

Job Woes Drive Certificate Admissions Up at UC San Diego Extension

Peter Chen, after being downsized from a job in company finance, decided it was time to bridge to a new career in the emerging discipline of data mining. When the construction industry hit the skids, Humphrey Rincon, a general contractor for 20 years, made the leap to become a Spanish/English translator and an interpreter. Leslie Widner, a teacher who was underemployed as a hotel desk clerk, hit the books to find a dream green-collar job in the field of sustainable business practices.

Chen, Rincon and Widner are all examples of adults returning to continuing education programs at the University of California, San Diego. The ongoing economic challenges have led to the number of continuing education students entering certificate programs at UC San Diego Extension increasing 19 percent last year, according to Elizabeth Silva, registrar and director of student services for the university's continuing education programs.

While the nationwide unemployment rate is hovering at 8.3 percent, San Diego is experiencing a jobless rate of 9.3 percent. That explains the trend of why a total of 3,841 students entered continuing education certificate programs at UC San Diego during 2011, as compared to 3,217 during 2010.

"For recent and mid-career college graduates facing a still challenging job market and a weak economy, continuing-education certificates remain an attractive as a way to bridge to employment areas that are in higher demand," said Silva.

Certificate programs offer a practical, concentrated study in a specific professional area. Students must complete a set of required courses and electives to earn a certificate. Most of the 102 certificates offered by UC San Diego Extension can be earned in one to two years at a cost of around \$1,875 to \$3,200.

The certificate programs that experienced the highest percentage of admission growth in 2011, in rank order, were:

- Lactation Consultant
- Data Mining
- Copyediting

- College Counseling
- Biostatistics
- Paralegal Studies
- Lean Six Sigma
- Leadership and Management
- Reading Instruction
- From Research to Practice
- Fundraising and Development

“Excellent instructors, innovative content tuned to the needs of professionals today and a broad reach to students in San Diego and around the world are also the reasons behind the rise,” said Silva.

New specialized certificates that were added in 2011 include: Career Advising, Clinical Trials Administration in Latin America, Global Service Entrepreneurship, Graphic Design, In Vitro Diagnostics, Mobile Applications Development, Mobile Device Programming, and Video and Imaging Technologies.

Some of the areas of possible study for career changers or those wishing to add new skills to their resume include: Accounting; Business; Digital Arts; Education; Engineering; English Language Studies; Foreign Languages; Healthcare and Behavioral Sciences; Humanities and Writing; Information Technology and Software Engineering; Law; Leadership and Management Development; Life Sciences; Occupational and Environmental Safety and Health; Photography, Art and Music, and Public Service and Social Responsibility.

For the convenience of working adults, continuing education courses are held online or evenings and weekends on the UC San Diego main campus and two other locations: the Extension University City Center and the Extension Mission Valley Center. During 2011 UC San Diego Extension began classes in a new three-story high-tech facility called University City Center that dramatically increases the university’s ability to serve adult learners.

Keep up with campus news by subscribing to *This Week @ UC San Diego*