Supercharge your LinkedIn profile

Why gratitude matters

Sharpen your career skills

Hard lessons learned

Chris Haney, MIS '07
Director of IT Support Services, HDR Inc.
Omaha, Nebraska
Your career isn’t going to plan itself.

Wish you had a career resource that could help you navigate each and every step of your journey? As an alum of University of Phoenix, you do.

The Phoenix Career Guidance System™ features innovative tools and time-tested tips to help you with every step along the way — from setting goals to prepping for interviews to growing in your current position. Think of it as a customized GPS for your career.

Ready to give your dreams a plan? Visit careers.phoenix.edu/alumni to get started.
Dear Alumni,

Recent negative press stories gave voice to critics who questioned the quality of the education you received at University of Phoenix. I know your degree has value and you demonstrate that every day.

After 16 years at the University of Michigan, I came to University of Phoenix as President last year to lead an institution that is uniquely positioned to help more working adults attain college degrees, rebuild and restore the American middle class, and change the lives of students, their families and future generations through higher education.

As I met University of Phoenix students, I quickly learned that not only were 76% of you working while earning your degrees, but you were raising families (67% of you have dependents at home). You are a diverse student body (45% underrepresented minorities, 19% military students, and 66% female), and you are true pioneers (60% first-generation college students), changing the trajectory of your families forever.

I know from conversations with many of you that much of your success is due to sheer determination, perseverance and hard work. You also told me of other reasons, including the University’s passionate practitioner faculty who work in the same industries in which you aspire to grow your careers, your dedicated advisors, 24/7 technical support teams, digital library and curriculum based on how adults learn.

New government data indicate that progress is being made by University of Phoenix and its graduates. The White House College Scorecard shows that among public and private universities with more than 15,000 students, University of Phoenix alumni median earnings are well above the national average (within the top 25 schools), and that the University’s tuition and fees are below the national average among private universities with more than 15,000 students. The University’s official three-year federal student loan cohort default rate is 13.5%, slightly above the national average of 11.8%.

My vision for University of Phoenix is to be recognized as the most trusted provider of career-relevant higher education for working adults. Dr. John Sperling, our founder, realized nearly 40 years ago that working adults needed a university tailored to their needs. He helped bring early innovations later adopted by traditional higher education, like hybrid learning and the ability to earn a degree online, because of the unprecedented access and opportunity they offered working adults. I am committed to carrying on that legacy.

The University’s recent graduation rates (41% for bachelor’s and 54% for master’s) are lower than some traditional universities. I know it is much harder to earn a degree while working and raising a family. I am proud of you, our alumni, and we at the University are committed to doing an even better job ensuring more of our current students join your ranks. I’m willing to work with all of you—along with our faculty and U.S. employers—to innovate and further enhance our focus on academic quality and career relevance to ensure that University of Phoenix continues to provide access to career-relevant, affordable higher education for working adults.

Thank you for serving as a living testament to the value of accessible higher education for diverse working adults, and what this can do to change the lives of families and future generations in this country.

Sincerely,

Timothy P. Slottow
President
University of Phoenix

Email: president@phoenix.edu
Twitter: @TimSlottow
LinkedIn: linkedin.com/pub/timothy-p-slottow/b8/852/293
Scientifically, being thankful has been linked to better mental and physical health. Read what researchers have discovered about the positive power of giving thanks.

By Keridwen Cornelius

A few years ago, Carla White got a call that changed her life: Her father had died suddenly of a heart attack. She’d already lost her dream job in the dot-com bust, and her startup business was tanking. She lost sleep, gained weight, dulled her depression with tequila and chocolate, and contemplated suicide. It seemed she had nothing to be thankful for. So she started a gratitude journal.

“What surprised me was how quickly my life changed in just two months,” she said at the recent AltConf event for tech developers. She became happier and healthier, received job offers and launched the wildly successful Gratitude Journal App to spread the gift of gratefulness.

“It almost seems too easy—and too cheesy. At first blush, gratitude has the emotional flavor of rice pudding: sweet and mushy. But speak to psychologists, and you’ll find a plenitude of evidence supporting gratitude’s power to propel positive change in the mind, body and relationships.

The science of gratitude

“I like to think of gratitude as fertilizer for the mind, spreading connections and improving its function in nearly every realm of experience,” says Robert Emmons, Ph.D., professor of psychology at University of California, Davis, and author of Gratitude Works!

Numerous studies have shown gratitude magnifies joy, social connectedness and self-efficacy. Emmons says study participants who keep gratitude journals report feeling more alive, alert and energetic.

Gratitude is also linked to physical benefits, such as stronger immune systems, lower blood pressure and reduced fatigue. Gratefulness correlates with lower levels of inflammatory biomarkers related to cardiac problems, according to a 2015 study from University of California, San Diego. “A more grateful heart is indeed a more healthy heart, and... gratitude journaling is an easy way to support cardiac health,” states lead researcher Paul J. Mills, Ph.D.

In addition, thankfulness boosts our “psychological immune system,” making us more resilient to stress. “Gratitude short-circuits the stress response,” Emmons says. “People who employ grateful thinking bounce back faster following a stressful event because finding blessings in misfortune is incompatible with fear and anxiety.”
“Ask your brain to do algebra every day, and it gets better at algebra. Ask your brain to give thanks, and it will get better at finding things to be grateful for.”

Robert Emmons, Ph.D., author of Gratitude Works!

Gratitude also works retroactively to reframe our past. In research published in the Journal of Positive Psychology, participants were asked to recall a negative memory that still troubled them. One group was told to write about how they might feel grateful for the experience. That group reported fewer intrusive emotions, such as guilt or resentment, plus a greater sense of closure.

The practice of gratitude

In her poem “Three Gratitudes,” singer-songwriter Carrie Newcomer writes, “Every night before I go to sleep/I say out loud/Three things that I’m grateful for/All the significant, insignificant/Extraordinary, ordinary stuff of my life./It’s a small practice and humble/And yet, I find I sleep better/Holding what lightens and softens my life/Ever so briefly at the end of the day.”

Whether it’s speaking aloud, keeping a journal or writing in an app, gratitude only gains power when it’s translated from fleeting thoughts into concrete language.

If you’re going through a difficult time, cultivating gratitude does not mean ignoring your suffering, Emmons says. It means intentionally focusing on other things you’re grateful for, and finding redeeming qualities in the struggle.

For example, after a breakup, your knee-jerk reaction might be to lament the lack of love in your life. Choosing gratefulness might mean being thankful for the love you do share with friends and family, and reframing the split as a difficult experience that’s made you stronger and better able to identify compatible partners.

A new habit such as gratitude must be practiced for 45 days until the brain rewires itself into the new normal, says Loretta Graziano Breuning, Ph.D., author of Meet Your Happy Chemicals. Just as exercise builds muscle, practicing gratitude builds gray-matter density in brain regions associated with gratefulness, so your thoughts more naturally flow toward gratitude.

“Ask your brain to do algebra every day, and it gets better at algebra,” Emmons says. “Ask your brain to give thanks, and it will get better at finding things to be grateful for.”

