



WEST VIRGINIA

BRIDGING THE GAP CONSORTIUM

TAACCCT ROUND 3

YEAR 2, QUARTER 2 SUMMARY

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## **BRIDGING THE GAP CONSORTIUM TRENDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Second Quarter of Year 2 revealed a number of trends, best practices, challenges, and in turn recommendations for the Bridging the Gap Consortium. These were most pertinent in the topical focus areas for this quarter of sector partnerships, marketing, and recruitment. Identified trends and best practices for Year 2 grant operations are described in greater detail below.

These trends, best practices, and recommendations are meant to provide the BTG colleges with a better understanding of what other institutions in the consortium are considering for their partnership and recruitment strategies. The BTG colleges can use the information provided below to further tailor their partnership and recruitment strategies toward grant requirements.

### **CONSORTIUM TRENDS**

#### **SECTOR PARTNERSHIP**

All of the BTG institutions indicated some level of involvement with WIBs and employers. Many of the BTG colleges indicated strengthened relationships since the implementation of the BTG grant. The level of employer engagement varied from advisory board participation to program development guidance and internship opportunities. WIB engagement ranged from exchanging ideas to assistance in targeting specific student populations (i.e., through development of a recruitment plan and referring BTG programs to students). The most significant challenge for BTG colleges is tailoring their partnerships to target BTG students. In order to meet grant requirements, many of the institutions need to establish internship and apprenticeship opportunities specifically for BTG students.

#### **MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT**

All of the BTG institutions plan to utilize multiple outreach tools or avenues (e.g., TV ads, social media, newspapers, newsletters, brochures, etc.) in their recruitment plans, which are explained in greater detail below. Many BTG institutions reported an increased focus on advertisements and program specific recruitment, diverging from the more general purpose advertisements usually employed; to meet grant requirements. However, some of the institutions need to establish outreach and recruitment plans specifically for BTG students. For those colleges that are targeting BTG students, many are finding that veteran, TAA, and other BTG populations are very limited in their region, which brings about additional challenges to traditional marketing techniques.

### **BEST PRACTICES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **SECTOR PARTNERSHIP**

Many of the BTG colleges need to consider how they can tailor employer and WIB engagement more specifically for BTG populations (i.e., veterans, displaced workers, and other underserved adults). A promising idea from other BTG institutions was to create a spreadsheet outlining all contacts made to local businesses to avoid duplication of contact. This document can be edited by one or multiple people. Another strategy from BTG institutions, is to collapse similar advisory board meetings to streamline meetings and become efficient with grant employees and business time. See [Appendix A](#) for questions to consider when looking to establish partnerships.

## MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT

BTG colleges that have emphasized creativity while focusing on projected outcomes have received promising results. Examples include video campaigns, mobile marketing, targeting incarcerated populations, and having face-to-face opportunities at community events, food banks, and sporting events. Colleges that are more creative in their content creation and those that target BTG-specific groups find that they are able to impact and reach previously untouched student populations. The BTG institutions were asked to consider opportunities for outreach such as social media (e.g., Facebook forums, YouTube applications), live chat sessions or webcasting, personalized websites, unique campus tours, and mobile apps<sup>1</sup>. Colleges should identify specific strategies for reaching out to veterans and dislocated workers. A few tips provided to the BTG colleges for recruiting these students included<sup>2</sup>:

- Providing a user-friendly website experience where students can easily see and access relevant information
- Utilizing Engine Optimization of your web content to make it easy to search (consider outside assistance for this strategy)
- Integrating content-rich self-service resources to the website so students feel in control of the research they are conducting to educate themselves on their educational options.
- Demonstrate empathy for the students' needs and concerns. For example, make class location, days, and times easily visible/accessible or distribute information on departments/individuals to contact for assistance.

Some colleges found that investing in increasing recruitment capacity was a great way to increase the quality and reach of marketing. Examples from BTG institutions include hiring a graphic designer, bringing in an outside consulting group to evaluate methods, and hiring a grant-specific admissions advisor. In addition, an analysis that was provided to the colleges of the strengths and weaknesses of available advertising media can be found in [Appendix B](#). A guide was also provided outlining social media advertising.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Retrieved from: <http://collegestats.org/2012/10/50-creative-ways-colleges-are-recruiting-students-today/>

<sup>2</sup> Retrieved from: <http://www.evolution.com/opinions/top-five-ways-to-market-higher-education-to-adult-students/>

<sup>3</sup> Retrieved from <http://moz.com/beginners-guide-to-social-media>

# BRIDGE VALLEY COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE

## TOPICAL FOCUS AREAS

### SECTOR PARTNERSHIP

Bridge Valley plans to build upon sector partnerships by implementing their Employer Engagement Plan in the coming year. Once this plan is integrated into Bridge Valley's grant operations, the plan will be implemented.

Bridge Valley has utilized WIBs in a number of ways including participating in sector strategy meetings and developing marketing materials. However, Bridge Valley anticipates building upon the existing relationship with the WIB to ensure they are better informed on BTG programs and Bridge Valley is better informed on the needs of the workforce.

### MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT

Bridge Valley is in the process of finalizing their recruitment plan for BTG students and will share this plan at a future date.

## FUTURE GOALS

### GRANT-FUNDED PROGRAMS

- Bridge Valley plans to restructure the Construction curriculum and continue to improve partnerships in all BTG programs.

### COLLABORATION

- Bridge Valley plans to develop relationships with construction companies to participate in Learn-and-Earn or Apprenticeship programs.

### STUDENT SERVICES AND ISSUES

- Bridge Valley has created a schedule for peer coaches to use when contacting students in the coming year. Bridge Valley anticipates this schedule streamlining the process of contacting students for a number of academic and non-academic related reasons (i.e., contacting prospective students, students who have not filed FAFSA, students who have not registered for the following semester, etc.).

