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COLUMN: Value is worth investing in, and Walsh College's increases as Troy campus is expanded

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As [Walsh College](#) advances with its Troy campus renovation and expansion, its leaders focus on creating ever more value to attract future students.

By David Shields

Special to Digital First Media

Walsh College is creating an enhanced learning environment that embraces the student experience, encourages student interaction and promotes networking as a business concept that begins while studying for a business degree. That is nowhere more obvious than in our current \$15 million building addition in Troy, slated for completion next spring and building upon a legacy of business education that is unparalleled in our region.

[Walsh College](#) has seen six building additions since we moved to Troy in 1969 from what is now the Detroit Opera House. Time and technology demand improved learning environments, this time with a greater emphasis on business communication – through a two-story student success center featuring excellent communication tools, and a fireside student lounge.

In the new pavilions we're building, we have designed more spaces for students to gather in breakout sessions and study groups. When the project is completed early in 2016, we will see our dream of a beautiful student lounge with a fireplace become a reality – a professional environment where our students will feel at home.

At the same time, we are building classes and programs that symbolically reflect this beckoning quality of our physical landscape. With everything we do, we are trying to further build an atmosphere of belonging. That makes Walsh more than just a place to get a solid education as foundation for a long-lasting and successful career. We are evolving graduate education that focuses on the whole person, and the executive presence they exude in the workplace.

According to a 2012 study by the Center for Talent Innovation, being perceived as leadership material is essential to being promoted into leadership positions.

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What, then, is executive presence and how can one build it?

First, it's the ability to project confidence, poise and mastery of a situation. Charisma. Articulate and focused communication skills. The ability to navigate a room and remember faces and names. Assertiveness. The ability to read an audience – and speak directly to them.

It's been said that people with executive presence have a "wow factor" or magnetic aura that influences and inspires those around them. They are people who aren't afraid to speak up, in strong and clear language, and who demonstrate a passion and energy that is infectious.

It's actually quite easy to develop executive presence once you understand what it's all about. Honing conversational skills and increasing awareness of others; cultivating character and authenticity through what you wear, how you speak and how you present yourself at a business dinner; and conveying a genuine warmth while remaining professional are three great ways toward building presence.

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It's also important to be present – right here, right now, not checking your smart phone in the midst of a networking event, but rather establishing eye contact and attentively engaging with those around you.

People with executive presence maintain a measured sense of calm, no matter the situation around them, by understanding how to manage stress. They give great presentations. They welcome feedback.

These are the traits of the people who will change the world. Individuals enroll in graduate school because they believe an advanced degree will increase their value and worth in the workplace. Graduate schools consistently face the question of how to convey their innate value better than the competition.

True value is worth investing in. Walsh is a local treasure where we are intensely focused on how to provide the best possible situation for our students to catapult from their current career stance into the leadership role they desire.

At Walsh, we don't launch people into adulthood; many are already launched when they come to us. We help them transition to the next phase of their career. We help them build the life they've always dreamed of.

Ours is an unusual calling and one we don't take lightly. We offer top quality programs modeled after some of the best graduate programs for working professionals across our nation.

One of our biggest investments is building the executive presence of our graduates – we want our graduates to have complete and total comfort and an inherent ability to communicate in person and in writing so they can inhabit the leadership space they yearn for. With that in mind, we have designated one of our new pavilions as the Success Center. After all, words do matter.

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