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# EDUCATION & WORKFORCE

## Education, career prep more important than ever

The leaders of Ivy Tech Community College, The Orchard School, University High School and Eleven Fifty Academy discuss the challenges and opportunities of remote learning and how their schools are preparing Indiana's workforce of tomorrow.

### Q: What lasting impacts of the pandemic do you predict for schools and students in Indiana?

**SUE ELLSPERMANN:** The pandemic demonstrated that we can teach and serve students in non-traditional ways. Virtual and online learning and student services are here to stay. We have even rolled out a "Learn Anywhere" model that allows students in some courses to go back and forth between face-to-face and virtual or online depending on their unique circumstances. Students, especially our working adults, like both virtual and online because it accommodates their

busy lives and, in some cases, is the only option to complete their education.

**SCOTT JONES:** Lasting impacts of this pandemic include the development of online solutions that actually work, as many schools were forced to transition before they were ready. Thanks to our nationally-recognized immersion learning techniques, high faculty-student ratio, and integrated job preparation, we were able to continue our efforts to educate and place students into stable careers during the lockdown.

**ALICIA LAMAGDELEINE:** It is clear the nature of learning and of work are



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changing. For University High School, as a college preparatory school, we will be tracking the adjustments of colleges and universities across the country. Will more instruction at that level move online permanently? What skills will our students need to succeed in that environment? What will the next generation's workforce look like?

**ALICIA LAMAGDELEINE:** At University High School, remote learning affirmed for us the importance of maintaining community even when we are physically apart. Our remote learning schedule featured synchronous live instruction where students and teachers virtually gathered together for class each day via Zoom. We also continued our one-to-one mentoring program, and we had several clubs and affinity groups that still met online outside of the school day.

### Q: What did you learn from remote learning and how can schools prepare for its possible return?

**SHERRI HELVIE:** At Orchard, we learned that we have the ability to keep our community close, largely due to the fact that we have incredible teachers who always go above and beyond for their students. While we hope to never have to return to a life filled with Zoom meetings, at the same time we will be fully prepared for the potential of remote learning in the future in order to support public health. The Orchard School has a COVID-19 task force and Healthy@Orchard team in place to make sure that all of the *what if* situations are accounted for in our planning.

**SCOTT JONES:** At Eleven Fifty Academy we learned that to do it "right" costs even more than in-person learning. We've had to leverage software and hardware that enable a "high touch" learning environment. We offer an intense program from dawn 'til dusk, for 12 weeks, in full immersion, similar to a "Study Abroad" program to learn a language. Pivoting the Academy experience into a safe, online, remote format has had challenges that we have overcome by our willingness to objectively and disruptively review our pedagogical processes.

**SUE ELLSPERMANN:** Ivy Tech was incredibly fortunate in two ways. First, online instruction has always been a core strength among our faculty members, so they were able to move to a remote learning environment very quickly and adeptly. Agility is a core competency we have been nurturing. The pandemic put many functions and each of Ivy Tech's campuses to the test. I couldn't be more proud of the results.

### Q: What should students and families consider as they make plans for school in the fall?

**SCOTT JONES:** Given that cities, including Beijing, re-opened schools only to shut down weeks later, we will almost certainly be contending with similar circumstances

here. Pre-K through college students aren't at high risk, but they are carriers who can deliver a fatal virus to grandparents, parents, or teachers. I think many families will reconsider putting innocent people at grave risk.

**SUE ELLSPERMANN:** Students and their families should be more intent than ever on finding the best match,

*"Virtual and online learning and student services are here to stay."*

SUE ELLSPERMANN



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even if that's different than what they were considering when the pandemic hit. This might mean a shift in preference toward options that are close to home, more affordable, or that allow students the flexibility to be as remote as they need to be.

**ALICIA LAMAGDELEINE:** Every student is unique, and so is every family situation. Students and families should consider their individual health situations first. Though the state is opening up and on-campus instruction is likely returning this fall, some students might have health concerns. Students and families learned a great deal about their preferred learning styles this spring; they should keep those lessons in mind as they plan for the fall.

