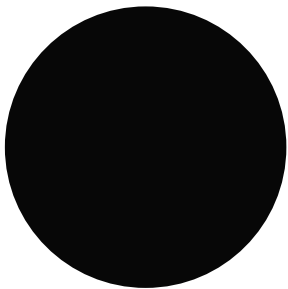




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Be Informed Be Inspired

UOPX

Dear Phoenixes,

Welcome to the inaugural edition of Alumni Chronicles Magazine! We are so excited to showcase the triumphs of and opportunities for our alumni in these pages.

When we describe what makes a Phoenix different from graduates of other universities, one word always rises to the top: grit. And while grit is a short word, it embodies a long list of qualities: courage, resolve, strength, character, dependability and resilience.

With that in mind, we have created this magazine to celebrate the ways our alumni have put their grit to good use, as well as to identify the news and trends that can help them continue to grow.

Take, for example, our cover story, “To the Moon and Beyond,” which highlights the ways one University of Phoenix alumnus worked with NASA to bring holographic teleportation to astronauts. There’s also “Better Together,” which shares the story of three women who earned their doctorates the same way they did their bachelor’s and master’s degrees: with each other.

While this issue applauds the many notable successes of Phoenixes like you, it also takes time to dive into some serious career content.

“The State of the American Career” looks at how the pandemic and other events have impacted which jobs are growing the fastest – and what you need to know to compete for them.

Those articles are just the beginning. You’ll enjoy reading through the stories here that ultimately tell one greater, bigger narrative: how Phoenixes continue to rise.

Getting to where you are today wasn’t easy. We know it. But your courage, your resilience and, yes, your grit got you through your program and helped you achieve other accomplishments in life. Your endeavors and the challenges you overcame along the way, are celebrated here in *Alumni Chronicles Magazine*. You’ll find even more stories on our blog.

You are the reason every University employee comes to work, every day. You may not realize this, but you inspire thousands of us. Now, with the debut of *Alumni Chronicles Magazine*, your stories can inspire current and future Phoenixes as well.

Patrick Kendrick,
Graduate and Seattle
Chapter President

Chris Celauro,
Graduate and Director
of Alumni Experience



Network with UOPX graduates, volunteer locally – and have some fun. [Join one of 50 chapters nationwide.](#)

[Learn more about our chapters.](#)

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Ready for Takeoff

Education gave one alumnus wings to soar.



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Research Rising: To the Moon and Beyond

How one UOPX alumnus is helping bring holographic teleportation to space.

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Alumni Chapter Spotlight: Cherry on Top

Cherry Roa, president of the Southern California Alumni Association, shares the magic behind her very active chapter.

University of Phoenix is constantly innovating. Check out some of the latest developments and achievements from 2022!

UOPX Introduces Competency-Based Education

In February 2020, University of Phoenix launched its first competency-based education (CBE) program so that students can gain a degree with career-relevant skills faster and at a lower cost. In fact, CBE lets qualifying students earn their degree in less than a year and for under \$11,000.

How? The idea is simple: CBE programs leverage a student's preexisting knowledge and skills to create a more flexible learning plan with the support and guidance of faculty. In a CBE program, students can demonstrate their knowledge through the completion of competency assessments rather than through predefined activities with set due dates.

Students can also leverage their expertise in subject areas they already know as a way to modify their learning plan and focus more of their time in areas new to them.

UOPX currently offers four CBE credit-based programs – three of which are master's programs – with more than 3,000 enrolled students and 570 graduates.

[Learn more about competency-based education.](#)

Career Questions, Answered

Much has been made of the job market over the past few years. While it's possible to comb through the avalanche of data and opinions, there is a better option: the University of Phoenix Career Institute®. Designed to identify and research the obstacles to career advancement, the Career Institute was launched in 2021 to provide data-driven thought leadership and expanded research on such topics as talent retention, career changes, return to in-person work and more. This year, the Career Institute released its second annual Career Optimism Index®, which offers a comprehensive look at how U.S. employers

and employees perceive their careers, their skills and what needs to change.

