



IACAC REGIONAL INSTITUTE · HANOI 2026

Future-Proofing Our Students

AI, Navigating Career Fluidity, & Higher Education

Presenters:

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[NEWS](#)[Student Success](#) [Life After College](#)

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Part of the **Student Voice** Collection

● November 18, 2025

The Experience Imperative

Students are confident they have what they need to succeed postcollege. But they want their institutions to stack the deck with internships and other experiential learning opportunities.

By [Colleen Flaherty](#)

Governments should step up efforts to equip people with the skills needed in labour markets

Press release 9 December 2025

Available in: En

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Durable skills are the kind that complement rather than compete with AI.

The Durable Skills Needed from College

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Future U Podcast - The Pulse of Higher Ed | EP213
Why Don't More Colleges Run Co-Op Pr...

WHY DON'T MORE COLLEGES RUN CO-OP PROGRAMS?

Tuesday, January 6, 2026 - Co-op programs are trending these days, with many colleges looking to offer students on-the-job experiences while taking classes. Jeff and Michael talk with Robert McMahan, president of Kettering University, which has a long-running co-op program for all students. He argues that more colleges could incorporate and scale the approach. But there are obstacles, both cultural and logistical. This episode is made with support from Ascendium Education Group.

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Why we think this topic is important

Not Economists or Philosophers

*Our experience and the
research suggests we are in the
midst of fundamental changes*

Are we asking
the right
questions?



ANTHROPIC

Labor market impacts of AI: A new measure and early evidence

Published
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The concerns

AI



Possibilities and problematic

What kind of
future are we
preparing our
students for?

What skills do our graduates need to be work ready?

OECD

WEF 2030

Anthropic

Prospects Luminate

Artificiality

Transformative

OECD Future of Work	WEF 2030 Top Skills	Anthropic AI Era Skills	Prospects Luminate	Transformative Skills	Artificiality Institute
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Critical thinking ● Problem-solving ● Digital literacy ● Creativity & innovation ● Communication ● Collaboration ● Self-regulation ● Adaptability ● Social & emotional skills ● Global citizenship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Analytical thinking ● Creative thinking ● Resilience & flexibility ● Motivation & self-awareness ● Curiosity & lifelong learning ● Technological literacy ● Dependability & attention ● Empathy & active listening ● Leadership & social influence ● AI & big data skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● AI collaboration ● Prompt engineering ● Critical AI evaluation ● Human oversight of AI ● Ethical reasoning ● Data interpretation ● Complex problem-solving ● Creative direction ● Interdisciplinary thinking ● Continuous learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Communication ● Teamwork ● Problem-solving ● Commercial awareness ● Leadership ● Organisation & planning ● Digital skills ● Numeracy ● Resilience ● Willingness to learn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Systems thinking ● Metacognition ● Empathy ● Cross-cultural competence ● Ethical action ● Values-driven work ● Civic engagement ● Anticipatory thinking ● Action competence ● Transformative agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Human-AI teaming ● AI sense-making ● Judgement & discernment ● Creative augmentation ● Ethical AI use ● Adaptive expertise ● Digital confidence ● Emotional intelligence ● Systems perspective ● Co-design with AI

● Appears across multiple frameworks

● Framework-specific skill

Sources: OECD Learning Compass 2030 · WEF Future of Jobs 2023 · Anthropic Economic Index · Prospects Luminate · Transformative Skills Framework · Artificiality Institute

Where the frameworks converge: Core skills for work readiness

UNIVERSAL SKILLS

Identified by ALL 6 frameworks

Critical thinking & problem-solving

Communication & collaboration

Digital & technological literacy

Adaptability & lifelong learning

Ethical reasoning & values

STRONGLY SHARED

Identified by 4–5 frameworks

Creativity & innovation

Systems / interdisciplinary thinking

Emotional intelligence & empathy

Self-awareness & metacognition

Resilience & wellbeing

EMERGING SKILLS

AI era — rapidly rising priority

Human–AI collaboration

AI evaluation & oversight

Prompt & creative direction

Ethical AI use & governance

Co-design & augmented creativity

▶ **Bold action needed:** Graduates must be equipped with BOTH enduring human skills AND emerging AI-era competencies to thrive in the future of work.