**SHERRI HELVIE:** Be open and honest with your children when discussing school next year, and make sure you create the opportunity to listen closely to the questions they have; you may be surprised by the details that will matter the most to them. Now more than ever, it's important to know how much time is spent integrating nature into the curriculum. Research shows the benefits of being outdoors, especially at an early age.

**Q:** How will students be able to form meaningful relationships if they often have to be separated?

**ALICIA LAMAGDELEINE:** One of the things we did at University High School was continue many of our extracurricular offerings while in remote learning this spring. Our clubs and affinity groups met virtually, students met with their mentors via FaceTime or Zoom, and some students even designed an eSports league to make up for the lost spring athletic season. The inertia of being at home makes it easy to isolate ourselves. Students and families need to plan ways to stay connected, and schools can be a catalyst in providing those opportunities.

**SUE ELLSPERMANN:** We're fortunate that the majority of our students, faculty, and staff are digitally literate and able to work remotely while staying connected to each other.

**SCOTT JONES:** While in-person social contact is essential for healthy development and for relationships, much can be accomplished by leveraging online interactions. Many families' relationships have been significantly enhanced by the new social order that brings family back together again, in a society that is perhaps over-distracted and global.

**Q:** How are schools enhancing their facilities to ensure the safety of students, faculty, and staff?

**SUE ELLSPERMANN:** At Ivy Tech, we are implementing federal and state guidelines to keep our students and guests safe. This starts with social distancing wherever possible, which is the primary inspiration for our increased flexibility in how courses can be completed. For those who choose to take classes on campus this fall, we are deep cleaning all buildings and implementing preventive protocols to reduce risk of transmission.

**SHERRI HELVIE:** At Orchard we are updating our school-wide air filtration systems and installing touchless faucets, toilets, urinals, soap dispensers, and hand sanitizers throughout the building in order to minimize the need for touching shared surfaces. We are also exploring touchless door entries for high-volume entrance locations. Our new natural playgrounds are being built over the summer, and these updated spaces will include three amphitheaters that can be used as outdoor teaching spaces. Our 43-acre, wooded campus will continue to be a central part of our progressive program.

**ALICIA LAMAGDELEINE:** At University, we are looking at a number of facility modifications for the fall, from upgrades to our HVAC system, to plexiglass partitions, to hands-free sinks and toilets. But the biggest way to ensure safety is to change personal practices, making sure people wear face coverings, maintain social distance, stay home when sick, and practice good hygiene.

**SCOTT JONES:** I am personally dubious of solutions at schools and colleges. Yes, the various ideas will help, but those enhancements will not alleviate the risk of hot spots, given the socialization that occurs at schools, on buses and at college bars and dorm rooms.

Until there is frequent, consistent, ubiquitous testing coupled with best-in-class tracking, there is no enhancement that will guarantee no infections.

**Q:** What role is your school or program playing in our state's economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic?

**SCOTT JONES:** We are putting bartenders, waitresses, Uber drivers, college grads, and many others back to work in 90 days, during the worst unemployment in decades. Eleven Fifty Academy uniquely provides a 12-week full-immersion program, either in person or online, that provides outcomes proven to be as good as, or better than, entire four-year college degrees, at least in terms of placement rate into high-paying jobs (the true measure of success).

**ALICIA LAMAGDELEINE:** We made a deliberate choice to not furlough any of our employees during this time. We used our part-time bus drivers to shuttle school supplies to students' homes. We delivered books and art materials. (We even sent frog-dissection kits to our zoology students, complete with a preserved frog for them to dissect at home with the teacher's virtual instruction.)

**SUE ELLSPERMANN:** We have introduced new and enhanced initiatives in collaboration with state government, private businesses, philanthropic benefactors, and non-profits to understand the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic and respond to the needs of Indiana employers and the workforce. With all of this in mind, we have focused on five key areas: research and insights for Indiana business, community, and government leaders; free, relevant online classes, and short-term training programs available to all Indiana residents; career development assistance for all Hoosiers; return-to-work strategies for employers; and outreach and partnership with community and faith-based organizations.

