


ThinkAGAIN

Summer 2020



RICHMOND
School of Professional
& Continuing Studies™



Responding to our new normal: Online learning

The coronavirus pandemic has deeply affected higher education, as it has done to most other industries. We're fortunate to be supported by the University of Richmond in our efforts to pivot to remote and online learning. Our goal is to support the Richmond community with quality online opportunities to address the immediate, short-term and career-long training and learning needs of its professionals.

We're acutely aware that Richmonders may be struggling. We want to help. In response, our professional education and lifelong learning programs have ramped up our online offerings to better, more immediately meet the needs of Richmond's professionals and career-seekers.

In Think Again, we've implemented a program-wide restructuring of our offerings to highlight online learning opportunities. Within existing and new Areas of Study, we've developed a career-focused framework for organizing courses, certificates and programs (see pp. 3-4 for a full explanation). We've carefully selected online classes and programs that meet career-focused needs of professionals. And we've widened and deepened our online offerings to meet our students where they are—online.

Within each Area of Study, we've categorized our courses and programs by career goal. Those exploring career options or seeking enrichment can check out the Career-Curious & Enrichment category. Those seeking to build career-based skills are invited to review the Career-Level category. And senior professionals looking for advancement can see opportunities in the Professional-Level category.

Wherever you are in your career, we want to provide accessible, high-quality training and coursework that will help you take the next step—whatever that step may be. This issue of Think Again details our new approach and shares stories of those who've benefited from the opportunities available at the University of Richmond through the School of Professional & Continuing Studies.

Summer 2020

VISIT THINK AGAIN ONLINE

spcs.richmond.edu/ta

INTRODUCING OUR CAREER-FOCUSED COURSE FRAMEWORK

SPCS is ramping up its online offerings to better, more immediately meet the needs of Richmond's professionals. We know many in Richmond are facing uncertain employment futures, so we're developing a career-focused framework to help you explore options, build skills, and develop professional competencies to support your employment needs.

When you visit the Think Again page at spcs.richmond.edu/ta, you'll see a new invitation to visit our **Areas of Study pages**. Within our Areas of Study, we've developed a career-focused framework for browsing our course offerings and programs.

Career-Curious & Enrichment Programs are designed for exploring careers and expanding interests. Here you can find classes to help you better understand a career and explore a career path, or to enrich your existing knowledge and abilities.

Career-Level Programs are designed to build professional skills toward career advancement or career switching. Here you can find classes to help you build entry-level skills or retool existing skills for a new career path.

Professional-Level Programs are designed to provide advanced learning and development for industry professionals. Here you can find programs that advance industry knowledge and build professional skills. And mid-career and senior professionals looking for advancement can see opportunities in the Professional-Level category.

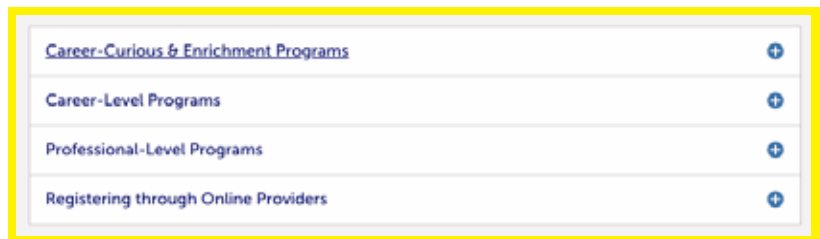
We'll use this career-focused framework to build out coursework within these topic-based **Areas of Study**. While you'll still be able to register for classes using the existing Think Again online registration system, you'll also be able to register for a wide range of classes through our online partner registration portals.

