



CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON
College-Workforce Transitions

**RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM
for students, researchers,
and career advisors**

#LowerEd: Why a critical view of the “skills gap” is essential in today’s higher education landscape

**Featuring keynote speaker Dr. Tressie McMillan Cottom
Friday, September 29, 2017 10:00 am - 1:30 pm
UW-Madison School of Education « Wisconsin Idea Room (Rm 159)**

The “skills gap” idea - that millions of well-paying jobs go unfilled due to a higher education system that is inadequately aligned to workforce needs - is deeply influencing education and workforce development policies at the state and national levels. The purpose of this symposium is to spark dialogue about issues related to the skills gap narrative (i.e., internships, labor market data, and for-profit colleges), and why critical analyses of these issues are essential so that students can make informed decisions about their educational and career plans.



Dr. Tressie McMillan Cottom, PhD is an assistant professor of sociology at Virginia Commonwealth University. She is the co-editor the new book “Lower Ed: The Troubling Rise of For-Profit Colleges in the New Economy” which has received national and international acclaim. The relatable human stories in “Lower Ed” - from mothers struggling to pay for beauty school to working class guys seeking “good jobs”

to accomplished professionals pursuing doctoral degrees - illustrate that the growth of for-profit colleges is inextricably linked to larger questions of race, gender, work and the promise of opportunity in the U.S. The skills gap idea ignores these broader issues while also obscuring issues such as wage theft and risk shift that students seeking postsecondary credentials need to be informed about as they invest time and resources into higher education.

Schedule

10:00: Overview
of the skills gap narrative
(Dr. Matthew T. Hora)

10:15: Panel I
Challenges w/designing ethical & effective internship programs
(Dr. Matthew Wolfgram, TBD)

11:15: Panel II
A critical approach to the ‘skills gap’ using labor market data
(Dr. Mattias Scaglione & Dr. Laura Dresser)

12:15: Keynote
#LowerEd—The troubling rise of for-profit colleges in the new economy
(Dr. Tressie McMillan Cottom)

Free lunch and beverages will be provided!

RSVP: Email Matthew Wolfgram at ccwt@wcer.wisc.edu

The Center for Research on College-Workforce Transitions (CCWT)

is a new initiative of the Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER). The mission of CCWT is to conduct and support research, critical policy analysis, and public dialogue on student experiences with the transition from college to the workforce in order to inform policies, programs, and practices that promote academic and career success for all learners.



**Wisconsin Center for
Education Research**
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON