



YEAR 2 – EVALUATION REPORT

VINCENNES UNIVERSITY

LOGISTICS TRAINING AND EDUCATION CENTER (LTEC) INITIATIVE

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CONTENTS

Introduction.....2

Summary of Activities5

Program Accelerators10

LTEC Initiative Progress Toward PY1 Accelerators10

New Accelerators for PY213

Program Barriers19

LTEC Initiative Progress Toward PY1 Barriers19

New Barriers for PY223

Program Recommendations.....27

LTEC Initiative Progress Toward PY1 Recommendations.....27

New Recommendations.....33

Conclusions.....37

Appendix A38

Appendix B.....39

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

In 2012, Vincennes University (VU) received a grant of \$2,931,354 through the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) program to fund the Logistics Training and Education Center (LTEC) Initiative. The purpose of LTEC is to prepare TAA-eligible workers and other participants for employment in the logistics industry. Ultimately, LTEC seeks to increase the number of qualified, employable candidates by providing them with increased opportunities to advance in their education and careers. Those following the career path developed through the program will progress to middle-skill and high-skill jobs and earn higher wages. The TAACCCT grant provides an opportunity for VU to expand the existing center to serve a larger number of students and carry out a comprehensive evaluation of program activities, outputs and outcomes.

As part of grant requirements, VU procured an independent contractor, Thomas P. Miller and Associates, LLC (TPMA), to conduct an objective evaluation of the LTEC Initiative. This evaluation will provide VU main campus and LTEC, its partners, its funders and other stakeholders with critical information regarding the effectiveness of implemented programs through September 2016.

This Year 2 Evaluation Report is the second of four yearly evaluation reports that examines the outputs and outcomes of the program to date, as well as the underlying processes, assumptions, modifications, successes, obstacles, and progress over the past year that have led to program results in Year 2. It concludes with recommendations for LTEC staff and faculty to consider as part of Year 3 operations as well as progress made toward Year 1 recommendations.

SUMMARY OF METHODOLOGY

This second evaluation report focuses on the implementation of the LTEC Initiative in Year 2 of grant-funded operations. To understand program implementation and draw conclusions about successes and obstacles, this Year 2 Evaluation Report relies on the content analysis of qualitative data as well as quantitative data from the following sources:

1. Interviews with LTEC staff and faculty;
2. Interviews with LTEC students;
3. Interviews with LTEC-connected employers;
4. Year 1 quarterly reports prepared and submitted by LTEC staff; and
5. Enrollment data.

Future reports will incorporate additional evaluation methods still in development, including analysis of course evaluations, pre-/post-test knowledge gains and a quasi-experimental design that will measure student outcomes compared to similarly situated Workforce Investment Act (WIA) customers in the LTEC's footprint of service.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Overall, LTEC has experienced program development and implementation success in PY2. With strengthened partnerships and relationships with employers as well as the VU main campus, LTEC has been able to progress through their grant activities with greater momentum than in PY1. LTEC is also working to strengthen relationships with the TAA representatives from the Plainfield and Marion County offices. Although LTEC staff are still experiencing difficulty connecting with other regional workforce agencies, they are fully developing other parts of their program.

Like all programs, a range of accelerators and barriers has impacted Year 2 activities and outcomes. These include accelerators and barriers include:

ACCELERATORS AND STRENGTHS

- Implementation of Technology Solutions
- Training Program Flexibility
- Single Point of Contact for Students
- Non-Academic Support for Students
- Refined Marketing Campaign
- Ease of Online Registration
- Increased Collaboration
- Fully Developed Sustainability Plan
- Increased Main Campus and Employer Support
- Established TAA Recruitment Strategy
- Continual Program and Curriculum Improvement

BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES

- Absence of Regional Referrals
- Need to “Sell” the Program
- No LTEC Alumni Marketing
- Staff Capacity
- Academic Recognition of Training Programs
- Modification of Data Collection Requirements
- Availability of Qualified Candidates and Main Campus Approval
- Delays with Grant-Funded Purchasing

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish Communication Standard between Campuses
- Focus on Student Recruitment
- Explore More Potential TAA Channels
- Increase Specialization of Staff and Staff Capacity
- Strengthen Regional Marketing Presence

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

Program Year 2 (PY2), which encompasses the period from October 1, 2013 to September 30, 2014, included a variety of program development and implementation tasks. Employer relationships were strengthened, the LTEC warehouse was established and outfitted with the latest technology in the logistics industry, and student enrollment as well as the number of programs offered both increased. The Employer Leadership Group (ELG) that was being developed in Year 1 has been fully launched and met in May and September 2014. The first meeting served as a kickoff with employers while the second meeting focused on how employers could help LTEC in program development and implementation. While LTEC has met on a regular basis with employers since Year 1, the implementation of the ELG has allowed LTEC to make progress in engaging a core group of employers through planned meetings and dialogue.

MILESTONES

LTEC's focus for Program Year 2 was largely in program development and implementation, as many program components were launched and improved. One major Year 2 activity, the establishment of the First Book Marketplace within the LTEC warehouse, was a great stride in progress. The LTEC warehouse provides a work-based learning component to students through Vincennes University main campus. The warehouse hopes to receive 40,000 books per week starting in January 2015 for a profit of almost \$5,000 per week. LTEC's sustainability plan was fully developed and staff are striving to meet their goals.

LTEC also finalized its training and academic programs with cohorts. These include:

Training Programs (non-credit)

- *Global Logistics Associate Program (GLA)* –Third cohort will soon be launched with 12 participants. A total of 80 contact hours are split between online and in-person lab time.
- *Team Lead Essentials Program* – 12 contact hours in a six-session or two-day format. LTEC has conducted six sessions with over 50 participants in total.
- *Forklift Essentials Program* – One- and two-day formats. This program has had the largest enrollment; more than 250 students between October 1, 2012 and September 30, 2013.

Academic Programs (credit)

- *Supply Chain Logistics Management* – 30 credit hour certification and 60 credit hour Associate’s degree pathways. Fifteen student enrolled by the end of PY2.
- *Tractor-Trailer (requested approval to add as grant-funded program of study)* – Six-week program with a target of 14 students per month by the end of the grant period. Course topics include: basic commercial motor vehicle operation, preventive maintenance, road driving, and basic controls. A Statement of Work Modification was sent in conjunction with an equipment request for four tractors and four trailers for the program.

Year 2 milestones include:

- Implemented Value Added Production Services project (VAPS) – Warehouse training with a target of 80,000 book per week by the end of the grant period. Students from other programs work alongside the warehouse technician for hands-on learning experience
- Implemented technology solutions, including Voice-Pick, Pick-to-Light, and RF scanning
- Received four TAA-eligible participants in the program
- Hired faculty for the Global Logistics Associate certificate program
- Launched billboard campaign for marketing (24 different locations, total of eight billboards)
- Established online registration software- Aceweb
- Strengthened relationships with Plainfield WorkOne TAA representative
- Worked with Marion County WorkOne to establish a cohort of participants to earn the Global Logistics Associate certificate and attended Manufacturing Day - a career/education fair hosted by the Marion County WorkOne
- Connected with a Business Solutions Consultant from EmployIndy for Westside counties (Boone, Hendricks, Morgan, and Johnson) to attend a Rapid Response Job Fair
- Implemented several “WorkOne Tours” in Central Indiana and surrounding counties to introduce LTEC programs
- Gained new partnerships with EmployIndy and began to establish new partnerships with Vocational Rehab
- Meetings with the Director of Dislocated Workers to explore ways to reach out to TAA participants

PROGRAM CHANGES

One major change to the program over the second year was a change in LTEC's use of technology for enrollment and registration. In PY1, LTEC had no online registration software. In PY2, LTEC implemented Aceweb, which allowed students to register and pay for their courses online.

The pilot use of this software took longer than LTEC staff expected. Although Aceweb is still being used, LTEC staff are also manually documenting their registration data into Excel for ease of data entry.

