

Meeting workforce demands through partnerships

By Tabitha Whissemore, Published April 8, 2015

Editor's note: This article continues a series profiling nominees of the [American Association of Community Colleges' \(AACC\) 2015 Awards of Excellence](#). Today's piece focuses on the four finalists in the category of corporate/college partnerships. Winners in each of the seven categories will be announced at the [AACC Annual Convention](#), which begins next week.

Anne Arundel Community College (Maryland)

President: Dawn Lindsay

Even before ground was broken for [Maryland Live! Casino](#) in 2011, [Anne Arundel Community College](#) (AACC) had partnered with the casino to ensure that employees would be trained in time for the grand opening.

The casino's biggest need was for dealers, who require very specialized training. The college developed casino training labs, where both entry-level and incumbent workers can receive training. AACC's [Casino Dealer School](#) has trained hundreds of people, many of whom gain immediate employment.

"These jobs offer concrete opportunities to transform lives through economic growth, family stability and personal pride," said Robert Norton, president and general manager of Maryland Live! Casino.

Maryland Live! also collaborated with AACC's [Hotel, Culinary Arts and Tourism \(HCAT\) Institute](#) to adapt a curriculum for a purchasing and cost control course. Students were able to work side-by-side with the casino's culinary management team. The HCAT facilities were used to assist in testing sous chef candidates as well.

The casino has provided AACC with the equipment and supplies necessary for the training. It donates funds to support the HCAT Institute and has been a lead sponsor and host of AACC's signature fundraising events.

"Our dynamic partnership with Maryland Live! Casino continues to adeptly combine private and public resources to create educational programming that is closely aligned to regional economic and workforce development needs," said AACC President Dawn Lindsay.

Bunker Hill Community College (Massachusetts)

President: Pam Eddinger

[Bunker Hill Community College's](#) (BHCC) innovative [Learn and Earn](#) paid internship program has allowed the college to partner with top employers to give students opportunities for valuable on-the-job training.

Learn and Earn began in 2012 with five leading corporations and 20 BHCC students. The goal was to introduce community college students to corporate work environments and expectations.

Thanks to a strong partnership with the [Massachusetts Competitive Partnership](#), the program continues to grow. It now takes students into 15 of Greater Boston's most prestigious firms, representing every major industry sector in the area, and has provided opportunities to more than 270 students. Companies involved include Raytheon, BJ's Wholesale, and State Street Corp. and Fidelity Investments.

"Together, we are cultivating learning excellence, creating a more competitive workforce and inspiring social mobility," said BHCC President Pam Eddinger.

The program promotes student accessibility, diversity, retention and completion. Students earn \$15.00/hour while receiving mentoring and support for their career goals, as well as academic credit. Companies also fund transportation stipends. Students are provided with alumni peer mentors and often get to meet with senior leaders from the participating companies.

The results of Learn and Earn have exceeded expectations. Ninety percent of interns transfer to a four-year institution after earning their associate degree, and 40 percent extend their employment. Raytheon alone has placed more than 60 Learn and Earn students.

Montgomery College (Maryland)

President: DeRionne Pollard

A decade ago, [Montgomery College](#) and Holy Cross Hospital partnered to produce a diverse health care workforce. Their aim was

to provide affordable, hands-on training for the next generation of health care professionals.

Their partnership expanded in 2008. Population growth in Montgomery County was outpacing existing medical care. A new hospital was planned—the first new hospital in the county in more than 30 years. On October 1, 2014, [Holy Cross Germantown Hospital](#) opened on the college's Germantown campus. Montgomery College is the first community college in the nation to host a hospital on site. It anchors the college's 40-acre Science and Technology Park.

In addition to adding 700 high-paying jobs to the region through the hospital, the college has expanded health training programs by adding clinical rotations at the facility. Faculty can work in the hospital on sabbatical, and hospital staff can teach at the college.

“Education and health care are intricately and intimately connected to the well-being of the community,” said DeRionne Pollard, president of Montgomery College. “Our partnership with Holy Cross Health proves that when they thrive together, the community thrives as well.”

Having the hospital on campus also will attract other life sciences companies to the park, allowing for new partnerships to be built.

“This partnership equates to workforce development, which ultimately strengthens the economic development of Montgomery County,” said Martha Schoonmaker, executive director of the college's [Hercules Pinkney Life Sciences Park](#).

Northcentral Technical College (Wisconsin)

President: Lori Weyers

For more than 30 years, [Northcentral Technical College](#) (NTC) has provided [Greenheck Fan Corp.](#), a leading global manufacturer with nearly 3,000 employees, with the academics and lab training for employees. But the company's expansion of late had been hindered due to a limited pool of skilled manufacturing technicians. NTC was able to help fix that.

Together, they revamped the college's electromechanical program, offering new flexible learning opportunities, which include one-credit courses, 24/7 lab availability, recorded lectures and anytime start dates. Greenheck and NTC collaborated on a campaign to raise funds to build a new lab facility for the program. The manufacturer was also a large financial contributor to that campaign.

During their long relationship, Greenheck and NTC have partnered on more than 250 contracted training projects, serving more than 4,000 employees. Their successes helped them to secure two state [Workforce Advancement Training Grants](#), which allowed them to provide more than 1,000 employees with more than 2,000 hours of training.

Greenheck has also helped forge longer education paths for students. It connected NTC with [Michigan Technological University](#) to create transfer options for qualified NTC grads.

“The company's willingness to work together with our college, other manufacturing companies, agencies, community leaders, educational institutions and businesses has generated economic growth within our entire community and beyond by employing skilled workers and growing the manufacturing industry,” said Lori Weyers, president of NTC.

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