## SUCCESSSES AND CHALLENGES

Based on our discussions with Bridge Valley the following successes and challenges have been identified to date.

- + Bridge Valley continues to utilize the College Career Network to connect students with employers.
- + A statewide PLA policy is moving forward and will be presented to the CTC Council and HEPC. Bridge Valley anticipates this policy being adopted by August 2015.
- + Bridge Valley has been conducting research on a number of grant-related components including: training on the use of Prior Learning Assessments and creating a web portal that will demonstrate career pathways to complete credentials.
- + In IT, six students have passed their certification test under the accelerated program.

- + Professional development training is being set up for prior learning assessments in May. One representative from each program will be asked to attend.
- + Developmental Education is undergoing changes in course length (i.e., math courses going down to four days per week).

# NEW RIVER COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE

## TOPICAL FOCUS AREAS

### SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

Currently, BTG Program Coordinators and faculty are engaging employers through previously established industry relationships and industry knowledge that employers can offer. BTG Program Coordinators and faculty are encouraging employers to join Advisory Boards and build partnerships with New River. Employers have submitted letters of support and have expressed interest but have not finalized partnerships. Advisory Board members have been involved in program development and New River anticipates that more partnerships could result in greater program development assistance.

Prior to the grant, there was no existing regional relationship with the WIB except for in Nicholas County. The regional relationship with the WIB has since strengthened and New River has met with the WIB to schedule a Sector Strategies meeting and develop workforce workshops for students in the spring. The WIB is becoming actively involved in the grant programs and is exchanging ideas with New River on potential improvements.

### MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT

New River has outlined their student recruitment and marketing plan below:

- A. Promote the substantive, innovative, and adaptive programs at New River CTC so that the College is a recognized leader in post-secondary education and the region.
  - a. Produce press releases promoting opportunities and events at the College through newspapers, social network sites, and Internet calendars
  - b. Produce monthly newspaper column promoting opportunities and events at the College through commercial news and social network blogs.
  - c. Produce TV show broadcast on local access cable channels highlighting College events and innovations
- B. Promote the high quality of New River technical programs and instructors
  - a. Publicize what our students do when they leave the college (i.e., transfer, gain employment) through radio, television, Internet, and social networking.
  - b. Emphasize our award-winning faculty and staff through magazines, Internet, student email, and social networking sites
  - c. Emphasize students receiving a high-quality education at a fraction of the price of other Universities through television, radio, and Internet.
  - d. Utilize tours and special events, especially those targeting prospective students
- C. Increase information available about partnerships and transfer opportunities
  - a. Expand listing and description in College Catalog
  - b. Utilize successful transfer student stories through monthly newspaper columns, television advertising, Internet advertising, social networking sites, and student emails
  - c. Work with Workforce WV, Region 1 WIB, Veterans Outreach, DHHR, etc. to expand outreach opportunities through factsheets, Lunch and Learns, and coordinated events
- D. Create and maintain a web brand and image that is user-friendly while adding a New River presence in online communities



- a. Working with web team and/or designer, implement suggestions from focus groups to revise the appearance and usability of the technical program webpages
  - b. Establish web links to and from local information sources through television, radio, and Internet sites
  - c. Feature successful alumni/highlight outcomes of graduates
  - d. Feature information about student activities/organization through College website, social networking sites, and student email
  - e. Establish college identity and presence on social networking sites. Utilize sites for events promotion
- E. Produce materials that support recruitment and retention
- a. Update current publications through catalog, program sheets, college transfer guide, and financial aid guide
  - b. Increase diversity in advertising materials
  - c. Emphasize scholarship opportunities through press releases, monthly columns, websites, social networking sites, and student emails
  - d. Produce new television commercials highlighting alumni, transfer students, and high-demand programs
  - e. Create and maintain means of informing the campus and community about events, opportunities, and deadlines through campus emails, students emails, websites, social networking, and website marquees

Prior to the BTG grant, New River utilized two recruiters that did not promote specific programs but rather recruited for the general institution. The recruitment plan outlined above indicates that recruitment efforts are beginning to be tailored to BTG programs. The ITL emphasized the need to work with the institution recruiters for BTG student recruitment and is working to establish a working relationship with these individuals. In addition, the ITL wants the peer coaches to work closely with the recruiters to begin expanding the responsibilities of the peer coaches to align more with the BEACON model.

## FUTURE GOALS

### GRANT-FUNDED PROGRAMS

- Grant staff is looking forward to seeing the benefits of the grant modifications to the programs and/or courses when they are up and running in the fall.

### COLLABORATION

- Now that program curricula have been sent through the Curriculum Committee, the ITL is looking forward to showcasing the new programs to employers.

### STUDENT SERVICES AND ISSUES

- Will be encouraging peer coaches to get more involved with BTG students in the coming year. After midterms, if students receive a “C” or below, they will be referred to a peer coach for assistance and/or tutoring.

## SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

Based on our discussions with New River, the following successes and challenges have been identified to date.

- + Moved into Raleigh County campus in mid-January and finalizing the certification testing center at that campus.
- + Held second round of training for the peer coaches and Career Counselor and hired two peer coaches that attended the training.
- + The Advanced Manufacturing Coordinator has reached out to two employers for Learn-and-Earn partnerships.
- + New River is implementing Edge credit for the Welding program and has been working with program instructors to ensure these credits are counted toward courses. Once this process is finalized, the plan will be sent to the Technical Division for approval.
- + New River plans to showcase the Welding and Line Service programs in their institution's magazine – CareerFocus. The Welding program will be shown on the cover of the magazine and will be distributed to over 70,000 people in the region.
- + New River has been keeping track of the referrals they are receiving from the WIB. As of now, they have received three student referrals that are ready to enter a BTG program.
- + The ITL is meeting with representatives from Student Services (i.e., Financial Aid, Admissions, and Recruitment Departments) to discuss how to involve the peer coaches more in testing, recruiting, and advising.
- New River is expecting challenges in the Machining program in the coming year. Funding has been delayed for this program and timeline constraints could be a challenge.

# SOUTHERN WEST VIRGINIA COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE

## TOPICAL FOCUS AREAS

### SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

Currently, Southern WV utilizes employers for providing customized training to students, whether credit or non-credit. Primarily, employers participate in program advisory committee activities but Southern WV anticipates developing new strategies for increasing employer engagement in the coming year. Southern WV has submitted their first Employer Engagement Plan and will be utilizing the “District Consortium” structure from the December meeting to increase engagement. Southern WV plans to engage employers in a number of ways including:

- Identifying growth occupations and providing more accurate data on local job market projections;
- Identifying meaningful credentials for their industry;
- Providing input and reviewing curricula to ensure programs are teaching relevant skills;
- Providing effective work-based learning opportunities (e.g., internships, mentorships, etc.);
- Actively participating in advisory committees;
- Hiring graduates; and
- Providing monetary contributions to support programs and potential scholarships.

From access to relevant participants to knowledge of impending workforce needs, Southern WV recognizes the importance of engaging WIBs in the grant program. Currently, the WIB and Southern WV have worked together on the development of a Resource Training Fair that targeted dislocated miners. However, Southern WV anticipates more proactive engagement with the WIB in the coming year. Time and capacity of the WIB have been a challenge thus far, but Southern WV anticipates a change in this relationship soon.

### MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT

Southern WV has outlined their student recruitment and marketing plan below:

- A. Expand awareness and recognition of the college, its programs, offerings, and events
  - a. Submit an average of two news releases per month to area media
  - b. Produce marketing materials and purchase paid advertising targeting prospective students
  - c. Post news releases to College webpage
  - d. Promote programs through local newspapers, radio, and television
  - e. Use social media (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube) for updates
- B. Raise awareness of Southern’s educational opportunities in high schools,<sup>4</sup> communities, and individuals in the area
  - a. Provide marketing materials through a Resource Portal to the Student Services Department
  - b. Utilize sponsorships of community and high school events and activities
  - c. Amplify information to highlight transfer articulation agreements to high schools students

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<sup>4</sup> The evaluation team notes high school recruitment is not an allowable TAACCCT expense; however, the college has identified high schools as part of a broader marketing and recruitment effort.

- d. Raise public awareness of Southern and technical education's relevance
- C. Increase awareness and effectiveness of Southern website and social media
  - a. Redesign webpage to target students
  - b. Keep website up-to-date
  - c. Keep all program pages updated with links to deadlines
  - d. Social media ad buys
- D. Raise awareness about technology programs
  - a. Produce marketing materials and purchase paid advertising
  - b. Continue press releases
  - c. Consider events inviting staff, students, and the community to view facilities
  - d. Distribute Quicksheets to employees
  - e. Discuss programs with internal stakeholders
  - f. Share program information at Workforce WV events
  - g. Directly contact potential employers of graduates from programs
  - h. Participate in production of videos that emphasize technical programs
  - i. Host showcase of area robotics team
  - j. Create webpage dedicate to each program
- E. Improve customer service and enhance student experience
  - a. Workshops designed to improve customer service
  - b. Plan events to heighten student experience and showcase student life at College
  - c. Student survey

The ITL at Southern WV has expressed the concern that Patrick has shared regarding the vagueness of the recruitment plan. The ITL plans to modify the recruitment plan to target BTG programs rather than move forward with the general institution marketing plan outlined above.

## FUTURE GOALS

### GRANT-FUNDED PROGRAMS

- Southern WV plans to complete Phase 2 design/redesign for the Mechatronics and Welding programs in the coming year.
- Southern WV also plans to look into the Construction Management program and employment opportunities for the IT program.

### COLLABORATION

- In the coming year, Southern WV anticipates developing "shared" instructional opportunities (i.e., distance learning) with Bridge Valley in the Mechatronics program.

### STUDENT SERVICES AND ISSUES

- Implementing an evaluation plan for the Student Services component of the grant will be a focus for Southern WV in the coming year.

## SUCCESSSES AND CHALLENGES

Based on our discussions with Southern WV, the following successes and challenges have been identified to date.

- + New certificate programs in Industrial Technology with Mechatronics and Welding certificate options started this semester.
- + New associate degree programs in Mechatronics and Welding have launched.
- Southern WV is concerned with the continued decline in enrollment that the college, as a whole, is experiencing.
- Southern WV's ITL recognizes challenges in improving employer engagement and marketing/recruitment of veterans and displaced workers in the coming year.

## WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY AT PARKERSBURG

### TOPICAL FOCUS AREAS

#### SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

Once the Sector Partnership Coordinator position is filled, more time will be devoted to employer engagement. The ITL recognizes the value of employer engagement as well as the consequences for not engaging employers, especially after the December meeting. The ITL would like to see job placement data reported as a result of established/strengthened employer relationships. This data could be useful in recruiting students and serve as an indicator of the institution's ties to the workforce system. WVUP believes that this may become a reporting option in the future.

WVUP has been fortunate to have a strong relationship with the WIB prior to the grant. This relationship has reportedly strengthened since the grant began and the relationship with the WIB has been beneficial to WVUP. WVUP has partnered with the WIB to develop a recruitment plan which has allowed for greater alignment between the two entities. The WIB has been a great resource for industry partnerships and has helped WVUP promote the BTG programs.

#### MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT

WVUP has outlined the following plan for student recruitment:

- A. Increase visibility and awareness of WVUP's programs and offerings throughout the region.
  - a. Develop a series of ads to include print, video, online, and other forms of media to educate target demographics on BTG career pathways
  - b. Increase presence at local businesses and events
    - i. Run TV schedule on local network stations featuring new tech spot
    - ii. Run new tech spot in local movie theaters
    - iii. Run ads targeting ages 25-59 on Pandora radio
    - iv. Run Facebook ads targeting ages 25+
    - v. Produce and distribute new print materials featuring opportunities for adult learners
    - vi. Hold "WVUP" nights at local high school basketball and football games to target parents of high school students<sup>5</sup>

In addition, WVUP plans to purchase a wrap for a donated trailer that will advertise the BTG technical programs. This form of outreach is still in preliminary planning stages.

