

AMERICAN SENIOR EXECUTIVES ARE FLEEING RETIREMENT

After the age of 60, a good number of American executives or senior executives have no desire to retire. Prestigious universities have concocted tailor-made programs for them, to help them imagine the future.

"I want to feel alive and prolong my zest for life": this is how [Katie Connor](#), 65, director of the DCI (Distinguished Careers Institute) program at Stanford University, California, describes the next 20 years of her professional life... With a bright smile, she recounts her first steps at Stanford. She had passed her sixties and wondered what to do next. The former executive of the University of Colorado has therefore become a student again. For a year, she explored what her second career could be, as part of the DCI. She went back to French, took drum lessons. She interacted with her peers and teachers. She met young students. And finally, she took over as head of the DCI...

Unlike their French counterparts, North American executives do not dream of retiring at age 60, during which they would play golf. This is why a good twenty universities have concocted special programs for them allowing them to settle down and imagine the future. No diploma at the end, just a certificate.

REINVENTING YOURSELF

Stanford, Harvard, the University of Texas at Austin, Queen's University in Canada, Loyola in Chicago... have all developed studies of six months to a year for their seniors, at high prices: 70,000 dollars for Stanford (nearly 65,000 euros), 60,000 at the University of Texas, 18,000 at Queen's University... "It's a sabbatical year", explains Gaylen Paulson, associate dean of the Tower Fellows program in Austin. The twenty or so students in their fifties and sixties are there to "reinvent themselves" when their first career comes to an end. "They do super cool things while imagining how they could contribute to society in another way by working for an association or start-ups," he says.

"We have a lot of fun, testifies Paul Kinscherff, 65, a former executive of the Boeing group who became special adviser to the president of the University of Texas. I studied the basics of astronomy and Hollywood business. I was sitting at the back of the class with the founder of CarMax, a new and used vehicle sales company. I learned a lot there.

The same enthusiasm for Jeff Mihm, 57, who attended a Rolling Stones concert with young students and enjoys lunches with faculty professors. "The teachers appreciate us," he says. We understand their humor when they tell 30-year-old stories..." It was by talking with the teachers that Jeff Mihm discovered his vocation. The former boss of Noven Pharmaceuticals leads strategy courses on international business that he enriches with his own experience. "I no

longer work 70 hours a week," he says. Just twenty hours. He doesn't earn thousands and cents either. "I don't try to chase money anymore," he says. I have found my balance.

GIVE BACK TO SOCIETY

These tailor-made courses often have a social aspect. An English judge, ex from Stanford, was thus inspired by an American program for the rehabilitation of former convicts to create his own version in Great Britain. As for Queen's University, in Canada, it promises its students that they will have a "social impact". One of its alumni, Patrick Dlamini, head of DBSA, a development bank in South Africa, is preparing to run a network of 200 clinics that will treat the poor for a reasonable price.

The concept of the second career is often tinged with a desire to give back. It is about giving back to society the good that we have benefited from. A very Anglo-Saxon notion, little developed in Europe. However, some pioneering institutions in the United Kingdom, but also in Switzerland, are embarking on the adventure. Thus, the University of St. Gallen will start its first session next June, with, it is hoped, 40 participants. "We are late, recognizes [Herb Riband](#), 56, one of the initiators of the project. But also in Europe people are living longer, and when they stop their career, they still have a lot of time and energy. Herb Riband knows what he's talking about. The former Amgen and Medtronic executive "woke up one day wanting to do something else," he says. He took DCI training from Stanford and reinvented himself as a consultant. A health expert capable of helping start-ups in the sector to grow.

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