VISIT THINK AGAIN ONLINE
spcs.richmond.edu/ta

Our career-focused framework in action: Management & Administration

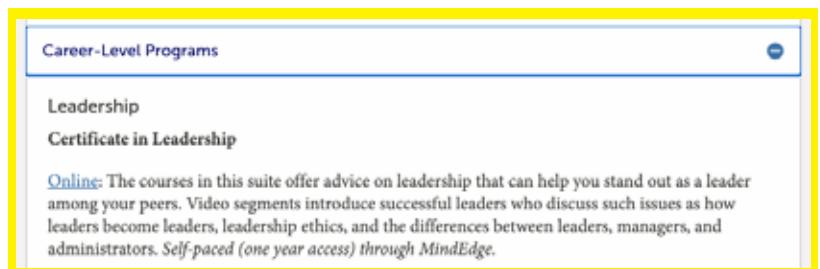
To demonstrate our new career-focused framework for organizing courses and programs, take a look at our **Management & Administration** Area of Study.

At the bottom of this page, you'll see **Programming Levels** described, followed by collapsed tabs that you can click to open. The first three tabs reflect the career-focused framework, while the fourth tab provides some feedback on how to register or apply.



Sample career-focused framework tabs

When you open each tab, you'll see a list of classes within the Area of Study. For example, in the Career-Level Programs programming level in the Management & Administration Area of Study, you'll see the **Certificate in Leadership** under the subcategory of *Leadership* with the format *(Online)* linked to the registration page, a course description and additional information about the program.



Sample career-level program tab opened with course details.

You can see this certificate is offered online, self-paced through *MindEdge*. You can follow the linked text to register with *MindEdge*. Not sure about what *MindEdge* means? Open the **Registering through Online Providers** tab to learn more, or simply follow the linked text to learn more and register.

Each of our **Area of Study** pages follows this same career-focused framework for consistency and clarity. As always, if you have questions, contact us at spcs@richmond.edu.

VISIT OUR AREA OF STUDY PAGES
spcs.richmond.edu/noncredit/areas

HELPING PEOPLE PURSUE THEIR PASSIONS in nonprofit organizations

When Danée Hudson first started working at Elk Hill Farm in Goochland, Virginia, she had no experience in the world of philanthropy. She came from the for-profit world and had never written a grant, a necessary skill for any nonprofit worker.

In order to succeed in her position as Development Manager, Hudson decided to attend the Institute on Philanthropy (IOP) Grant Writing Institute. During this program, Hudson learned how to determine the best funding possibilities and strategies, to research opportunities, to write and package successful grant proposals, and to manage grants after an award or decline.

“I couldn’t be where I am today without taking that class,” Hudson said, “especially since I had never written before.”

In IOP’s Grant Writing Institute, learners like Hudson gain the opportunity to learn from and alongside professionals in the field. The program provides participants with the circumstances to expand both their skills and confidence.

“The Institute definitely provided me with the confidence to do my job well,” Hudson explained, “and it also was a good community of people, of professionals that wanted to advance their career or, you know, do better work for their organization.”

Through this program, Hudson gained valuable skills that enabled her to better serve Elk Hill’s mission: to help children with behavioral, emotional and developmental challenges overcome them. She was able to give back to a community she loved, at the same time furthering her own educational and professional development.

“Taking these classes at the University of Richmond, I know, will serve me really well in the future,” Hudson said.



Visit the Institute on Philanthropy
spcs.richmond.edu/iop

Watch Danée Hudson’s video
bit.ly/hudson-iop

Learn more about Elk Hill Farm
elkhill.org



Institute on Philanthropy

At **SPCS**, we’ve ramped up our online professional education offerings in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Our offerings are a mix of custom online courses and programs combined with those offered with partners. We align with partners like *LERN*, *MindEdge* and *Ed2Go* because of their outstanding reputations and longevity within the online learning community. As a result, our online partner programs are vetted nationally and feature some of the top online instructors from across the nation and combine value, rigor, instructor expertise, flexibility and convenience.

NON-TRADITIONAL CREDENTIALS

give professionals an advantage in uncertain times

College is expensive. That is a well-known fact. But there is a burgeoning sector of higher education gaining traction in the working world, and that is the world of professional certificates and micro-credentials, which includes badges.

Both of these approaches essentially function as bite-sized chunks of education that give students and professionals the opportunity to broaden their skillsets without taking on the potential debt burden of a traditional higher education route. These non-traditional credentials give students competencies.