Remember to express your gratitude to others, verbally or in writing. Psychologist Martin Seligman, Ph.D., studied various gratitude practices and discovered the method that most enhanced happiness was visiting people and reading them a letter thanking them for their kindness.

“Gratitude for everyday interpersonal gestures can be a powerful mechanism for relationship growth,” according to lead researcher Sara Algoe, Ph.D.

Thankfulness motivates

Despite the scientific evidence, the concept of gratitude can make improvement-oriented people bristle. They may think that if they focus on reasons to be content, they’re resigning themselves to an uninspiring situation. But surprisingly, gratitude does not cause complacency.

Emmons and his colleagues asked study participants to identify six personal goals, and then told some of them to keep a gratitude journal. After 10 weeks, those who practiced gratitude by writing in their journals made 20 percent more progress toward their goals than those who didn’t keep a journal.

Grateful people practice more pro-social behaviors, such as generosity, compassion, charitable giving and drawing on others’ support to make positive changes, according to research published in the psychology journal Motivation and Emotion.

“Gratitude is incompatible with inactivity, passivity and hopelessness,” Emmons says. “Gratitude motivates, inspires and energizes.”
Discover how stress can actually be a good thing.

Stress 101
So what is stress, really? According to the American Institute of Stress, the term “stress” was coined by Hans Selye, who is considered the father of stress research. He defined it as “the non-specific response of the body to any demand for change.”

“Stress is a survival mechanism,” explains Renee Jain, an anxiety relief expert and life coach.

It’s an automatic reaction dating back to our prehistoric ancestors that warned of physical threats, such as being eaten alive. It’s called the fight-or-flight response. When faced with danger, a physiological reaction occurs: Our bodies produce hormones, resulting in increased heart rate, blood pressure and breathing rate. And, although we no longer face the predators our ancient relatives did, stress is still a part of our lives.

Recent science shows that stress can actually be a positive force. Studies have proven we can reduce many of stress’s associated health hazards simply by understanding that it isn’t always a bad thing.

Stress can be broken into two categories: distress and eustress. Distress is the bad stress that can negatively affect our thoughts, motivations and even our physical well-being. Eustress, on the other hand, is good stress. It helps motivate us and can improve our performance. Consider how stress can empower you to tackle a big project at work or excel in a baseball game or marathon.
“Stress is what arises when something you care about is at stake.”

Kelly McGonigal, Ph.D.
Stanford University Health Psychologist

“We need to adopt a more balanced view of stress,” says Jain. She likes the definition used by Kelly McGonigal, Ph.D., a Stanford University health psychologist and lecturer who wrote *The Upside of Stress*. McGonigal states, “Stress is what arises when something you care about is at stake.”

**When stress is helpful**

“When we are stressed, it helps us to focus,” says Eric Karpinski, who co-created a program called ReThink Stress with top positive psychology researchers Shawn Achor and Alia Crum. “It can help us achieve goals. It can help us move ahead,” says Karpinski.

Their research study shows that stress can boost productivity. Achor and Crum took employees from an investment bank and split them into three groups. The first group watched a video explaining that stress can be positive. The second group watched a video explaining that stress can be damaging. The third group wasn’t shown a video.

Karpinski explains that the first group showed a significant increase in productivity and a decrease in stress-related physical symptoms.

Researchers at University of California, Berkeley, examined how short-lived stress can improve the brain’s performance. They discovered that lab rats’ brain stem cells grow into new nerve cells when the rats are put into a stressful situation, improving their mental function.

A 2012 Stanford University School of Medicine study found that stress may even strengthen our immune systems.

So how can we best manage stress?

**Think positive and acknowledge it**

Achor and Crum’s research isn’t the only study showing a person can lessen stress’s negative effects by simply acknowledging it’s not always bad.

Karpinski points to research conducted by Harvard scientists. One group of participants was told beforehand that stress isn’t all bad. The other group was told nothing. The participants in the first group had a healthier cardiovascular response.

Another study published in 2012, which examined 30,000 people over eight years, found that stress only negatively affects the health of those who believe it’s harmful.

Adopting the right mindset about stress is paramount, Jain says. “This is the key to using stress to your advantage.”

“We spend so much energy trying to avoid stress or trying to pretend it is not there,” Karpinski says. “We can choose how we respond instead of being on autopilot. That’s one of the most powerful things we can do.”

Jain suggests taking a minute to “say hello” to your stressful thoughts, keeping in mind it’s OK to be uncomfortable. “The goal is not to eliminate stress,” she says. “It’s a survival mechanism. Why would we want to get rid of it?”

**Take a breather**

Despite its positives, too much stress can still be a bad thing. “They didn’t make this stuff up that stress can be negative,” Karpinski says.

Stress is in negative territory when it becomes disruptive or chronic, Jain says.

What should you do when you start to feel overwhelmed? There’s no one-size-fits-all magic pill to de-stress, Jain explains, but she suggests deep breathing and mindfulness tactics.

This approach is not only effective, she says, “It’s fast, it’s free and it’s accessible at any time.”
Supercharge your LinkedIn profile in 5 simple steps

By Julie Wilson

Just 12 years ago, it would have been unimaginable to access 380 million professionals from more than 200 countries with the click of a mouse. Today, that far-fetched vision is a reality for registered users of the LinkedIn® professional networking site.

But is simply having a LinkedIn profile enough? (Take our LinkedIn quiz on page 18 to find out.) Once you have one, it’s up to you to tap its career-boosting potential by taking advantage of opportunities to make your profile stand out among a sea of like-named individuals. Here are five ways to do just that:

1. **Hook them with your headline**

   When you set up your LinkedIn profile, your headline defaults to your job title. That means generic titles like “coordinator” or “director” won’t cut it. You need to edit your title so it entices those searching for you to stick around and read more.

   Dan Sherman, author of *Maximum Success with LinkedIn*, has a formula for writing a winning title: “You want the benefit, and then you want credibility,” he insists. For instance, “Sales executive who closed over a million dollars in sales in first three years” paints a picture of a candidate’s abilities and track record more than the bland title, “Sales representative,” says Sherman.

2. **Be a hero**

   Did you know you can customize the banner across the top of your LinkedIn profile with a graphic? Sherman found a freelancer online to create a made-to-order banner. The result? An attention-grabbing graphic that reinforces his personal brand while taking advantage of a valuable marketing opportunity for a very reasonable price.

   “If you’re not using that real estate, it’s a waste,” he says.

   You can find for-hire graphic designers on sites such as Upwork or Fiverr who will create a customized banner to support your career goals for minimal cash. “At the very least, upload an image of something that speaks to who you are and is in alignment with what people looking at your profile are interested in,” adds Viveka von Rosen, CEO of Linked Into Business and author of *LinkedIn Marketing: An Hour a Day.*

And watch your career take off.
Tell your story with multimedia
LinkedIn has come a long way since its official debut in 2003. Today, you don’t have to tell your story to prospective employers with only words and white space. Now you can upload videos, slideshows of your professional portfolio and PDFs of articles to help your page visitors get a clear picture of what you offer.

