more than
DOUBLED

**More than
4,000**
students have used
Promise scholarships

11.3%
return on
dollars spent

Donors have invested over
\$70 million
in The Promise

85%
of Promise graduates
start college within one
year of high school.

Students in
ALL demographic groups
use The Promise **EQUALLY**

Celebrating 10 Years **The Kalamazoo Promise®**

Data as of January 2016

BE AWARE AND PREPARE.

The logo for Consumers Energy, featuring the company name in a blue sans-serif font with a green swoosh underneath.

Count on Us®

A large, bright blue lightning bolt strikes down from the top left, branching out across the dark blue background. The bolt is the central visual element of the advertisement.

STORM SAFETY TIPS AT
[ConsumersEnergy.com/safety](https://www.consumersenergy.com/safety)