[Learn more about the University of Phoenix Career Institute.](#)

Show Off Your Skills

As the job market continues to evolve, so does the University's commitment to providing an education students can leverage in the real world. Enter skills-tagged curriculum, an innovative new process for making visible to students and potential employers the skills students learn in their undergraduate and graduate programs across the University.

How does the process work?

At UOPX, skills are being aligned with program and course outcomes. Each skill is connected to a corresponding assignment – authentic, real-world assessments that the student completes as part of the course.

Across select programs and courses at the University, when students completes certain assignments, they are awarded a digital credential, a badge that indicates the specific skill they've more. This yen-U

To the Moon and Beyond

By Sharla Hooper

Photo: Camille Josephine

R E S E A R C H R I S I N G

Holographic teleportation — it's the stuff of sci-fi films, fantasy novels and, thanks to University of Phoenix alumnus Dr. Fernando De La Peña Llaca, real-life space travel.

For most people, holographic teleportation sounds like a pie-in-the-sky possibility. But the technology actually exists, and what's more, it's transforming industries outside IT.

Take space travel, for example. Dr. Fernando De La Peña Llaca's company, Aexa Aerospace, recently collaborated with NASA scientists to provide holographic teleportation as an innovative, 3D version of telemedicine for astronauts on the International Space Station (ISS).

His recent success with NASA is part of a journey he began many years ago. As an undergraduate engineering student, De La Peña Llaca completed and patented a spacecraft engine propelled by antimatter. He received additional patents as well, including for a space launcher that employs magnetic levitation.

"I have 28 years of experience leading technology companies," says De La Peña Llaca, who completed his Doctor of Management at University of Phoenix in early 2022. "However, space exploration has always motivated me."

He continued to refine and further his research on space exploration as a doctoral student at the University. His dissertation, "Holographic Teleportation in Space and Astronauts' Stress," focused on defining the best practices of the technology to alleviate social isolation and stress for astronauts.

De La Peña Llaca's dissertation research found two significant areas in which holographic teleportation could benefit astronauts: psychologically (via socialization) and physically (via medical care). "Astronauts spend months in social isolation," he explains.

"They live in a closed space station for up to a year. They don't socialize with their families or friends." He points out how millions right here on Earth experienced and closely modeled the phenomenon in the past few years.

"We lived during the COVID-19 pandemic and saw and experienced how isolation is linked to side effects, including a loss of performance. While holographic

Cherry

President of University of Phoenix's Southern California Alumni Association, Roa is, at heart, a connector. She connects University graduates to each other, to a sense of belonging and to the numerous career, volunteer and social events her alumni chapter facilitates.

In fact, her alumni association's slate of activities and participation rates are so strong that the SoCal chapter has become the eighth largest in the University of Phoenix system. The chapter's 850 members are diverse in their personalities, professions and values. So, Roa figures, there had better be a little something for everyone.

The chapter presents Leadership Impact Awards, which, in 2022, recognized 18 recipients. The awards showcase leaders, innovators, people who serve their communities and individuals who have overcome adversity to improve their lives and the lives of those around them.

Roa's chapter also hosts network events, which include educational workshops and webinars to help SoCal alumni stay current on everything from career skills to personal financial strategies.

There are volunteer outreach events, which bring Phoenixes together around causes like serving the homeless and improving youth literacy. There are career fairs to connect alumni with potential jobs and job seekers. And there are golf tournaments, sports outings and community gatherings at local parks, all of which are planned simply to focus on what Roa loves best: connection.

"I have this — I don't know, this is what people say — skill and energy of drawing everyone together and pointing them toward one goal," Roa says with dancing eyes, a sparkling smile and a sense that she kind of knows this is what she was born for.

And it's not even her main gig.

Applying the Master of Health Administration she earned from the University in 2014, Roa has a full-time job overseeing the operations, marketing and accounting for the two home healthcare businesses she owns. (Prior to embarking on her MHA, she practiced law in the Philippines.) When she's not running her healthcare businesses, she plays golf and dabbles in amateur photography.

Still, she finds time to give back to the alumni chapter that welcomed her with open arms in 2014.

“ People are attracted to her infectious, positive attitude. She is 100% focused on helping our alumni achieve their goals.”

