

## Interview with Jay Gary on Regent University's foresight program

By Frank Spencer

professional



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As an organization working towards the professional development of the futures community, it is important for the APF to promote the growth of foresight programs in the academy, both for the sake of on-going research and continued maturity in the profession.

In 2006, Regent University launched an M.A. in Strategic Foresight that reaches across their MBA, Doctorate, and PhD programs. As a recent graduate, I had the privilege of interviewing APF member Jay Gary, the program director and assistant professor at Regent.

### "First, tell us about the offerings of the program."

First, all of Regent's foresight programs are offered online, with minimal residency requirements. The M.A. in Strategic Foresight (MSF) helps mid-career professionals master the practices of strategic and anticipatory leadership. For those who already have a master's degree, we offer a Doctor of Strategic Leadership (DSL), with a third year entirely focused on foresight.

### "Can you explain the specialization and strength of the Regent University program?"

Regent's core distinctive is leadership. Many futurists have technical capacity, but have not led strategy and change efforts at the enterprise and industry level. We explore these internal competencies of C-level leaders, and relate foresight to high placed decision-making.

Another distinctive of the Regent MSF is our breadth of electives, including organizational futures, human futures, and professional futures. Soon, we will offer a defense futures course that will help professionals break into defense industry contracting.

### "What challenges have you encountered marketing the program, given that futures work is so little known or understood?"

We market our program as a strategic foresight degree that



Students in 2008 Master's Residency

helps professionals lead their organizations, rather than a futures degree, so we don't have the direct problem of futures studies not being understood.



Master's Residency course in session

**"What are the most common student backgrounds?"**

Our average student is 42 years old. They come from a variety of industries, whether government, education, military, health or business. About 20% of our students work in congregations or community social services.

**"Where do graduates go after completing the program?"**

After taking the doctoral foresight track, one student launched a whole new global futures offering for IBM's strategy and consulting division. Another used his studies to launch into defense industry consulting; another to raise her profit as a health administration consultant. The Regent program supports consulting futurists, non-profit executives, intelligence analysts, and innovation managers.

**"Given that there are so few futures programs in the world, do you see more independent programs arising or more integration into existing curricula in non-futures programs?"**

Just as Regent's program is a strategic foresight program being offered from a graduate leadership school, I would look for more hybrid programs. I recently spoke with a futurist from France who desires to launch an M.A. in Innovation with an emphasis on anticipatory systems. Others might design an M.A. in Emergent Studies, based on complexity sciences. The greatest opportunity for launching futures programs is in Asia, where you have burgeoning business programs.

For more information on the program contact or visit the site below:



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