“Absolutely take advantage of multimedia opportunities,” advises Sherman, “especially in your summary, where you can attach all kinds of cool stuff.”

Offer proof of your abilities
Whether they’re looking to buy a new car or book a hotel room, people today want to hear what others think before they make a commitment. It’s called social proof, and it’s no different in the professional world where hiring managers look to LinkedIn to vet potential job candidates.

That’s why it’s important to collect recommendations and endorsements from others in your network. “You can’t manage who is going to endorse you,” cautions Sherman. But you can manage what they endorse. It’s important to edit your skill set so your contacts are endorsing you for the expertise that matters most in your industry or field.

Although sometimes you may find you’re endorsed by people you’ve never worked with, recruiters and hiring managers look for these commendations as a matter of course. “It’s still a numbers game, and people pay attention to that,” notes Sherman.

Republish your content on LinkedIn
No, this isn’t the same thing as posting a link to an existing blog post or white paper. LinkedIn allows you to post long-form content that may not fit on your regular profile page. The benefits are clear: Your content is searchable both within LinkedIn and on the Internet. Publishing enables others to follow you on LinkedIn, and your content gets archived on your profile page. It also helps position you as a thought leader in your focus area.

Von Rosen explains it takes about 15 minutes to replicate your content on LinkedIn, and you’ll likely reap the benefits of this effort in spades. “You have the opportunity for your content to be seen, shared, linked and amplified way beyond your network connections,” she says. “It absolutely makes sense to replicate it.”

Is your basic LinkedIn account cutting it?
Maybe yes, maybe no. According to Dan Sherman, LinkedIn expert and author of Maximum Success with LinkedIn, sometimes a premium LinkedIn membership pays for itself—but not always.

The right time to make the investment? “It’s very important for job seekers,” he says, likening the expenditure to buying a new interview suit or hiring a resume writer. Depending on which premium plan you select from the four available, the added features allow you to reach out to cold contacts via InMail®, see who’s viewed your profile and conduct more robust searches, among other things.

The good news? “You can subscribe on a monthly basis and then turn it off when you get a job,” Sherman says.

Join forces: knowledge + experience = power
Graduates, you have the power to inspire and motivate students. Your experiences and knowledge matter.

Apply to be a mentor:
bit.ly/uopxmentor

The Alumni Mentor Program
What’s your LinkedIn profile appeal?

Take this quiz to find out.

By Jenny Jedeikin

If you’re like millions of other working professionals, chances are you’ve already joined the ultimate professional networking website, LinkedIn®.

Maybe you’ve created a detailed profile and linked to more than a few dozen of your colleagues—and even gotten a few glowing recommendations. But with 380 million members worldwide and two new users joining LinkedIn every second, it’s critical to do everything you can to ensure your profile stands out from the crowd and winds up in front of the right people: potential employers and recruiters.

Take our quiz to find out how your profile rates in terms of LinkedIn appeal:

1 | My LinkedIn profile is written from the perspective of:
   A. Third person, similar to a standard resume.
   B. My mother; she wrote it.
   C. A series of bulleted lists without complete sentences.
   D. First person. I use “I” throughout.

2 | My profile picture on LinkedIn:
   A. Is the default gray avatar. I just don’t have any decent photos, so I’d rather have nothing.
   B. Is warm, friendly and sharp; it’s professional-looking.
   C. Is a picture of my new puppy. He’s super adorable and will definitely attract attention.
   D. Looks a lot more serious than I really am.

3 | The summary at the top of my profile:
   A. Includes a list of my overall job-seeking career objectives.
   B. Provides a brief snapshot of my work history, written in the first person.
   C. There’s a summary section? I must have missed that.
   D. Is a couple of sentences. I didn’t want to provide too much information at the top.

4 | My recommendations on LinkedIn are:
   A. Mostly from three friends I begged.
   B. I don’t have recommendations yet. Is that important?
   C. From a range of colleagues, including past supervisors to current co-workers that I have carefully cultivated.
   D. I have a ton, but they’re all more than four years old.

5 | Which of the following is true about profiles?
   A. I can create a customized URL for my profile that includes my name.
   B. Adding skills will get my profile viewed more often.
   C. I can reorder the skills at the bottom of my profile to move important ones to the top.
   D. All of the above.

6 | When it comes to listing past jobs on my profile, I:
   A. Listed everything I’ve done. You never know when someone might be interested in those skills I picked up in my early positions.
   B. Only included positions I think are relevant to the work I want to do in the future.
   C. List most jobs, but I don’t include any detail on jobs that were more than 10 years ago.
   D. Included only the jobs I stuck with longest. Otherwise, it makes me look like I’ve switched jobs too often.

7 | To make my LinkedIn profile more appealing, I:
   A. Use a lot of buzzwords and industry jargon in my profile.
   B. Only connect with people in my industry.
   C. Picked a background banner photo that’s relevant to my industry.
   D. A and B

8 | To make my profile appear in more searches, I:
   A. Added relevant industry keywords to my title and summary section.
   B. Wrote a provocative headline for my profile that has nothing to do with my profession.
   C. Make a point of connecting on LinkedIn with respected professionals I meet.
   D. A and C
Get a leg up on your winter wish list with Marketplace

**Start your search at Marketplace first.**

- More than 300 retailers offer continual cash back and discounts
- Accumulate cash back indefinitely
- Earn $20 or more in cash back and apply it to purchases through PayPal® or get a check sent to you

**Check out alumni offers from these and other top retailers:**

![University Marketplace](uopxalumnimarketplace.com)
A major turnaround in alumnus Chris Haney’s life led him to realize the value of a strong support system and hard work.

At one point in his life, Chris Haney was broke, homeless and living on the streets. Today, he’s the director of IT support services for a $2 billion global architectural, engineering and consulting firm. The story of how he emerged from the darkness isn’t easy to explain—even for the fellow who lived it.
“I’ve had this amazing life and sometimes I can’t believe I’ve gotten where I am,” says the 44-year-old Omaha, Nebraska, resident. “I think a lot of it comes down to my wife. Meeting her was the major turning point.”

Inauspicious beginning

Haney spent most of his early years living with his single mother in Winslow, Maine. She remarried when he was 9, and Haney had a father figure for the first time. But when Haney was a freshman in high school, his mother died, and his relationship with his stepfather collapsed.

At the age of 16, Haney was tossed out of the house. For the remainder of his high school years, he lived with friends and relatives. He graduated in 1989 and was offered an opportunity to play baseball at a community college. He turned it down.

“I was living on my own, drinking, partying and making a lot of bad decisions,” Haney says.

Needing a change of scenery and eager to leave Maine, he joined the Army in 1990 and was stationed at Schofield Barracks in Hawaii. But a year later, after a brutal fight with another soldier and a positive marijuana test, Haney was given a general discharge. He had nowhere to go and had reached rock bottom.

“After leaving the Army, I stayed in Hawaii. I was working 60-70 hours a week doing security during the day and bartending at night,” says Haney. “But I was angry at the world and wound up living on the street. I needed to get back home.”

A turning point

He emptied his bank account of $360 to return to Maine. But the money only got him as far as Omaha, where he moved in with relatives and began working odd jobs.