PART 01 · LANDSCAPE

What's Changing/Changed?

Why we need a new playbook!

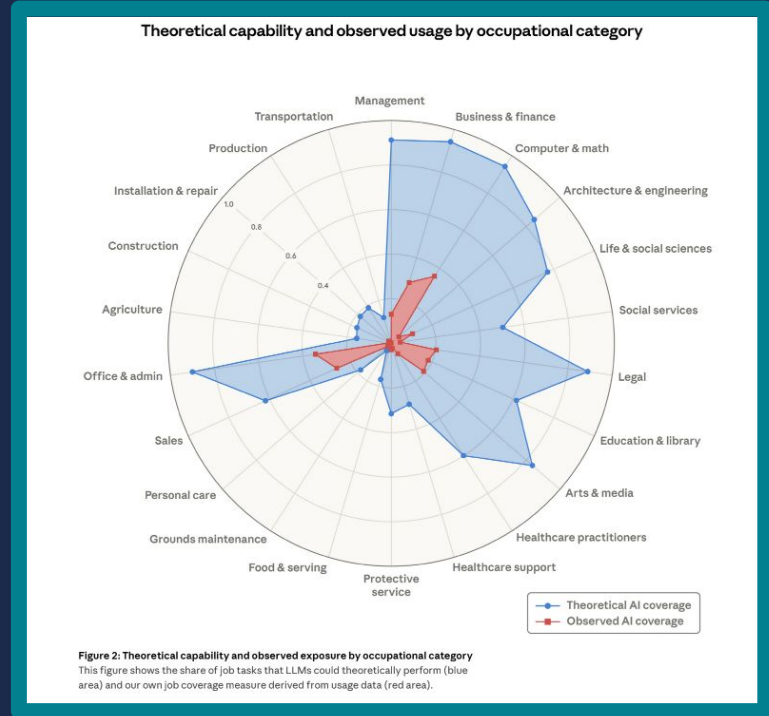
The World of Work For Today's Graduates



**AI is automating
entry-level tasks**



**Internship
listings have fallen
by 15% over
2023–2025**



The World of Work For Today's Graduates



 **Employers are hiring differently**

 **International students face compounded pressure**

Global Jobs Disruption · WEF Future of Jobs 2025

170M

New roles created

by 2030

92M

Jobs displaced

by 2030

+78M

Net new jobs

net gain

39%

Core skills change

by 2030

- **22% of all jobs** will be disrupted by 2030
- **14%** of workers may need to change occupations
- AI adoption expected in **86%** of businesses by 2030

The Rankings Trap


What rankings measure — and what they don't

What QS / US News Measures

- ✗ Research output & citations
- ✗ Academic reputation surveys
- ✗ Faculty-to-student ratio
- ✗ International student ratio
- ✗ Employer reputation surveys
- ✗ Alumni employment (limited)

What Career Readiness Measures

- ✓ % students who complete internship
- ✓ Dedicated career services staffing
- ✓ Employer partner network size
- ✓ Co-op / placement year structure
- ✓ Job offer conversion rate
- ✓ Speed to employment post-graduation

 *University of Waterloo ranks #154 globally — but places more students in paid co-ops (25,000+) than almost any university on earth.*

PART 02 • DATA

The Evidence

*What the research actually shows about
work experience & career outcomes...So far!*

Just last week...



