

The Right Stuff

When it comes to your career growth prospects, what does it mean to have the right stuff? In the not-too-distant past, the correct answer might have been easy: get a bachelor's degree. Today, there is still plenty of truth in that answer, but the degree of truth – no pun intended – may depend on the degree itself. If you have a bachelor's degree in engineering, education, math, or computer science, the odds are good that you are employed in the field you studied and likely have favorable career growth prospects. If, on the other hand, your degree is in an area such as communications or the liberal arts, the odds are just the opposite - that you are working out-of-field and may have limited career growth prospects.

Many who fall into that latter category or otherwise and find themselves working out-of-field have begun to take advantage of programs that enable them to get specialized training at a low cost and within a short period of time. This training takes the shape of College Credit Certificates (CCC) offered by the Florida College System colleges including the 14 separate CCCs offered by Florida SouthWestern State College (FSW). These programs focus on providing the core all-important technical skills training and enable college grads from other fields to leverage their existing skills sets. For example, a 25 credit-hour CCC in Business Development and Entrepreneurship or a 24 credit-hour CCC in Small Business Management may help provide the necessary skills to leverage the creative processes of the arts or communications major into a new business opportunity, or help understand how those existing skills can better benefit one's current employer. Likewise, a CCC in a discipline such as Information Technology Support, Network Security, or Computer Programming may also serve to add tangible value to those holding degrees in non-IT areas.

This may be especially true for those with degrees in business or a related discipline. In fact, one of the recurring findings in the Workforce Now studies (www.fsw.edu/sobt) has been that many area employers indicated they prefer potential employees to have both technical and business skills. This idea is also supported in a research paper entitled *Moving the Goalposts: How Demand for a Bachelor's Degree is Reshaping the Workforce* published by Burning Glass (http://www.burning-glass.com/media/4737/Moving_the_Goalposts.pdf).

To get a better idea how earning one of these CCCs might be a benefit, a good research site is <http://www.onetonline.org/>. O*NET is sponsored by the US Department of Labor's Employment and Training Division and offers a wealth of occupational information, including educational attainment, employment outlook, related jobs, career pathways, and leveraging an individual's unique skills. O*NET also offers a variety of Career Exploration tools online and at no cost to the user.

For more information about earning a CCC at FSW, please contact the FSW School of Business and Technology at 239-489-9270 or sbt@fsw.edu.

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