



training for regional energy in north dakota

**September 30, 2018**

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# Letter from the Project Director

Dear Readers,

On behalf of our TREND Consortium partners – Bismarck State College, Sitting Bull College, Turtle Mountain Community College, and Williston State College – thank you for allowing us to share with you a few highlights of the many successes we've seen throughout our TAACCCT Grant. There are many accomplishments that have resulted from our grant, and I wish I could document them all. Stories of our students' successes, new relationships and partnerships with industry, collaboration among our consortium partners, etc. But in the interest of time, I'll let the stories and pictures included here speak for themselves.



It has been such a pleasure to work with this amazing group of people over the last six years during both our Round II and Round IV TAACCCT funding. The friendships and partnerships will carry on as we continue this important work of helping our students get trained for a successful career.

Cheers,

*Emily Cash*

Director, TREND Consortium



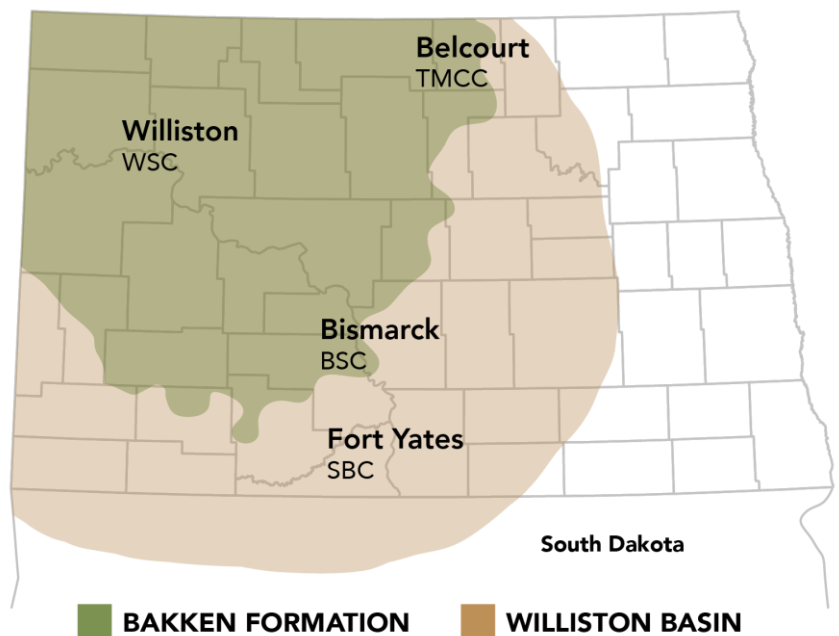
# Meet the Consortium

In 2010, the U.S. Department of Labor started a four-year series of grants to award \$500 million to higher education institutions across the country under the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training grant program (TAACCCT). This grant provided funds to expand and improve the institutions' delivery of education and career training programs that can be completed in two years or less.

A unique partnership between state and tribal institutions in North Dakota came together as a consortium and were the fortunate recipients of two of these grants. This group is called the TREND Consortium.

The TREND grants were the first formal higher education partnership between state and tribal institutions in North Dakota. Prior to TAACCCT funding, there were pockets of success with early groundwork between BSC, WSC and TMCC, and of course in this small state, college presidents sometimes network on various committee work. But the opportunity to jointly apply for TAACCCT funding opened communications in a new way that forged lasting relationships between TREND partners. Open and consistent dialogue has resulted in regular sharing of best practices that go beyond just grant staff.

All stakeholders see this relationship continuing into the future and being the foundation for other initiatives. Though each are very different institutions, our common goal is providing the best education to our students and meeting the needs of employers. By sharing with one another and leveraging our experience, we are creating a lasting environment of collaboration, camaraderie to provide workforce training that gets results.



# Grant Goals

In 2012, TREND partners received **\$14.6 million** to develop new and enhanced curriculum and credentials; redesign program development and delivery systems; and to offer enhanced support services and career navigation. The Consortium's second grant was awarded in 2014 for **\$9.9 million** and built upon the first grant's success and continued to increase enrollment and successful completion of participants. The goals of the TREND grant focused in three main areas:

- 1. Increased training and credentialing in four main sectors – oil and gas, utility, transportation and construction. The consortium emphasized career pathways and stackable credentials.**
- 2. Improved curriculum delivery and providing a flexible, technology-enabled environment to enhance student learning.**
- 3. Increased retention strategies with student support and career exploration services and increased relationships with industry.**

Bismarck State College served as the lead for the TREND grants. Funding at the colleges was used to add equipment and software, purchase classroom and lab supplies, train faculty and staff, along with other initiatives that ultimately aided students in their success at college and in the job market.



