

College Town: QCC among beneficiaries of \$2.5M boost for advanced manufacturing training

By Bonnie Russell
Telegram & Gazette Staff

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Advanced manufacturing training at Quinsigamond Community College and other learning institutions in the state just received substantial funding.

On Tuesday, in a ceremony at Quinsigamond Community College, Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito joined QCC President Luis G. Pedraja, regional workforce leaders and state and local officials to announce \$2.5 million to four regional consortiums through the Advanced Manufacturing Training Program to address the skills gap by creating a fully coordinated manufacturing training system to connect residents to full-time employment and meet the needs of regional industry.

In layman's terms, Mr. Pedraja described the Advanced Manufacturing Training Program as recruiting and training people to fill jobs in advanced manufacturing with the emphasis on advanced.

"It is not training people to work on assembly lines," he said, explaining that highly skilled workers with an understanding of technology are in demand.

At QCC there are 19 programs that are eligible for funding, including associate degree programs such as electronics engineering technology with options in biomedical instrumentation, mechatronics, and photonics, and certificate programs in contextualized ESOL for manufacturing and 2D and 3D design and fabrication, to name a few. The associate degree programs can hold 30 students and run three times a year, while the certificate programs hold 20 students and run three times a year.

All of these programs provide opportunities to not only acquire technical knowledge, but to test it.

For example, in a mechatronics lab, an automated manufacturing system with a conveyor belt and storage units simulating the dispensing process teaches students how to troubleshoot the type of equipment they are likely to encounter on the job, according to James Heffernan, a professor of electronics engineering technology at QCC.

“I introduce a problem into the system and the students have to find it and solve it,” he said.

QCC and Mount Wachusett Community College are part of the award in the central region, which is coordinated by MassHire North Central Workforce Board and 24 partner organizations. The award is for the training and placement of 160 individuals in manufacturing the Central Region in fiscal 2019. And also to develop a five-year manufacturing training strategy to continued growth in the manufacturing training system, identify a regional manufacturing training captain to be the point person for the system, and participate in statewide coordination and system development.

In addition to the Central Region, the other three fiscal 2019 Advanced Manufacturing Training Program awardees are: Northeast — coordinated by MassHire Metro North Workforce Board and 24 partner organizations; Southeast — coordinated by Greater New Bedford Workforce Board and 58 partner organizations; and West — coordinated by MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board and 33 partner organizations

In 2018, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development began a statewide re-branding of MassHire, bringing the career center system, which previously existed under 45 different programs and names, under one brand, MassHire. The 2019 awardees are all qualified consortiums working in conjunction with the MassHire system.

Upon announcing the awards, Ms. Polito said, “We believe this collaborative, regional and place-based approach is an exciting step forward in effective workforce development that matches residents with high-growth industries. Today’s awards are an important part of that approach, and focus on connecting underrepresented populations, including minorities, women and veterans to these opportunities in manufacturing.”

Assumption names VP for student success

In response to the ever-changing demographics of its student body, Assumption College has announced the creation of a new position, vice president for student success, which will focus on student achievement in all of its dimensions across the college's many departments and divisions. Conway Campbell, the college's current dean of students, will assume this new role on July 1.

Becker varsity esports adds Overwatch team

This semester, Becker College students will be able to cheer for a new varsity esports team – Overwatch.

Overwatch, published by Blizzard Entertainment, is an online, team-based game where heroes do battle in a world of conflict. Becker's team will kick off its competitive schedule by playing in the TESSPA Overwatch Collegiate Championship: Varsity League beginning later in January.

Overwatch is now the third game supported at the varsity level by Becker. League of Legends was the college's inaugural title in its varsity esports program when it launched in the summer of 2018. Then, in fall of 2018, Becker took advantage of a special opportunity to build a SMITE team.