### FUTURE GOALS

#### GRANT-FUNDED PROGRAMS

- WVUP made progress in the Construction Management Certificate that they are leading and plans to begin piloting this program through West Virginia University in the coming year. WVUP is anticipating the development of an online format for this class.

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<sup>5</sup> The evaluation team notes recruitment of high school students is not an allowable TAACCCT expense; however, the college has identified this effort as part of a broader marketing and recruitment plan.

### COLLABORATION

- WVUP is planning to finalize the Sector Partnership Coordinator position in the coming year. WVUP is the only BTG institution with permission to hire a Sector Partnership Coordinator using BTG funds. If the position proves useful, the position could be funded by the Governor's office in the future.

### STUDENT SERVICES AND ISSUES

- WVUP is in the process of improving the mentoring system at the institution. The system has been modified for the spring to include more informational sessions and will continue to be evaluated as the grant continues.

### SUCCESSSES AND CHALLENGES

Based on our discussions with WVUP, the following successes and challenges have been identified to date.

- + There are 22 students enrolled in the Construction Management Certificate course.
- + WVUP plans to have more course instruction through hybrid and online formats.
- + The BTG technical programs are being realigned as they are currently under guidance of the Workforce Community Director; although this is taking time, the realignment is necessary.
- ± The BTG grant has made WVUP more open to improving business operations at the institution. However, many different departments want BTG funds to support their programs/events although they might not directly support non-traditional students or change to do so. It has been a challenge to distinguish change for the institution that is relevant for the grant's original purpose.
- WVUP is planning to hire a Course Designer but is challenged in finalizing the candidate that they are interested in as she has a different job working virtually.

# MOUNTWEST COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE

## TOPICAL FOCUS AREAS

### SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

Mountwest is engaging employers in a number of ways including résumé writing, portfolio development, interview techniques, internship opportunities, job fairs, and job postings. Program advisory boards have been established through the WIB and WIB Advisory Council. Mountwest recognizes a need for employers to be more formally engaged and, with the hiring of a Recruiter, Mountwest plans to establish a formal contact between the College and industry. Strengthening relationships with industry could help solidify the role that Mountwest wants employers to fill at the College (e.g., identify industry trends, internship agreements, and educational reimbursement for students).

Currently, Mountwest invites the WIB to College and division advisory meetings and on-site for student registration. Mountwest recognizes a number of benefits in engaging the WIB, including: student referrals, connections to local employers, and prescreening potential students. The ITL recognizes that there is room for improvement regarding WIB engagement and plans to utilize the WIBs in different ways this year by establishing scheduled on-site visits for the WIB as well as finding ways to inform students to register online for BTG programs.

### MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT

Prior to the BTG grant, Mountwest had a single recruiter that advertised programs and recruited students. Now, this recruiter helps refer students to BTG programs by referring them to BTG staff. BTG programs are advertised through the Mountwest website, Career Focus magazine, and other advertising through electronic and print media. In addition, Mountwest has developed a marketing and recruitment plan for students, which includes hiring a recruiter/information specialist that will serve as the primary point of contact with business, industry, federal, state, and local government training and employment programs as well as with post-high school training programs.

Mountwest is also developing promotional tools to reach out to BTG target populations. The timeline for these activities is outlined below:

- A. Begin promotional activities (February 1- May 15)
  - a. Develop professional media marketing and program information sheets
    - i. Student-focused program brochure
    - ii. Employer-focused email, handout
    - iii. YouTube video (used for TV ad)
    - iv. News release sent to regional media outlets
  - b. Media buys via Bulldog Creative Services, March 16-May 3 (designed to target males 18-34)
    - i. Cable: 30s (March 16-May 3; 172 spots)
      - 1. Cartoon Network/Adult Swim
      - 2. FX
      - 3. TBS
    - ii. WSAZ: 30s (March 16-May 3; 54 spots)
      - 1. Jimmy Fallon/Late Night
  - c. Social media (designed to target 19-50 year olds and female influencers)



- i. Facebook ads (March 2-May 3)
    - ii. Weekly posts alternating between a call to action and informational
  - d. CareerFocus – Mountwest’s Bi-Annual Career Magazine
    - i. One-page article on Fast-Track program
  - e. College Website
    - i. Banner image to run February 23-April 9
    - ii. Dedicated program webpage to launch February 23
- B. Identify agencies to work with to identify targeted students (supply with posters and brochures, as appropriate)
  - a. Veterans
  - b. WIBs
  - c. IT and Mechatronics Advisory Committees
  - d. Businesses with entry-level or displaced workers seeking a degree
  - e. Chambers of Commerce
  - f. College recruitment representatives – BEACON calls to potential student that have made inquiries to the College
  - g. Existing adult students that wish to accelerate their education to work timeline
- C. Community Charities that deal with adults in crisis (Supply with posters and brochures, as appropriate)
  - a. Goodwill
  - b. Salvation Army

Mountwest grant staff’s main concern lies in identifying, selecting, and recruiting students for BTG programs. There are a large number of local institutions that are competing for a limited population. Ensuring that these recruitment efforts are effective has been a source of concern for Mountwest grant staff. Mountwest provides ample student resources, quality programs modified for the grant, and new facilities to accommodate BTG students but getting these students may continue to be a challenge.

## FUTURE GOALS

### GRANT-FUNDED PROGRAMS

- Mountwest expects to complete the IT marketing materials in the coming year as well as hire another IT instructor. Once the materials are complete, Mountwest expects to develop a full recruitment plan for the coming year.
- The Fast-Track IT program pilot will be completed this year and Mountwest plans to review and modify based on results relating to a number of outcomes (e.g., student selection, curriculum content, peer coaching efforts, etc.)
  - Once the pilot is complete and changes are made, Mountwest plans to initiate a full-scale Fast-Track IT program cycle of students.

### COLLABORATION

- Mountwest plans to work with the TAA and VA representatives to identify and recruit students for the program.

## STUDENT SERVICES AND ISSUES

- Streamlining the process that peer coaches, instructors, and counselors use to identify and address issues related to students is a main objective for Mountwest.
- Mountwest is planning to expand the number of boot-camps offered to increase support for students entering college in the middle of the academic year.

## SUCCESSSES AND CHALLENGES

Based on our discussions with Mountwest, the following successes and challenges have been identified to date.

- + The Fast-Track IT program is still in development and Mountwest is determining a cycle that allows for continuous program improvement.
- + Mountwest plans to hire a Recruiter who will work with business and industry directly. The Recruiter will serve as the single point of contact for employers and will streamline the process of communication, which will hopefully result in strengthened and/or new partnerships.
- + A consortium-wide BEACON training will take place in mid-March.
- + The IT testing center is near completion. Once the testing center's equipment is completed, Mountwest will apply to Pearson Vue to become an accredited testing center.
- + Two BTG instructors will attend a Microsoft IT Academy Global Customer Summit, which is a professional development opportunity to improve alignment between the CTE and CTC systems that will allow for more successful stacking and latticing of IT credentials for adults.
- Operating within institutional guidelines for hiring and purchasing has been a challenge as it puts time constraints on grant schedules. For example, the new hire process is very lengthy in drafting, approving, and posting job descriptions, advertising the job opportunities, and selecting candidates.
- The testing center for student services is taking longer than expected to implement. Mountwest plans to have the center functional by the first of this year.
- Student recruitment is expected to be a challenge in the coming year.

## **PIERPONT COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE**

### **TOPICAL FOCUS AREAS**

#### **SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS**

For employer engagement, Pierpont staff contact employers to gauge their needs, attend economic development meetings, host advisory board meetings for each program, and, recently, hosted a stakeholders' conference. The stakeholders' conference brought 400 people in from different companies and industries in the 13-county service area and allowed them to talk with staff and faculty in each of Pierpont's programs, allowing the college to gain additional exposure for their programs and employers to share their needs.

The BTG grant has given Pierpont a much better, and larger, data bank to work with, increasing the number of employer contacts and the amount of information available on each of these contacts. This increased flow information has allowed Pierpont to focus their efforts and strategy. Pierpont is seeking to cut down on some of the overlap that currently exists to avoid the problem of multiple representatives from the college contacting the same person.

Pierpont reports a very strong, and growing, relationship with the local WIB. Most recently, staff at Pierpont met with the local WIB Director to discuss how TAACCCT funds have been spent up to this point and where the WIB can support the college. In addition, someone from the college attends all of the WIB partners' meetings, opening up opportunities to speak with a variety of workforce representatives.

Pierpont sees the WIB as opening up opportunities to connect with potential students that would have otherwise never stepped into the classroom, including veterans, the chronically underemployed, and individuals eligible for TAA assistance.

#### **MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT**

Pierpont is using advertising to highlight the college's strong partnerships and BTG programs, including full page advertisements and multipage inserts into the largest circulation newspaper in the region. Pierpont is conducting TV commercials, radio spots, and billboard advertisements focused on BTG and the institution as a whole. The college has received feedback on these from the CLARUS Group - an outside consulting firm - on how to focus the advertisements as well as guidance on how to better utilize social media. Pierpont's high placement rate for graduates is also a selling point for their programs.

Recruitment challenges include potential students wanting to get a job more quickly than the time it takes to complete a BTG certificate or degree. This applies outside of the program to CDL truck drivers and even within the college with students opting for electrical distribution rather than applied process technology programs.

Pierpont staff seek to further target veterans and TAA workers. Staff attend events targeting veterans, reach out to the American Legion and VFW, connect with veteran representatives at Workforce West Virginia, attend job fairs targeting veterans, and utilize the WIB to recruit TAA individuals. Pierpont is also identifying veterans who currently attend the college and could use help from grant services, but are not currently affected by the grant. Pierpont is also bringing in an admissions recruiter to focus specifically on bringing in grant students.

## FUTURE GOALS

### GRANT-FUNDED PROGRAMS

- Pierpont is beginning implementation of the Applied Technology program as well as its first gateway course.

### COLLABORATION

- Pierpont is working with the local WIB to increase recruitment efforts, specifically around veterans and how to best recruit this group.

### STUDENT SERVICES AND ISSUES

- Pierpont is offering a new program with the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), allowing a new place for people to share opportunities.

## SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

- + A recent retention campaign by Pierpont resulted in the over 120 students staying at the college who otherwise would not have returned.
- + Pierpont signed an articulation agreement with Alderson Broaddus (AB) University focusing on Petroleum Technology allowing students to take advantage of opportunities in the Marcellus Shale play.
- + Pierpont has had a large increase in Petroleum Technology students.
- + The new Applied Process Technology program has been approved. Students in the program will choose from three career paths: Instrumentation and Controls (an entirely new program), Advanced Manufacturing (previously the Mechatronics program); and Energy Systems Operations (previously the Power Plant program). This approval is the culmination of a great deal of work.
- Pierpont is having difficulty finding instructors for the Petroleum Technology program; the college is seeking out advice on how best to draw individuals to the field.

