

## Workforce Learning Summit Innovation or Best Practice

### Stanly Community College

#### ***CAFÉ - Career Academy for Educators***

The CAFÉ program offers Stanly County Schools (SCS) educators, counselors, principals, and staff an opportunity to become acquainted with Stanly Community College's (SCC) curriculum and continuing education programs and talk with several local businesses and industry. Additionally, CAFÉ helps educators and counselors identify the education, skill sets, and soft skills necessary for employees to become successful within industry. This collaborative approach is crucial in the development of the future workforce in Stanly County and beyond.

CAFÉ participants are key players in public school education, post-secondary education, and the business sector; each has access to a vital network that promotes a free exchange of ideas in which to improve future endeavors.

---

#### **DETAILS**

The CAFÉ program was created through the Stanly County Career Readiness Task Force committee. This committee brought together county business leaders, educators, and private citizens to create programs to improve the work skills, education levels, and overall workforce development efforts for Stanly County. The CAFÉ specifically addressed the need to align local industry with the curriculums of Stanly Community College and Stanly County Schools.

The CAFÉ program is sponsored by the Centralina Workforce Development Board (WDB), Stanly Community College, Stanly County Chamber of Commerce, and Stanly County Schools.

The impetus of creating CAFÉ was to get the top level decision makers in the county to increase efforts, programs, and partnerships to make an impact in developing a strong workforce for Stanly County.

Implementation began in July 2007.

#### **Partner Type(s):**

- Business/Industry (direct involvement)
- Economic Development
- Workforce Development Board
- Public Schools
- Nonprofit organization(s)

#### **Impact/Outcomes**

Evaluations are done every year following each CAFÉ session. Out of the 12 respondents, from this year's CAFÉ, 100% said they would recommend it to their colleagues or other community leaders.

One of the biggest impacts that CAFÉ has had on Stanly Community College is our refocused efforts on developing Career & College Promise (CCP) Career and Technical Pathways. These pathways include:

Advertising & Graphics	Biomedical Equipment Technology
Business Administration	Cisco
Computer Engineering	Computer Information
Corrections	Cosmetology
Cyber Crime	Early Childhood Education
Electronics	Human Services
Infant Toddler Care	Information Systems Security
Law Enforcement	Machining
Medical Assisting	Microsoft Technologies
Nursing Assisting	Pharmacy Technology
School Age Education	Simulation & Game Development
Welding	

Additionally, SCC has developed two partnerships with Stanly County Schools in which we are teaching Career and Technical classes within the high school for the Cosmetology and Certified Registered Nursing (CNA) programs.

#### **Funding Source(s)**

Centralina Workforce Development Board funds each CAFÉ project for \$1,600.

---

## **REFLECTIONS**

### **Innovation or Best Practice**

This is a best practice because:

1. It helps bring awareness of the jobs and vocations available in Stanly County and skills needed to obtain these jobs.
2. It provides information to the career counselors in the schools about the career opportunities in the manufacturing, service, health, construction and financial sectors.
3. It helps identify the skill sets needed for workers in these settings and link those skills with high school course work.
4. It Identifies the “soft skills” needed by future workers:
  - Communication both verbal and written
  - High performance teamwork
  - Problem solving
  - Critical thinking
  - Customer service
  - Strong work ethics
5. It instills the concept that “We are Life-Long learners”
6. It assists students that cannot or will not go to a 2 year or 4 year institution but need job skills. Although it may involve more work, we need to help identify and provide training to

meet job requirements in the manufacturing, service, health, construction, and financial sectors.

### **Lessons Learned**

Stanly County School and Stanly Community College had not really been listening to our business and industry in Stanly County for years. The CAFÉ brought the three groups together and not only did we find out what was not being addressed on the educational level, but industry found out the limitations and constraints counselors and teachers were working under.

It also helped provide a pipeline of mentors and speakers to be invited to talk to students about how manufacturing has changed, and these careers can earn good living wages and job benefits.

It also provided teachers with contacts to set up plant tours for their students and the different alternatives for career paths for graduating students who were not going to a four year college.

Another thing we learned with the CAFÉ, we started with high school counselors and teachers and realized we needed to include elementary educators because high school was really too late. We needed to begin reaching students at an earlier age about alternatives for careers and not just a goal of four year colleges.

In the future, we'll also need to include parents because parental influence has a measurable, co-occurring effect on the college choice process (Institutional Brand Parental Influence on College Choice, 2009).

### **Scalability**

We typically have 20 participants but can easily increase or decrease the number of attendees. For instance, this year we had two CAFÉs- one for school counselors and another for school administrators.

Any community college can adopt a CAFÉ program. We would recommend that you start the process by convening a committee of community college, school system, elected officials, business and industry to explore options.

---

## **RESOURCES**

### **Workforce Learning Summit Presenters**

Melissa Eudy, Director of Outreach, Stanly Community College (Presenter)

David Hollars, Executive Director, Centralina Workforce Development Board (Panelist)

Marion Kinley, Economic Development Director, Stanly Community College (Panelist)

Lori Poplin, HR Director, Stanly Engineered Fastening (Panelist)

### **Link**

<http://www.stanly.edu/news/headlines/1679-annual-cafe-program-held-for-educators.html>

### **For Further Information**

Tom George

Dean of Marketing & Outreach

Stanly Community College

Email: [tgeorge5857@stanly.edu](mailto:tgeorge5857@stanly.edu)

Phone: 704.991.0387