**TREND Project Team** from L to R: Jerame Novak, Alicia Uhde, Julie Erickson, Katrina Delorme, Mica Belgarde, Dr. Jim Davis, Mary Morrell, Tania Welch, Dr. John Miller, Pam Rasmussen, Dr. Larry Skogen, Harriet Black Hoop, Valerie Minery, Bruce Emmil, Dr. Koreen Ressler, Kari Knudson, Emily Cash

# Success Stories

**Turtle Mountain Community College's** Heavy Equipment program is one of the only programs operating in the state, providing valuable training for its participants. The college entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the tribe's transportation department. This is the first MOU to be approved and implemented between the college and tribe in many years. TMCC students work with the tribal transportation department, where they gain real-life work experiences, working on an actual road construction project with the tribe's employees, under the supervision of TMCC Heavy Equipment Operator program instructors. The latest project consisted of the construction of a small access road/driveway. The students were very proud of their work.



*TMCC's TREND-funded motor scraper is used to give students heavy equipment skills in the Heavy Equipment Operator program.*



**Bismarck State College and Turtle Mountain Community College** expanded their existing collaboration by offering TMCC students an additional pathway to complete an online Power Plant degree through BSC's online energy programs.

**Sitting Bull College** has been able to provide its students with hands-on training in electrical, welding, CDL, building trades, and energy technology. The college created customized welding and electrical labs, transforming the ability for students to obtain certificates in their programs.

SBC's TREND programs are popular trades with students. In Welding, students are taught different welding practices, fabrication techniques, measurement tools and drawings used by industry. SBC's Electrical Program provides students basic electricity, wiring circuits, materials and tools used in residential and commercial buildings. CDL students receive basic driving skills, OSHA safety standards, and DOT regulations, including training on a TAACCCT-funded semi-trailer and CDL simulator.



*Sitting Bull College's new welding lab was customized to fit students' needs, including welding bays to allow more students to enroll in the program.*

As part of a comprehensive behind-the-wheel driving experience **Turtle Mountain Community College** students and an instructor take a “1,000-mile road trip” across areas of North Dakota to gain experience in both rural and urban terrain, giving students experience driving in various road conditions and environments, which the college finds is a very helpful and important addition to the training course.

This line of work can sometimes require graduates to be away from home for some time. One family of four (three of which earned their certification from TMCC) have overcome this challenge by gaining employment at the same trucking company. Two brothers, a brother-in-law, and a stepfather carpool to work during the work week and room together while they are away from home. Having support from each other while away from their families helps with morale and keeps them motivated during the work week.



*One of TMCC’s graduates of the Commercial Vehicle Operation program was Mr. A., an older-than-average student who had never held a permanent full-time job and was a single father of three. He discovered his calling in the program and landed a position right after completion earning \$33.00/hour. “As long as I am [able] to provide a decent home, my own home, decent running vehicle. Got my kids to graduate and go off to college, staying away from alcohol and drugs, I know I’ve done my job on this earth. My only goal is to have a nice home where all my kids can come [for] Christmas.”*

*“The TREND grant partnership has been truly transformational for Williston State College (WSC). Because of the financial support and guidance provided through the grant, WSC has been able to build premier training/educational programs attuned to the needs of business and industry in northwestern North Dakota. More importantly, because of the lessons learned and partnerships forged through the grant, WSC will be able to sustain all of the programs started and supported by the TREND grant and continue to serve business and industry partners in the energy sector and related fields.”*

*Dr. John Miller, President, Williston State College*

**Bismarck State College** increased its data gathering and processing during the grant period by requiring additional intake information and developing a detailed database that could more easily run student reports on progress, outcomes, internships, and employment results. The database has been used for TAACCCT reporting, but also expanded capacity for staff to track things such as placement, academic performance, and methods of student referral. As a result, BSC can more easily track student retention, identify possible industry partners, and make data-driven decisions.



*Students in BSC’s Mechanical Maintenance program make their own tools as part of a hands-on project that also allows them to showcase their skills to family and potential employers.*

**Bismarck State College's** Lineworker program has been a successful training program for many years. Through the TREND grant, the program was able to add much-needed, updated equipment in which students could become better prepared for the equipment and supplies they would be encountering in the workplace. A highly-technical and hands-on program such as Lineworker can be very costly to equip, and through the TREND grant, students had access to modern safety equipment, pole setters, bucket trucks, trenchers, and more. In the Lineworker program, students also take courses to prepare them for them for the North Dakota Department of Transportation Commercial Driver's License exam, a skill requested through the Lineworker industry advisory committee.