Haney’s life turned around when he met his wife, Diana, in 1992. They married nine months later.

“She believed in me and encouraged me and has continued to do that over the 22 years we’ve been married.”

His professional fortune turned as well when Haney took college courses that rekindled his interest in computer programming. As a 13-year-old, he had enjoyed sitting down with his old Apple® computer to write code. It was a boyhood hobby based on an innate skill. His first IT job allowed him to utilize his skills. He explains, “I was good at it, and somebody was willing to pay me good money to do it.”

In 1999, Haney began working as a software developer for HDR Inc. After three years, he was promoted to senior systems analyst, and in 2004, the company sent him to Oregon to be the IT manager on a 10-year, $1.3 billion bridge-building project.

Within 18 months, Haney put together a team of 14 IT professionals supporting 250 employees. He loved the challenge. He considers the assignment a professional crossroads and his first real management job.

“Being a program IT manager, my career started making sense to me,” says Haney. “But I realized I couldn’t achieve what I wanted without an advanced degree.”

Real-time learning

With a bachelor’s in information systems from Nebraska’s Bellevue University already in hand, he enrolled at University of Phoenix in 2005 to earn a master’s degree. At the time, he was working 65 hours a week and had three kids under the age of 10.

He worked during the day, came home, ate dinner, put the kids to bed and began homework, which often lasted until the wee hours. After 18 months, he completed his master’s in Information Systems Management, becoming one of only a few members of his family to earn an advanced degree.

Haney found the coursework particularly valuable because it matched perfectly the job he was doing at the time, for which he had limited experience.

“It was really cool because there were days I’d run into something at work that we’d just talked about at school,” he says. “University of Phoenix was almost like a mentor walking me through this learning curve I’d taken on as an IT manager.”

“I hated going to class, so online study was right for me,” he says. “It bohers me when people say that wasn’t as good as a brick-and-mortar school. The program at University of Phoenix was hard, and I worked hard to get my degree,” he says.

Valuable lesson

Haney, who has spent the last five years as HDR’s director of IT support services, hopes to become a chief information officer or vice president of IT, a job that will allow him to partner with business leaders to give his company a competitive advantage.

As for his relationship with his three kids, he hasn’t kept his troubled past a secret. He and Diana believe the lessons their children can learn from Haney’s mistakes are as valuable as those they’ve learned from their father’s career and educational achievements.

“I’m one of the few people in my family to earn a graduate degree, and I’m really proud of that,” he says. “Even though we’ve never told the kids they have to go to college, they know it’s the next step after high school. It’s not a matter of if they go, but when and where.”

For information on this program, including on-time completion rates, the median debt incurred by students who completed the program and other important information, please visit phoenix.edu/programs/gainful-employment.html.

““It was really cool because there were days I’d run into something at work that we’d just talked about at school. University of Phoenix was almost like a mentor walking me through this learning curve I’d taken on as an IT manager.”

Chris Haney, MIS ‘07

Chris Haney, MIS ’07

“She believed in me and encouraged me and has continued to do that over the 22 years we’ve been married.”

His professional fortune turned as well when Haney took college courses that rekindled his interest in computer programming. As a 13-year-old, he had enjoyed sitting down with his old Apple® computer to write code. It was a boyhood hobby based on an innate skill. His first IT job allowed him to utilize his skills. He explains, “I was good at it, and somebody was willing to pay me good money to do it.”

In 1999, Haney began working as a software developer for HDR Inc. After three years, he was promoted to senior systems analyst, and in 2004, the company sent him to Oregon to be the IT manager on a 10-year, $1.3 billion bridge-building project.

Within 18 months, Haney put together a team of 14 IT professionals supporting 250 employees. He loved the challenge. He considers the assignment a professional crossroads and his first real management job.

“Being a program IT manager, my career started making sense to me,” says Haney. “But I realized I couldn’t achieve what I wanted without an advanced degree.”

Real-time learning

With a bachelor’s in information systems from Nebraska’s Bellevue University already in hand, he enrolled at University of Phoenix in 2005 to earn a master’s degree. At the time, he was working 65 hours a week and had three kids under the age of 10.

He worked during the day, came home, ate dinner, put the kids to bed and began homework, which often lasted until the wee hours. After 18 months, he completed his master’s in Information Systems Management, becoming one of only a few members of his family to earn an advanced degree.

Haney found the coursework particularly valuable because it matched perfectly the job he was doing at the time, for which he had limited experience.

“It was really cool because there were days I’d run into something at work that we’d just talked about at school,” he says. “University of Phoenix was almost like a mentor walking me through this learning curve I’d taken on as an IT manager.”

His advice to anyone considering returning to school is to find the institution that’s right for you and don’t listen to suggestions that online courses are inferior.

“I hated going to class, so online study was right for me,” he says. “It bohers me when people say that wasn’t as good as a brick-and-mortar school. The program at University of Phoenix was hard, and I worked hard to get my degree,” he says.

Valuable lesson

Haney, who has spent the last five years as HDR’s director of IT support services, hopes to become a chief information officer or vice president of IT, a job that will allow him to partner with business leaders to give his company a competitive advantage.

As for his relationship with his three kids, he hasn’t kept his troubled past a secret. He and Diana believe the lessons their children can learn from Haney’s mistakes are as valuable as those they’ve learned from their father’s career and educational achievements.

“I’m one of the few people in my family to earn a graduate degree, and I’m really proud of that,” he says. “Even though we’ve never told the kids they have to go to college, they know it’s the next step after high school. It’s not a matter of if they go, but when and where.”

For information on this program, including on-time completion rates, the median debt incurred by students who completed the program and other important information, please visit phoenix.edu/programs/gainful-employment.html.

“It was really cool because there were days I’d run into something at work that we’d just talked about at school. University of Phoenix was almost like a mentor walking me through this learning curve I’d taken on as an IT manager.”

Chris Haney, MIS ’07

“She believed in me and encouraged me and has continued to do that over the 22 years we’ve been married.”

His professional fortune turned as well when Haney took college courses that rekindled his interest in computer programming. As a 13-year-old, he had enjoyed sitting down with his old Apple® computer to write code. It was a boyhood hobby based on an innate skill. His first IT job allowed him to utilize his skills. He explains, “I was good at it, and somebody was willing to pay me good money to do it.”

In 1999, Haney began working as a software developer for HDR Inc. After three years, he was promoted to senior systems analyst, and in 2004, the company sent him to Oregon to be the IT manager on a 10-year, $1.3 billion bridge-building project.

Within 18 months, Haney put together a team of 14 IT professionals supporting 250 employees. He loved the challenge. He considers the assignment a professional crossroads and his first real management job.

“Being a program IT manager, my career started making sense to me,” says Haney. “But I realized I couldn’t achieve what I wanted without an advanced degree.”

Real-time learning

With a bachelor’s in information systems from Nebraska’s Bellevue University already in hand, he enrolled at University of Phoenix in 2005 to earn a master’s degree. At the time, he was working 65 hours a week and had three kids under the age of 10.