"When I joined, I thought, 'I might as well get to know fellow Phoenixes,'" she says. "There were fewer than 100 in the chapter at the time, but it was something new. I wanted to be involved and make it grow."

Why? "I see the value of belonging," Roa says.

Southern California Campus and Academic Director Mikal Powers says three ideas come to mind when he considers Roa's leadership: positivity, passion and



Different Name,
Same Problem

64%

52%

The data supports Woods' assessment. Turnover reached a historic high in March 2022 when 4.5 million Americans quit their jobs. Barring a change in economic conditions or a drastic development in automation, *Forbes* notes that the abundance of open positions will likely continue through 2030. Even Klotz has gone on record saying he doesn't see it slowing down for at least a few years.

Not All Markets —or Employees —Are Created Equal

Where things get confusing is in the specifics of the market that appears to favor employees. According to a recent article by the BBC, "Although a war for talent is certainly raging, employers aren't fighting the same battles across the board. Only some candidates have power in the job market — typically experienced, mid-career employees. It means entry-level workers can still face difficulties finding employment — and this is especially the situation in certain sectors."

Job availability varies by industry and country, but one strike against entry-level employees is the training they require. With hybrid and work-from-home options increasingly available, new employees need to be able to ramp up without a lot of oversight or training, and that's a skill that often comes with experience.

“ Although a war for talent is certainly raging, employers aren't fighting the same battles across the board.”

Industries on the Rise

No matter what stage your career is in, it helps to know which industries are projected to experience strong job growth in the coming years. Here's the short list.

Healthcare and Social Assistance

Overall, the healthcare and social assistance sector is projected to add the most new jobs from 2020 to 2030. And, as outlined in the *Employment Projections — 2020-2030* report from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS),

individual and family services roles, like home health aides and occupational therapy assistants, will experience the fastest job growth among healthcare professions.

Leisure and Hospitality

The pandemic may have necessitated a breakup with the leisure and hospitality industry, but a rebound is taking place in a major way. So much so, in fact, that BLS projects employment in the leisure and hospitality industry to grow the fastest as people return to in-person activities. This means hiring at hotels, restaurants, recreational destinations and cultural icons could increase faster than you can say amusement park.

Professional, Business and Scientific Services

Careers in business, IT and other professional fields

How to Navigate Toward the Great Retention

According to the UOPX Career Optimism Index, 43% of Americans don't see a clear path for advancing their careers, and 40% worry that artificial intelligence will

It's funny the details you remember when you look back on your first love, that indelible moment when the skies parted, your heart pounded ... and the jackrabbits scattered?

That's how it went for Boeing Project Manager Dennis Trujillo (MS/Global Management, 2003) anyway.

He was 6 or 7 years old when he fell in love with airplanes. Trujillo romanticized them from the other side of the 4-foot chain-link fence where he spent his spare time "spotting" — the art of identifying aircraft from the ground.

"My father would take me to Long Beach Airport, and we'd park along the runway. When the airplanes would come in to land, I'd identify them. I knew them by the nose and engines," he says. "I could tell a Douglas from a Boeing from a Lockheed."

In fact, he could tell a plane was close just by looking at nearby bushes. "All the jackrabbits would scatter when the ground shook. I always got such a kick out of that," says Trujillo.

Now approaching his 40th anniversary working first for McDonnell Douglas (and now Boeing, which merged with McDonnell Douglas in 1997), Trujillo has been project manager for major endeavors such as passenger-to-freight plane conversions and the reconfiguration of parked planes for new owners during the pandemic.

Staff to Student

At University of Phoenix, education is for everyone. Transfer students, returning students... even staff who decide to become students themselves.

Ron Erlandson

Re-Entry Representative

Should your UOPX path ever cross with that of Ron Erlandson, chances are good you'll have taken your first step toward restarting your education. As a re-entry representative, Erlandson is tasked with helping students who've taken a break from school find their way back. Often, this involves Erlandson imparting some of his hard-earned wisdom.

As an Air Force veteran, life coach and personal trainer, Erlandson knows what it means to have a goal and achieve it. He also thinks motivation is overrated. Success, he says, usually boils down to discipline.

