

## Continuing the Higher Education Climb

Ask someone in the world of business – that's employers and a growing number of their employees – what factor will make the biggest difference in the future success of our state and the answer for most is education.

Probe a little further and more people than not will likely identify the importance of K-12 preparation. There is no denying that – in addition to celebrating the successes, the Indiana Chamber has been documenting the shortcomings of the system and is most actively engaged in current reform efforts that we and others believe will be game changers for today's young people and future generations.



But while K-12 is the foundation, higher education has its critical role. It also possesses a growing number of people and programs that bring tremendous potential and early results to the table. On these pages last year, we documented collaboration efforts in Richmond and Columbus that are truly a model for the relationship between community college and regional campuses. These initiatives fulfill a mission – serving students – that should always be top of mind.

In this issue, we highlight the Lumina Foundation for Education and its president Jamie Merisotis. As Merisotis says in our one-on-one interview, the Big Goal of 60% national college completion by 2025 has transformed Lumina from a provider of grants to a leadership organization. While the organization's work is national, Indiana benefits even more from its home base being located in our state.

We also offer features on Western Governors University Indiana (the more options the better to meet diverse student needs) and some additional accelerated degree programs (properly executed, these efforts help save students and parents money while moving talented young people from the classrooms to companies at a quicker pace).

It would be nice to see even more of these initiatives. It's all about college completion – not college enrollment.

Sincerely,

Kevin M. Brinegar  
President

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