He worked during the day, came home, ate dinner, put the kids to bed and began homework, which often lasted until the wee hours. After 18 months, he completed his master’s in Information Systems Management, becoming one of only a few members of his family to earn an advanced degree.

Haney found the coursework particularly valuable because it matched perfectly the job he was doing at the time, for which he had limited experience.

“It was really cool because there were days I’d run into something at work that we’d just talked about at school,” he says. “University of Phoenix was almost like a mentor walking me through this learning curve I’d taken on as an IT manager.”

His advice to anyone considering returning to school is to find the institution that’s right for you and don’t listen to suggestions that online courses are inferior.

“I hated going to class, so online study was right for me,” he says. “It bohers me when people say that wasn’t as good as a brick-and-mortar school. The program at University of Phoenix was hard, and I worked hard to get my degree,” he says.

Valuable lesson

Haney, who has spent the last five years as HDR’s director of IT support services, hopes to become a chief information officer or vice president of IT, a job that will allow him to partner with business leaders to give his company a competitive advantage.

As for his relationship with his three kids, he hasn’t kept his troubled past a secret. He and Diana believe the lessons their children can learn from Haney’s mistakes are as valuable as those they’ve learned from their father’s career and educational achievements.

“I’m one of the few people in my family to earn a graduate degree, and I’m really proud of that,” he says. “Even though we’ve never told the kids they have to go to college, they know it’s the next step after high school. It’s not a matter of if they go, but when and where.”

For information on this program, including on-time completion rates, the median debt incurred by students who completed the program and other important information, please visit phoenix.edu/programs/gainful-employment.html.
Through hard work and an education, this College of Humanities alumnus ignited a new career.

Ramon Jimenez Jr. is well on his way to accomplishing his second successful career. The first ended several years ago when he retired from the Air Force after 20 years of service. In the second, now 13 years along, he’s a civilian working for the Department of Defense as a software application instructor and video teleconference coordinator.

Yet he is nagged by a mistake he made and hopes to convince others not to go down the same road.
“Don’t wait to get your education,” advises Jimenez, who was 54 when he completed his Bachelor of Science in Communication with a concentration in Communication and Technology at University of Phoenix. “I didn’t want my son and grandson to do the same thing. I told them to get educated while they’re young so they can enjoy the fruits later on.”

Youthful enthusiasm
Jimenez grew up a typical, small-town Texas boy. He loved playing sports and being outdoors with friends, riding horses, hunting and fishing near his home in Premont, south of San Antonio.

His mother was a homemaker, and his father was a laborer in the oil fields. Their values were strong. “My mom taught us respect first and said everything else will fall into place after that,” he says.

Neither of his parents completed grade school. When Jimenez graduated from high school, he didn’t think he was cut out for college, and with four siblings, he was sure his parents couldn’t afford it.

He enlisted in the Air Force right after high school, saying, “I wanted see the world and learn a skill that I could use after I retired.”

He did just that in assignments in Greece and Turkey. During his time abroad, Jimenez met as many people as he could and absorbed the history, culture and especially the cuisine of the host countries.

Laughing as he recalls his time in Athens, Jimenez says, “I left the U.S. weighing 125 pounds soaking wet and was 160 pounds when I got home. Food is my favorite sport.”

A new world
Jimenez began his Air Force career as a medical administration specialist. He became an expert at handling patient records at a time when such files were kept on paper. When the computer revolution began in the early 1980s, he was in on the ground floor.

At Carswell Air Force Base in Fort Worth, he headed the base hospital’s computer room. Later, at Kessler Air Force Base in Mississippi, a colleague who’d purchased his first Packard Bell® computer with DOS programming asked Jimenez if he wanted to learn the new technology.

Jimenez jumped at the opportunity, highlighting his adventurous spirit and ambition.

“If somebody else gets a promotion or an award, I’m happy for them,” he says. “But I also say if they can do it, I can too.”

Putting it all together
By the time he retired, Jimenez was a medical systems information manager and a self-described computer geek. Those skills helped ease the transition to his civilian job with the Department of Defense at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas in 2002.

Still, something was missing.
Four years later, he understood what it was when his then-boss hired three young women with master’s degrees in Education to revamp the entire training process. He wanted desperately to be part of the change, but not having a degree held him back.

“I knew I had to get my butt off the bench and do this,” he says.

He drove to the University of Phoenix® San Antonio Campus and met with a representative about getting started. At the time, Jimenez thought of education as being for young people. At 47, he felt self-conscious, even embarrassed.

“Here I was an old guy asking for an education, and the gentleman I met with didn’t pressure me or make me feel uncomfortable at all. He was a total professional and helped me a lot.”

Jimenez earned his associate degree in 2008 and his bachelor’s in 2013. He credits his then-girlfriend, Laura—now his wife—for her strong support.

Learning and teaching
Jimenez says he gets up every morning and thanks God for the energy he has. He still loves teaching Air Force personnel how to use Microsoft® applications and managing video teleconferences between leadership and troops around the world. He also oversees the scheduling for five classrooms and the maintenance of 90 student computers.

In his free time, Jimenez spends time with his grandchildren and stays physically fit by officiating high school football games, usually three times per week in the fall. He plans to raise horses after he retires for the second time, in another seven years.

For now, though, he is enjoying the benefits of his University of Phoenix education.

“Laura and I missed a lot of date nights because I was studying into the wee hours,” Jimenez says. “But it was worth it because I have better opportunities to advance, and my opinion is heard and respected now. I’m contributing to a better training environment.”

For information on this program, including on-time completion rates, the median debt incurred by students who completed the program and other important information, please visit phoenix.edu/programs/gainful-employment.html.
Criminal Investigator Dawn Wilson works to ensure justice.

The evidence tells the story. Crime scene photos, police reports, videos, toxicology results, physical evidence, and testimony from officers and witnesses come together like pieces of a puzzle revealing a picture of the truth behind a crime—and the guilt or innocence of a suspect.
Dawn Wilson, the criminal investigator for Navajo County Public Defender’s Office, is the one who pieces together the critical snippets of evidence for crimes that occur within the borders of this northeastern Arizona jurisdiction. On any given day, she may be examining photos of a victim’s injuries, interviewing witnesses, reviewing DNA reports or mapping out the sequence of events that led to a crime.

On the surface, Wilson seems an unlikely person to wind up working for the defense. A former deputy sheriff and construction investigator, she spent years operating with a prosecution mindset. “To me, it was always ‘guilty until proven innocent,’” she admits. A chance job opportunity in 2010 changed all that when she applied for the position of criminal investigator for the public defender’s office and got the job.

Making the switch from the prosecution to the defense wasn’t easy. In fact, her early days in that role were a bit of a struggle.

“After a week on the job, I went to one of the lawyers and asked, ‘How do you defend these people?’” Wilson recounts. “He said to me, ‘Your job is to get the facts: what people are testifying to and the evidence against the client. Guilt or innocence is the judge’s job, not ours.’” It completely shifted her mindset. “That’s when I realized I could do this,” she says.

