

OVAE CONNECTION



OVAE Welcomes Emily Ferlis

Presidential Management Fellow Emily Ferlis recently joined OVAE's Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL), as a management and program analyst. Her areas of specialization include data-driven professional development and research on youths and adults with limited English proficiency and specific learning disabilities. Ferlis holds a doctorate in instructional leadership from Virginia Commonwealth University, a Master of Science in TESOL from the City College of New York, and a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Virginia. Prior to joining DAEL, Ferlis was the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center program development specialist at the Virginia Department of Education's Office of Adult Education and Literacy. She was also an ESL specialist at the Virginia Literacy Institute at Virginia Commonwealth University and has taught English language learners at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels in New York, Virginia, Bulgaria, and Japan. She served as an English Language Fellow for the Department of State, for which she presented TESOL teacher training seminars in Bulgaria, Estonia, and Serbia.

Change in Immigration Policy May Increase Enrollment

On June 15, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) [announced](#) a new immigration policy granting deferred action for two years to those subject to potential removal from the U.S. The deferment is renewable and, if granted, may provide eligibility to apply for employment authorization. To be eligible, immigrants under age 30 must document that they were brought to the U.S. under the age of 16, do not present a risk to national security or public safety, and have continuously resided in the U.S. for the past five years. In addition—and this criterion may impact enrollment, including for community colleges and adult education programs—the policy states that eligible individuals “Are currently in school, have graduated from high school, have obtained a general education development certificate, or are honorably discharged veterans of the Coast Guard or Armed Forces of the United States.” DHS has 60 days to implement the

The Power of Certificates as Credentials

A recent report from the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, [Certificates: Gateway to Gainful Employment and College Degrees](#), proposes that “In an American economy where the advancement of technology and globalization means that a high school diploma alone is no longer able to provide family-sustaining earning to many, certificates represent one piece of a multi-pronged solution on the road to a workforce with 60 percent postsecondary attainment.” This column reviews the major findings in the report.

Although postsecondary certificates vary widely in the benefits they provide, the report finds that since they tend to encourage further education and college completion, they have become a cost-effective means of enhancing postsecondary educational attainment as well as gainful employment. Even if only certificates with “clear and demonstrable economic value”—certificates with returns at least 20 percent above the earnings of the average high school graduate—were counted toward postsecondary attainment, the United States would “move from 15th to 10th in postsecondary completions” among OECD countries for 25- to 34-year-olds. (See [executive summary](#).)

There are wide variations in the economic returns of certificates. While those with college degrees earn, on average, more than those whose highest attainment is a certificate, many certificate holders do earn more than those with bachelor's degrees. Among male certificate holders, 39 percent earn more than the median male with an associate degree and 24 percent earn more than the median male with a bachelor's degree. Thirty-four percent of female certificate holders earn more than women with associate degrees and 24 percent of women with bachelor's degrees.

These earnings premiums depend on certificate holders working in their fields of study. For example, in computer and information services, men who work in field earn \$72,498 per year, which is more than for 72 percent of men with associate degrees and 54 percent of men with bachelor's degrees. Women in the same field earn an average of \$56,664, which is more than for 75 percent of women with associate degrees and 64 percent of women with bachelor's degrees. Only 24 percent of men and 7 percent of women with certificates in computer and information services, however, work in-field. Working out-of-field is not atypical. Less than half (44 percent) of certificate holders work in a field related to their certificate training. Those who work in-field earn 37 percent more, on average, than those who work out-of-field.

Other findings worth noting: (1) certificates lead to higher salaries for men than for women; (2) a higher percentage of African-Americans hold certificates than any other racial or ethnic group, yet African-Americans get the smallest earning premium from certificates; and (3) states vary significantly in certificate production.

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policy and is not yet accepting applications. Please watch for updates at [uscis.gov](#) or call 1-800-375-5283. OVAE Connection will announce when more information is available.