The addition of the CDL certificate has benefitted students, and BSC's graduating class of 2017 had an employment placement around 90 percent.



*The 2017 Lineworker program consisted of 52 students. Faculty followed up with students following their training and reported that more than 90 percent had lined up employment in their field.*



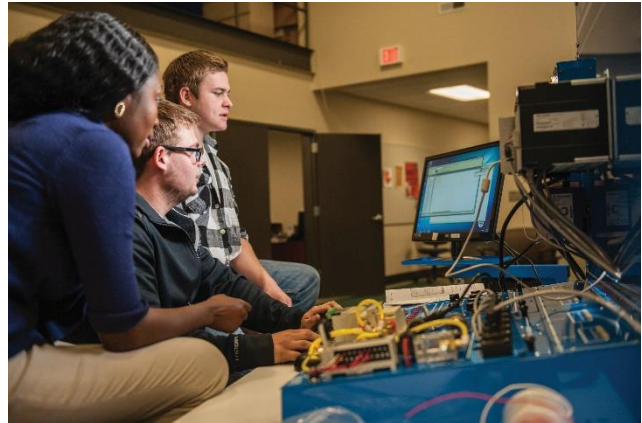
**TREND Consortium partners** provided training and professional development to faculty and career navigators to better equip them with skills and certifications that will position students for increased learning and certificate attainment.

**Turtle Mountain Community College** utilized TAACCCT funding to enhance its existing welding program with better equipment and supplies to aid students in their training. Student Lane B. graduated from TMCC's 9-month Welding Technology program. Following graduation, he accepted a position earning \$30/hour, including an incentive of a raise once he passed his welding tests. *"Before I graduated, I was going through a rough period in my life. Almost dropping out of the program due to bad decisions, TMCC gave me a second chance and I have not looked back since. Having a degree helps make your life easier because it shows people you can achieve set goals and are employable."*



*A student uses new equipment in TMCC's Welding Shop during his 9-month training program.*

**Williston State College's** Automation and Control instructor will incorporate the NIMS approach (National Institute for Metalworking Skills), a nationally-recognized credential for industrial maintenance. Gas plants coming online near the college are looking for skills with centrifugal pumps and compressors. These skills, and basic electrical and automation skills, are found in the NIMS approach and closely correlate with the Amatrol equipment and Rockwell Automation platforms used by the college. This approach will aid in program sustainability and its contribution to the workforce of qualified technicians.



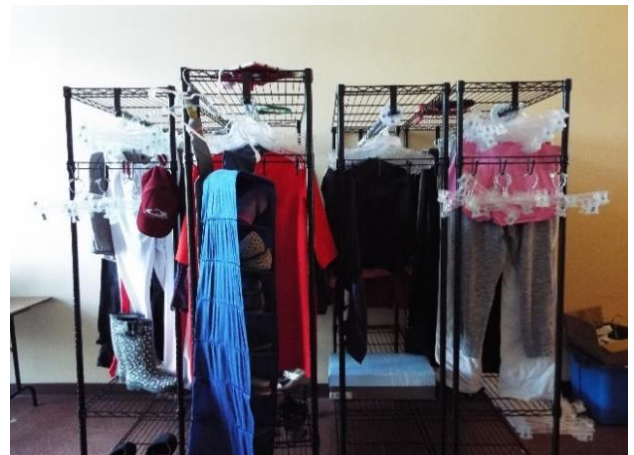
*Students at Williston State College collaborate on high-tech trainers during a course in Automation and Control. WSC used grant funding to purchase trainers that participants will be using when starting jobs in the field.*

With WSC's location in the heart of Bakken oil development, the grant allowed WSC to evolve and refresh certain offerings to withstand a volatile market and incorporate industry feedback and trends to give students an edge when job searching. WSC saw high placement of students in internships and job positions, which has averaged 100 percent throughout the grant for Petroleum, Diesel, Welding, and Information Technology.

