

# OVAE CONNECTION

## STEM Pay and Job Security (Continuing Series That Began June 30)

In the twenty-first century, workers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (the STEM disciplines) will drive our nation's innovation and competitiveness by generating new ideas, and creating new companies and industries, according to a recent report from the U. S. Department of Commerce, [STEM: Good Jobs Now and for the Future](#).

In 2010, about 1 of every 18 American workers (7.6 million workers) worked in STEM occupations. STEM jobs have grown three times as fast as non-STEM jobs over the last 10 years. This growth in STEM occupations is projected to continue at a rate well above the average for other jobs. From 2008 to 2018, the projected rate is 17.0 percent, compared to 9.8 percent for non-STEM occupations.

To take advantage of these opportunities, an undergraduate degree is beneficial. More than two-thirds of STEM workers have at least an undergraduate degree, compared to less than one-third of non-STEM workers (with the physical and life sciences having the highest-educated workforce). STEM-educated workers are also less likely to experience joblessness.

The benefits of STEM education and employment are not equally distributed across the STEM education levels and occupations. Interestingly, the highest earnings premium for STEM workers is for those with less than a college degree. Also interesting, almost two-thirds of the 9.3 million workers with a STEM undergraduate degree work in a non-STEM job. Yet even these STEM degree holders enjoy an earnings premium relative to other college graduates. The larger payoff, however, comes when a STEM major goes on to work in a STEM job, as their earnings (all else equal) are about 20 percent higher than those of non-STEM majors working in non-STEM jobs. The largest earnings advantage goes to STEM workers as a whole, who command 26 percent more, on average, than workers in non-STEM fields, a six percentage point increase since 1994.

## Jon Kerr Named Adult Education Director in Washington State

On July 8, 2011, Jon M. Kerr began his duties as the adult basic education director for the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. Kerr succeeded Israel Mendoza, who had served in that position since 1996. An early pioneer of Washington's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST), Kerr was the founding director of the I-BEST Program in the Pierce College District in the state. He has provided I-BEST training in Washington as well as in several other states. In his previous position as dean of instructional programs and library director at Lower Columbia College, Kerr piloted the first academic I-BEST program as well as an I-BEST model for developmental education students. He has a long history in adult education, serving as an instructor, coordinator, and director for over 36 years. Kerr holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in theater and education from Central Washington University.



## OVAE Welcomes Lekesha Campbell

OVAE is pleased to welcome Lekesha Campbell as a management and program analyst for the Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL) Accountability Team. She is working on a variety of projects, including the *Workforce Investment Act* reauthorization, coordination of Incentive Grant state applications and awards between the departments of Education and Labor, the interagency workgroup on unified state planning, and the CTE strategy workgroup on partnerships. Before joining OVAE, Campbell served as a workforce analyst at the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA), Office of Policy Development and Research. Prior to her policy position, Campbell worked as a federal project officer managing several research and evaluation projects of ETA programs. She holds a joint master's degree in public policy and social service administration from the University of Chicago and a bachelor's degree in sociology from the University of Pennsylvania.

Welcome, Lekesha!

## AACC Releases Policy Brief

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) recently released its latest quarterly policy brief [Promoting Educational Opportunity: The Pell Grant at Community Colleges](#). The brief outlines why community colleges are a sound investment for students and communities and examines the historical and programmatic nature of the Pell Grant program, following its trends through the 2010-11 program year.