Another change in PY2 was the temporary absence of the Academic Advisor. Portions of the Academic Advisor's responsibilities have been transitioned to the Logistics Grant Project Manager, which will soon be transitioned to a new Academic Coach. The Logistics Grant Project Manager has been documenting all student inquiries but the Academic Advisor will soon share these responsibilities with the Academic Coach. In PY3, when the Academic Advisor returns, the student services/ recruitment role will be shared with the Academic Coach. The Academic Advisor will resume the responsibilities of taking care of all student inquiries, enrollment, and monitoring of student progress in academic and training programs, while the Academic Coach will assist students with interview skills, résumé building, career exploration, and job search. The Academic Coach will also assume responsibility for all marketing and data collection.

NEEDS

For future program improvements, LTEC staff identified one crucial need: to establish and strengthen their relationship with the other regional workforce agencies. Although LTEC is beginning to establish a relationship with the Plainfield WorkOne TAA representative and Business Solutions Representative from EmployIndy and Region 5, LTEC staff have experienced challenges in connecting with other WorkOne agencies in the region due to lack of responsiveness. Making these connections could increase student enrollment numbers for LTEC as well as provide participants with funding assistance from WorkOne. LTEC is slowly gaining traction with the agencies and would greatly benefit from a strengthened partnership.

LOOKING AHEAD

For Program Year 3, LTEC staff will continue to develop and refine program components. This includes the adherence and active pursuit of program sustainability goals. Sustainability goals to be achieved by September 30, 2015 include:

- Generate over \$4,800 per semester in tuition for the Supply Chain Logistics Management Program
- Generate a profit of more than \$9,000 each month from the First Book Marketplace in the LTEC Warehouse
- Generate a profit of \$16,000 per month from the training programs - Team Lead, GLA, and Forklift.
- Generate over \$50,000 per month from the Tractor-Trailer Program (pending approval).

These sustainability goals result in positive net profit by October 1, 2015, with no additional grant funding, compared to an actual net profit of over \$3,000 on June 1, 2014 (Appendix A).

Additionally, as the program moves into PY3, there will be changes made within the impact evaluation comparison group design. The original approach intended to compare LTEC participants to similarly situated Workforce Investment Act (WIA)-eligible workers from the Indianapolis area. The evaluation would demonstrate whether individuals who participated in the LTEC model, as a cohort, experienced better employment, wage, and retention outcomes than a comparable group who did not.

As the LTEC program progressed, TPMA began to observe that participants in academic and non-academic programs appeared to be characteristically different due to the length of the program; altering potential outcomes. TPMA decided to modify the original comparison group analysis design to include two different comparison groups that would be matched with the academic and non-academic student-participants. This two-pronged approach employs the following strategies: (1) comparison of certificate and Associate degree students at LTEC with Global Supply Chain degree students on the VU main campus, and (2) comparison of short-term LTEC students with a matched cohort of workforce system customers who expressed an interest in logistics positions and scored within a comparable range on the WorkKeys assessment.

In PY2, challenges around both comparison group designs emerged: (1) The VU main campus made a decision to shift focus of the Supply Chain Management Degree to the LTEC campus and will not be actively recruiting for this program thus making the comparison group more challenging for the LTEC degree programs in PY3, and (2) Indiana's Department of Workforce Development would only provide aggregated employment and wage data — not at the

individual level ideal for a comparison group analysis – due to restrictions in Indiana code that limits disclosure of individual-level data that is ideal for the comparison group. Although LTEC is still working with the State to determine if there is any possibility of obtaining individual level data, this challenge will directly impact the comparison group analysis. The initial comparison group analysis plan as well as current challenges are explained in greater detail in Appendix B.

PROGRAM ACCELERATORS

LTEC INITIATIVE PROGRESS TOWARD PY1 ACCELERATORS

Several PY1 accelerators have continued to propel program development and implementation progress into PY 2. This progress is expressed below:

YEAR 1 STRENGTHS	CONTINUED STRENGTHS	NEW STRENGTHS, YEAR 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing Facility and Programmatic Foundation Physical Assets Proximity to Major Logistics Companies Staff Qualifications and Structure Focus on Program Sustainability and Revenue Sources Blended Learning Environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing Facility and Programmatic Foundation Physical Assets Proximity to Major Logistics Companies Staff Qualifications and Structure Focus on Program Sustainability and Revenue Sources Blended Learning Environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Technology Solutions Training Program Flexibility Single Point of Contact for Students Non-Academic Support for Students Refined Marketing Strategies Ease of Online Registration Increased Collaboration Fully Developed Sustainability Plan Increased Main Campus and Employer Support Established TAA Recruitment Strategy Continual Program and Curriculum Improvement

Progress toward PY1 accelerators is described in greater detail below.

PROGRESS TOWARD KEY PY1 ACCELERATORS

EXISTING FACILITY AND PROGRAMMATIC FOUNDATION

LTEC was still utilizing instructors from VU main campus in the beginning of PY2. In the spring semester, a VU main campus employee was engaged in both LTEC courses and the Business and Industry Department at the Vincennes main campus. Utilizing instructors benefits the LTEC program because they can cost-share with VU for instructor salaries. This faculty member also understands VU's functions, which made it easier to transition to the LTEC campus. Had existing faculty not been utilized, LTEC would have had to externally hire other faculty members and incur additional expenses.

PHYSICAL ASSETS

In PY2, LTEC continued to develop their traditional classroom space and the warehouse for logistics education. A partnership with First Book Marketplace, a non-profit organization that sells high-quality children's books at low prices to educators serving children from low-income families¹, has been instrumental in developing the LTEC warehouse for hands-on logistics training. LTEC simulates warehouse management and other activities with First Book products. Students in each of the training programs play a defined role in the simulated warehouse operations process. For example, students in the forklift training program move shipments throughout the warehouse while the students in the Supply Chain Logistics Management program utilize warehouse technology to document, collect, and package shipments coming in and out of the warehouse. The warehouse component provides students with real-world, hands-on experience that validates the skills learned in the classroom portion of the program.

PROXIMITY TO MAJOR LOGISTICS COMPANIES

Central Indiana has always provided a particularly strategic location for LTEC in regards to the logistics industry. Even more so than before, there is increased regional development in the logistics industry. Companies such as OHL are expanding and continue to bring new opportunities. In the Indianapolis Metropolitan Statistical Area, the concentration of employment in warehousing and storage is 60% higher than the national average; compared to 54% in 2013². As the industry continues to grow, LTEC's central location in Indiana as well as its innovative educational experience for the students could gain popularity. LTEC's location continues to be a strength as the industry expands.

¹ Retrieved from the First Book Marketplace website: <http://www.firstbook.org/first-book-story/innovation-in-publishing/marketplace>

² Data for Indiana and the Indianapolis MSA come from EMSI Analyst, 2014.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS AND STRUCTURE

LTEC continues to adapt to employer, regional, and student needs that arise. The faculty that LTEC have hired are knowledgeable and have strong experience in the industry. Different faculty members actively engage students during lectures through interactive discussions and alignment of coursework and hands-on experience. LTEC faculty have reported adapting their curricula to the academic needs and capabilities of the students, which encourages student success. LTEC faculty appear to be genuinely committed to the needs of the students and dedicated to fostering an engaging and positive learning environment that nurtures success.

The structure of the classroom, which utilizes both academic and hands-on components, continues to be a strength to the LTEC Initiative. Students are learning the interactive and academic principles that employers deem as important in their desired career pathway. The ability to promote an active and engaging learning environment through academic and hands-on training is an advantage for LTEC when considering other institutions that may not offer these opportunities.

FOCUS ON PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY AND REVENUE SOURCES

Since PY1, program stakeholders have established a full sustainability plan (Appendix A). LTEC's plan will ensure they will accrue a profit beyond grant funds and can continue their programs. The sustainability plan explicitly describes goals per program and lays out exactly how many students and how much revenue would be needed to maintain profitability.

A completed warehouse outfitted with the latest technology will contribute to the profitability of the initiative. The partnership with First Book Marketplace allowed LTEC to establish a revenue source that is planned to contribute significantly to the overall profitability of the LTEC Initiative. Revenue from the programs offered at LTEC is also planned to play a substantial role in future sustainability.

BLENDED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Unlike traditional classroom settings, LTEC offers online and hands-on training in logistics education. This structure provides students with the real-world experience that employers indicate that employees need in order to succeed in the logistics industry. The training and academic programs at LTEC are designed to provide a career pathway that leads students to high-wage careers. Material handling, warehousing, team lead, and soft skills are addressed as well as the opportunity to operate the more innovative technology currently found in the logistics industry.

