**Workforce Learning Summit Innovation/Best Practice**

**Piedmont Community College**

**Piedmont Community College Workforce Certification Academy© Training Programs**

Piedmont Community College’s Workforce Certification Academy© is designed to meet workforce needs by preparing individuals for employment by providing demand-driven, short-term training that leads to national, state, or industry-recognized certifications. This best practice model seeks to not only provide training to citizens within the College’s service area of Person and Caswell counties, but also to share its model with other community colleges across NC so that NC as a whole will prosper. The model is grounded in aligning employer driven demand with industry recognized credentials and providing that training to individuals seeking employment. Prominent training areas currently include the advanced manufacturing and allied health sectors.

**DETAILS**

Opportunities: Provide employers with a well trained workforce. Provide training to dislocated workers or workers seeking employment with the skills and credentials they need to succeed.

Model development:

Step 1. Do the research. PCC collaborated with business and industry to determine: 1) What do employers need (the College has strong relationships with employers), 2) What are the industry trends for employment, 3) Where are the jobs, 4) What programs can the College afford to offer, 5) How can the college provide the best employees for the employers, and 6) What programs area needed to be created.

Step 2. The PCC team narrowed down our focus to advanced manufacturing; we met with employers to design the program and get commitment.

Step 3. Find the funding (NC Rural Center and Golden LEAF).

Step 4. The College maximizes new program potential by incorporating additional stackable credentials into the programs of study.

Step 5. The College trained personnel, developed additional curriculum, purchased equipment, recruited students, implemented the program, and then the College continues to review, realign, expand, and improve the programs.

Implementation began in January 2011.

**Partner Type(s):**
- Business/Industry (direct involvement)
- Economic Development
Impact/Outcomes
Employers have a well-trained workforce from which to choose. Graduates obtain credentials that increase their probability of gaining and retaining employment. The College uses a three-tiered module that includes an Orientation course, Occupational Extension course, and a Job Search course. By including the CRC in the Orientation course, this affirms the ability of students to be successful in completing the academic requirements of the certification courses (i.e. Occupational Extension course). In doing so, students successfully obtain stackable credentials, in a modular training format that includes multiple entry and exit points for students. Additionally, inserting the Job Search course after the completion of the certification courses helps facilitate the job search and interviewing process for students. As part of this, students are able to meet with employers, HR representatives and supervisors. Continuous employer feedback contributes to improving and shaping program content and delivery.

Approximately 74% graduate with national credentials and approximately 59% obtain employment.

Funding Source(s)
Golden Leaf: $165,032.00
NC Rural Community Mobilization: $70,000.00
NC Back to Work: $125,000
Project Skill-Up: $10,000
WIA: $36,678.00
OE/HRD: $106,115.00
Total: $512,825.00

REFLECTIONS

Innovation or Best Practice
This innovation provides employers with potential employees who have obtained national certifications, along with soft skills. Additionally, it provides the job seeker the opportunity to not only obtain the required skills, but the help to find and obtain employment. By combining the holistic approach, employers and potential employees benefit from the comprehensive approach in the WCA©.

Four major things set the Workforce Certification Academy© apart. First, it is a model that incorporates assessment for success during the Orientation course (i.e. NC CRC). Secondly, it incorporates instruction that is specifically focused on providing nationally and state recognized credentials into its training. Third, it incorporates job search skills that increase a participant’s success at obtaining and maintaining employment. Finally, this model was shared with other community colleges across the state of North Carolina so that it could be replicated to quickly and effectively increase the availability of qualified employees in the advanced manufacturing sector.

Lessons Learned
The lessons learned were: 1) determining the effective number of hours that the program needed to be delivered at in order to turn out high quality participants, 2) meet with employers at least semi-annually to see if there are any problems with the participants that they are hiring and have
honest conversations, and 3) realize that there are always ways to improve and take steps to make those improvements.

**Scalability**
This model is scalable and has been replicated by many community colleges in N.C. Extensive work was done by the Workforce Certification Academy© team and its instructor to greatly increase training materials and processes.

**RESOURCES**

**Workforce Learning Summit Presenters**
Dr. Walter C. Bartlett, President
Dr. Doris Carver, Vice President, Continuing Education; Interim Vice President, Instruction and Student Development
Tommiann Hill, Dean, Workforce Development
Piedmont Community College

**Link to website and video:**
[www.piedmontcc.edu/ContinuingEducation/ProgramsandClasses/HumanResourcesDevelopment.aspx](http://www.piedmontcc.edu/ContinuingEducation/ProgramsandClasses/HumanResourcesDevelopment.aspx)

**For Further Information**
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