## **BLUE RIDGE COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE**

### **TOPICAL FOCUS AREAS**

#### **SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS**

Blue Ridge engages partners in a number of ways, from chairing Chamber of Commerce Committees to hosting summits for local County Commissions. The institution regularly meets with business and industry to determine training needs, hosts job fairs, and offers workshops in relevant industry topics. In addition to these efforts, Blue Ridge is seeking more targeted ways of reaching out to local stakeholders including hosting an annual leadership development conference for local employers, developing a student Resume Database to align with employer needs, promoting co-ops, and hosting employer A La Carte Dinners – in conjunction with their Academy of Hospitality and Culinary Arts – for recruitment and informational meetings.

Going forward, Blue Ridge will build upon these efforts in order to achieve their long term goals of strengthening relationships among regional partners, facilitating continual dialogues, building consensus for focused investments in programs, and increasing student employability in targeted programs.

#### **MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT**

Prior to the BTG grant, recruiting was part of general marketing; specific programs would be featured from time to time, but marketing was focused generally on the Blue Ridge institution as a whole. Under the BTG grant, recruitment has become more focused. More BTG-specific recruiting and marketing materials have been sent out.

Blue Ridge reports that the BTG funding allows the college to increase the amount of marketing material going out and hire a graphic designer specifically tasked with designing marketing pieces for BTG materials. Having a graphic designer on site has greatly reduced the time it takes to complete marketing pieces. An additional benefit of the recruitment efforts has been the increased communication and collaboration between different divisions at the college. Program coordinators now work with marketing teams and pair with the Office of Admissions for job fairs. Other specific marketing pieces include print advertisements in the paper, banner ads on the website highlighting particular programs, pop-up banners for when attending events and job fairs, radio campaigns, and open houses.

Blue Ridge sees their biggest recruitment challenge as continuing the positive momentum which the college has built to date. Blue Ridge is the third largest higher education institution in the state and has grown by 150 percent over the past 10 years. Blue Ridge staff cite the intentionality of program design as a key to success – Blue Ridge does not design a program without knowing that graduates will be able to get a job locally. Still, Blue Ridge is pursuing methods to connect with the grant’s target audience.

Going forward, Blue Ridge seeks to ensure consistent branding, particularly between the college’s website and print advertisements. For specific pieces, staff would like to create informational and recruitment videos to target students who would be interested in a program if they had a better understanding of it. This falls in line with the college’s goal of increasing marketing on social networking sites. Staff report that the best recruitment is direct referral and face-to-face interaction. The college continues to seek these types of connections using their Human Resources and outside referral sources like the local WIB.

## FUTURE GOALS

### GRANT-FUNDED PROGRAMS

- Blue Ridge is seeking to increase enrollment for the Advanced Manufacturing program to 50 students and build out the instrumentation and process controls lab.
- Blue Ridge is seeking to complete the design of two new courses for the Energy program to be implemented by fall 2015.
- For the IT program, Blue Ridge is seeking to add a Capstone Project Management Course, implement Gateway and Capstone courses, and develop a more structured advisory board meeting to strengthen review of entire curriculum.
- A full scale plan launch for the IT program.
- Blue Ridge is moving forward with robotics courses and a certificate program.

### COLLABORATION

- Blue Ridge is seeking to implement more technology classes online and make these available to other CTC's in the consortium.
- Blue Ridge's WIB representative will attend upcoming internal BTG meetings.

### STUDENT SERVICES AND ISSUES

- Blue Ridge is seeking to establish Veterans Support Center and fully launch the BEACON program.

## SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

- + Blue Ridge has recently hired a Veterans Coordinator for BTG students, which grant leadership reports as a tremendous asset to the college, especially in regards to establishing a Veterans Support Center.
- + Blue Ridge reports overall strong momentum for the grant, including the recent progress around IT and Robotics
- + Blue Ridge has recently announced a partnership with First Energy, an electric utility that will create a new Energy program on campus. This is a unique partnership in that Blue Ridge already has an Energy program. The college is still determining exactly how the partnership relates to the grant.

## WEST VIRGINIA NORTHERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

### TOPICAL FOCUS AREAS

#### SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

Northern's ITL has a background in workforce making her very familiar with the needs of businesses and what they expect from a community college partner. Northern's ITL is leading the college's business outreach as part of the responsibilities as the head of workforce development. Northern's primary method of business engagement is direct contact, with the ITL calling employers and touching base on their needs and the college's needs. Northern's ITL seeks to develop a good relationship with employers so that they feel comfortable coming to them for their needs. One way this is done is by keeping track of all of the contacts made with employers to ensure that they do not get inundated from too many sources at once.

Northern's ITL would prefer for the system of contacting businesses to be more formalized with a possibility for this including a formal group of advisors for each industry that meet once or twice a year. The only other concern expressed is not having enough time to recruit employers.

#### MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT

The BTG grant has allowed resources to be poured into recruitment for the Mechatronics and Petroleum Technology programs. Northern is creating two brochures to advertise the program, with one focusing on the college and another focusing on the college and the WIB's joint efforts. These advertisements, as well as radio spots and print ads that will run regionally in May and June, will help not only the grant programs but the college as a whole. Grant staff have reported a much closer relationship with the WIB due to the grant.

Northern has brought on a recruitment coach to specifically focus on veterans. The college's ITL believes that this will be very helpful for recruitment efforts.

Going forward, Northern will continue to utilize the marketing funds to expand grant efforts, print material, work with veterans, and get individuals in sooner so that they can get through fast track and developmental programs before the fall semester starts. The ITL will use both grant funds as well as a new wave of funds for the new welding program.

### FUTURE GOALS

#### GRANT-FUNDED PROGRAMS

- Northern will add a class to the Petroleum Technology program, and may explore creating a crossover with the mechatronics program by allowing these students to take the class as an elective.
- Northern's ITL is looking to increase staff in fall of 2015 to support an additional mechatronics cohort.
- Northern is looking to strengthen their faculty base to support the grant-funded programs and has added four new instructors.

#### STUDENT SERVICES AND ISSUES

- Having aided students with Technical Math 2, Northern will continue on with their supplemental instructor setup as the instructor moves forward with the students to Technical Math 3.

