

The TAI Buzz

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The Academic Institute: Inspiring Students to Achieve their Potential

A Publication of Sherrill O'Shaughnessy & Associates

Spark the Dream... Ignite the Drive... Prepare for the Journey

The College Quest – Finding the Right Fit in a New Economic Environment

For students seeking the best way to get to their future, the quest to find the right college choice can be intimidating. Today's news is filled by reports of defaulting home borrowers, young professionals sinking under the weight of college debt and unemployment levels not seen since 1980.

Looking out at the future that awaits them, we expect our students might be asking themselves one big question—what does this mean for me? Taking out substantial amounts of student debt to finance a 4-year college degree appears less of a sure investment than it has in recent years.

In addition to the changing borrower environment, the job market is also transforming. Recent legislation related to climate change and smart-grid technologies, such as the measures supported in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, is laying the groundwork for a new economy that will require new jobs and skill sets to support it. Ongoing advances in technology and shifts in the global political landscape are also contributing to the changing shape of the workplace of the future.

As students look forward at all of these changes, TAI's longtime emphasis on personal, individualized educational planning and solutions is more critical than ever before. Sherrill and her staff continue to keep an eye to these broader market trends and incorporate this

A Note from the Director: Education for the New Economy

Today's students face unprecedented challenges and opportunities for their future. Against the backdrop of a fluctuating global economy, the world is changing and with it comes a new kind of job market that awaits our students when they graduate.

At TAI, we are exploring these changes every day, examining how they will impact our students in the classroom, in the community, in the college search and beyond. The financial crisis is placing tighter pressures on families to pay for college education, but it is also highlighting exciting developments such as green jobs, new vocational programs and enhanced opportunities at local colleges. Whatever the path they choose to take, we look forward to guiding our students as they navigate the ups and downs of the new economy.

~ Sherrill

information into the consulting and coursework they design for students at TAI.

Classes such as our college-style seminars with Reggie help our students develop the critical thinking and analytical skills they need to evaluate the changing world and understand where they want to fit in the future. Readings include current news and op-ed pieces, which students then discuss in a candid, Socratic-style forum that fosters the development of fact-based opinions.

Other creative offerings such as Media Studies give students the chance to build technical skills and a familiarity with the latest technologies that will be used in the workplace of tomorrow. Media Studies also helps students learn how to engage alternative forms of communication to help convey their message to diverse audiences, a skill that will become increasingly necessary in this interconnected world.

Most importantly, TAI's personalized approach to classroom education provides our students with the mentorship and guidance they need to identify their core areas of interest and academic talent, and apply this knowledge to the quest for the right college experience.

Whether seeking a private liberal arts education or looking for a vocational 2- or 4-year training program, today's students have a long and growing list of options to explore both here in the Northwest and around the country.

Sherrill and the TAI staff are pleased to serve as resources for every student as they explore their options and determine the best path and education for bringing them into the workforce of the future. In addition to a range of college and career planning programs, students can benefit from TAI's new job shadow program.

For more information, email
sherrill@academicinstitute.com.

~~ COLLEGE QUEST: On the Road with Sherrill ~~

In today's economy, it's important to remember that there are a lot of great alternatives to traditional 4-year and private education. This winter, we focus on schools and opportunities that offer hands-on education programs that will help students prepare for a role in the tomorrow's marketplace at a lower cost.

Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) *Get reduced tuition at regional out-of-state schools* www.wue.wiche.edu

For students looking to save on college while also gaining the experience of traveling out of state, the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) offers the perfect money-saving alternative. Students in 15 Western states ranging from New Mexico to Alaska can enroll at participating 2- and 4-year colleges outside of their home state at reduced tuition costs. For more information about the program and to search for participating states and schools, visit www.wue.wiche.edu

Leading Community Colleges *2-year programs in the Pacific Northwest*

The Northwest is home to several leading community colleges that offer students practical 2-year degrees at a lower cost, as well as the option to transfer to the region's top 4-year schools.

Sherrill has spent several years becoming acquainted with the best community college programs on the West Coast, and offers this short list of her favorite schools for TAI graduates:

Green River Community College, Auburn, WA
Featuring dorms, small class-sizes and top professors, GRCC has three campuses and feeds many students into the University of Washington.
www.greenriver.edu

Cascadia Community College, Bothell, WA
Serving as a stepping stone to UW, Cascadia CC has been praised by former TAI students for affordability and intimate classes with personable professors.
www.cascadia.edu

Southern Oregon Community College, Coos Bay, OR
Located on the Oregon Coast, SOCC is offering free tuition to students with a 3.75 GPA or higher and applies no out-of-state tuition costs. www.socc.edu

For Love of Learning: How one Student Turned a Passion into a Career Path

By Reggie Garrett

During the course of his high school studies at TAI, Tristan developed a love of photography. He's been shooting pictures on his own for three years now, and recently purchased a Nikon D200 which he proudly uses as his primary instrument.