The current structure of the LTEC training and academic programs allows students to experience an inclusive educational experience. The structure takes material learned from the classroom and translates it to necessary skills associated with different responsibilities in the warehouse. For example, a process could look like this:

- Class A CDL students pick up donated books at the publisher's warehouse and take the loads to the LTEC warehouse
- Students in the Forklift program learn to move and store the products
- Student workers pick, pack, and ship completed orders using equipment found in the warehouses where they will likely be working³

NEW ACCELERATORS FOR PY2

Several new accelerating factors have emerged in the second year of the program. These include:

- Implementation of Technology Solutions
- Training Program Flexibility
- Single Point of Contact for Students
- Non-Academic Support for Students
- Refined Marketing Campaign
- Ease of Online Registration
- Increased Collaboration
- Fully Developed Sustainability Plan
- Increased Main Campus and Employer Support
- Established TAA Recruitment Strategy
- Continual Program and Curriculum Improvement

Each accelerating factor is described in greater detail below.

³ Retrieved from the 2014 *Indiana Logistics Directory*, "Vincennes University + First Book = Opportunity," p. 23

KEY ACCELERATORS

IMPLEMENTATION OF TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

New technologies such as RF Scanning, Pick-to-Light, and Voice-Pick make LTEC a competitive facility for logistics training and education. These technologies are new for PY2 and can make a difference when considering sustainability and competitive practices. The implementation of technology solutions ties the warehouse and academic portions of the program together and completes LTEC's vision of a hands-on learning lab.

The launch of the new technology LTEC warehouse in July has allowed LTEC to provide a hands-on learning experience to their students as well generate revenue for program sustainability. As described throughout the report, warehouse activities and training align directly with the skills and capabilities required in the workplace, and students recognize those synergies. One student reported enjoying being able to learn the principles behind the job in the classroom and then seeing and experiencing the physical parts of the training in the warehouse. Students were also able to come to the warehouse and train on their own time. This policy afforded the students flexibility in their training—if they required extra time to learn a concept, they could easily come into the warehouse for the extra practice and training.

TRAINING PROGRAM FLEXIBILITY

Because of the flexible structure of the programs, LTEC is able to tailor the program content focus to specific student interest. Students who enroll in and complete the programs choose to gain competencies and skills that the industry deemed relevant and important, and thus are typically more committed to their education.

While the process does weed out students who are less interested in the programs, having a tailored program that is specific in focus helps to limit program participants to those who are genuinely interested in logistics. This may also contribute to a lower drop-out rate because students are passionate about logistics and dedicated to obtaining jobs in specific companies, and not simply enrolling in an LTEC program because they are unsure about their desired career path.

Because class times are negotiable, students could maintain their full-time work schedules and integrate class time. Additionally, courses were organized in longer blocks of time, allowing students to get through the material more quickly. One student commented that meeting multiple times during the week would defeat the purpose of the LTEC programs that are targeting non-traditional learners. The flexibility of these courses was also possible because of the small class sizes, which students also valued. Students felt comfortable with the instructor

and other students in the course because of the small class sizes, which encouraged classroom engagement.

SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT FOR STUDENTS

Having a single point of contact for LTEC students promoted consistency and the opportunity to build relationships with the students. The majority of the students entering the programs are non-traditional learners who would typically require more attention and guidance. The Academic Advisor, who served as the single point of student contact for much of PY2, was a first-generation college student, which made it easier to relate to the non-traditional students inquiring about LTEC programs.

The Logistics Grant Project Manager will soon begin transitioning students back to working with the Academic Advisor. After this transition, the Academic Advisor will maintain the current protocol of e-mailing students with contract information and an overview of the nature of the relationship and roles and responsibilities. Emails to the students about the Academic Advisor's contact information and an overview of responsibilities to the students will be sent. These transitioning periods are valuable when there are staff changes and LTEC has recognized that importance as well as the importance of having a single point of student contact. Without a single point of student contact, students could feel that the process is too overwhelming and may opt out of LTEC training.

NON-ACADEMIC SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

LTEC has sought to respond to students' non-academic needs throughout the initiative. Meetings with the Employer Leadership Group revealed soft skills (also called employability skills or workplace skills) to be one of the greatest employer needs and thus an important aspect to the LTEC program. In response, LTEC facilitated the development of soft-skills with the students in non-academic settings. These skills could increase student's employability as they were a direct request from employers.

The academic coach, who was part-time at the end of PY2, has also worked with students one-on-one to help them find jobs, build their résumés, and provide academic support. This is especially important as many of the students in the programs have been unemployed for a significant duration of time, or have been employed by the same company and have not had to compete in the job market. Students that can market themselves are more likely find employment, which can only enhance LTEC's reputation.

REFINED MARKETING STRATEGIES

With the refinement of a regional marketing campaign in PY2, LTEC was able to expand its coverage past local employers. Within the marketing campaign, LTEC developed a billboard campaign with three different billboards that rotated in 24 locations in Central Indiana. Many individuals who inquired about the programs in PY2 mentioned seeing the billboard in their inquiries. While the billboards may not been the only factor motivating inquiry, their presence likely contributed to the student's decision-making process.

Additionally, LTEC developed brochures and pamphlets to hand out to local employers, potential students, and regional WorkOne agencies. LTEC met with the Director of Dislocated Workers at the State Department of Workforce Development to review the brochures before distribution to WorkOne agencies. Prior to PY2, LTEC did not have appropriate channels for marketing but are beginning to refine their marketing avenues and strategies.

LTEC could benefit from regional marketing and has tasked the academic coach with expanding the marketing and social media presence of LTEC. LTEC began to tap into many different realms of marketing and will benefit greatly from these developments. These new avenues in marketing could provide LTEC with opportunities for sustainability by increasing student enrollment numbers and employer engagement. Without a marketing campaign, LTEC would have to rely solely on referrals for enrollment. Referrals could serve as an effective recruitment tool, but in order to create a more regional presence, consistent refinement of LTEC's marketing capabilities are imperative to future program success and sustainability.

EASE OF ONLINE REGISTRATION

In PY2, LTEC established an online registration system through Aceweb. This system allows students to view course schedules, register, and pay for a course all online. This allows students to register for a class or program without the added step of contacting someone in the LTEC building. For non-traditional learners, this tool is particularly valuable because these individuals may not have the extra time to call or visit LTEC for more information. The online registration system will decrease the burden on the student services staff as well as simplify the process easier for some students.

INCREASED COLLABORATION

Throughout PY2, LTEC has increased collaboration with different employers, grants, and professional organizations. Currently, the American Society of Transportation and Logistics has an exclusive contract with VU to be the only provider of the Global Logistics Associate (GLA) certification in Indiana. EmployIndy has also collaborated with LTEC via the GLA training,

through the Powertrain Indy grant. LTEC has also continued to strengthen collaboration with local employers, the Plainfield WorkOne, and the state's Vocational Rehab.

Collaboration with these entities will be valuable for LTEC in the coming years. From marketing and recruitment to advocacy and career pathways, these relationships are crucial to obtain for program success.

FULLY DEVELOPED SUSTAINABILITY PLAN BY PROGRAM

By developing a complete sustainability plan, LTEC will now be able to meet specific goals and generate revenue to continue the program beyond grant funds. Developing a sustainability plan was a critical part of PY2 operations and LTEC is currently on track to meeting the sustainability goals for October 2014. The sustainability plan explicitly outlines the goals for the remaining grant years to generate enough revenue to sustain the programs past the life of the project period. The full sustainability plan is described in greater detail in Appendix A.

INCREASED MAIN CAMPUS AND EMPLOYER SUPPORT

Throughout PY2, LTEC has strengthened employer and VU main campus relationships in a number of ways. For instance, greater consistency in communication and VU main campus involvement in program operations have reduced time to access information. The VU President and the Vice President of Workforce Engagement have also participated in ELG meetings and provided their expertise on program development.

Local employers participating in the Employer Leadership Group (ELG) are also contributing to program implementation by providing meaningful feedback and suggestions. Although the full ELG has only met twice, the meetings have generated valuable information. LTEC has begun to meet one-on-one with employer partners to mitigate scheduling challenges with high-level managers. LTEC hopes that this strategy will allow them to obtain the quality and quantity of employer input needed for program development, in a way that accommodates employer representatives' schedules.

ESTABLISHED TAA RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

Because TAA-eligible participants are the target population for the grant, establishing a targeted recruitment strategy is critical. LTEC has met with the Director of Dislocated Workers at the State Department of Workforce Development to explore ways to reach out to the TAA population. Options for reaching out are still being explored but holds potential for increasing future TAA-eligible participant enrollment.

Connecting with the Plainfield WorkOne TAA representative has opened another door for recruitment. LTEC staff have worked with the TAA representative and, since the inception, have received two participants that have been TAA certified. LTEC staff are hoping to consistently receive TAA participant referrals from the Plainfield WorkOne agency.

LTEC, through an invitation with the Business Solutions Representative from Region 5, also attended a Rapid Response Job Fair that was held for a local business that was closing. LTEC was able to attend this event but did not receive approval to attend the Rapid Response Team events⁴. Although there were no TAA participants at the job fair, LTEC is confident that this relationship will lead to access of TAA-eligible participants. The partnership with EmployIndy, Plainfield WorkOne, and Director of Dislocated Workers were significant milestones in Program Year 2.

CONTINUAL PROGRAM AND CURRICULUM IMPROVEMENT

One staff member is currently dedicated to re-examining LTEC's programs for content and potential changes. In addition, this staff member will develop middle/stackable course programs around certificates and certifications, as well as compare the programs to currently recognized certifications to identify ways to enhance the curriculum and new organizations with which to form partnerships.

LTEC also plans to encourage the members of the Employer Leadership Group to sit in on different courses in LTEC programs. The employers would be permitted to send an employee through the GLA program. Once employers begin taking these courses, they can provide feedback on ways to make the material more relevant to current industry needs.

⁴ Rapid response teams work with employers to quickly maximize public and private resources to minimize the disruptions on companies. These teams provide employees of these companies with information and services, including: career counseling and job search assistance, résumé preparation and interviewing skills workshops, information on the local labor market, unemployment insurance, information about education and training opportunities (which is where LTEC comes in), and other information that can help employees get through unemployment. Retrieved from the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration. <http://www.doleta.gov/layoff/employers.cfm>

PROGRAM BARRIERS

LTEC INITIATIVE PROGRESS TOWARD PY1 BARRIERS

Several PY1 barriers have continued into PY2, which have hindered the launch of the LTEC Initiative and slowed the progress to date. However, progress was made in PY2 to mitigate PY1 barriers. This progress is expressed below:

YEAR 1 CHALLENGES	CONTINUED CHALLENGES	NEW CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distance from Main Campus Lack of Referrals from Workforce System Small and Relatively New Staff Shift in Perspective on Employer Collaboration Employer Understanding of Program Certifications Program Curriculum and Flow in Development Student Circumstances and Enrollment Wait Times from Federal and University Regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of Referrals from Workforce System Employer Understanding of Program Certifications Student Circumstances and Enrollment Wait Times from Federal and University Regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence of Regional Referrals Need to “Sell” the Program No LTEC Alumni Marketing Staff Capacity Academic Recognition of Training Programs Modification of Data Collection Requirements Availability of Qualified Candidates and Main Campus Approval Delays with Grant-Funded Purchasing

Progress toward PY1 barriers is described in greater detail below.

PROGRESS TOWARD KEY PY1 BARRIERS

DISTANCE FROM MAIN CAMPUS

In PY1, LTEC's distance from the VU main campus posed a challenge to establishing an effective communication standard. Limited in-person interactions made establishing close connections and collaboration difficult. However, in PY2, LTEC has recognized appropriate contacts at the VU main campus. The process of contacting the VU main campus has been streamlined due to an established VU main campus contact. Although communication may still be a challenge between specific faculty at VU and staff at LTEC, a streamlined standard of communication is beginning to develop.

LACK OF REFERRALS FROM WORKFORCE SYSTEM

LTEC continues to welcome all participants in logistics training; however, the primary target audience is still individuals who are Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) eligible. Individuals are classified as TAA-eligible through the Indiana Department of Workforce Development, and LTEC can identify them through the WorkOne centers in the area. Given the importance of the workforce system to accessing and identifying TAA-eligible participants, collaboration and communication must be established between LTEC and WorkOne.

LTEC has begun to work closely with the TAA representative from the Plainfield WorkOne, Business Solutions Consultant from EmployIndy – Westside counties, and the Marion County WorkOne office, but is still experiencing challenges connecting with other WorkOne offices in the region. LTEC staff developed and instituted Central Indiana "WorkOne Tours" to distribute brochures but report few responses to this outreach from potential students. LTEC staff have reported attempting to contact multiple representatives from different regional WorkOne offices but state that these attempts have been met with non-responsiveness by WorkOne staff. However, LTEC will continue their attempts to establish that valuable relationship with other regional WorkOne offices.

SMALL AND RELATIVELY NEW STAFF

In PY1, many LTEC staff and faculty were relatively new to developing a logistics program. However, in PY2, staff had gained a year's worth of program development experience, and additional, experienced staff and faculty were hired. Since PY1, the LTEC staff were able to gain the relevant experience needed to develop and implement different logistics programs. New faculty hires have also contributed to logistics program development and implementation due to their extensive industry experience and knowledge. The overall knowledge in logistics and capacity to conduct the grant has increased throughout the year.

Year 1 LTEC staff are now well-established and are beginning to make the connections necessary to streamline their processes. Regardless of LTEC's attempts to facilitate regional workforce connections, LTEC has established a number of partnerships and have engaged employers in different ways (i.e. one-on-one meetings, ELG meetings) to make the initiative relevant for them.

SHIFT IN PERSPECTIVE ON EMPLOYER COLLABORATION

PY1 focused on targeting large employers, including Fortune 500 logistics-related companies, for curriculum development and potential career pathways. Although LTEC is still working to establish stronger and additional relationships with employers, LTEC has found it difficult to connect with these employers because of limited resources and competing demands for time. In PY2, however, LTEC has shifted to connecting with small, active employers that will be easier to involve. Due largely to this shift in focus, LTEC now has an established Employer Leadership Group with active and engaged employers. Despite difficulties with scheduling and coordination, which has limited the number of meetings the ELG has had, participating employers are more actively engaged than larger employers would have had the capacity to be.

EMPLOYER UNDERSTANDING OF PROGRAM CERTIFICATIONS

A continued barrier from PY1 has been increasing exposure with employers regarding LTEC's programs. Initially, employers were under the impression that LTEC was a staffing company, but in PY2, employers are beginning to recognize and experience the logistics training opportunities LTEC has to offer. For instance, an employer is requiring potential employees to complete a skill assessment, and based on gaps identified, they will be sent to LTEC for training to acquire the skills necessary for the job.

A developed marketing plan can make a significant impact on employers' understanding of LTEC certifications. Marketing publicizes LTEC's opportunities for potential students and employers. According to interviews, marketing publicity is beginning to shift the employer and student perceptions of the function and purpose of the LTEC program. Although a complete employer understanding of the program certifications has not occurred, LTEC's marketing plan development and increased contact with employers is helping establish them as a regional training competitor.

PROGRAM CURRICULUM AND FLOW IN DEVELOPMENT

With an expansive list of training needs in the region, curricula development in PY1 was a challenge. Since then, LTEC has developed a number of academic and training programs with cohorts that are currently being implemented. Although career pathways with employers are

still being developed, LTEC staff are becoming confident that LTEC is on its way to becoming a competitive training provider in Central Indiana.

LTEC has finalized a number of programs including a series of Essentials certifications (forklift and team lead) as well as other training and academic programs (supply chain logistics management, Global Logistics Associate). LTEC is also requesting to add an additional program of study to the initiative that is directly relevant to employer needs (i.e. Tractor-trailer).

STUDENT CIRCUMSTANCES AND ENROLLMENT

As in PY1, many LTEC students in PY2 faced challenging circumstances and life issues. As a result, students need higher-than-originally-anticipated levels of one-on-one time from faculty and staff to assist with enrollment and program completion. One faculty member reported that most students needed remedial coursework when entering a program. Faculty expectations have continually been readjusted to meet the students' academic capabilities for each class. Consequently, it may take some students more than two years to complete an Associate's degree. LTEC faculty are accommodating these needs and hope to gain a better understanding of non-traditional student's capabilities in their future courses.

Additionally, students often require extensive assistance to fund their education, but are not aware of financial aid options or how to navigate the process. These students require extra attention when going through the enrollment process. LTEC staff report some students are unaware of additional financial assistance that exists to help low-income students complete a degree program, and so many are not planning to do so. Since many of the students are non-traditional (older, and with work and family responsibilities), LTEC courses must be offered in the evening to accommodate full-time work schedules.

WAIT TIMES FROM FEDERAL AND UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS

Federal and university regulations have continued to slow the progress of the program in PY2. Although the Federal Project Officer has been very responsive to LTEC's needs and has provided a quick turnaround for documents, LTEC documents submitted to the national Department of Labor (DOL) are often delayed.

Additionally, Vincennes University as an institution is focused on long-term sustainability of the program and so requires justification for program changes or additions. This required process for information flow and decision-making, present at many institutions, often slows review and approval of hiring faculty, staff, or purchasing equipment.

This is beginning to change, however, as DOL encourages grantees to continue program development. Throughout PY2, the VU main campus increasingly prioritized LTEC and is

beginning to recognize the need for progress. LTEC is also beginning to adjust to VU's standard guidelines and communicate with the main campus more often. This creates a more streamlined process for both LTEC and VU. Ideally, communication will become more standardized in the coming Program Year 3.

NEW BARRIERS FOR PY2

Several new factors have hindered the launch of the LTEC Initiative and slowed the progress to date. These include:

- Absence of Regional Referrals
- Need to "Sell" the Program
- No LTEC Alumni Marketing
- Staff Capacity
- Academic Recognition of Training Programs
- Modification of Data Collection Requirements
- Availability of Qualified Candidates and Main Campus Approval
- Delays with Grant-Funded Purchasing

Each barrier to program implementation is described in greater detail below.

KEY BARRIERS

ABSENCE OF REGIONAL REFERRALS

Although LTEC has seen a drastic increase in student enrollment numbers from PY1 in their programs, a select few have been TAA-eligible individuals. Four TAA participants were enrolled in PY2, but LTEC is hoping to see more TAA-eligible participants enter their program to align with the DOL's goals of serving TAA-eligible individuals in PY3. LTEC is looking into marketing strategies that will target this population, which could help reroute the types of students entering the programs.

One potential reason that TAA-eligible students are not enrolling with LTEC could be due to an absence of formal referrals from WorkOne office. With this in mind, LTEC needs to reexamine ways to find TAA-eligible participants. This will be addressed further in the Recommendations section.

NEED TO "SELL" THE PROGRAM

In order to maintain sustainability beyond the funds provided by the grant, LTEC must find other avenues for selling the programs to participant-students and employers. This includes having the regional workforce system engaged in the grant while also selling the First Book

Marketplace books to generate revenue. The sustainability plan is in progress and LTEC is planning to start seeing results in the coming weeks.

LTEC also needs to match employers and unemployed individuals together by directly targeting employer as well as student needs. By addressing the needs of both the students and employers, LTEC can become more relevant to both constituencies, spurring program advocacy and marketing on the part of employers. Testimonials from those that complete LTEC programs would be useful for marketing, recruiting, and selling the program. Without these referrals, LTEC would be missing out on an invaluable marketing tool that could significantly contribute to LTEC program sustainability.

NO LTEC ALUMNI MARKETING

LTEC is seeing an increase in student enrollment in a number of different short-term programs, but no one has completed a degree program. This is understandable for the current state of the campus and recent development of many of the programs but necessary for the coming grant years.

Past graduates of the VU main campus are some of VU's greatest supporters, but because LTEC is an entirely new campus, there are no degreed alumni to help market and advocate for the programs. Once students graduate with degrees from the LTEC program, alumni advocacy could serve as a useful recruitment tool.

Although there have been students completing the short-term training programs, academic courses of study offer potential for more in-depth testimonial than training programs can address. Most students from the training programs are currently employed by the companies that require the training. However, many of those in degree programs are looking gain new employment. If they were able to do so after completing the LTEC program, this would legitimize LTEC's capabilities and value as a logistics campus.

STAFF CAPACITY

Currently, all of the LTEC staff are multi-tasking to some degree. Before the Academic Advisor went on leave, she also assumed responsibility for scheduling classes, coordinating instructors for classroom training, developing training and academic policies, and recruiting. Once she left, the Project Manager assumed all of these responsibilities in addition to her lead staff responsibilities. Many of the staff are meeting full capacity in a number of areas within the grant.

One concern is that once the program expands, there will be more students to accommodate. With most staff already maxing out their work capacity, this could become an obstacle to

program success in the future. LTEC is already responding to this with plans to hire new staff to relieve some of the burden from the current staff. However, this was still a notable challenge to PY2.

ACADEMIC RECOGNITION OF TRAINING PROGRAMS

As a community college who focuses primarily on associate degrees, VU main campus has historically measured success by degree programs. Therefore, short-term training programs implemented at LTEC have experienced initial hurdles with VU main campus recognition. In part, this is due to training programs operating differently than academic programs (e.g. registration process) but this is also due to VU's theory that success is defined as degree attainment and not training program completion.

Many of the administrative operations (e.g. hiring staff, cost-sharing, and grant purchases) must go through VU, so main campus support could significantly improve LTEC's ability to progress. VU main campus support could also increase LTEC's legitimacy as a competitive training provided in Central Indiana. LTEC is making progress toward developing communication and connections systems with the main campus by making appropriate contacts.

MODIFICATION OF DATA COLLECTION REQUIREMENTS

Earlier in PY2, LTEC learned the requirements for data collection had been altered. The data that LTEC was collecting was correct, but the DOL had clarified the original requirements to include backup documentation to substantiate participants' responses. For example, if a student was employed at the time of entry into the LTEC program, he or she would be prompted to answer whether or not they received a wage increase post-enrollment. However, self-testimony was not considered sufficient to answer this question. Because of this, LTEC staff had to retroactively collect documented proof that the student received a wage increase post-enrollment. LTEC must either obtain State wage record, pay stubs, or an employer verification. This has been challenging due to required coordination with the student and employer to agree to supply the information.

Many of the participants in the program were referred through an employer, which allowed for simple follow-up as their employment records were easier to trace. Although these students saved LTEC significant time for post-enrollment data collection, the need to modify data collection with other students was certainly a hurdle for PY2. LTEC is now on schedule for PY3.

AVAILABILITY OF QUALIFIED CANDIDATES AND MAIN CAMPUS APPROVAL

Finding qualified staff for the LTEC programs has proved to be a challenge. Many candidates do not meet industry experience requirements, specifically in logistics, while others are available only for evening classes. As reported by LTEC staff, qualified candidates are currently employed in the industry and are looking to teach at LTEC for a supplemental income, which means that they have limited availability. Because students shared a preference for both day and evening courses, LTEC is hoping to provide ample opportunities for these students to attend classes that match their schedules by offering a wide array of class times. Unfortunately, this is becoming more difficult than anticipated.

Additionally, all new staff must be approved by the VU main campus, with justification for why the hire is requested and how the position will be sustained beyond the grant. Although these requirements slow the pace of hiring decisions, LTEC recognizes the importance of sustainability and strategic hiring practices.

DELAYS WITH GRANT-FUNDED PURCHASING

According to the DOL monitoring visit, LTEC needs to increase the pace at which it expends grant funds. Further, with the plan to implement different programs and courses, LTEC must have the ability to access their funds.