- Northern is seeking to build stronger ties with veterans and has recently hired a veterans coach.

## SUCSESSES AND CHALLENGES

- + Northern's Mechatronics program is booming with over 25 students enrolled this semester, above the regular cap of 20 students. Northern has responded by adding extra lab times for students and bringing on an additional lab instructor who is a recent graduate.
- + With the recent retirement of the college's Vice President of Workforce Development, Northern's ITL has picked up additional responsibilities, giving her more authority to shape the direction of economic and workforce development on both the workforce and educational departments (e.g. hiring, purchase orders, leave time).
- + Northern has brought on a recruitment coach specifically for veterans, a strong step towards the grant goal of focusing on the veteran population.
- Northern reports difficulty getting student feedback on important campus and grant. For instance, Northern will often conduct student surveys but has a hard time getting students to respond.



## **EASTERN WEST VIRGINIA COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE**

### **TOPICAL FOCUS AREAS**

#### **SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS**

Eastern's ITL relies on a number of strategies to connect with employers, including meetings with sector partners, K-12 superintendents, economic development organizations, the Chamber of Commerce, and the County Commissioners. Each of these meetings holds a different focus but the emphasis is on opening up the most opportunities to make contact with new employers or build relationships with current partners. The ITL often reaches out to contacts and follows up with phone calls or even in-person visits. Eastern's primary targets for growth are Allied Health, IT, and Advanced Manufacturing/Energy.

Eastern's ITL is working off of Mark Julian's framework to work with new partners including a Workforce region (Region 8) and the Department of Rehabilitation Services to address other community needs not currently being met. Eastern also utilizes their entrepreneur Joe Papp to provide a valuable resource to the community on new methods to grow this skill set.

Eastern's ITL reports a strong relationship with the WIB. One of the key features of this partnership is an agreement in which WIB staff provide on-site career counseling for the college two days a week. This embedded partnership provides a needed service for the college while also providing opportunities for interaction between the two organizations. Eastern also reports a good relationship with the Division of Rehabilitation Services and the unemployment office. This is very helpful for students as the knowledge from the workforce side allows them to open up potential funding opportunities, like dislocated funds or economic hardship funding.

Going forward, Eastern is seeking to improve the visibility of the career counselors and the services they can provide as, at the moment, many students do not take advantage of the available opportunities. Eastern's ITL is looking into getting these counselors into classrooms.

#### **MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT**

Eastern is building on a recruitment strategy outlining many traditional forms of prospective student engagement including hosting events, radio advertisements, billboards, mailings, social media platforms, and workforce trainings. Eastern also has the resource of extensive demographic research. Eastern's ITL sees their workforce training as the key asset to their marketing platform as their ability to offer workforce training sets them apart from other colleges in the region.

Using the assistance of BTG funds, Eastern has sent a mailing to all 35,000 households in the institution's six-county area. This was a particular accomplishment for Eastern as they have never before had a mailing that hit everyone in their service area at once. The mailing focused on specific BTG programs including their Wind Energy and IT programs. This diverges from the more general focus previously employed in the college's recruitment strategy.

Recruitment on targeted populations has also increased recently for TAA eligible individuals and veterans. Specifically, Eastern has not sent out mailings to anyone eligible for TAA benefits since 2005. Eastern is also working with Veterans Upward Bound, an organization that helps veterans who are interested in returning to college apply for school, take placement tests, and make it to their first day of school.

Eastern is rolling out a new recruitment strategy based on crowdsourcing called “Strive for Five,” in which students are offered an incentive for referring friends to the school. This is being funded with money that is separate from the grant.

The biggest challenge Eastern foresees in recruitment is the college’s environmental limitations. Eastern’s service area is very rural and as the college graduates more and more students, the pool of potential students shrinks. This is especially true as students are earning terminal degrees and thus will most likely not be reenrolling at any point. Coupled with the aging and shrinking population projections, the college faces a difficult road in recruitment. Another challenge facing Eastern is their reliance on adjunct faculty. With only four or five full-time faculty, it can be difficult to get adjunct faculty on board for these large-scale recruitment initiatives.

Going forward, Eastern hopes to be able to market itself as a gateway to major four-year institutions by establishing MOUs with WVU, Shepherd, Marshall, and Potomac State. Funding for recruitment has come from both grant funds as well as college funding. Additionally, while Eastern sees some correlations between certain demographics and program interest, the college’s marketing aims for a diverse clientele and avoids targeting any specific group.

Finally, Eastern’s recruitment of the prison population continues, with the ITL pursuing discussions with regional jails now in addition to the state prisons. The regional jails present a different type of opportunity which the college is exploring as well.

## FUTURE GOALS

### GRANT-FUNDED PROGRAMS

- Eastern is seeking to have staff trained for the NCCER certification so that the college can participate in a “train the trainer” model for Advanced Manufacturing and Energy programs.
- Eastern is looking to grow their IT program offerings, with new grant IT staff instructing their first course this semester.
- Eastern’s IT grant staff have identified targeted courses for hybridization and have sent these to BTG leadership.

### COLLABORATION

- Eastern is seeking to put MOAs in place with 4-year transfer colleges to ensure guaranteed admission for students; one of these plans targets Potomac State College and IT.

### STUDENT SERVICES AND ISSUES

- Building on successes in finding business partners, Eastern is working to get Partnerships for Possibilities, the parole and prison population program, up and running with a goal of five to 10 business partners and 10 to 20 participants.
- Eastern is rolling out their Eastern Advocates program to all new students entering the college.
- Eastern is assessing the PLA route for the college and is exploring the best way for students to receive credit for prior experiences.

