



# NEWS RELEASE

*from*

## AICUP

Association of Independent Colleges  
and Universities of Pennsylvania

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **PENNSYLVANIA'S PRIVATE COLLEGES ARE FILLING HIGH PRIORITY OCCUPATIONS AND HELPING THE COMMONWEALTH'S WORKFORCE**

**HARRISBURG, November 21, 2014** – Each year, thousands of college graduates leave the familiarity of campus and venture into the workforce, hoping to land a job that will bring them satisfaction, financial security, and will utilize the skills they learned in their undergraduate studies. Though much has been made lately about a lack of available jobs and “underemployment”, according to new research conducted by the Association of Independent Colleges & Universities of Pennsylvania (AICUP), there is in fact a large segment of the workforce that needs graduates to fill jobs: the High Priority Occupation market.

High priority occupations are described as “job categories that are in demand by employers, have higher skill requirements and provide family-sustaining wages and advancement opportunities.” This includes jobs in such industries as Advanced Manufacturing, BioMedical, Business Services and Health Care. It’s an area of the job market that conducts essential work. According to AICUP Vice President of Research Ron Uroda, employers in Pennsylvania sometimes have trouble filling certain high priority occupations because of the technical skills and knowledge required in these positions.

AICUP President Don Francis noted, however, that Pennsylvania’s private colleges and universities have noticed this disconnect and are responding in turn. He explained that Pennsylvania’s 89 independent institutions are producing well-trained, skilled and knowledgeable graduates for the workforce and are especially preparing students for success in these high priority occupations. Additionally, the schools are actively engaging minority students, females and older students, sending an array of talented and diverse alumni into the workforce.

“The demographic makeup of Pennsylvania is changing as the Commonwealth becomes more racially and ethnically diverse,” Francis said. “As such, Pennsylvania’s private colleges and universities are committed to working with policymakers to ensure that the Commonwealth has workers that reflect the state’s diversity and have the skills needed by employers in the emerging high-tech economy. The biggest assets to our schools – the assets that most impact the workforce, the economy and society as a whole -- are the highly-skilled, knowledgeable alumni that Pennsylvania’s independent colleges and universities produce.”

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According to the AICUP report, Pennsylvania's private colleges and universities are a major source of workers for high priority occupations that require a college degree. The schools produce 54 percent of the college degrees needed for high priority jobs in Advanced Manufacturing, 55 percent of degrees needed for high priority jobs in the BioMedical sector, 52 percent of degrees needed for high priority jobs in Business Services and 61 percent of all Health Care degrees needed for high priority jobs. Additionally, Pennsylvania's private colleges and universities provide 58 percent of all of the minority-awarded college degrees needed for high priority jobs in these sectors, and provide 57 percent of the female-awarded college degrees needed for high priority jobs in Advanced Manufacturing, 56 percent of the degrees needed for high priority jobs in the BioMedical sector, and 54 percent of the degrees needed for high priority jobs in the Business Services sector.

The Association of Independent Colleges & Universities of Pennsylvania (AICUP), the only statewide organization that serves exclusively the interests of private higher education within the Commonwealth, exists to complement and support the work of campus leaders. With a membership of 89 private colleges and universities within Pennsylvania, the Association provides a variety of services and programs tailored specifically to the needs and situation of independent higher education. A list of AICUP's member colleges and universities is included on its website at [www.aicup.org](http://www.aicup.org).

NOTE: ADDITIONAL DATA ABOUT DEGREES IN HIGH PRIORITY OCCUPATIONS ATTACHED.

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