The grant period is halfway over, but only 30 percent of allocated grant funds have been spent. This is due, in part, to processes required by VU administration, which requires a process for justifying purchases. LTEC leadership have stressed the importance of faster grant fund expenditures, particularly following a monitoring visit that cited the program's slow spending. LTEC staff hope to begin purchasing new equipment for the programs with the support from the main campus as the initiative moves into PY3.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

LTEC INITIATIVE PROGRESS TOWARD PY1 RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of LTEC progress from PY1 strengths and barriers, what follows is progress that has been made toward PY1 recommendations by the end of PY2. This progress is expressed below:

YEAR 1 RECOMMENDATIONS	CONTINUED RECOMMENDATIONS	NEW RECOMMENDATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct strategic and persistent communication • Materialize employer engagement • Utilize employer feedback • Segment employers based on interest • Determine maximum capacity and specialization • Maintain an industry focus • Create middle-skill connections and pathways • Focus on time management • Expand marketing by leveraging relationships • Continued focus on long-term sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materialize employer engagement • Utilize employer feedback • Segment employers based on interest • Focus on time management • Expand marketing by leveraging relationships • Continued focus on long-term sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Communication Standard between Campuses • Focus on Student Recruitment • Explore More Potential TAA Channels • Increase Specialization of Staff and Staff Capacity • Strengthen Regional Marketing Presence

Progress toward PY1 recommendations is described in greater detail below.

PROGRESS TOWARD KEY PY1 RECOMMENDATIONS

CONDUCT STRATEGIC AND PERSISTENT COMMUNICATION

Although LTEC is beginning to communicate with regional WorkOne offices as well as with other TAACCCT grantees to work toward accessing TAA-eligible individuals, strategies employed to date have not been sufficiently successful. LTEC needs to refine their attempts to engage regional WorkOne offices outside of Plainfield and Marion County as well as find ways to recruit TAA-eligible individuals for enrollment. Strategic and persistent communication as well as suggestions in the “New Recommendations” section will likely improve LTEC’s regional relationships with WorkOne offices.

Regional WorkOne offices have the ability to provide LTEC with direct access to TAA-eligible participants. Once a relationship is established with other regional WorkOne offices, LTEC’s access to the TAA-eligible population is likely to increase.

MATERIALIZING EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

Developing networks with employers is an important step in ensuring the program remains relevant within the industry. The Employer Leadership Group (ELG) has been established and progress has been made but, as noted above, has experienced challenges in coordinating numerous schedules with the high-authority figures within the companies. More frequent meetings would help keep current the needs of employers, identify additional needs, and provide networking and strategy benefits for employers as they share information and learn from one another.

LTEC has supplemented two ELG meetings with one-on-one discussions but recognizes the importance of finding a schedule and format that works for ELG participants. For PY3, LTEC is in the process of developing a work plan for employer engagement. TPMA encourages LTEC to move forward with this plan and to incorporate the following elements:

- **Always communicate the value of employers’ time.** Whenever possible, highlight the ways employer input was incorporated into the program’s strategies, curriculum, or activities.
- **Hold a technology demonstration open house.** The evaluators heard from employers that LTEC’s warehouse is equipped with the latest logistics technology that many employers themselves do not even use in their facilities yet. An event highlighting this technology would raise awareness of LTEC’s presence and thus expand LTEC’s network of employers.

- **Segment employers based on interest⁵.** One theme derived from employer interviews was differences in needs from LTEC. Some employers were interested in degree pathways, some were interested in making LTEC their “one-stop” training facility, while others were only interested in certificate programs. Rather than a general marketing plan, LTEC could segment these different needs and provide targeted marketing materials focused on specific employer priorities. Many employers indicated that LTEC is already demonstrating value to their company, but this could be increasingly customized creating specific marketing strategies for each group of participations
- **Consider other representatives.** LTEC has understandably sought participation from logistics executives or, at minimum, the highest-level representative they can attract. Since scheduling has proved difficult, however, LTEC should consider asking companies to send a representative from a different division or level. In the evaluator’s experience, different employees within the same company provide varying perspectives on what qualifies as “the most pressing need” for training and talent development. The ELG may benefit from this varied perspective, and employees at the manager level may have fewer scheduling difficulties than those higher in the company.

UTILIZE EMPLOYER FEEDBACK

Since PY1, LTEC has made a consistent effort to incorporate employer feedback into the program. In collaboration with a local employer, LTEC established the Team Lead Essentials Program. This program examines core requirements for being a team lead and is now a requirement for all employees at that company. The success of this program has led the company to work with LTEC to develop another supervisor training program that would be a continuation of Team Lead training.

LTEC also plans to have involved employers go through the courses that LTEC is offering and provide feedback on the curriculum and/or structure of the course. This would be beneficial to maintain engagement with employers and ensure that courses are remaining relevant to industry needs. Employers also suggested involving other areas of the companies in these course reviews and in the ELG to ensure multiple perspectives on industry needs. Currently, the ELG has multiple employers with the same job title, which leads to the same needs and perspectives. A shift to including other areas of the company may account for this. LTEC has made countless improvements to utilizing employer feedback but for PY3, this can always be expanded.

⁵ “Segment employers based on interest” section condensed into “Materialize Employer Engagement”

DETERMINE MAXIMUM CAPACITY AND SPECIALIZATION

Faculty have begun to specialize in their focus on specific aspects of the program in PY2. Originally, faculty were responsible for overlapping duties; however, LTEC worked to redefine roles so that each faculty member specialized in a specific set of responsibilities. This helped LTEC determine where additional capacity was needed (such as in warehouse operations) and freed staff to focus on specific aspects of LTEC operations.

However, with a relatively small project team, LTEC should continue to be aware of project capability and capacity. This will be especially true once LTEC begins expanding in terms of student enrollment, employer engagement, and programs offered. As the program expands in PY3, it will be critical for LTEC leadership to prioritize areas of focus for staff and faculty work, identify strategies to address those priorities, and give staff the necessary training and support to carry them out.

MAINTAIN AN INDUSTRY FOCUS

From PY1, LTEC has made progress in incorporating an industry-wide focus within the initiative. Some of the program's most significant successes, including the Team Lead program, have arisen from honing in on the specific needs of individual employers. This has benefits of strengthening relationships and promoting early successes. As the program scales, it will be equally necessary to incorporate and maintain an industry-wide perspective that is applicable to a variety of logistics employers. By understanding the regional logistics industry and adjusting the program accordingly (i.e. in terms of technology and course content), LTEC will begin to address the needs of the industry as a whole. This will allow students to easily transition to careers throughout the region rather than just in a few specific companies.

CREATE MIDDLE-SKILL CONNECTIONS AND PATHWAYS

LTEC has addressed this recommendation by developing new programs that target middle-skill connections within the program design. The Global Logistics Associate certificate program is one way that LTEC addressed this PY1 recommendation. This certificate program addresses topics such as soft-skills, warehouse management, and safety awareness.

LTEC is also looking into ways to transfer credits from the Team Lead Essentials and GLA programs to a degree program, thus creating another career pathway for the students. These changes could help employers as well as students visualize the program and their place in it, which both indicate increased engagement.

FOCUS ON TIME MANAGEMENT

Now that programs are being implemented, prioritizing time and initiatives is more critical than ever. Although the LTEC team is beginning to set milestones, track progress, and plan and identify time for key initiatives; the group still needs to set a structure to focus on time management.

The LTEC staff have created common calendars for the building but some of the specific plans are still rushed and could benefit from better organization. As a group, LTEC should focus on planning ahead in order to keep the current pace of progress and identify needs and gaps in skills that new staff could fill. Although LTEC staff have progressed significantly in planning and time management since PY1, there are still ways to become more efficient to account for the rapid changes in student enrollment, employer engagement, and development of new programs that LTEC anticipates in the coming years. Suggestions for ways to manage time more effectively include:

- **Comprehensive list of grant activities.** Create a plan that states each staff's responsibilities and/or the general activities left to accomplish by the end of the grant. A comprehensive list of outstanding tasks can help visualize ways to manage time efficiently as well as developing tasks on a day-by-day basis.
- **Prioritize tasks.** As with most grant-funded projects, there are many components and tasks to complete. These activities can be difficult to manage when they are not prioritized in a way that allows staff to focus on the most time-sensitive tasks first. Prioritizing specific tasks is beneficial when managing time more efficiently.
- **Set focused deadlines and track progress.** With long-term projects, setting targeted deadlines could motivate staff to focus on accomplishing one or a few tasks rather than attempting to accomplish a number of broad grant activities. Deadlines encourage staff to develop plans, priorities, and set realistic goals for individual grant activities. A targeted focus on specific grant activities could spur faster implementation and account for contingencies.
- **Consistent staff/faculty meetings.** Meetings that ensure all staff are aware of the general program goals, tasks each individual should accomplish, individual responsibilities, and timelines for the tasks is essential to avoid miscommunication and procrastination. These meetings would also provide an opportunity for faculty to discuss their classroom experiences/successes as a way to keep everyone on the same page and up-to-date on grant activities and campus operations. Currently, faculty and staff do play different roles, but bridging these groups together could create consistency in program goals and expectations.

