

Liberal arts grads: 'master learners,' workplace leaders and ready for change *HR, diversity and inclusion leaders learn about future workforce and liberal arts students*

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Speakers at the ACI breakfast were, from left, Doug Harris, Robyn Clark and President David J. Livingston.

An ACI event designed to highlight liberal arts education and workforce development in Illinois drew more than 60 corporate and higher education leaders in human resources and career services, as well as diversity and inclusion officers.

Speakers at the Nov. 2 event discussed how to recruit and retain a diverse range of talent from ACI's 24 member colleges and universities, said Mick Weltman, ACI executive director. The event was also designed to generate interest in the first ACI Career Fair, set for March 23, 2018 at North Central College, Naperville, an ACI-member school.

[President David J. Livingston](#) of [Lewis University](#), Romeoville, is a graduate of [Augustana College](#), Rock Island. Both schools are ACI members. He told the audience his liberal arts education helped him adapt to a variety of educational experiences in chemistry and theology, plus different employment experiences leading to his current role.

"We believe that what people need to do is become 'master learners,'" he said, "That for me is the key to what ACI institutions do. Master learners are people who can adjust to the economy of the future. Master learners learn how to learn. They can deal with anything your companies will deal with in the future -- because they're flexible." Livingston added that liberal arts institutions prepare people for their first jobs and beyond, and prepare them to make career changes.

Robyn Clark, managing partner and founder, [SuccessWise](#), Chicago, showed attendees a list of liberal arts graduates serving as corporate and organizational CEOs. "Liberal arts students can be successful and achieve, and liberal arts students can make money," she said.

Liberal arts graduates bring leadership to the workplace, will learn, can deal with ambiguity and relate to people, she said. "That is the beginning of great leadership, Clark said.

Doug Harris, CEO of [The Kaleidoscope Group](#), Chicago, cited his experience at Tufts University, a liberal arts institution in Massachusetts. He highlighted liberal arts graduates' ability to embrace change, be open to new ideas and grow as employees and people. They're also prepared for the future and the unknown, he said.

"Change leads to growth, and it leads to opportunity. Liberal arts students love change," Harris added. "We're flexible around what we do and how we do it."