## SUCCESSSES AND CHALLENGES

- + Eastern is officially a member of 8 Keys for Veteran Success; grant staff reported that the process was very simple to go through.
- + Eastern has confirmed partners for their Partnerships for Possibilities program and is has found additional opportunities for recruitment.
- Eastern cannot pursue online course creation under the grant as intensely as the institution would like to as the college is still awaiting the completion of an HLC evaluation to become accredited. Only upon receiving the accreditation would Eastern be able to grant a degree to a student who completed more than 50 percent of their courses online.

## APPENDIX A. ESTABLISHING PARTNERSHIPS

Below is a list of questions to consider when looking to establish partnerships.<sup>6</sup>

### Establishing the Partnership

#### Questions to Consider

1. What is the need for a partnership? Is there a funding opportunity?
2. What is the mission or purpose of the partnership? What goals does the partnership seek to achieve?
3. Is the partnership going to target a specific industry sector and/or a specific region?
4. What are the different perspectives and stakeholders necessary to define the problem/need and to create solutions?
5. Who needs to be a member for the partnership to achieve these goals? What level of decision-making power will be required to allow the partner to help affect desired change?
6. What are appropriate avenues or networks for reaching out to prospective members?
7. What is the expected value or benefit of participation for each partner?
8. Who should reach out to prospective partners?
9. What are appropriate roles for the partners participating in the partnership?
10. What resources will be required to support the work and the operation of the partnership?
11. What resources are already available for this purpose?
12. What are expectations for participation in the partnership (e.g., attend meetings, provide financial support, etc.)? What kind of commitment of time and resources are expected?
13. What kind of formal agreement is necessary? Is it necessary or desirable to have different partner categories?
14. What are partners expected to do within their own organizations, to build buy-in, increase involvement, to change policies or practices, etc.?
15. Once the partnership has been established and begins its work, pose the question, "Who else needs to join us to help us achieve our goals?"

#### Action Steps

1. Meet individually with prospective partners to understand their needs, their interest in partnering, and potential contributions.
2. Use information from these meetings to develop an initial statement of goals for the partnership and potential benefits to partnering in order to invite the interest and commitment of potential partner organizations.
3. Determine the need to be addressed and draft broad mission and goals for the partnership.
4. Determine the industry and regional focus if any and identify stakeholders and potential partners. Identify any

<sup>6</sup> Retrieved from: "Partnerships: A Workforce Development Practitioner's Guide" Commonwealth Cooperation, 2013.

'anchor' industry association or business.

5. Obtain preliminary commitment from prospective partners and identify individuals to represent the partners.
6. Support prospective members to obtain commitment to the partnership by providing details of potential benefits and the potential responsibilities, and resource and time commitments of member organizations.
7. Convene a meeting of all partners to formally agree on goals, key (program) activities, and structure.
8. Determine the roles that need to be filled to help the partnership function and work with partners to ensure that all roles and responsibilities have been clearly assigned to at least one partner organization/individual.
9. Determine the need for resources to support the partnership. Develop a budget that includes staff time for planning/coordination, meetings, materials and other needs.
10. Establish a schedule of regular meetings.
11. Plan and design the core work of the partnership to address the key purpose of the partnership – the policy or program design.
12. Develop plans for deeper institutional engagement with member organizations across multiple levels and departments/functional areas.

## APPENDIX B. STUDENT RECRUITMENT ANALYSIS TABLE

Below is an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of available advertising media.<sup>7</sup>

Types of Marketing	Strengths	Weaknesses
<b>TELEVISION</b>	Great for awareness and direct response advertisements. These efforts also allow institutions to geo-target or appeal to a national audience.	Very competitive, rising costs. Effective media placement and analysis can require professional assistance.
<b>RADIO</b>	Great for pushing open houses or on-campus events - and it can influence the success of your other advertising media.	Difficult to directly attribute inquiries and/or measure results.
<b>OUTDOOR/TRANSIT</b>	Lots of bang for the buck over time in raising local or regional awareness. Can geo-target placements to coordinate with commuter patterns.	Difficult to directly attribute inquires and/or measure results.
<b>PUBLIC RELATIONS</b>	Useful for raising awareness of both prospective students and general public.	Difficult to directly attribute inquires and/or measure results. It's time intensive, as results usually show over a longer period of time.
<b>SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO)</b>	This is the most cost-effective source of inquiries that lead to enrollment.	Low lead volume. Best results typically come from an ongoing plan that is administered by SEO specialists.
<b>PAY-PER-CLICK MARKETING</b>	Great conversions, good volume and ability to geo-target.	Time-consuming - this can be a 24/7 job. Best results come from working with interactive marketing experts.
<b>INTERACTIVE RETARGETING</b>	Useful for raising awareness and branding.	This medium hasn't matured yet.
<b>ONLINE DISPLAY</b>	Useful for raising awareness and drives traffic to your best converting sources.	Difficult to directly attribute inquires and/or measure results.
<b>COST-PER-INQUIRY</b> (Interactive Inquiry Generation)	Low cost-per-inquiry and generates significant volume.	Conversions are low; must have adequate staff to work the volume of inquiries.
<b>DIRECT MAIL</b>	Allows great targeting ability for both search and remarketing campaigns and remains a standard form of follow-up for specific stages of inquiry pools.	Results for search campaigns are declining while costs for paper and printing are rising.
<b>EMAIL MARKETING</b>	An excellent source for matriculation - use as part of your communication plan.	The science behind mail communication continues to change. Mapping out, deploying and measuring email campaigns can be very time-consuming.
<b>PRINT</b>	As an advertising medium, it remains relatively inexpensive. Print ads can be geo-targeted to appeal to your prospects and can also drive Internet inquiry volume.	Larger metropolitan newspapers aren't generally effective and others are going out of business.

<sup>7</sup> Retrieved from: [http://www.plattform.com/sites/default/files/Marketing\\_Your\\_AdultEd\\_Prog\\_0.pdf](http://www.plattform.com/sites/default/files/Marketing_Your_AdultEd_Prog_0.pdf)