*"Now more than ever, it's important to know how much time is spent integrating nature into the curriculum."*

SHERRI HELVIE

**Q:** How and with what level of success is your education program addressing the plight of the growing number of unemployed?

**SUE ELLSPERMANN:** Ivy Tech is taking a leadership role here as well, as part of the initiatives mentioned above. The College recently opened up 10,000 free online classes for enrollment. These classes are in relevant high-demand areas, including advanced manufacturing, business, and cybersecurity, and they were selected in collaboration with employers and other partners to ensure they are aligned with existing and future job opportunities. We are confident this effort along with our core function as the state's community college will make Indiana's workforce collectively stronger and better equipped to remain globally competitive.

**SCOTT JONES:**

We have placed many of the unemployed back into the workforce, at double their prior salary, even

during the lockdown. We are working very closely with all of the WorkOne (and EmployIndy) offices around Indiana and with the Department of Workforce Development to help us

See page 26

## THE ORCHARD SCHOOL



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Continued from page 25

provide federal dollars via the CARES program to our students. Starting every few weeks, our bootcamps are accomplished from home in a compressed 12 weeks, with 80% graduation and 70% placement into jobs that start at an average of \$55,000, with significant pay increases with each year of experience.

**Q: What should schools be doing to keep diversity, equity, and inclusion top of mind in hiring and teaching?**

**SHERRI HELVIE:**

This is an important time for schools to be open and honest as they reflect on their mission and prepare for the future. I think it would be a mistake to not acknowledge the significant and overdue shift we're living through as we reflect on work in support of social justice and diversity, equity, and inclusion. In schools, that means continuing the critically important work of examining what we teach, how we teach, and who is doing the teaching. Our children deserve that. Orchard students discover Diversity/Equity/Inclusion work at the age of three. We believe that by having these important discussions about identity at an early age, children will discover the true meaning of inclusion.

*"We need to examine what we teach, how we teach, and who is doing the teaching."*

SHERRI HELVIE

**ALICIA LAMAGDELEINE:** The number one thing schools can do to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion is regular education, training, and reflection. Teachers and school leaders must listen to the diverse voices around them, reflect on what they are saying, and do the work of understanding the historical decisions that have caused inequity and injustice to permeate our country. One thing we are examining at University is the makeup of our decision-making bodies at the student, staff, and administrative levels. Do they all include a diverse set of voices?

**SUE ELLSPERMANN:** The events of the past month have reinforced the need for even the most forward-thinking organizations to do better in terms of their commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. For education providers, this is especially critical, given our ability to teach our students through our actions as well as through coursework and classroom instruction.

**SCOTT JONES:** Over our history, we realized the importance of diversity, so we made it one of our core values early on. In our student base, we currently have over 25% minorities, 25% females, and 10% veterans in

our programs. We have focused on diversity at our leadership level also, with half of our leaders being either a minority or female.

**Q: What can we do to help build Indiana's workforce of tomorrow?**

**SUE ELLSPERMANN:** We must ensure all high school students have earned their first credential before they graduate, that adults who do not have a credential beyond a high school diploma have access to training and educational opportunities, and that every Hoosier has access to career coaching that steers them to high-wage, high-demand careers that support Indiana's economy. Further, we must continue to seek to improve the health care, cultural, and quality of life amenities that will allow us to retain the talent we already have.

**SCOTT JONES:** At Eleven Fifty Academy, we are hyper-focused on the workforce of tomorrow, skilling up "old economy" workers into a tech-proficient workforce that understands the languages and skills of software development, web development, and cybersecurity. Even if graduates choose not to write another line of code in their life, they have learned the literacy of tomorrow.