The evaluation team understands VU LTEC may have already incorporated portions of these suggestions into staff management and grant administration activities and suggests refining current strategies for improved efficiency.

EXPAND MARKETING BY LEVERAGING RELATIONSHIPS

The Employer Leadership Group (ELG) has served as a great marketing resource for LTEC. Maximizing the use of these opportunities to promote the program and generate interest in the community is critical to program success and sustainability. LTEC staff should continue to utilize these opportunities for marketing by leveraging more of their current relationships. Many of these different opportunities exist for program advocacy including employers promoting the program internally and externally as well as using employer networks to disseminate information.

Another way to expand marketing by leveraging relationships would be to request additional support from the VU main campus to identify additional employer contacts and leverage relationships with WorkOne offices in the region.

CONTINUED FOCUS ON LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY

LTEC staff are beginning to focus on sustainability strategies after the grant period ends. In PY2, LTEC worked with partners who had grants to fund students to go through the program (i.e. Powertrain grant with EmployIndy) to fund students engaged in the program. A long-term focus on the academic and training programs has been developed and was a major activity for PY2.

This includes the following goals:

- The Supply Chain Logistics Management program will require 20 students per semester to be enrolled by the end of the grant.
- The Team Lead Essentials and Global Logistic Associate training programs will require 50 students per month to be enrolled by the end of the grant to sustain the programs past grant funds.
- The First Book Marketplace, work-based learning opportunity will require 80,000 book to be brought in per week by the end of the grant, which will bring in its own revenue through the First Book Marketplace.
- The forklift and tractor-trailer programs, if approved, will require 14 students per month to be enrolled by the end of the grant to sustain the programs.

The long-term sustainability plan is described in more detail in Appendix A.

NEW RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of LTEC's strengths and barriers, what follows are recommendations to consider for program improvement.

These include:

- Establish Communication Standard between Campuses
- Focus on Student Recruitment
- Explore More Potential TAA Channels
- Increase Specialization of Staff and Staff Capacity
- Strengthen Regional Marketing Presence

Each recommendation for program implementation is described in greater detail below.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

ESTABLISH COMMUNICATION STANDARD BETWEEN CAMPUSES

Although communication is improving, LTEC still needs to develop a formalized, established communication standard operating procedure between the VU main campus and LTEC. LTEC and the main campus should be in contact frequently to ensure that program development and implementation will go smoothly.

This could also help LTEC move forward on purchasing as frequent communication could strengthen the relationship with the main campus. This could also lead to more assistance from VU in recognizing LTEC programs as academic programs. Frequent communication could result in the VU main campus feeling included in the LTEC initiative. This could, in turn, increase accountability with the main campus in regards to the success of the LTEC initiative.

Suggestions to improve communication between LTEC and VU main campus include:

- Establish a standing call time with VU main campus. This time could be spent updating the campus leaders on LTEC's successes, challenges, goals, and current needs from the main campus. Communication with VU main campus currently goes through one administrative person, which is then relayed to the main campus administration. To improve communication with the main campus, these general updates could be beneficial.
- Include VU main campus in LTEC updates. In addition to a standing call time, email updates on LTEC's latest successes, challenges, goals, and current needs could be beneficial for VU main campus staff and administration that may not be available for a standing call. Ensuring that entire VU main campus feels supportive and connected to

LTEC would be beneficial to LTEC's progress; especially because VU governs LTEC's staff hiring and grant purchasing.

- Involve VU main campus in marketing strategies. Ask for suggestions on ways to enhance marketing presence. VU has a website and social media presence and could offer great insight into ways to make LTEC's marketing more efficient. Engaging VU past their original duties of hiring and grant purchasing could garner greater support and involvement from the main campus.
- VU main campus visitation days. LTEC staff could travel to the VU main campus to communicate updates and challenges. This visitation could bridge the detachment between LTEC and VU main campus that has been caused by distance.

FOCUS ON STUDENT RECRUITMENT

One employer suggested that LTEC should focus more on student recruitment rather than employer recruitment. In other words, rather than having employers recruit the students for the training programs, LTEC would first recruit the students who would then recruit other students and companies.

Although this dependence on student-led marketing poses a challenge, there are merits behind the idea of enrolling more students resulting in more student and employer engagement. Once student enrollment increases, the alumni can act as a supplemental marketing tool that can recruit more students at the companies where they work, or encourage their employers to take advantage of the LTEC offerings. This circle of recruitment, enrollment, and advocacy has multiple layers and nuances, but LTEC could capitalize on positive student experiences to increase recognition in the logistics industry as a whole. However, it is important to recognize that assigning recruitment responsibilities primarily to students limits LTEC exposure to the individuals that students are referring, which may or may not be TAA participants. It is important to recognize the importance of student recruitment as well as not focusing on one avenue of recruitment.

EXPLORE MORE POTENTIAL TAA CHANNELS

LTEC has reported attempts to utilize as many TAA channels as possible. TAA participants are the target population for the LTEC Initiative so their presence in LTEC programs is important. In addition to the channels that LTEC has utilized to date, there are other possible recruitment avenues that TPMA recommends investigating. These include:

- **WIB leadership.** If LTEC could get on the agenda at regional WIB meetings, they could talk about their program opportunities and could receive support and guidance on ways to engage other regional WorkOne agencies.

- **Rapid Response Coordinator.** Although LTEC had the privilege of attending a Rapid Response Job Fair, LTEC could attempt to work with Rapid Response leadership to examine different ways to get involved and gain access to TAA participants.
- **Union Halls.** By gaining access to Union halls, LTEC could promote the opportunities they are offering. Union leadership could then promote Union workers to take advantage of LTEC opportunities as well as assist LTEC in locating TAA individuals.
- **Veteran's Organizations.** Presenting LTEC program information to veteran's organizations could provide LTEC with additional support and, again, assist LTEC in locating TAA individuals through veteran organization's connections.

INCREASE SPECIALIZATION OF STAFF AND STAFF CAPACITY

As the LTEC programs expand and the volume of staff work increases, LTEC can consider further increasing staff specialization. For example, the Academic Advisor role can be more than one individual who can either focus on some of the scheduling, recruiting, or other duties and/or help with the case-load of students. The Academic Advisor's current roles focus on marketing/recruiting, guidance and registration, and course oversight.

By specializing staff member roles, individual staff capacity could increase. This would allow the LTEC staff to be more efficient in their roles and as a team. Furthermore, staff specialization with specific, clear roles for each staff member may make it easier in the future to hire new staff.

STRENGTHEN REGIONAL MARKETING PRESENCE

LTEC has been addressing the need for a marketing presence since the first programs were implemented. LTEC is beginning to explore ways to market on a more regional level with the billboard campaign and the recent hire of someone who will be responsible for marketing. Marketing will become more of a focus in PY3 but is important to note nonetheless.

Specifically, LTEC is hoping to increase their social media presence. With so many potential students utilizing online resources, it is important to create a social media presence. Facebook, Twitter, and a webpage are a few ways to create an online marketing presence. Currently, if a prospective student or employer were to type "LTEC" into a search database, no results would come up because of a lack of an online presence. This underutilization of online marketing tools inhibits LTEC's public relations and recruitment potential. The only marketing that LTEC has is through employers, billboards, and word-of-mouth. Once an online presence is developed, LTEC can begin reaching out to a greater pool of students. TPMA supports LTEC's plans to strengthen their regional marketing presence. One of the fastest growing channels for

educational institutions and businesses to reach out to potential students is social media marketing. TPMA recommends the following steps for effective social media marketing⁶:



⁶ Retrieved from “A Five Step Guide to Using Social Media for Business Development” by JA Company Program (2013)

CONCLUSIONS

LTEC has been successful in Year 2 in developing and implementing their programs and sustainability plan. Success in Year 3 will require meaningful employer engagement, arising from clearer goals and expectations for the Employer Leadership Group, and more persistent efforts to collaborate with regional workforce boards. An established marketing presence could increase TAA enrollment as well as solidify the initiative's sustainability. More clearly defined career pathways and strengthened relationships with employers and regional partners could help LTEC make a name for itself in logistics education in Central Indiana.

