

PARADE

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Needed: Qualified Software Engineers

There are no football games or frat parties at Neumont University. Instead, the Utah-based school is attracting some of America's most driven students with a promise of high-paying jobs in the tech sector upon graduation. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates a need for more than 324,000 new software engineers by 2016. Yet the Computing Research Association found that only 10,000 undergraduate computer-science degrees were awarded by major universities in 2008.

The Neumont curriculum, the first of its kind, was developed in partnership with Microsoft, IBM, and other industry leaders. The school offers only one major—computer science—and packs coursework that would take four years at a traditional school into an intensive 2 years at a cost of \$70,000. Since classes began in 2004, there have been 286 graduates, 94% of whom quickly landed jobs at an average annual salary of more than \$62,000.

But research shows there is more to higher education than immersion in specific disciplines. “I’m sure they turn out really great technicians, but how are these students going to fit into the real world?” asks Karen Arnold, a professor of higher education at Boston College.

Neumont President Ned Levine agrees that the school is unorthodox but says that’s the point: “We don’t have sports, we don’t have some of the extras. If that’s a compromise, it’s one that results in a fast launch into an exciting career.”

— J. Scott Orr

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