**Q: How important are certificates, basic degrees, and advanced degrees in the workforce today?**

**SHERRI HELVIE:** These types of credentials are important in that they show a person's level of training and dedication to their craft. But people are much more than their degrees and certificates. The key factors are passion and commitment. For example, we've had extraordinarily talented teachers with specialties and expertise in fields outside of education who have been truly impactful in their teaching—because of their real-world experience and joyful pursuit of learning.

*"We are putting bartenders, waitresses, Uber drivers, college grads, and many others back to work in 90 days, during the worst unemployment in decades."*

SCOTT JONES

**SCOTT JONES:** We believe in the importance of credentials; however, we think the true measure of success in education is the outcomes. We are hyper-focused on the OUTCOMES, which includes placement rate into high-value, high-impact careers. At Eleven Fifty Academy, we believe that all training providers and educational institutions should be held strictly accountable to reporting their true outcomes.

**SUE ELLSPERMANN:** The lines between certifications, certificates, undergraduate and advanced degrees are likely to continue to blur as employers want skills and competencies relevant to their workplaces. What we know for sure, however, is that certificates and

other short-term credentials are more valuable than ever. Information technology, advanced manufacturing and health care have evolved to allow short-term credentials as an entry point while providing a high wage. Further, these credentials most often "stack" to an associate and/or bachelor's degree. Ivy Tech has been leading the way in this strategy by intentionally focusing on the ways in which credentials stack, allowing for lifelong learning.

**Q: How can people set themselves up for a good return on their educational investment?**

**ALICIA LAMAGDELEINE:** Find a school that prepares your student to be the most dynamic and flexible learner. The world of work is different than it was 50 years ago, and it's going to be different 50 years from now. This means looking for schools that build their students' capacity to think across disciplines, to empathize with others, and to problem solve collaboratively—skills that can lead to success in multiple work environments.

**SUE ELLSPERMANN:** Families should take a close look at college costs. The student loan crisis has made this a national conversation, but it remains underappreciated by many families as they believe success only comes through the four-year institution. Each year millions of freshmen begin at residential colleges only to drop out. This means they have no credential and tens of thousands of dollars in debt. Conversely, Ivy Tech students can graduate in less time, at a fraction of the cost and be prepared to enter the workforce and/or complete the last two years at a four-year institution, thereby cutting their college costs by as much as half.

**SCOTT JONES:** The cost of Eleven Fifty Academy is literally an order of magnitude (10x) better than a four-year public university, and in some cases, is two orders of magnitude (100x) better than college, in terms of

return on investment. We think ROI is paramount to decisions of prospective students and of the unemployed.

**SHERRI HELVIE:** As you explore school options, the most important thing to weigh is which experience is best for your child—and you are the expert on that question. It's also very helpful to have ready access to testimonials from a school's graduates to hear directly from students, in their own words. We created orchard.org/grads not only to highlight our awesome Owls, but also to share the outcomes for our students in our Progressive program.

**Q: To what extent should federal, state, and local**



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Kaylea, 2017 Graduate

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### education funding be tied more directly to the ability of graduates to land high-paying, rewarding careers?

**SUE ELLSPERMANN:** Funding should be tied to students completing credentials of high value. Indiana has begun to do this but still fails to recognize the hundreds of thousands of credentials and degrees for jobs like welding, nursing, and cybersecurity. These are high-paying, rewarding careers completed at places other than our four-year institutions. We are going to see major disruptions in how credentials are delivered. Seat time and credit hours should not dictate value. The revolution is under way, and colleges will need to transform to remain relevant to employers.

**SCOTT JONES:** In order for Indiana (and the US) to compete in the global economy, it is essential that all funding sources begin to genuinely focus on outcomes, such as rapidly acquiring high-value, high-impact jobs (and careers), as opposed to simply focusing on credentials. This will require a complete recalculation of current educational funding mechanisms. There are decades of process that must be “disrupted” if we are to effect the changes that will make us competitive. Currently, other states pass us by. And other countries are passing up the US as we cling to our antiquated ways of choosing how and where to invest in education.