*"Through the TREND grant, Sitting Bull College was able to expand its curricular programs in the trades area, in particular welding, electrical, and commercial driver's licensure. Without this funding, starting these programs would have been a challenge for us due to limited funding. In addition, we now have the equipment and facilities to sustain the programs into the future. This allows Sitting Bull College to continue to meet our mission of providing educational opportunity for the citizens of the Standing Rock Reservation and surrounding communities."*

*Dr. Koreen Ressler, Vice President, Sitting Bull College*

**Sitting Bull College** started a job coaching initiative, a program to help students be prepared for the workforce. Services include providing students with basic interview skills, dress code information, and expectations of professionalism in the workplace. Over the grant period, the job coaching expanded to also include job shadowing and internship experiences to give students practical, hands-on learning of what is like to be an employee and what an employer expects of them. Building on the success of the job coaching initiative, SBC faculty and staff took it upon themselves to start their own initiative, providing a "career closet" for students of the job coaching program. They collect donations of professional clothing so that students in need can have an outfit that will give them a professional appearance and more confidence for job interviews.



*While direct student services are not part of the TAACCT grant, SBC leveraged its success with the TREND-funded job coaching program with students and faculty donating professional attire to help students feel prepared and confident for job interviews.*



**Williston State College** began an innovative “cross-walk” between the Petroleum and Information Technology (IT) Programs to better prepare students for the regional workforce. Students enrolled in Petroleum Automation and Control began taking Networking Fundamentals, and the Information Technology students crossed over to take basic Automation courses. This initiative was driven by industry, and feedback has been positive, indicating that job applicants with this combination of skills are more likely to be placed than those without. These important skillsets enhance an employee’s contribution to a company when automation technicians possess basic knowledge of computer networking and IT technicians have the same in automation.



*WSC Student Jared Croop participated in WSC's cross-walked courses and became the youngest member in the North Dakota Chapter of the InfraGard Group, a partnership between the FBI and private/public sector professionals who work to protect data, networks, and other national infrastructure. Croop recently graduated and accepted a full-time job.*



**TREND Consortium partners** worked with the state Career and Technical Education office to provide input and expertise on an energy-related career exploration module with the goal of increasing student enrollment into various high-wage, high-skill, energy-related pathways in demand throughout the state.

**Sitting Bull College** Vice President Dr. Koreen Ressler said that the grant enabled them to recruit more males into programs, increasing male enrollment at the school to 40 percent of students, up from 30 percent before the grant. Outreach efforts also included heavy emphasis on recruiting veterans into the career training programs.

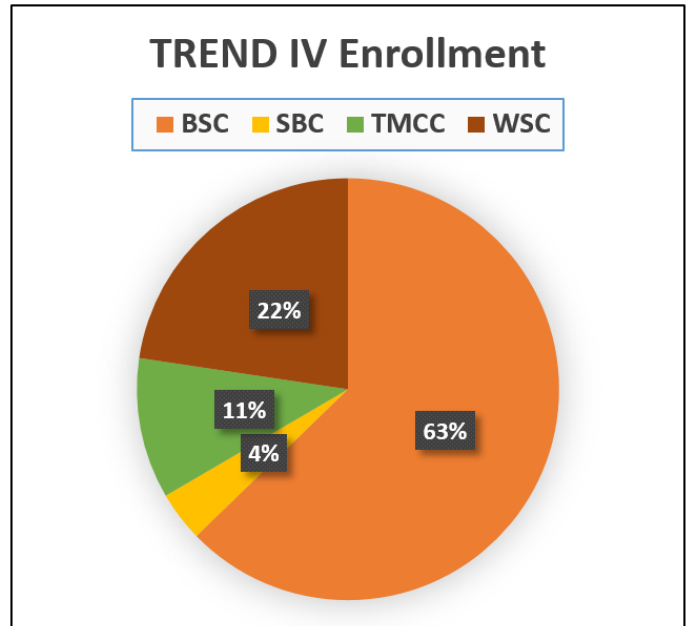
SBC’s trades programs include a technology aspect as well as hands-on projects, enabling students to see first-hand their accomplishments and take pride in their work.



*Students in SBC’s electrical program receive training on a local underground transformer. This work done in the field is paired with a new, grant-funded electrical lab to provide hands-on training.*

The **TREND Consortium partners** exceeded its overall enrollment target of 1,740 participants over the program period and enrolled more than 2,200 participants. Seventy percent of participants either completed a program or were retained in their program at the end of the grant period.