The turning point

Wilson says a very high percentage of the defendants she works with actually are guilty, whether through indisputable evidence or confession. But every once in a while, a truly innocent defendant comes across her radar. For Wilson, there was one such case that made her realize she was in the right job.

It was six months after she started at the public defender’s office that the case came across her desk. The accused already had a lengthy rap sheet. The current charges against him included kidnapping and sexual assault. She read the police reports and researched his extensive criminal history. But after interviewing him, Wilson knew her client was innocent. She just needed to prove it.

Determined, Wilson went beyond the police reports, locating previously overlooked witnesses and digging for information that the officers and prosecutors hadn’t pursued. Each witness account and piece of information she uncovered buoyed her client’s claim of innocence while undermining the accuser’s story. The mounting evidence Wilson gathered was so convincing that the prosecution dropped the charges just before the case was to go to trial. Had the defendant been convicted, he would have faced 14-28 years behind bars for crimes he didn’t commit.

“The there are so many innocent people in prison, on death row or serving a lifetime sentence whether due to no DNA evidence or bad testimony,” says Wilson. “They didn’t have someone who cared enough to go in and look at the evidence and check alibis. If I can be that one person to help prove someone’s innocence and keep them out of prison, then that’s what I want to do.”

That one person

Wilson is “that one person” for people charged with crimes in Navajo County. As the sole criminal investigator for the public defender’s office, she works alongside five defense attorneys. At any given time, there may be 350-400 cases on their desks. Of those, Wilson’s own caseload is around 20-30, and often includes thefts and drug offenses, as well as more serious crimes such as murder, child molestation and sexual assault.

Working these kinds of cases every day—especially when accompanied by sometimes graphic, disturbing evidence—isn’t for the squeamish. But criminal justice has been in Wilson’s blood since she was 11 years old when she declared she wanted to be a police officer. And it’s been an underlying theme throughout her career path—as a police dispatcher, deputy sheriff, legal secretary, construction investigator and criminal investigator.

A welcome turn in the career path

Her career trajectory took an interesting jump when she was laid off from her legal secretary job. The Arizona Department of Economic Security determined she was eligible for retraining through a local community college. Wilson chose to enter a paralegal program that was part of the associate in applied science degree at Northland Pioneer College in northeastern Arizona. Unfortunately, that program was cut short abruptly during her studies. The only degree she could get with her credits without starting over was an associate of general studies.

She had caught the education bug and wanted to take it a step further, but with more focus. “Criminal justice has been my career,” Wilson says. “I know it, I’m comfortable with it and I don’t plan on leaving the criminal justice field.” She looked into several colleges before ultimately selecting University of Phoenix. “I found that the advisors were much more personable and helpful than the other colleges,” she says. “I was impressed by that and felt important to them.” After transferring 58 of her 60 credits, Wilson began her undergraduate program and earned a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice/Human Services degree in 2013. And she’s not done. She’s now working on her Master of Science in Administration of Justice and Security/Law Enforcement, which she anticipates receiving in Spring 2016. Wilson has two very compelling reasons for pursuing a master’s. Personally, it enables her to set an example for her teenage son about the value of education and hard work to achieve a goal. Professionally, she would like to teach in the field someday.

“I’m working in a field I’ve always wanted to be in. I love my job,” she says. Having worked both sides of the criminal justice system, she’s gained a unique perspective on her role within it: “I’m not on the side of the prosecution. I’m not on the side of the defense. I’m on the side of the truth.”

For information on this program, including on-time completion rates, the median debt incurred by students who completed the program and other important information, please visit phoenix.edu/programs/gainful-employment.html.
Building on his success

Jake Gibson traded his engineering classes for a career in construction, and never looked back.

By Julie Wilson

As a freshman at Purdue University in Indiana, Jake Gibson sat in his engineering classes, bored to death. He had a decision to make: Pick a new major and stay in school with his parents’ support, or drop out and face the world on his own.

A budding builder

He chose the former. His engineering classes had focused on theory, but Gibson delighted in the hands-on. “Seeing the concepts become the reality—that’s the thrill of it,” he explains of what quickly became his passion. “I switched to construction management.” And he never looked back.

Though his prior experience included tinkering with repairs around the house, he quickly gained new skills fulfilling his field requirements for a school internship at a custom homebuilder. During his last year of college, he switched to the commercial side and found he enjoyed the business-to-business projects even more. “Controlling the flow of the entire project through the design and construction phases is really exciting, and there’s a lot more to it than just one employee,” he says. “The business climate forced him to focus on excelling at customer service. He also made sure to do business with companies and individuals with whom he had mutual respect. “That helped us,” he says.

A plan to expand

Fast forward seven years, and Gibson’s company has grown by focusing on specific customers—not geographic markets. “This has allowed us to develop those relationships and build the company,” he says.

Gibson Commercial Construction now employs 21 people, and its projects cross a range of industries in a number of states east of the Rockies. Clients include private racetracks, health care, agriculture and retail and restaurant establishments.

Building his resume

Over the next 10 years, he worked for a few construction outlets, gaining experience on projects across the country. In 2004, his employer offered to pay for his master’s degree as part of an executive development program. Gibson accepted, enrolling at the University of Phoenix in 2004 to pursue his MBA and graduating in 1997.

His own venture

In 2008, he decided to launch his own construction company, Gibson Commercial Construction. He jokes that when he started his company, “in the 100-year economic cycle, it was the best time not to start a company.”

Despite his entrepreneurial debut coinciding with a major economic downturn, Gibson prevailed. When he began, he had just one employee, himself. With no staff or stand-alone office, he only had to worry about paying his own mortgage.

“A lot of other companies were having to lay off employees and build whatever they could,” he says. “In a way, he explains, the business climate forced him to focus on excelling at customer service. He also made sure to do business with companies and individuals with whom he had mutual respect. “That helped us,” he says.

His best advice

For Gibson, the road to entrepreneurial success was paved with common sense. “There’s no magic answer,” he says plainly. “Make more than you spend, work hard and focus.”

California

Cottonwood

Jennifer Finnegan, BS/ACC ’04, has been named executive director of the Las森 Park Foundation. Finnegan is a native of Portland, Oregon, and grew up in Oakley, California. She and her family recently relocated to Cottonwood, California, from the San Diego area. Finnegan has worked for nonprofit organizations since 2007, including seven years as executive director of the College Area Business District of San Diego. She enjoys hiking, kayaking and camping at Lassen Volcanic National Park and Whiskeytown National Recreational Area.

Los Angeles

Paula Miller, Ed D ’14, received the 2015 SCPHA Antoinette Vancy Physical Fitness Award from the Southern California Public Health Association. She developed the Health Education P:il P:er Curriculum for the Prevention of Obesity program to assist middle school students with physical activity for health and wellness. Through her work, she has motivated students to exercise and make a difference in their lifestyles. The award recognizes the best of past and present leadership concerned with ensuring the healthiest quality of life for Southern Californians.