A competency is “a learnable, measurable [and/or observable], role-relevant, and behavior-based characteristic or capability of an individual,” according to the American Council on Education (ACE). Employers look for and test candidates for competencies during the hiring process. These competencies can include leadership, critical evaluation and thinking, communication, teamwork, and problem solving.

Although employers largely draw upon interviews to assess competencies, survey results from a recent ACE study reveal that the following items also factor into hiring decisions: a list of job-related competencies, a portfolio of a student’s work, specific certifications earned by the student, a list of certificates or badges that a student earned and jobs the student held while in college. Clerkships and internships associated with a course and group projects can also help employers determine how well a student can apply competencies in the workplace.

The professional certificate programs and micro-credentials offered by SPCS hit all the targets. Learners are able to gain micro-credentials and certificates and, through the programs, often build portfolios, participate in group projects and demonstrate competencies in a wide range of fields. SPCS is helping professionals upskill and reskill, making SPCS-educated employees more valuable assets to employers in a time of great uncertainty.

Learn more about the American Council on Education
[acenet.edu](https://www.acenet.edu)

Visit our Professional Education programs
spcs.richmond.edu/noncredit/programs

ONLINE LEARNING

is a great option for busy professionals

If you ask most students why they choose to learn online, the most common response you’ll get is, “It’s just more convenient.”

But the benefits of online learning go beyond mere convenience. In fact, you may find the online environment is more conducive to your individual learning style. If you are a motivated self-starter who enjoys using technology and online interaction tools, you may find that online learning is the right fit for you. Plus online learning, especially online professional development, offers numerous other benefits.

Expand your skillset. Our variety of online learning partners make it easy for individuals to upgrade their knowledge of a particular topic or add a new skillset. E-learning, digital marketing, software applications, writing and communication, and customer service are a few examples.

Earn a credential. Many online providers also offer coursework that results in a certificate or professional credential. CFP, eMarketing Essentials Certificate and the Certificate in Online Teaching are some of these we offer.

Broaden your perspective and your professional network. You can learn from instructors across the country, and in some cases, around the world. Plus you’ll be enrolled with classmates from a wide range of backgrounds and locations, giving you the opportunity to get to know and network with them as well.

Proceed at your own pace with added flexibility. Because much online learning is done in an “asynchronous” manner, students proceed at a pace that best meets their personal needs and schedules. Plus you can access online learning opportunities anytime, any place you have access to the Internet, from the comfort of your own home or office.

Get excited about learning. The interactivity and multimedia delivery of online professional development can make learning more engaging and fun. Most online learning technologies integrate online quizzes and other tools to more rapidly evaluate the pace of learning. Instructors in turn have the ability to share feedback quicker and more frequently.

BREWING CERTIFICATE helps local cidery expand

Jerry Thornton, owner of Bryant's Small Batch Cider and 2017 graduate of the SPCS Beer Brewer Professional Certificate program, began work on his new cidery and tasting room in Shockoe Bottom at the beginning of January 2020. After nonstop work for about two months, the location was ready to open with just a permit and a few hours of work left to go.

Then the coronavirus hit, the governor shut down the Commonwealth, and the beautiful new location was shuttered from the public eye.

Despite the shutdown, business has continued through curbside pickup and home delivery, and sales have been strong, marking just how far Thornton has come in a short time.

When Thornton first started the company in 2017, he had thought getting it up and running would be a five- or six-year goal. "I had absolutely no idea what the hell I was doing other than: I want to do this; I'm going to do this," Thornton reflected.

In conjunction with starting the company, Thornton earned the SPCS Beer Brewer Professional Certificate in fall of 2017. Though the curriculum doesn't focus on cider making, the program gave Thornton industry fundamentals and a brewing background, which helped him come at the market with interesting ideas and concepts.

"Applying a lot of that knowledge and technology and information to cider helps you put a very different spin on what you're making and how you present it to the market," Thornton said.

