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INDUSTRY- ENGAGED LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT for CTE Programs

BY ROBERT FORD

Since October 2008, Western Carolina University's Kimmel School departments of Construction Management and Engineering and Technology have been in communication with education administrators, industry organizations, national and local contractors, and many other entities with concerns about the future workforce; the aim has been to develop a unique training program to address identified shortfalls.

We have developed a leadership and career development training program called the "Kimmel School Construction Training Program" that gives preference to economically challenged career and technical education (CTE) students here in Western North Carolina. But it will be expanded after the initial program to meet the needs of any interested CTE participants. (This project received support from the Golden LEAF Foundation.) With two years of planning, a program

has been developed to help the participants excel in various ways. Program outcomes sought include that participants excel in their individual CTE programs, continue their education beyond high school, enter into industry as a career choice, and/or establish their own company. Participants will receive the necessary leadership training to be successful team builders/managers and know the ins and outs of industry. This process will identify what career paths are available, and how to take the knowledge they learn in their CTE program and successfully apply it to the real world.

The Curriculum

This six-day program provides students with a 10-hr OSHA safety course, Coreten learning module "Basic Crew Leadership," individual engagement activities with successful owners (fire-side Chat), and specific learning opportunities with industry organizations, vendors, suppliers

and contractors. The campus experience includes teambuilding and leadership activities presented by the Resident Life program, and an opportunity to build lifelong relationships with peers.

One of the main goals behind the development of this program is to eventually offer a similar leadership training program in every state. Every state has an educational administrative body, industry organizations, related vendors, suppliers and contractors, in addition to old field hands like me, or local CTE instructors that could be persuaded to implement it.

The great thing about using the Content Learning Series of materials is the program can be manipulated to fit any CTE learning need or requirement.

With support from outside sources, this program intends to offer 30 of the initial 60 participants two more levels of instruction—an intermediate and advanced application of leadership training. If participants complete all three levels of instruction before they graduate, they will receive a Certificate of Crew Leadership. This recognition will provide them an opportunity to begin their individual working careers at a level above a basic laborer.

A five-year study will be initiated to determine outcomes. It will offer the necessary data to determine if future investment of time and money is worth the effort. More information about this program can be found at <http://constructiontraining.wcu.edu>. T

Robert Ford, M.S.,

is a visiting instructor at Western Carolina University's Kimmel School of Construction Management. He can be contacted at rwford@email.wcu.edu.

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