### Q: What radical out-of-the-box things could Indiana be doing to compete with the coasts for high value, high impact careers?

**SCOTT JONES:** There are unique funding mechanisms such as the Indiana Career Accelerator Fund, which could catapult Indiana past our neighboring states, and even the coastal states, if we invest intelligently with state and federal dollars. This program can pay for itself, pay back the state entirely for its investment, sustain itself, and provide \$680 billion of Hoosier income over the coming few decades. Yes, it’s radical, but all the pieces are already proven out by unique, best-in-class programs such as Eleven Fifty Academy. Indiana should do this. Others will try to follow our lead.

**SUE ELLSPERMANN:** Indiana is fortunate to have tremendous health care and information technology industry sectors, prerequisites for economic vitality in the 21st century. Our true point of difference, as I once heard a Hoosier entrepreneur say, is our unmatched ability “to make, move and grow things.” We are leaders in advanced manufacturing, logistics, and agriculture, and we need to continue this focus.

### Q: What are you most proud of about your school or program?

**ALICIA LAMAGDELEINE:** I am most proud of University High School’s sense of community. As *New York Times* columnist David Brooks once wrote, students learn best from people they love. Everything at University is designed around relationships, from our one-to-one mentoring program, to our approach to classes, to our daily community meetings (even when they are held virtually). Putting so much institutional time and focus on building relationships not only increases student motivation and ability to learn, but it also makes our community strong enough in times of crisis, like this pandemic. Part of our ability to pivot so quickly to remote learning in the spring was a result of the tremendous mutual trust students and teachers have in one another. That’s at the core of every good thing at our school.

**SUE ELLSPERMANN:** Without question, our students make me proud every day. That’s true not only when they succeed, but also when they have the courage to overcome the many challenges they face. The events of the past few months have only strengthened this esteem for our

students, my respect for their tenacity and my recognition of the impact they will have on our state’s future.

**SCOTT JONES:** I am most proud of our innovative team at Eleven Fifty Academy. Every institution is formed by its people, who form its culture. From instructors to learning assistants, from staff to our leaders, from current students to our alumni, we have a team that is 100% focused on trying to make the very best educational immersion experience

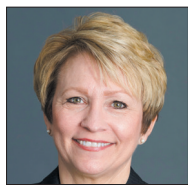
in the world. So far, we’ve succeeded with several hundred graduates who have been placed into high-value, high-impact careers, paying

high salaries, after just 90 days of “full immersion” training. Our team can be extremely proud of the impacts we’ve already made on the lives of so many Hoosiers and their families. And we’ve only just begun!

**SHERRI HELVIE:** For nearly a century, Orchard has been the leader of Progressive education in Indy. We are very fortunate to have incredible teachers, learning spaces, and families. But our students and their successes are what I’m most proud of. They are leaders, critical thinkers, and changemakers!

*“We have placed many of the unemployed back into the workforce, at double their prior salary, even during the lockdown.”*

SCOTT JONES



**Sue Ellspermann, Ph.D.**, became president of Ivy Tech Community College in 2016. An industrial engineer, she previously served as Indiana’s 50th Lieutenant Governor from 2013 until March of 2016 and before that served in the Indiana General Assembly as state representative for District 74.



**Sherri C. Helvie, Ph.D.**, is The Orchard School’s ninth Head of School in the institution’s nearly century-long history. With more than 20 years of education experience, she was previously assistant Head of Gateway School, in Santa Cruz, California (a progressive K-8 school).



**Scott Jones** is the president and founder of Eleven Fifty Academy, one of the world’s top-ranked software development and cybersecurity full-immersion training bootcamps. Jones has raised over \$200 million for his various companies, resulting in over \$5 billion of investor returns, and co-founded the world’s largest voicemail provider.



**Alicia M. LaMagdeleine** is the incoming Head of School at University High School, an independent college preparatory high school in Carmel. She had 16 years of experience in teaching and leadership at University before being named head of school. She is a former trustee of The Orchard School.

## CONGRATULATIONS UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2020



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