With that in mind, Erlandson embarked on his third master's program at UOPX in 2021. (He actually started as a student before joining as staff in 2010.) He already has a Master of Business Administration and Master of Arts in Education/Adult Education and Training under his belt. As he looks toward the future, however, he'd like to be more effective in his current role and, after retiring, carry on a small counseling practice and maybe even run a nonprofit dedicated to helping military veterans.

Which degree are you pursuing?

Master of Science in Counseling/Clinical Mental Health Counseling

What's one tip for juggling work and school?

Using checklists and reasonable disciplined expectations.

Most people look at time or motivation as the key drivers, but I would suggest they hold a student back. Instead, I have students think about working on lists, because a list can help you stay focused and actually shorten the amount of time you work on something. But the list is never more than three items. So, every day you're doing just three items. For example, today is Tuesday, and I start a class. My three items are: I'm going to ask the instructor a question if I have one, I'm going to make the outline for my paper, and I'm going to read the chapter that involves this week's work. That's it. Then tomorrow, there's another list.

How will you celebrate the completion of your degree?

My short-term goal is to be a better re-entry representative, and it has helped me a lot in understanding students. After I retire, I want to be a licensed counselor and continue to help people and do something I feel I can be mentally sharp for.

Daniel Miekley

Performance Coach

Daniel Miekley is used to looking on the bright side of things. As a performance coach, he works with enrollment representatives at UOPX to help them apply what they've learned in training and build on their existing skills. It's a role for which his high energy and extensive UOPX experience (13 years and counting) are well suited.

But his personal experience helps too. Miekley is a two-time Phoenix who earned his bachelor's degree in 2016. His wife then earned her degree, and now this father of two is back in school for his master's.

What keeps him going? For him, education is an investment in his future.

Which degree are you pursuing?

Master of Management

Why go back to school?

I knew I wanted to do more in leadership and management, and I knew that getting the education would definitely help me. I wanted to be qualified for some of the future jobs I would pursue.

What's one tip for juggling work and school?

It really comes down to calendar planning and time management. I have set times I do my homework. I have set days I do my homework. My wife knows that [and] we coordinate schedules.

Every Tuesday and Wednesday, I know I'm spending two-hour blocks of time working on schoolwork and then again on Friday and then again on Saturday. My goal is to have it finished up to where Sunday, I can rest and have time with my family.

How will you celebrate the completion of your degree?

Maybe I'll actually do a party or even a trip. I'm originally from L.A., and I miss the beach.

Anissa Armenta

Repayment Advisor

Anissa Armenta is one of those people who has it all — she's poised, friendly and good at what she does, which is help students figure out repayment plans for their student loans.

She also has it all in terms of obligations. This three-year veteran of UOPX started her bachelor's program shortly after joining the staff, following in the footsteps of her fiancé and various family members. As she eased into her professional role and her new degree program, she took on buying a house, remodeling, helping her fiancé launch a side business and, yes, planning a wedding.

Here's what keeps her going.

Which degree are you pursuing?

Bachelor of Science in Management with a certificate in Human Resources

Why go back to school?

I wanted to take advantage of the opportunity I had as an employee and use that to better myself and create more opportunities. I ultimately would like to go into human resources.

What's one tip for juggling work and school?

Sometimes you just need a little reminder that you had an assignment due today or tomorrow, or that you have a group project you should be working on just for a little bit at some point today. Setting reminders doesn't seem so significant until you see how much of an impact they can make.

How will you celebrate the completion of your degree?

I would like to take a long nap. And then I'll start my master's. [She's not kidding.] 🍷

Everybody's talking about the job market—but not everybody knows how to navigate it. At University of Phoenix, however, students and graduates have a secret weapon for weathering workplace trends: Career Services for Life®.

What's in a name? Quite a lot if it's "Career Services for Life." And while we live in a world where over-promising is as common as underdelivering, Career Services for Life does what the name says.

"It's a resource center with support for people who are in career transition. So, whether that means they're unemployed and looking for a job, or feeling underpaid or undervalued and would like to try something different, or not sure what they want to do, we can support them through that. It's a great place for career exploration," explains Ricklyn Woods.

Woods is a certified career coach and part of the University's team of career coaches who routinely work with students and graduates on achieving their career goals. Like her colleagues, she brings decades of experience to her role. Also like her colleagues, she has seen how skeptics quickly become believers.

