

Student Success Beyond Covid, Teaching The Workforce Of 2026

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Dr. Todd Hamrick, Ph.D. is an Assistant Teaching Professor in the Freshman Engineering Program at West Virginia University's Statler College of Engineering and Mineral Resources, a position he has held since 2011. He received his Ph.D. that same year from WVU in Mechanical Engineering, with studies in efficiency improvement in well drilling and organic solar cells. Dr. Hamrick received undergraduate degrees in Mechanical Engineering and German in 1987, and returned to academia after a 22-year engineering career in industry. During his career, Dr. Hamrick served in a broad range of positions including design, product development, tool and die, manufacturing, sales, and management. His teaching style brings practical, innovative, experience-based learning to the classroom, where hands-on projects that reflect real-world applications are valued by students.

FYEE 2022 Workshop summary

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The workshop will consist of a presentation, breakout sessions, and summary report from the breakout sessions, each lasting about 20 minutes. The workshop is based on a similar one that I conducted in May 2022 for the WVU Teaching and Learning Commons end of year showcase and collaboration event.

For the past two and half years we have been working to support our students and ourselves in a kind of survival mode. While most of our efforts have been focused on our students and classes, the ground has shifted not only in academia but also the wider working world, which our students will enter in the next few years. While we are fully aware that such changes are taking place, most of our efforts have been on the next semester or year.

This session will explore how the workplace has changed, which changes are expected to be permanent, and which will likely fade away. Many changes that were made were quick pivots that will go back to pre-pandemic practices, while others were acceleration of existing trends that are here to stay.

This session is not about fall 2022 but will look to 2026 and beyond. We will explore how corporate world expects to be working, and how we can prepare our students - the future workforce - for a redefined and quickly evolving workplace. While the future cannot be predicted with precision, we will explore trends anticipated by researchers, marketing experts, business leaders, and others who regularly predict future trends.

Discussions include preparing students for; future success as skills-based metrics replace or supplement credential-based metrics, future successful mentoring and collaboration, and work/life balance in a more remote based working world.

The workshop will consist of about a 20 minute slide presentation on the topics below.

Main topics for the presentation:

- Pandemic is a “Persistently Disruptive Event”
- Look Back - Learn from history (Learning from Persistently Disruptive Events of the past)
- Look around - Snapshot of what’s happening now beyond academia (What has changed)
- Look Ahead - Predict the future (What changes are expected to)
- Preparing tomorrow’s workforce discussion

After this presentation, we will break the group into breakout sessions for about 20 minutes. Topic headings that I expect to assign is below. I will include some conversation starters for each:

- Preparing students for skills- based hiring and performance-based metrics
- Engendering lifelong learning
- Improving remote work collaboration and mentoring skills
- Work/school/life balance for workers of the future
- Start, stop, continue
 - What seems to have been working well that we should do more of
 - What has become inefficient, ineffective, or obsolete that we should stop doing
 - What opportunities are we missing that we should start doing (possibly the most important of the three)

After the breakout sessions we will bring the group back together for summary reports of about 5 minutes each from all of the breakout sessions, for a total of one hour.

A draft of the slides that I plan to present is included. These are subject to some minor changes based on additional research that I have conducted since I created them in May.