



Gig U: California College Begins Offering Gig Economy Classes

Insights

1.17.18

With each passing day, it is becoming increasingly evident that the gig economy is here to stay. Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that institutions of higher education have begun thinking of ways to educate students about the gig economy.

The College of Marin in Marin County, California is one of the first colleges to offer courses relating directly to the gig economy. Before doing so, however, Marin officials reviewed a study by Edelman Berland, a market research and analytics firm, finding that 53 million workers (or 34 percent) of the workforce are freelancers. They also looked at a separate study estimating that 40 percent of the U.S. workforce will be made up of freelancers by 2020. After looking at these reports, they determined that offering educational classes on the gig economy cannot wait—it needed to be done immediately.

The College of Marin put together a new offering of classes called the “Gig Economy Career Pathway,” slated to launch at the beginning of the Spring 2018 semester. The three classes being offered are: (1) entrepreneurship; (2) e-commerce and online business; and (3) self-employment strategies. Upon completion of these courses, a student will receive a skills certificate from the college.

According to the Nancy Willet, co-chair of the college’s business department, the program is designed to help students become their own boss. She believes the new offering will be beneficial to students who will pursue freelance positions, as well as current professionals who have found themselves working in the gig economy.

With the continued proliferation of the gig economy, it is very likely that other colleges and universities across the country will follow suit. This will likely lead to even more growth in the gig economy sector.