Maine

Portland

Deborah Wentworth, MBA ’06, has earned the insurance designation of Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter (CPCU), the equivalent of a master’s degree in the insurance industry. She works for Clark Insurance, an employee-owned independent insurance agency, serving as its director of business insurance services in three states: Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

Maryland

Rockville

Marianne Bohr, MAED ’11, a writer, editor and French teacher, published her new book, Gap Your Girl: A Baby Boomer Adventure Across 21 Countries in September. Bohr took a yearlong sabatical from her job as vice president of a book publishing and distribution company to travel across Europe, and the book is the culmination of her journey with her husband. She currently works as a freelance writer and teaches French to middle school students.

New York

New York

Margarita Irizarry, MBA/HRM ’10, has been named national director of EEO and affirmative action for Skanska USA. In her role, Irizarry will lead a team to support proactive national strategies to ensure the company’s EEO and affirmative action requirements are met and align with Skanska’s company goals. She will also serve as a member of Skanska’s National Diversity and Inclusion Council, a group of company leaders who work to facilitate and foster a positive environment for all employees, clients and partners based on mutual respect, trust and communication. She brings more than 20 years of human resources experience to her new position, having previously served as senior manager for Equal Employment Opportunity for Johnson & Johnson.

Tennessee

Nashville

Jeff Syracuse, MBA/TM ’05, was recently elected to serve on the Metro Council, representing the 15th District for the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County. Syracuse is associate director for customer relations at Broadcast Music Inc. and a 16-year veteran of the Nashville music industry. He has served his community for more than 10 years, leading his neighborhood association as well as the Donelson Gateway Project, Friends of Two Rivers Mansion and the Donelson Heritage Chamber of Commerce. Syracuse was also named one of “Nashville’s Forty Under 40” honorees in 2014.

Washington, D.C.

Byron Garrett, MAOM ’02, recently published a children’s book, There’s Greatness on the Inside, to inspire children and parents alike. Garrett is an educator and leadership speaker. He seeks to inspire future generations to pursue greatness.

“My own pathway to greatness was paved by the education I received from the University of Phoenix outstanding faculty. There’s Greatness on the Inside was inspired by my experience as a lifelong learner and a school administrator. All children should receive messages that lift them to aspire to greatness inside and out,” says Garrett.

To learn more about Garrett and his book, visit byrongarrett.com.
**CAREERS 101**

University of Phoenix experts answer your questions.

---

**Tailor your job search**

If the answer to these questions (and others that may be particularly important to you in evaluating jobs) is yes, it is likely to be an appropriate job for which you will want to apply. Some other tips to help you increase the quality of your applications:

- **Apply for jobs for which you are qualified.** You do not have to meet every requirement listed on the posting, but note carefully what is listed as “required” versus “desired.” You should meet at least 75% of the required qualifications to submit a strong application.
- **Craft highly distinct cover letters and resumes for each position you apply for;** it is essential to add in some uniqueness to your self-marketing documents. Employers want to know that you are interested in them and have taken the time to learn about their company. There is no such thing as a “blanket cover letter.” Every document needs to be tailored for the specific job you are applying for. Make sure to add in what it is about the company that resonates with you and how you can help them achieve their mission.
- **Use your network.** When possible, reach out to those that are a good fit for you, and submit tailored application materials to each one.

There are several criteria to use in assessing the degree of fit of each job opening you have identified. Things to consider include the interest and skill match, salary, culture of the organization, company growth, colleagues and commute. Take some time to answer the questions of why and how each position could be a good fit for you: Do you possess the skills the employer is seeking? Does the organization sound like one that complements your work-related values? Will you have a commute that is manageable?

---

**Q:** I am applying to as many jobs as I can each day but not getting a response. Should I be applying for more positions?

**A:** When initiating a job search, it is easy to become overwhelmed by the sheer number of job openings out there. However, as in many aspects of life, more is not necessarily better. When choosing positions to apply to, it is essential to emphasize quality over quantity. Many students and alumni have told us that they have applied to “hundreds of jobs” with no interviews or offers. Just because you apply to hundreds of jobs doesn’t mean you are applying for the jobs that are right for you. Instead of submitting a generic resume and cover letter to 100 different job openings, select only those that are a good fit for you, and submit tailored application materials to each one.

---

**How do you get better at it?**
The good news is you can train yourself to approach challenges creatively, even if it doesn’t come naturally for you. Here’s how:

- **Decide you want to improve in coming up with creative solutions.** “Robert Sternberg says that ‘creativity is a decision,’” notes Reali. So commit to it, which “might include giving yourself permission” to think in a new way.
- **Find a creative process that fits the way you think and work.** “There are different models and methods, but generally the four stages we go through to solve a problem are: clarify, ideate, develop and implement,” says Reali. Find your perfect fit by educating yourself on the topic. The Internet is a great place to check out new ideas or ways to solve problems.
- **Set yourself up for success.** This means beginning the process by restating your problem in a way that invites creative thinking. “I recommend this technique: Reframe the problem in multiple ways—a dozen or more ways—to uncover what is the true problem,” Reali advises.

“For example, ‘We are brand-new, and no one knows who we are,’ is information; it’s not a solvable problem when stated that way. On the other hand, these are solvable problem frames: ‘How do we help people discover our business?’ and ‘How might we find our first customers?’”

---

**Learn more**

Continue to sharpen your creative problem-solving skills with these resources:

- **Read:** Creativity Rising: Creative Thinking and Creative Problem Solving in the 21st Century.
- **Watch:** Navi Radjou’s TED Talk, “Creative problem-solving in the face of extreme limits.”
- **Attend:** Find a workshop at the Creative Education Foundation.

---

**Creative problem-solving**

**What is it?**

In all industries—from manufacturing and business to technology and health care—a creative approach to finding solutions equals opportunity. According to creative problem-solving expert Paul Reali, the concept “is a form of deliberate creativity: a structured process for solving problems or finding opportunities, used when you want to go beyond conventional thinking and arrive at creative (novel and useful) solutions.” Reali is the author of Creativity Rising: Creative Thinking and Creative Problem Solving in the 21st Century.

“Most entrepreneurial ventures and business startups are filled with creative problem-solving, as the founders face an endless stream of problems they haven’t yet solved and hadn’t even considered,” notes Reali.

**Why is it important?**

In today’s business climate, it’s adapt or die. “Change is so rapid now, and business is so competitive that constant innovation is the only way to keep up,” Reali explains. “And successful innovation requires creativity and creative problem-solving at the front end.”

---

By Julie Wilson
Industry spotlight

Careers for Security Professionals

In this terror-conscious era, there are career opportunities for professionals willing to stay ahead of the game.

“There is an increased awareness of cybersecurity,” notes Linda Florence, Ph.D., CPP, dean of specialized programs for the University of Phoenix College of Security and Criminal Justice. “Security professionals have known the dangers and risks for a long time, and after 9/11, the public became more aware and more accepting of measures taken to help protect them.

The new landscape of risk

One innovation that has become increasingly prevalent around the world is drones. These unmanned aerial vehicles are longer the stuff of science fiction. Today, they can be seen in skies across the globe in the service of companies, recreational enthusiasts and militaries.

In the wrong hands, though, drones can be used to do harm, such as deploy weapons and steal sensitive information from both governments and consumers. Crowded skies also create risk of accident and injury.