Thornton gave the program high praise, describing how much he learned about the fundamentals, the background, the ingredients and the chemistry of beer brewing. It provides considerable value for the cost of attendance, Thornton explained.



"It was honestly dirt cheap for what it was, which was kind of a steal," Thornton said. "I mean, it was a huge piece in helping us get up and running."

Learn more about the Beer Brewer Professional Certificate
spcs.richmond.edu/brewer

Visit Bryant's Small Batch Cider
bryantscider.com

Read more of Jerry Thornton's story
bit.ly/thornton-cider



ALLIE FIREBAUGH: Teacher who became a student and learned to code

Allie Firebaugh was a successful teacher. After graduating from Emory & Henry College with a triple major in physics, math and French, inspiring young minds became her livelihood. But this career path wasn't quite her perfect fit. Soon, Firebaugh realized she was in need of change—a job that would push her to apply her problem-solving skills in a more analytical capacity. A dream job.

The original version of this article appeared in the Trilogy Education Services T60 blog trilogyed.com/blog

Learn more about UR Coding Boot Camp spcs.richmond.edu/codingbootcamp

So, Firebaugh quit teaching, spoke with a career counselor and signed up for the University of Richmond 24-week Coding Boot Camp, powered by Trilogy Education. During this program, Firebaugh learned a multitude of coding languages and programming skills and built websites, bolstering her portfolio.



"It was rewarding to create a website that a lot of people would potentially need," Firebaugh said. "Even through group work I learned how to be more independent when putting together an application, which I think is a critical skill to make yourself stand out to potential employers."

The pivotal moment of boot camp for Firebaugh was presenting her final project to prospective employers on demo night. "We were able to discuss our projects with professionals who've been in the tech industry for years," Firebaugh said. "It was extremely beneficial for us."

Although it was fast-paced and required full dedication, the program served as a powerful stepping stone in Firebaugh's professional life. A month after completing the boot camp, and with the help of the boot camp's career services, Firebaugh secured a job as an automated data collection specialist at CoStar Group, a company that provides data on commercial real estate.

This job has turned out to be Firebaugh's perfect fit: it continually puts her analytical problem-solving skills to use, and it's a position she can envision herself growing into for the long-term.

Special Programs Building
490 Westhampton Way
University of Richmond, VA 23173

IOP PROGRAMS give Lisa Cheney, C'17, a professional edge

After about four hours of sleep, Lisa Cheney crawled from her bed at 4:30 one recent morning to prepare for a board meeting. The night before she was up past midnight taking a final exam following an eight-hour work day.

This was one of those moments Cheney questioned her decision to return to school, thinking, "I don't need to do this."

Cheney has been a student at SPCS since 2007, when she earned her Professional Certificate in Fundraising through the Institute on Philanthropy. After her positive experience with IOP, Cheney decided to take her education to the next step by completing her bachelor's degree at SPCS. And now, she's working on her Master of Nonprofit Studies at SPCS.

Despite challenging mornings, Cheney appreciates the opportunities she's experienced while at SPCS. Her first certificate through IOP was a résumé-builder that gave her an advantage in her fundraising job. Later, while working at Bon Secours Richmond Healthcare Foundation, Cheney was able to transition to Director of Operations & Advancement Services because she was earning her bachelor's degree. And she's since become Director of Donor Relations at the Sheltering Arms Foundation.

Because SPCS students make professional connections with fellow students and professors, Cheney's education has bridged her professional and academic experience, learning from teachers who are able to base their curricula on professional experience.

Having a degree has become essential to career growth in today's world, and SPCS offers programs that improve workers' skill sets with every class, Cheney explained.



"It's never going to be a good time to go back to school, but I think that SPCS programs make it flexible and adapt to peoples' schedules," Cheney said.

"Not that it's easy. It's not easy. I will not say that," she continued. "But if you take it all in stride and one step at a time, I think people will meet their goal."

Learn more about the Institute on
Philanthropy
spcs.richmond.edu/iop

Read more of Lisa Cheney's story
bit.ly/cheney-iop