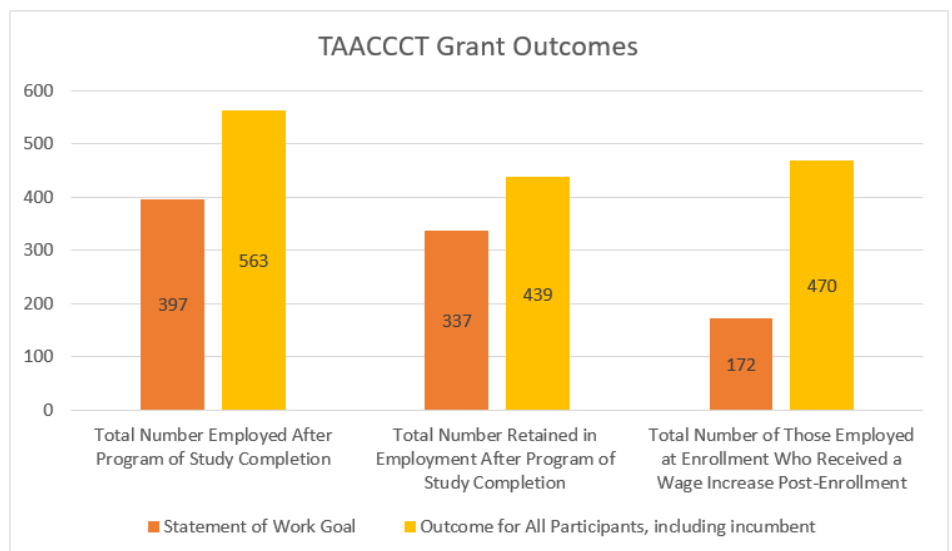
Each TREND college meets a critical need in their communities by providing workforce training for area students, particularly in tribal areas. The partnership of these very different four schools around the state provided an enriching collaboration that will be sustained. Each college noted that learning about the differences in needs at each of the institutions was enlightening and contributed to how issues were addressed within their own colleges.



*“The TREND grant was a first class collaborative effort and agreement between a number of North Dakota tribal and community colleges. At TMCC, we did our best to maximize the use of the funds and succeeded in achieving accreditation and state-of-the-art training programs as a result. Thank you for providing us this opportunity.”*

*Dr. Jim Davis, President, Turtle Mountain Community College*

**Bismarck State College** is the third-largest college in North Dakota and enrolled the largest number of participants throughout the grant period. BSC also has a very large percentage of its students entering programs with some form of employment, whether in the industry or not. The TAACCCT grant guidelines didn’t allow those incumbent students to be counted in Outcome B.8 “Total number employed after program of study completion,” which hampered the consortium’s efforts in reaching its goal of 397 students employed after program completion and 337 still retained in employment two and three quarters following completion. However, state wage records indicate that when counting all students, including incumbent workers, the consortium exceeded its employment goals from the Statement of Work.



After seeing how successful the career navigator function aided students in TREND programs at the college, **Turtle Mountain Community College** administration implemented it college-wide. The TMCC Career Navigator continually tracked and followed up with TREND students, assisting them with every aspect of their education, from registration to scholarship applications to job readiness activities such as resume preparation and interview skills. Overall, the TMCC Navigator takes a case-management approach to each student, bolstering their success from the very beginning of their higher education journey to program completion and beyond.



***TREND Consortium partners increased basic skills training for participants through a variety of efforts at each school, including job coaching, internships, embedded tutoring, and developmental education.***

**Bismarck State College** developed and hosted successful “Careers in Energy Weeks” for students to meet with employers in the energy industry, participate in mock interviews, and learn about career opportunities in the industry. Students said participating in the event will help them begin their careers as they were able to make connections and network with future employers while learning about what different companies have to offer. A goal of this event was to expand the awareness to students of what options are available to them with their BSC degree, outside of the companies and nearby locations that are most commonly associated with their career path. Company representatives enjoy coming to the event and visiting with students in a variety of BSC programs, as it gives them ideas about what other degrees they could hire from for certain positions.



*BSC Lineworker Program started a capstone "Rodeo" at the end of the semester in which students showcased their skills and participated in competitions. The college invited industry partners and participants' family members and held a picnic, which was an effective tool for increasing student confidence and employer appreciation and feedback session for future collaboration.*

*At BSC we pride ourselves in providing nationally recognized energy programs to support workforce needs. Our employer partners appreciate the fact that our equipment and labs are state-of-the-art. Cutting edge equipment and technology ensures our students are ready to fill the jobs needed to keep our economy moving. Several of our energy programs got a major boost thanks to the TREND grants. Thanks to this investment from the TAACCCT funding, our students have a real edge as the move from the classroom into high demand, high wage careers.*

*Dr. Larry C. Skogen, President Bismarck State College*

The logo for TREND features the word "TREND" in a bold, sans-serif font. The letters "TRE" are orange, and the letters "ND" are white. The entire word is set against a black background that has a rounded, rectangular shape.

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