Inside
Higher
Ed



FLORIDA ATLANTIC
UNIVERSITY

Florida
Atlantic

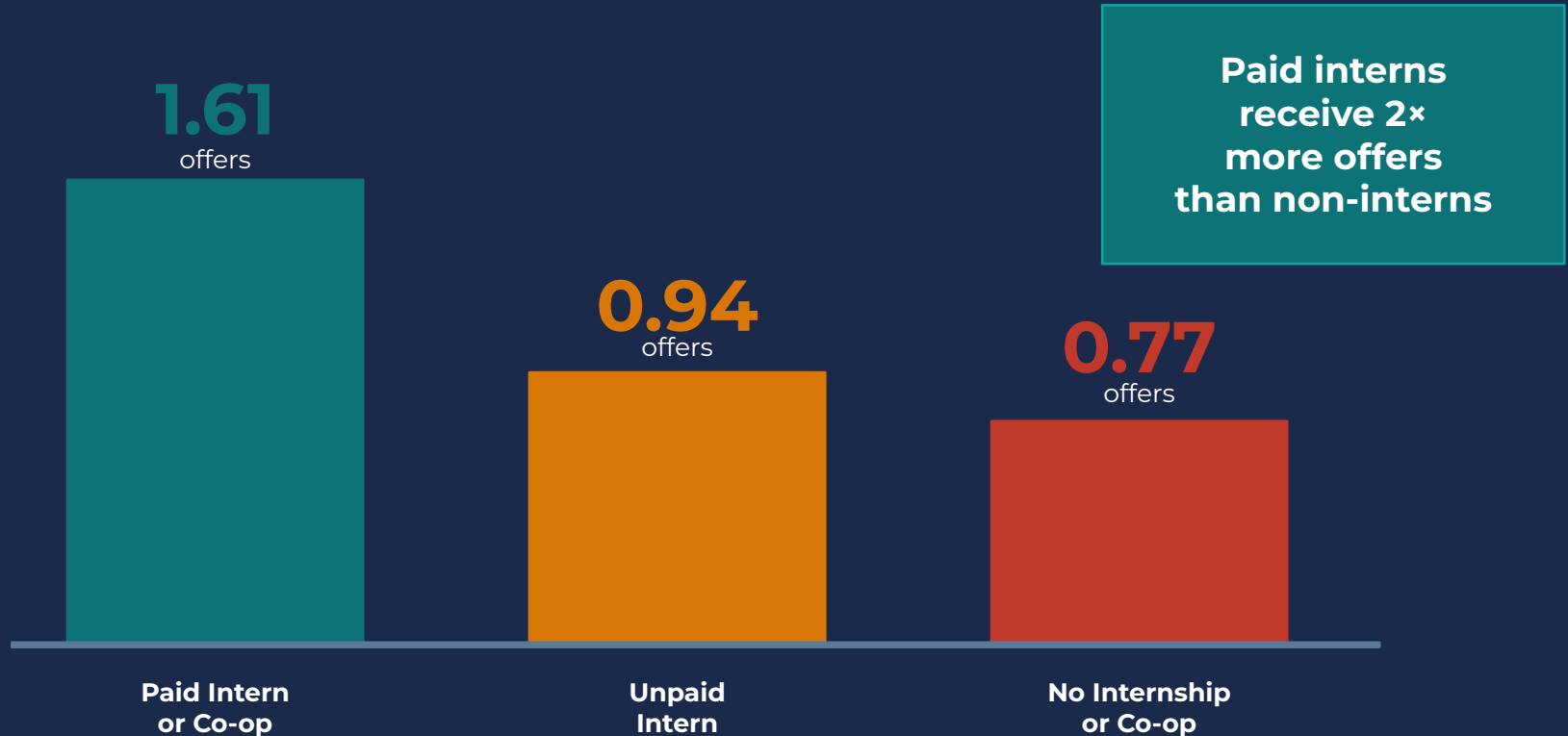


Ending the era of unpaid internships

Florida Atlantic University is accelerating economic mobility by removing barriers to access for internships, while employers benefit from in-demand skills.

The Job Offer Gap

Average number of job offers at graduation — NACE research



Source: NACE 2023 Internship & Co-op Report · Forage / Internexus 2024

The Salary Premium

Starting salary by internship experience — NACE data

Paid Intern / Co-op

\$67,500

Median starting salary

Highest offer rate · Fastest employment

Unpaid Intern

\$45,000

Median starting salary

Lower offer rate · Some benefit

No Internship

**\$37,000–
42,000**

Estimated median range

Fewest offers · Slowest to employment

A paid internship is worth an estimated \$25,500 salary premium at career entry—compounding over a lifetime of earnings.

The Conversion Effect

From intern to full-time employee — a pipeline that works

53%

of eligible interns are converted to full-time hires by their employer (NACE 2024)

4.5/5

Rating given by employers for preference to hiring an intern who has worked in their company (NACE 2026)

>50%

of Northeastern co-op students receive a full-time job offer from their co-op employer—often before graduation

40%

of UK students who completed a placement year received a direct job offer from their placement employer (High Fliers 2024)



Retention Advantage

75.5%

1-year retention:
interns-turned-employees

51.5%

1-year retention: non-intern employees

+24%

retention advantage for intern-hired staff

Choosing Between Equally Qualified Candidates - Influence of Attributes

*5-point scale, where 1=No influence at all, 2=Not much influence, 3=Somewhat of an influence, 4=Very much influence, and 5=Extreme influence.



“NACE’s Job Outlook surveys consistently reveal that employers seek **critical thinking/problem-solving, communication, and teamwork skills** in the candidates they recruit. These skills are often gained through work performed and programming offered during **internships and other experiential education assignments**, and through employment.”

Source: NACE Jobs Outlook, 2026

TABLE DISCUSSION

At your tables:

Q1

How do you currently approach a discussion with students and families about core skills they need to develop in tertiary education and beyond? How do you discuss work experience during university? What tools would make the discussion easier?

Q2

Which universities are you currently recommending to students—and do you know what % of students in specific programs complete an internship or co-op before graduation?

Q3

Where does the biggest resistance come from—students, families, or university culture itself?

TABLE DISCUSSION

[Padlet](#)



PART 03 · STRATEGIES

Practical Frameworks

*What to tell families · Questions to reframe university
research and selection · Counselor tools*

GEN Z WORKPLACE ISSUES

FOXLOCAL



A Different Checklist

Questions families should ask — beyond rankings and acceptance rates

Most families ask:

- ✗ What is the acceptance rate?
- ✗ What is the US News / QS ranking?
- ✗ What's the average SAT / GPA?
- ✗ How famous is the school?
- ✗ What is the sticker price / scholarship offer?

Better questions:

- ✓ What % of students in MY major complete an internship?
- ✓ Is there a mandatory co-op or placement year?
- ✓ How many employer partners does the career center have?
- ✓ What is the employment rate 6 months after graduation?
- ✓ What is the median starting salary for my program's graduates?

Asking better questions doesn't devalue the degree—it adds a dimension rankings can't capture.- Students are planning ahead for opportunities to grow in wisdom to be enabled to work in AI adjacent/augmenting roles.

The Spectrum of Institutional Models

Not all universities approach career readiness the same way

LONGSTANDING NETWORK-DRIVEN

Eg: Oxford, Harvard, LSE, Columbia, EHL

Brand & alumni network open doors. Career services excellent but student-driven. Internship culture strong but self-arranged.

Best for: Students who are proactive, self-directed, and already network-connected. The name does a lot of the heavy lifting.

PLACEMENT YEAR (UK/AUS)

Eg. Bath, Warwick, UNSW, Monash, RMIT

Year in Industry or WIL embedded in most degrees. 12-month paid placement. Extends degree by 1 year but outcomes are often exceptional.

Best for: Students comfortable with a 4-year degree who want deep single-employer experience. Bath: University of the Year for Graduate Jobs 2024.

CO-OP EMBEDDED

Eg. Northeastern, Drexel, Waterloo, Kettering

Co-op is structural — built into the degree. Assigned advisor. Employer pipeline. Some mandatory. Students graduate with 6–18 months of paid experience. Alumni networks often support the co-op as well.

Best for: Students who need structure and support to build work experience. International students. Students entering competitive fields.

STRONG SUPPORT

Eg. MIT, Stanford, Wake Forest, UCL, Melbourne, NUS

Excellent career services, large employer networks, robust job boards. Not mandatory but very high participation rates from culture and resources.

Best for: Motivated students who will use career resources. Less suitable for students who need structured intervention to seek experience.

TABLE DISCUSSION

Build your toolkit:

Q
1

What is ONE university / programme you currently recommend where you know the co-op or placement-year outcomes are genuinely strong—and could you make a more specific case for it with families?

Q
2

Draft the first two sentences you would say to a family that is fixated only on [US News/Other Rankings] top-20 schools. How do you reframe—without dismissing their goal?