"I tell people so often, 'You have more experience than you think you do,'" Woods says. She cites one recent client who wanted to get into human resources but whose experience was in office administration. Woods chatted with her about her current job duties, pointing out that certain responsibilities – sourcing talent and verifying their eligibility to work – fall under the HR umbrella even if she was performing them as an assistant office manager.

"What we often find is people do have experience; they just haven't connected the dots with how their experience transfers to certain fields or how there is a common thread throughout their whole career that can really be leveraged as experience," Woods explains. That "aha" moment is one of the biggest reasons Woods loves doing what she does.

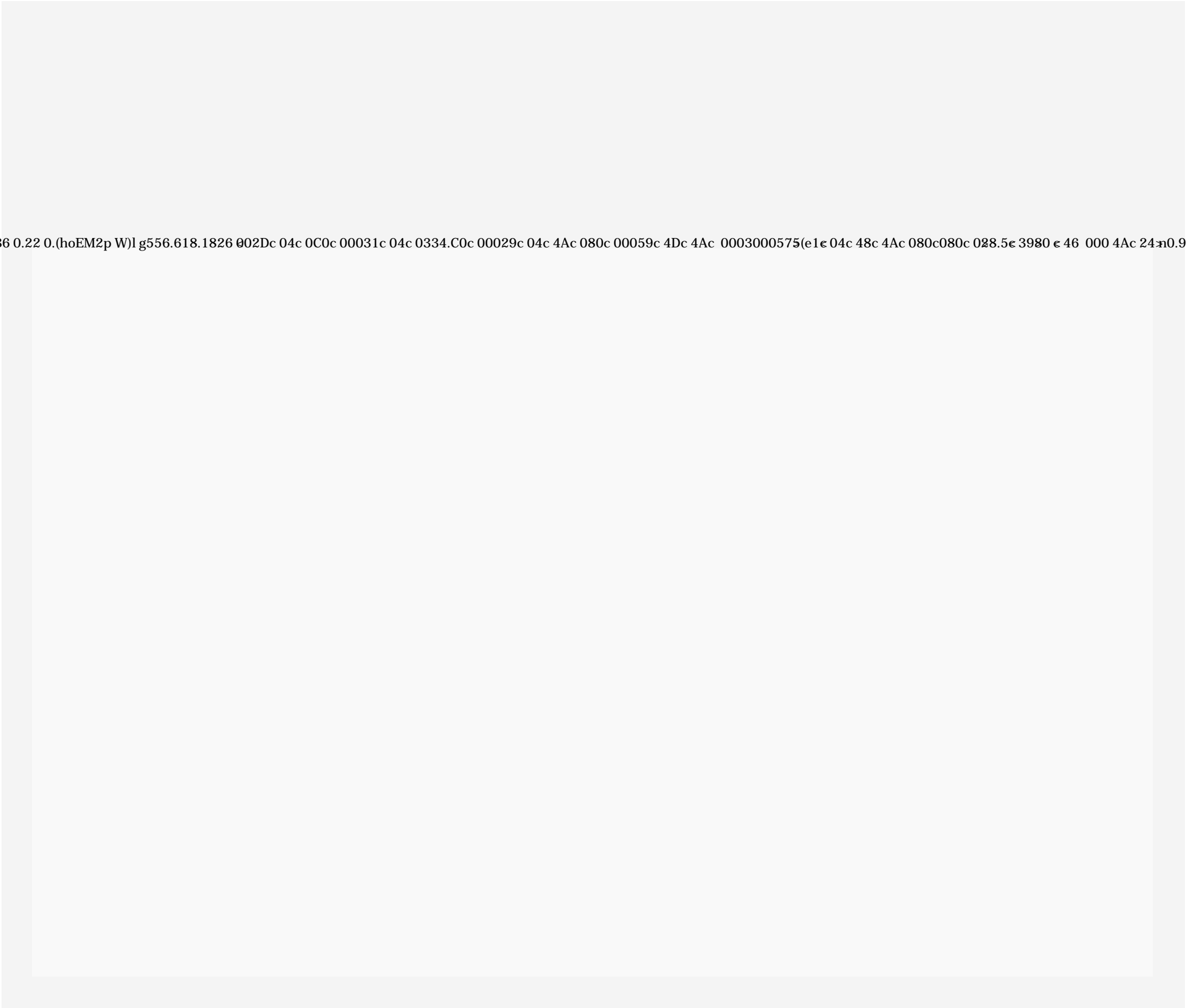
Here, Woods shares other secret and not-so-secret facts about what Career Services for Life at University of Phoenix is all about.

