

Community College Designs Specialized Technical Courses Through NJ Training on Demand Program

First Graduates Start New Jobs Within Days of Graduation

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NJ Training on Demand students, along with instructors and Bergen Community College administrators. Ten students were hired by Crestron after completing electronic technician training courses.

During an economic downturn marked by high unemployment, the road to recovery is often paved one new job at a time. Such was the case when 10 out-of-work New Jersey residents secured new jobs after completing electronic technician training courses through the NJ Training on Demand program at Bergen Community College (BCC).

This program addresses companies' personnel needs and the needs of unemployed and underemployed people with training designed to fill jobs that are in demand. In this case, BCC designed a curriculum to meet the training requirements of Rockleigh-based New Jersey Business & Industry Association member Crestron, a global provider of electronic control and automation systems for homes, offices, schools, hospitals, hotels and other commercial applications.

"We rely on cutting-edge technology and the level of training we were getting in other programs left us with three or four months of additional training that we had to do before new employees could test our products," said Martin J. Devaney, Crestron's senior director of human resources. "Through the Training on Demand program, we were able to customize the training and bring our products into the classroom at BCC, test them there, and eliminate the need for additional training."

The courses provided a second chance in a tough economy for unemployed residents with experience in a range of fields. One student had returned to college and was majoring in physics. Another worked as an electrical engineer before losing his job.

"It was a refreshing course that re-instilled all of the things I learned in technical school. The course gave a lot of detail and information in a short time," said George Stathopoulos, an air conditioning and heating controls technician from Paramus who was out of work for a year. "It has a good success rate for people to continue in the workforce. All of us started jobs as technicians and testers at Crestron."

The highly successful program is offered through a partnership among the Consortium, the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the local Workforce Investment Board and with the support of the NJBIA.

The NJ Training on Demand program is just one training program available to New Jersey businesses through the state's community colleges. The Consortium also offers the NJ Basic Skills Workforce Training program, which provides free training in basic computer operations (Microsoft Word, Excel); mathematics and measurement; verbal, written, and customer service communications; and English as a second language. Training is available on-site at the business or at one of the 67 community college campus facilities statewide.

On behalf of the Consortium, I am particularly gratified for Labor Commissioner Harold Wirth's continued support of - and providing funding for - these valuable programs that enhance the skills of our statewide workforce and continue the mission of community colleges to match individuals with job needs in order to help people improve their lives.

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