APPENDIX A

PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

Program Sustainability Plan – Average Monthly				
	Current <i>June 1, 2014</i>	5 Months <i>October 1, 2014</i>	1 Year <i>June 1, 2015</i>	17 Months <i>End of Grant October 1, 2015</i>
SCLM Academic <i>(\$100 per credit hour)</i>	\$1,500 <i>(72 credit hours /8 students /semester)</i>	\$2,200 <i>(108 credit hours /12 students /semester)</i>	\$3,400 <i>(168 credit hours /14 students /semester)</i>	\$4,800 <i>(240 credit hours /20 students /semester)</i>
B&I Training <i>(average \$325 per student)</i>	\$6,500 <i>(20 students /month)</i>	\$9,750 <i>(30 students /month)</i>	\$13,000 <i>(40 students /month)</i>	\$16,250 <i>(50 students /month)</i>
LTEC Warehouse <i>(FirstBook Marketplace)</i>	\$0	\$4,750 <i>(40,000 books /week)</i>	\$7,125 <i>(60,000 books /week)</i>	\$9,500 <i>(80,000 books /week)</i>
TTDT / CDL <i>(average \$3,800 per student)</i>	\$26,600 <i>(7 students /month)</i>	\$34,200 <i>(9 students /month)</i>	\$41,800 <i>(11 students /month)</i>	\$53,200 <i>(14 students /month)</i>
Total Revenue	\$34,600	\$50,900	\$65,325	\$83,750
Total Expense	(\$63,575) <i>(\$762,890 annually)</i>	(\$69,900) <i>(10% increase)</i>	(\$76,300) <i>(20% increase)</i>	(\$82,650) <i>(30% increase)</i>
Grant Funding	\$32,450	\$37,000	\$41,000	\$0
Net <i>(Monthly)</i>	\$3,475	\$14,000	\$28,025	\$1,100

APPENDIX B

COMPARISON GROUP ANALYSIS – ORIGINAL PLAN

SUMMARY

The original evaluation plan stated that by comparing LTEC participants to similarly situated Workforce Investment Act (WIA)-eligible workers from the Indianapolis area, the evaluation would demonstrate whether individuals who went through the LTEC model, as a cohort, saw better employment, wage, and retention outcomes than a comparable group who did not. In doing so, the comparison group would help build the case for future action and investment in LTEC and similar education and training models. As the LTEC program progressed, TPMA began to observe that participants in academic and non-academic programs appeared to be different. This led TPMA to evolve the original comparison group analysis to include two different comparison groups that would address the academic and non-academic student-participants. A plan would allow for a stronger analysis upon completion of the evaluation.

For the analysis of the LTEC Initiative, TPMA projected the use of two data points for the comparison group.

1. The first analysis would use data from the workforce system to compare short-term LTEC students with a matched cohort of workforce system customers who expressed an interest in logistics positions and scored within a comparable range on the WorkKeys assessment.
2. A second analysis would use data from the VU main campus to compare certificate and associate degree students at LTEC with Global Supply Chain degree students on the VU main campus.

DATA FROM THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM

Data from the workforce system would be used to match LTEC short-term program participants, including individuals who have completed the forklift training, with a similar group of workforce system customers who did not participate in LTEC training but who expressed an interest in logistics employment and had a similar WorkKeys score range. LTEC short-term program students were chosen due to the projected inherent similarities with workforce candidates. This analysis intended to show the difference between training (LTEC participants) and no-training (workforce customers).

Participants would be filtered based on:

- WorkKeys scores; and
- An indicated interest in logistics.

Following filtering, the treatment and comparison groups would be matched on:

- Employment history;
- Educational attainment level;
- Previous workforce training;
- Age;
- Race;
- Gender;
- County of residence; and
- Annual average unemployment level of their resident county.

Analytical Techniques

The data would be used to analyze the following dependent variables:

- Employment (Y/N on whether an individual is employed);
- Wage; and
- Job Retention

A *logistic regression* would be used with Employment as a binary dependent variable. A *linear regression* would be used for the Wage and Job Retention variables. Covariates would include those described earlier (i.e. employment history, education, age, etc.). On average, 10 observations would be used for every variable included within the logistic and linear regressions.

Research Questions

This comparison group would allow the evaluators to answer the following research question:

- Does short-term training received at LTEC lead to better employment, wage and/or job retention outcomes compared to other resources available through the workforce system?

The evaluators believed the strength of this comparison group was that it was likely to compare individuals who are similar. Based on the evaluators' experience, workforce system customers are unlikely to be traditional students who may pursue a longer-term certificate or degree. Thus, by excluding these longer-term students, the internal validity of the comparison group would increase.

Additionally, the evaluators understood that, as of January 2014, much of the LTEC's success has been with very short-term training, such as forklift training, which would likely mirror many of the training programs available through the workforce system.

DATA FROM THE VINCENNES UNIVERSITY-VINCENNES CAMPUS

Data from the VU main campus's Supply Chain Logistics Management Associate degree students would be used to match with LTEC one-year and LTEC Associate degree students. LTEC longer-term students were chosen due to their ability to more closely match with VU-Vincennes students within the VU Supply Chain Logistics Management program. This analysis intended to show the differences between traditional education (VU-Vincennes training) and a mixed learning environment of traditional education combined with hands-on, real world training (LTEC training).

Participants would be matched on:

- Employment history;
- Educational attainment level;
- Age;
- Race;
- Gender;
- County of residence;
- Unemployment level of resident county; and
- Others standard variables collected by Vincennes University.

Analytical Techniques

The data would be used to analyze the following dependent variables:

- Employment (Y/N on whether an individual is employed);
- Wage; and
- Job Retention

Analysis for the binary Employment variable would be conducted using a *comparison of proportions*, while the non-binary variable of Wage and Job Retention would be analyzed with a *t-test*. In both cases, a power analysis would be conducted to show sample size and overall analytical strength. Should the power analysis indicate that the sample size is too small for the comparison of proportions and t-test analyses, then *non-parametric testing* would be used for all three dependent variables.

Research Questions

The second comparison group would allow the evaluators to answer the following research question:

- Does logistics education through the LTEC, compared to the Vincennes campus, lead to better employment, wage and retention outcomes?

The evaluators believed the strength of this comparison group was that it was likely to compare individuals who are similar. This second comparison group design would exclude very short-term logistics students, who are not being educated in great numbers on the VU main campus. In addition, this design would help provide evidence for whether certain features of the LTEC, such as its hands-on logistics laboratory and its location near the major Indianapolis logistics hubs, led to better outcomes for students. While the evaluation design cannot determine *which* features are responsible for outcomes, it may provide general evidence of its overall success.

CURRENT CHALLENGES WITH COMPARISON GROUP ANALYSIS

The plan to utilize the two comparison groups has generated challenges. The comparison group analysis was planning to utilize workforce system data for LTEC training program participants and workforce training program customers. Unfortunately, TPMA is only able to retrieve data at an aggregated level, not an individual level ideal for the comparison group analysis, from Indiana's Department of Workforce Development. The unideal data available creates complications for comparing LTEC participants to workforce customers to determine the differences between training. Although VULTEC is still pursuing this opportunity for individual-level data with the state, guidance from the DOL on ways to secure this information would be welcomed.

Additionally, the second comparison group was comparing LTEC longer-term students to VU main campus degree-seeking students. This comparison group intended to show the differences between mixed learning (LTEC) and traditional learning (VU main campus) environments. In order to do this, TPMA determined the best comparison for LTEC longer-term programs was VU's main campus Supply Chain Logistics Management program. However, VU main campus has now shifted focus of this program to the LTEC campus and is not actively recruiting for this program. This creates challenges in comparison group analysis in PY3. This analysis was meant to compare to LTEC longer-term programs to determine whether mixed learning environments benefit students more than traditional learning environments for logistics education.

The TPMA team will continue to adapt the comparison group analysis portion of the evaluation plan to address the challenges that emerge. Currently, the TPMA team is in the process of re-

evaluating comparison group options for the LTEC Initiative. The evaluation team will continue to evolve the comparison group design in order to gain the best available analysis upon completion of the evaluation.