



The insights we gain from UPCEA's continuing education leaders help StraighterLine be an even stronger partner to colleges and universities and for the students we all serve.



Dr. Amy Smith
Chief Learning Officer
StraighterLine

Why did you choose to become an UPCEA partner?

UPCEA offers corporate partners like StraighterLine so many opportunities to interact and connect with like-minded thought leaders in higher ed. Being a part of an association that values and celebrates diversity and inclusivity is important to us. The UPCEA community aligns with our mission of broadening access to diverse student populations through high-quality online education, and through our partnerships with colleges and universities, to help students achieve their academic goals.

How has your UPCEA partnership contributed to your business success?

Our engagement and invaluable interactions with the UPCEA membership base provide a crucial forum for us to better understand the challenges impacting colleges and universities today. This allows us to better tailor our solutions to those challenges in order to meet the schools' and the students' needs accordingly. The insights we gain from UPCEA's higher ed continuing education leaders help us be an even stronger partner to colleges and universities and for the students we all serve.

Dr. Smith and her team focus on researching, designing, and building best-in-class products and services that provide optimal value for StraighterLine's students and higher ed clients.



What specific things have been most impactful?

The great thing about our UPCEA partnership are the many and varied opportunities to participate in professional development and networking events. StraighterLine sponsors and exhibits at UPCEA Regions, MEMS, SOLA, and the Annual Conference where we can interact with a wide variety of members. We share our online education solutions through exhibiting, product showcases, and poster sessions, and through conference presentations where we've highlighted and shared our success stories.

We recently co-authored an op-ed piece for the UPCEA journal, Unbound titled "Prior Learning Assessment: Necessary Burden or Future-Proofing Strategy?" written by StraighterLine founder and CEO Burck Smith and UPCEA President Bob Hansen. I am currently working directly with Jim Fong, UPCEA's Founding Director of the Center for Research and Strategy, on a joint research project profiling the disengaged learner and how their situations and motivations are different from other adult learners. We will co-present the findings at UPCEA's Regions Week in October 2021!

How has the recent pandemic and need for remote/online education increased the importance of your UPCEA partnership?

The pandemic accelerated the need to provide learners with the access and flexibility only online education can offer. As such, UPCEA's history and focus on quality standards, best practices, and leadership in online learning have never been more important to support and prioritize as we continue forward with our partnership.

Would you recommend an UPCEA partnership?

I would recommend an UPCEA partnership to any organization that wants to be treated as a valued partner and contributor. UPCEA serves individuals and organizations, like StraighterLine, who are passionate about higher ed, who want to learn from colleagues and institutions that serve the adult learner, and who understand the value and benefits of online learning.