As the nature of security becomes more complex, “There is a push to professionalize the industry,” explains Florence. “If nothing happens, then security professionals are doing their jobs.” This also means that most people aren’t aware of their successes or the disasters these professionals avert. The right candidates are OK without external praise to drive them.

Security professionals need to be strong communicators to work effectively across organizations, too. They must be able to think critically—often under pressure—and make decisions based on their analyses. They should possess keen leadership skills and the ability to motivate cross-functional teams to take actions to reduce risk and secure assets.

A college degree in security can help professionals hone specialized expertise, as can certificate programs like the University of Phoenix Cyber Crimes Certificate. For more information on the University of Phoenix security-related certificates, visit phoenix.edu/programs/continuing-education/certificate-programs.html.

Tools for Successful Law Enforcement

Criminal justice professionals must stay abreast of current digital tools and applications in order to combat crime successfully.

Early records show that many ancient civilizations had their own versions of law enforcement, court systems and corrections facilities with similar approaches over the centuries. Today though, innovation and globalization are impacting the rate at which criminal justice is evolving—and ultimately influencing the future of the field.

A state of transition

Technology has left almost no area of our lives untouched. The way we communicate with one another, spend our money, pay our bills and look after our health have changed greatly over the past two decades.

“With mobile and personal computing devices, everybody has the ability to store and transfer electronic information more easily and affordably than ever before,” notes Franzi Walsh, DBA, criminal justice program dean for the University of Phoenix College of Security and Criminal Justice.

Savvy criminals also are using technology as a means to perpetrate crimes, such as theft and fraud. Migration, which is on the rise in many areas around the world due to political unrest and economic instability, also is driving change in the field. “In the future, criminal justice professionals will be interacting with individuals from many different cultural and religious backgrounds,” says Walsh.

One way law enforcement professionals are addressing an increase in responsibility is by implementing a community policing philosophy, explains Donald R. Munday, Ed.D., a former chief of police and the current dean of assessment for the University of Phoenix College of Security and Criminal Justice. In community policing, law enforcement agencies partner with community groups in order to build positive working relationships.

“You have to build trust in the community, and then partnerships can be developed,” says Munday.

Basic training

Strong communication skills are an integral part of working well in criminal justice positions that require extensive face-to-face contact with members of the community, as well as colleagues and leaders.

An influx of immigrants also will create a need for employees with the skills required to interact effectively across a wide range of populations, particularly those in diversity-focused roles.

Knowing how to speak a foreign language or two won’t hurt, either.

Strong critical-thinking skills are essential, too. Law enforcement officers must assess situations they encounter and plan appropriate responses, frequently on the fly. A solid foundation of training can help criminal justice professionals perform effectively and safely under the most stressful circumstances.

Because criminal justice professionals often are tasked to do more with less funding, creative problem-solving has become a must-have skill. Criminal justice professionals must also have a thorough understanding of ethics so they can uphold their responsibilities with integrity and maintain the trust of the community.

It’s important to hone the wide array of skills required for success by earning related degrees or certificates, such as University of Phoenix’s Criminal Justice Management Certificate. For more information on the University of Phoenix criminal justice related programs and certificates, visit phoenix.edu/colleges/divisions/criminal-justice/criminal-justice-degree-programs.html.

For more information about each of these programs, including on-time completion rates, the median debt incurred by students who completed the program and other important information, please visit phoenix.edu/programs/gainful-employment.
By the numbers:
Security and Criminal Justice

700,000
Number of drones expected to be sold in the U.S. market in 2015

27,400
Projected number of new information security analyst jobs between 2012 and 2022

2015
Year the U.S. Department of Labor adopted security trade organization ASIS Foundation’s Enterprise Security Competency Model, a set of standards and guidelines created through a collaboration with University of Phoenix that move to professionalize the security industry.

12,000+
Number of local police departments operating in the United States during 2013

441 million
Projected U.S. population in 2065. Of these, 78 million will be immigrants and 81 million will be people born in the U.S. to immigrant parents.

3 million
Online complaints the FBI’s Internet Crime Complaint Center received from its inception in 2000 through May 2014.

$800,492,073
Total adjusted dollar losses from 2014 Internet crime complaints, alone

1.8 million
Estimated number of operational security workers in the United States during 2015

Each month, approximately 8,000 dedicated students earn their degrees and become proud University of Phoenix graduates.

Phoenix Focus magazine celebrates the newest members of the growing alumni community—now more than 878,000 strong—with an online list of recent graduates.

To see the list of graduates from July 1–September 30, 2015, visit the Phoenix Focus home page.

alumni.phoenix.edu/phoenix-focus
University news

Homecoming 2015
This year’s homecoming is in the books. Don’t miss the fun photos from the 20 events that took place around the country to celebrate our amazing graduates. Also, University of Phoenix and the Arizona Diamondbacks teamed up to create a memorable night for alumni, scholarship recipients and community volunteers. Watch the video highlighting that October event at bit.ly/uop-dbacks.

Alumni Scholarship news
The UOPX Alumni Scholarship program offers $3,000 scholarships to 40 University of Phoenix alumni who are currently enrolled in a subsequent associate, bachelor’s, master’s or doctoral degree program at the University. Only 200 qualified applications will be accepted, so now’s the time to prepare. There are two steps to the application process: the application and essay questions. You will be able to access the link to the application on January 5, 2015, when the scholarship process opens. Awards will be made in April 2015. Find all the University of Phoenix Alumni Scholarship details at alumni.phoenix.edu.

Career Resources: Supporting your career path
Your alumni status grants you continued access to valuable career resources ranging from tools and webinars to expert content series and social networks. You can read career content, join career conversations happening on alumni social channels, take advantage of career workshops, and access the Phoenix Career Guidance System™ that you used as a student.

Check out the alumni Career Corner, learn about career workshops, ask a question and find featured employers. Visit alumni.phoenix.edu/career-resources.html.

What’s up, alumni?
The Alumni Association wants to know what our alumni are up to. Have you written a book? Started a new business? Made a difference in your community? We know our alumni have done some amazing things, and we want to share your businesses, books and volunteer news in Phoenix Focus magazine. Email us at alumni@phoenix.edu with your success stories so we can spread the word.

Mentors wanted
Graduates, you have the power to inspire and motivate.

Your knowledge, expertise and insights can help students get the most from their University of Phoenix experience. You can open students’ eyes to the opportunities and challenges they may face after graduation—and you can inspire them to aim high. Mentoring is a wonderful way to make a real and lasting impact on a student’s life.

Be a volunteer mentor on your terms.
The Alumni Mentor Program facilitates mentorships via an online platform, matching profiles of mentors and mentees on relevance. As a mentor, you can choose to mentor only those students you feel you can best support. Because you work directly with mentees to set expectations around how often you will communicate, you can build a relationship in the way that works best for your schedule. The new program includes mobile-friendly mentoring—respond to your mentee from your phone.

To find out more about the new Alumni Mentor Program, visit alumni.phoenix.edu/get-involved/mentor-program.
Need to show proof of your alumni status?
Get your own ID card now at alumni.phoenix.edu