



FOUNDRY COLLEGE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Former Harvard Dean Starts Foundry College To Educate Working Adults for Middle-Skills Jobs *Online Two-Year College Secures \$6 Million in Funding From Learn Capital*

San Francisco, Calif. – October 10, 2018 — Foundry College, a new type of online two-year college specifically designed to educate students—particularly working adults—to fill “middle-skills” jobs that are in high demand by employers, announced today that it is launching its first class beginning in January 2019. Founded by Dr. Stephen M. Kosslyn, former dean of social science at Harvard University and former chief academic officer at the Minerva Schools at KGI, Foundry College also announced that it has raised \$6 million from the nation’s leading education investment firm, Learn Capital.

“Foundry College is designed for those who want to gain the cognitive and emotional skills—such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and soft skills—needed to get a good job or advance in their current job, without being displaced by automation as technology evolves,” said Kosslyn. “There are 46 million adults in the U.S. with some college and no degree, many of whom are particularly susceptible to labor automation. By identifying what humans can do better than machines—and then effectively teaching these ‘future-proof’ skills and knowledge—Foundry College can help both working adults and their employers to adapt and thrive as the labor force changes.”

Foundry College works closely with employers and organizations to ensure that the skills and knowledge taught to students will be immediately relevant to their jobs. The curriculum integrates practical knowledge with a broad education. Partnership opportunities are available for employers interested in filling current or future hiring gaps and in sponsoring employees to be students—up-leveling employee skills in ways that are uniquely valuable to the enterprise.

“Stephen Kosslyn is a force of nature who is truly one of a kind—Ivy League academic dean, world renowned neuroscience professor, groundbreaking curriculum developer, and one of my own favorite teachers at Harvard. With Foundry College, he is bringing disruptive change to a long-dormant segment of the education landscape that serves tens of millions of students in the U.S. alone,” said Rob Hutter, the founder and managing partner of Learn Capital. “Stephen understands that mainstream colleges need to evolve from principles conceived in the 1950s to embrace a social-online experience that transforms lives with real learning science and employer integration at scale.”

Middle-skills jobs, those that require more than a high school diploma but less than a four-year college degree, make up 53 percent of all jobs in the United States.¹ However, significant middle-skills/management hiring gaps exist across industry areas—50,000+ openings per functional role per quarter.² And, these gaps are negatively affecting businesses across the U.S. According to research from Harvard Business School, 69% of HR executives say their inability to attract and retain middle-skills talent frequently affects their firm’s performance.³

Foundry College’s curriculum and pedagogy are specifically designed to educate working adults and include the following unique features:

- Foundry’s foundational courses directly teach students “future proof” practical skills and focused knowledge, including how to think critically, solve practical problems, learn effectively,

¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment Statistics, May 2015.

² Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook; U.S. Department of Labor, 2018.

³ Bridge the Gap: Rebuilding America’s Middle Skills Jobs. Harvard Business School.

communicate well, and work in groups. These skills and knowledge will not be automated in the foreseeable future.

- Online classes are live and synchronous, combining instructor-led lectures with active learning sessions in small, student-led breakout groups—which include debates, role-playing, and other experiential learning.
- Classes are contained, which means that there is no pre-class reading or post-class homework; all learning takes place during the twice-weekly, 1.5-hour online class sessions.
- Foundry College incorporates the latest techniques from the science of learning into all aspects of the curriculum and pedagogy to ensure that students learn the material and can put it into immediate practice in work-related contexts.
- Students are placed in breakout groups based on quiz performance and instructions for tasks are “layered.” This approach allows students at different levels to dig more or less deeply into the task (which keeps them in the “Goldilocks spot” for learning—challenged but not overly challenged).
- All learning is competency-based and assessed during in-class quizzes. Students can take quizzes repeatedly (with different questions) until they pass. There are no grades—students are considered “in progress” until they have mastered the material.
- Material is taught in discrete stages that build upon each other so that each individual class provides students with useful and certified competencies.
- Foundry’s major courses provide essential knowledge and skills to prepare students for the modern workplace and business management roles. Foundry College plans to apply for accreditation and to award all graduates an Associate’s Degree in Business Management.

“The future-proof skills we’ve identified—which won’t easily be replicated by machines—are the same skills that are in high demand by employers,” said Kosslyn. “By systematically and directly teaching these skills to our students, we’re essentially creating a pipeline of strong candidates for in-demand jobs. This is a win-win for our students, employers, and the broader economy.”

Admission is open to all candidates who complete the application process—regardless of test scores, previous grades, or academic credentials—but only a limited number of spots will be available for the first class. Prospective students can apply directly by visiting the Foundry College website: www.foundrycollege.org. Tuition for the entire program will be waived for all students accepted into the first class.

About Foundry

Foundry College is a new type of online two-year college that teaches working adults skills and knowledge that are in demand by employers and unlikely to be automated in the foreseeable future. The curriculum integrates practical training with a broad education so students can adapt as the labor market changes. Every class combines live, instructor-led lectures with small group active learning sessions to ensure that new knowledge is effectively integrated, retained, and can be put into immediate practice. Foundry College aims to ensure that students have a pathway to long-term job stability and employers can fill hiring gaps for in-demand jobs. Created by a team led by Dr. Stephen M. Kosslyn, Foundry College launched in 2018 and is headquartered in San Francisco. www.foundrycollege.org

About Learn Capital

Learn Capital is a venture capital firm focused on breakthroughs in education technology. For nearly a decade, Learn has funded companies pursuing scalable learning platforms and cloud-powered instructional services for people of every age and background, on nearly every continent. Headquartered in the San Francisco Bay Area, Learn Capital supports entrepreneurs and learning innovations globally. For more about the firm, please visit www.learncapital.com.

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