TABLE DISCUSSION

Build your toolkit:

One tool we (co)created...

[Link](#)

Key Takeaways

What to carry out of this room

01

Rankings are incomplete

They measure research prestige and reputation — not career infrastructure, co-op structure, or graduate employment speed. Add those lenses to every university conversation.

02

The data is unambiguous

Paid internship experience doubles job offers, raises starting salaries by ~\$25K, and improves retention. This isn't soft advice — it's measurable ROI.

03

Structure matters more than brand

A student in a mandatory co-op program at a mid-ranked university may be better career-prepared than a self-directed student at a prestigious university who never sought out work experience.

04

The market has changed: permanently

Internship listings down 15%. Competition up. AI absorbing entry-level roles. Students who arrive at graduation with applied experience are not just more employable — they're the new baseline.

05

Ask better questions

Teach families: 'What % of students in my major complete an internship?' 'Is there a dedicated career services center?' 'What's the median starting salary for program graduates?' These are questions where the answers matter.

7 Ways today's high schoolers can plan ahead to add value



1. Human-first roles

Nursing, teaching, social work & trades grow most in absolute numbers—and cannot be offshored or automated.



2. Skills beat credentials

Skills-based hiring is 5× more predictive than degrees. A degree is a starting point but must be seen as part of an overall profile: A portfolio of work, problem-solving, and real projects matter.



3. AI fluency is baseline

AI literacy is the new digital literacy. Learn to prompt well, verify outputs, and apply AI tools not just use them.



4. Build human skills

Creativity, resilience, written & verbal communication are rare in graduates. Debate, volunteering and sport build them. Employers can't find them.



5. Get work experience

77% of employers say interns arrive with better attitudes. A real-world role signals readiness; paid is better than voluntary but even if voluntary you can demonstrate tangible skill and experience development.



6. Learn to utilise Labour Market Information

There are 34 million new green jobs projected to exist by 2030, such as Climate Tech, Renewable Energy, EV and Sustainability—roles are structurally growing globally.



7. Author your AI use

Don't drift. Use AI as a thinking partner, not a ghostwriter. Question its outputs. Your judgment is the irreplaceable part.

Resources & References

Anthropic 'Nowcasting' Labour Market Impacts of AI

Maxim Massenkoff and Peter McCrory

College Transitions

collegetransitions.com — 'Best Colleges for Internships & Co-ops'

Handshake Higher Ed

joinhandshake.com — 'Internship Landscape' reports (2024, 2025)

High Fliers Research (UK)

highfliers.co.uk — 'Graduate Market' annual report; Top 100 Graduate Employers

NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers)

nacweb.org — Annual Internship & Co-op Reports, Student Surveys, First Destination Surveys, Jobs Outlook 2026

OECD - Future of Education and Skills: Skills for 2030

Transformative Competencies for 2030

Prospects Luminate (UK)

Labour Market Information - resources and articles: <https://luminate.prospects.ac.uk/>

Resources & References

QS World University Rankings

topuniversities.com — includes Graduate Employability Rankings

Other media sources (various)

Grit - Duckworth), Artificiality Institute, Dr Brian Wong ("Self-Defense in the Age of AI" - Hong Kong Economic Journal), SCMP, Guardian, FT, MIT Project Iceberg - iceberg.mit.edu, Georgetown CEW - <https://cew.georgetown.edu/research/>

Times Higher Education

timeshighereducation.com — Graduate Employability Rankings by country

University-specific outcomes data

Available on each university's career services website — always check program-level (not university-wide) stats

World Economic Forum: Future of Jobs Report 2025

Insight Report - January 2025

AI and resources statement:

This presentation and related resources were developed by the presenters. AI tools, specifically Claude, Gemini, and Perplexity, were utilised in developing resources and slides for this presentation. All resources shared during the IACAC Regional Institute in Hanoi, April 2026, should be reviewed and the subject of your own independent research, particularly as resources become outdated very quickly. All university data should be cross-checked against the respective universities own websites and published materials. Session resources are available on request.

University Internship Guide Google Doc Exemplar

Link

