

North Carolina Community College System Workforce Development

- North Carolina is recognized as a pioneer and one of the leading states in the nation in providing workforce training. The tradition of workforce training dates back to 1957 and the creation of the Industrial Education Centers and the nation's first customized training program for business and industry. The Industrial Education Centers were the forerunner of the North Carolina Community College System, and established a unique tradition for workforce development in North Carolina. While most community colleges in the nation started with a more academic tradition as junior colleges and have been moving in an industry training workforce development direction, North Carolina's system started with training/workforce development roots and has grown into the most comprehensive community college system in the nation.
- North Carolina's Community College System has been profiled in an article on the cover of the *Wall Street Journal*, and three years ago received the national innovation award in education from the Education Commission of the States. Recently, the North Carolina Community College System was named the #2 worker-training program in the nation in the annual survey rankings of business site selection consultants published each year by *Expansion Management* magazine. In the four years of the awards, North Carolina was the only state to have received the #1 ranking in multiple years (1998 and 1999), and the only state to finish in the top four in each year of the rankings.
- An area that many people associate with community colleges is our wide selection of technical and associate degrees. Through the community colleges, North Carolina produces the fifth highest number of vocational/technical associate degree graduates of any state in the nation.
- What makes North Carolina most unique is its wide array of short-term job training programs that account for approximately three-fourths of all students. Last year the System served 760,764 students, accounting for one out of every six adults in the state.
- The Community College System sponsors one of the largest workforce continuing education programs in the nation. Through this program, individuals can take short-term job training in over 1400 training categories for a low registration fee of only \$50 to \$65 per course. As a result, North Carolina maintains a reputation as the leading state in providing lifelong learning. Last year, 315,000 North Carolinians received job training through the continuing education programs.
- Through the New and Expanding Industry Training Program, the community colleges provide one of the state's greatest incentives to creating new jobs in NC. This program provides customized training for new employees of manufacturing and technology companies, and national and regional customer service and warehouse/distribution centers. It was the first of its type in the nation, and was so successful it has now been replicated by many other states. Last year the program provided training for 203 new and expanding companies and trained 25,000 North Carolinians for new jobs. Of the companies supported, 67.5% were in rural areas and 60% were expanding facilities. In surveys of company clients last year, 99% rated the community colleges as either excellent or very good in meeting their expectations.
- Through its Focused Industrial Training Program, the community colleges can provide specialized retraining to North Carolina manufacturers and information technology companies that enables them to remain competitive by providing their employees with specialized training in new technologies and processes. The program also enables colleges to support staff to develop customized programs with area companies, and to develop new training programs that support North Carolina industries, including recent efforts in Manufacturing

Certification, Biotechnology/Pharmaceuticals, Boat Building, Economic Literacy, and Industrial Maintenance.

- Through its Basic Skills programs, North Carolina Community Colleges offer 14,000 literacy classes annually at 2,000 sites. Through its Adult High School and GED programs, North Carolina Community Colleges confer one out of every five high school diplomas in the state, and provide free training in English as a Second Language, a program that has grown substantially to over 30,000 participants in the past couple of years.
- Through the Human Resources Development Program, North Carolina Community Colleges provide free employability skills training to unemployed individuals, dislocated workers, and those working but earning below federal poverty standards. The unique program provides training that cover six core components including skill assessment and career development, resume writing and interviewing, self-esteem and work ethic, teamwork, problem solving, and computer/internet literacy.
- The North Carolina Community Colleges sponsor one of the largest small business assistance networks in the country, with each college small business center that provides free entrepreneurial training and business development counseling, as well as a Small Business Resource Center. The program provides support to approximately 70,000 North Carolinians a year with both counseling and entrepreneurial training services.
- North Carolina Community Colleges are extensively involved in working with the business community, with most colleges maintaining Industry Advisory Groups for each of their program areas. In partnership with the North Carolina Biotechnology Center and the North Carolina Electronics and Information Technology Association, the System has initiated unique industry collaboratives with the biotechnology and information technology communities to develop new policies and programs that enhance the competitiveness of these important industries in North Carolina. Several of the companies involved in these collaborative efforts include Cisco Systems, IBM, SAS Institute, Red Hat Software, Biogen, GlaxoSmithKline, Bayer and Wyeth Lederle.
- North Carolina Community Colleges are benefactors, along with the University of North Carolina System, of the largest higher education bond in U.S. history. Of the \$3.1 billion funding, \$600 million will go to community colleges over the next five years to renovate, update, and build new training facilities throughout the state.
- Through its workforce training programs, the North Carolina Community College System has undertaken a comprehensive effort to develop concentrated competency-based training programs based on national skill standards and/or industry certifications. These include: 1) the North Carolina Manufacturing Certification Program, a program recommended by the National Association of Manufacturers' Center for Workforce Success, and provides training in fundamental manufacturing skills as well as specialty programs in plastics, metals, textiles, and electronics; 2) BioWork, a biotechnology/pharmaceutical process technician training program, developed collaboratively with the North Carolina Biotechnology Center, recently profiled in the *San Francisco Chronicle*; and 3) the North Carolina Boat Building Training Program that provides specialty training for maritime companies.