Tristan's love for photography attracted the attention of a family friend, photographer Scott Miller, a renowned photographer and filmmaker in his own right. Recognizing Tristan's dedication to photography, Mr. Miller invited Tristan to assist him as an intern for his most recent project, a documentary series about singer-songwriters who perform Americana music. As part of the project, Tristan recalls, he had the chance to accompany Mr. Miller into the Oregon countryside to film at some "out-of-the-way" concert venues.

"Filming the show was stressful and a lot of work, but very rewarding," says Tristan. As Mr. Miller's intern, Tristan's responsibilities included helping to set and adjust the lighting, capturing still photography of the proceedings and actually running one of the video cameras. During the shoot he had to write down and keep track of all the settings. "Precision was very important," says Tristan, explaining that "setup and filming the actual concert took two full days, from 9:30 in the morning until we were done." The third day was spent shooting portrait shots of the performers and, finally, tearing everything down.

That "hands-on" experience has served Tristan well. With the support of Mr. Miller and his family, Tristan applied to and entered Brooks Institute of Photography in Santa Barbara, CA this fall. Brooks is one of the premier colleges of photography and film in the country. Tristan is studying visual journalism (both photography and video) in an intense program that is designed to prepare students thoroughly in their craft. The faculty stress attention to detail, precision and a complete knowledge and understanding of the equipment, all of which Tristan brings with him from his internship with Mr. Miller.

Tristan has been able to turn his passion for photography into a field of study and a career path he can be excited about. He is already in discussion with Mr. Miller to rejoin him in the field for another shoot—only this time, he'll be going as a paid assistant.

News and Events!

Local and National Updates that Impact the TAI Community

Career and College Planning Opportunities

TAI has expanded its offerings of college and career planning workshops and events. Key programs include:

Career Exploration Workshops

In this new TAI program, students work with teachers Reggie and Jaime to evaluate their personality types using a modified version of the Myers-Briggs analysis called Do What You Are. Reggie and Jaime will guide students as they use this information to explore potential career paths using the WOIS database at TAI.

Job Shadow Opportunities

As an extension of the Career Exploration Workshops, students have the opportunity to engage in job shadows in their fields of interest for a credit unit that will go on their transcripts. TAI staff will help oversee the initiation and review of the job shadow experience. Interested students are invited to ask Sherrill to schedule a meeting for them with Reggie for a one-to-one session to explore a job shadow possibility with Reggie

College Quest Workshops

Sherrill hosts a college quest workshop regularly each semester, with a special emphasis on engaging parents of students who learn differently. Notice of the next workshop will be announced at the school. Fee is a small donation of canned food for Northwest Harvest.

Washington Council's College Planning Day

This spring, Seattle Pacific University will be hosting the Washington Council's annual College Planning Day, where students can choose to attend sessions about 20 different area colleges and universities. Special sessions on financial aid are also available. The event is on Wednesday, March 24, 2010. 9am-12pm, and Melinda will meet TAI students at the event. Please let her know if you plan to attend.

For more details about any of these events, contact Sherrill at sherrill@academicinstitute.com

Examining the Changing World Around Us at Wednesdays with Reggie

As we help our students explore and interact with the changing world around them, our Wednesday Seminars with "Professor Reggie" are particularly important.

At these weekly sessions, students engage in topical and moderated discourse on the major issues defining their world. Using the Socratic method of question and answer, students learn to interpret reading material and formulate fact-based arguments to share with peers and their teacher. These discussions engender a confidence in ideas and expression of opinion that will help our students succeed in college and beyond.



Following last year's theme of political conventions and the creation of a national platform, Reggie's seminars this semester focused on the complexities of international law, with topics ranging from the creation of the International Criminal Court to North Korea's nuclear program and examining the ownership of the world's oil reserves. After reading a series of current articles from leading media sources, Reggie challenges the seminar students to develop their own fact-based opinions.

Reggie's Wednesday Seminar is a Humanities course that contributes to 40% of the students' English grade and 40% of their History grade. The Seminar is graded by active engagement in weekly classroom discussions, independent visits to local museums and PowerPoint presentations of team projects in May.

Students who engage in these activities will earn a current event credit or Senior required current issues credit.

TAI Welcomes Miriam Castro, Learning Specialist and ADD Coach

We are pleased to welcome our newest faculty member at TAI, Miriam Castro. She joins the team to provide support to our academically gifted ADD students by helping them develop organizational and focusing skills in class. Miriam's individualized strategy instruction will help us continue to enhance the classroom experience at TAI for all of our students and their individual needs.



Meet our Staff...

TAI students introduce our newest teachers in their own words



Brenda, Math

"Brenda cares about her students. She tries to help you actually learn."



Heather, American Government

"Heather is very easy to relate to and work with. She has a very calm approach and is very easy to talk to."



Reggie, History

"Reggie is the best teacher I have ever had. The seminars are my favorite way to learn."



Jairo, Spanish and Media

"Jairo tries to help you learn Spanish. You can ask questions and not feel stupid."



Trish, U.S. and World History

"Trish treats her students as people and genuinely cares for each and every one."