COLLEGE AND CODING BOOT CAMP FIND A WAY TO TEAM UP

Dominican University of California, Make School will teach courses on each other's campus

By Melissa Korn
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Coding boot camps pitch themselves as a sure path to a lucrative job. Colleges say a liberal arts grounding is crucial to career success.

Now, the two have come to a sort of truce, marrying a healthy dose of technical skills with a more traditional college course load in an effort to round out students' experiences and boost enrollment.

Dominican University of California and San Francisco-based coding program Make School are teaming up to offer computer science courses at Dominican, taught by Make School instructors, and general-education courses at Make School, taught by Dominican professors.

Humanities and social science majors have lost enrollment in recent years, partly to more career-focused options like health and engineering, forcing liberal arts schools to shake up their curricula.

"Innovation is no longer optional," said Dominican President Mary Marcy, adding that small schools like Dominican are also challenged by changing student demographics and financial pressures. The century-old school, with 1,264 undergraduates, would take years to build out its own computer science department and can't afford to wait that long, she said.

Jobs for software developers and programmers are forecast by the Labor Department to grow by nearly 18% between 2016 and 2026, and Dr. Marcy says she believes students pursuing other fields, including marketing or medicine, could benefit from coding skills as well.

The rise of coding boot camps as a means to provide entry-level computer-programming skills to liberal arts graduates has stalled in the past year, with some closing and others rebranding as corporate training programs.

A few dozen schools including the University of Washington and University of Pennsylvania have teamed up with Trilogy Education Services to offer boot camps through extension or adult-education programs, charging $10,000 to $12,000. Those courses lead to a certificate, but no college credit.

Make School is paying Dominican in cash and stock for its administrative expertise navigating federal and local regulations, and covering costs for any new staff. They are working under a new incubation policy created by Dominican's accreditor, aimed at helping more upstart programs launch by learning the ropes from more established schools.

"We're learning how to make a college," said Make School co-founder Ashu Desai.

Make School was founded six years ago with backers including Laurene Powell Jobs' Emerson Collective and Y Combinator, a tech-startup incubator. It has about 110 students 2

and expects to more than double in size next year. Nearly all students pay via income-share agreements, promising a percentage of their income back to the school after they land jobs. While many boot camps appeal to college graduates, Make School generally enrolls younger students without degrees in its short summer courses and two-year program that includes some soft-skills and general education classes. Make School is now accepting applications for a new bachelor's degree and expects to have an independent, accredited three-year degree program within five years.

In that same time frame, Dominican expects to have its own computer science minor. It plans to host Make School classes on campus starting next spring, pending approval by the accreditor.

"Even as a software engineer, you spend most of your time talking to people, not talking to computers," said Mr. Desai. Make School students will take classes in areas like ethics and philosophy to be better prepared to deal with how their work in technology affects the world.

Nyapal Gatkuoth, 23 years old, worked in customer service and as a receptionist, coding on the side, before enrolling at Make School. She is taking a writing composition course with a Dominican professor this fall, and is eager for a mix of technology and humanities classes—without having to pay up front.

"It's good to have a well-rounded education," Ms. Gatkuoth said.