C A R E E R S E R V I C E S

Once they have some clarity about their desired industry and what they'd like to do within the industry, we'll talk about how we can capture their work experience and education into a compelling document: their resumé. We'll get into the networking and what their LinkedIn profile looks like. How are they using it?

As they start getting phone calls for interviews, we'll talk about interview prep. I've even had clients who have gotten the job offer and want help with negotiating the salary.

It can be a full cycle kind of career management experience if that's the shone c9pSc73(arPrPrW)45(e)8ualtheir ul2d likw3tcs 0.86 0.22 0.(hoEM2p W)l g556.618.1826 002Dc 04c 0C0c 00031c 04c 0334.C0c 00029c 04c 4Ac 080c 00059c 4Dc 4Ac 0003000575(e1e 04c 48c 4Ac 080c080c 028.5e 3980 e 46 000 4Ac 24x0.958 0C /S



And Facey-Walker is the glue that holds them all together as well as the driving force that keeps them in motion.

Facey-Walker and Mayers met in middle school and stayed friends over the course of high school and Sunday church services. In college, they encountered Myla and discovered the missing piece to their triumvirate.

The three women would go on to complete their bachelor's and master's degrees together and work as educators in the same Broward County school district in Florida.

They live within five or 10 minutes of each other. Their children, as Myla noted, play with each other.

But they weren't done.

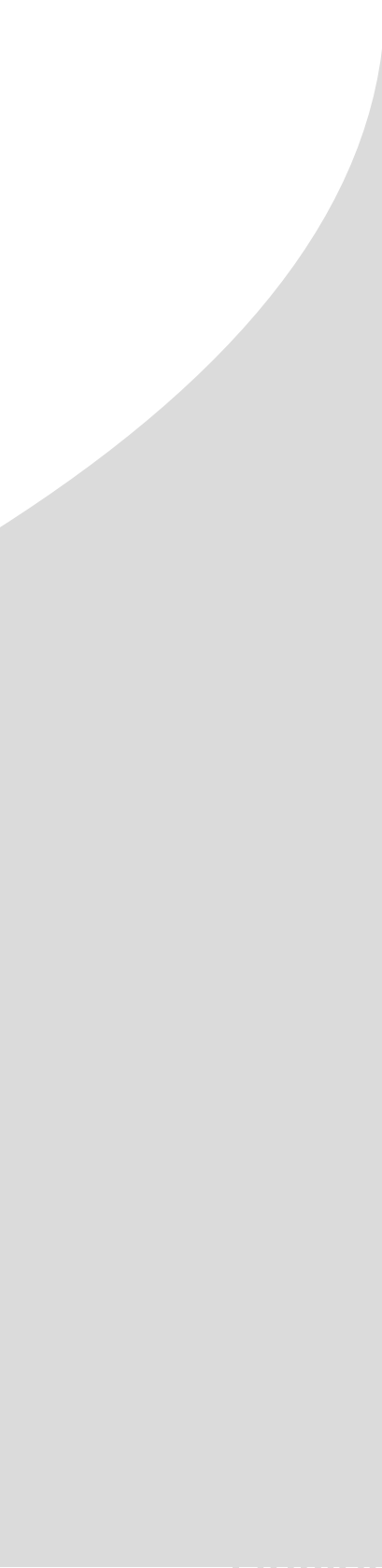
No one can pinpoint whose idea it was to pursue their doctorates in education. It simply evolved, like their friendship, out of like minds and goals.

"We said, 'You know what? Let's get our doctorates!'" Myla recalls.

Alumni Why

By Elizabeth Exline

University of Phoenix is a great place to go to school. Why? Just ask our alumni.



University

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