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# Partnerships help colleges attract students, prepare health care workforce

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Partnerships are a growing trend in higher education.

For colleges, they can boost efficiencies, help draw in students and meet changing workforce needs. For employers, they can lead to a larger, more skilled job applicant pool in a particularly hot labor market.

That win-win is especially needed in the health care industry.



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Mike Dolan, co-director of Canisius College's sports and exercise healthcare program, and Chris Nentarz, director of

“I think during the pandemic a lot of academic institutions really honed their skills and for us, it’s health care, health care professions and our ability to jump in and support during Covid-19,” said Denise DiRienzo, chief mission officer at D’Youville University. “We’re seeing huge job growth and we’re really focused on supporting that.”

Thrive at D’Youville University

D’Youville and Canisius College recently finalized an agreement that aims to boost the local health care professions pipeline.

According to the agreement, Canisius students getting a bachelor’s in sports and exercise health care, who meet program requirements, will get guaranteed admission to D’Youville’s doctor of physical therapy, doctor of chiropractic or master’s in occupational therapy.

“It’s a really strong partnership in the sense that we can play on each other’s strengths,” said Mike Dolan, co-director of Canisius’ sports and exercise health care program, which has about 70 enrolled students.

He’s hoping that starting this fall, at least five to 10 Canisius students each academic year will be admitted to the program to go to graduate school at D’Youville.

The program will also benefit from the schools’ close proximity in the City of Buffalo. Students won’t have to change their living situations when transitioning to graduate school and commuting students could save money on housing.

Local colleges have also partnered with private companies to boost both parties.

Trocaire College started in September 2020 meeting with Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, discussing ways to enhance both organizations. The talks led to three initiatives: a professional development committee work group, where the college provides non-credit training and workshops for Roswell employees; clinical workplace

affiliations, where the college sends students to Roswell for workplace experience, and a scholars program.

The Roswell Scholars program, which starts this fall, allows 10 Trociare students to work onsite at Roswell to learn about potential career paths, get mentors, do shadow days and attend professional development seminars.

Trocaire will give each student an annual scholarship of \$1,000 and will do additional educational programming that complements the Roswell experience. Student participants can apply for Roswell jobs after they graduate college.

“It gives our students opportunities for exposure above and beyond clinical experiences,” said Jackie Matheny, special assistant to the president for external affairs at Trocaire. “It’s a great way for Roswell to preview perspective employees.”

Participants will go on about five Roswell visits during the academic year and will have about five meetings with a Trocaire instructor, both of which are separate from their typical course loads.

The meetings will be flexible and spread out to accommodate students busy schedules, according to Matheny.

“One of the reasons why partnerships are great is because it gives you a competitive advantage,” she said. “Our hope is that as this program grows ... it will be another added value for that student to enroll in Trocaire.”

**Lian Bunny**

Reporter

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