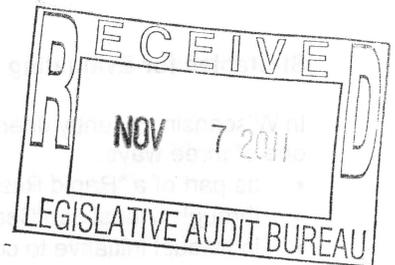


WISCONSIN  
TECHNICAL COLLEGE  
SYSTEM

November 7, 2011

Senator Robert Cowles  
Room 118 South, State Capitol  
PO Box 7882  
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Representative Samantha Kerkman  
Room 315 North, State Capitol  
PO Box 8952  
Madison, WI 53708



Dear Senator Cowles and Representative Kerkman:

As recommended by the Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) in its August 2011 letter report, "*Educational Programs for Working Adults*," the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) Board is providing this report to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee on:

- initial award notifications received by technical college districts and district consortia through the federal Health Care and Education Rehabilitation Act; and
- strategies to evaluate educational and training needs of individuals who are seeking services and have recently become unemployed.

#### Initial Health Care and Education Rehabilitation Act Awards

As LAB noted, the federal Health Care and Education Rehabilitation Act signed into law on March 30, 2010, authorized \$2.0 billion through federal fiscal year 2013-14 for Community College and Career Training Grants, which provide funding to expand and improve the ability of two-year educational organizations to serve workers eligible for training under the Trade Adjustment Assistance program. Initial awards were announced in October 2011, totaling \$500 million and ranging from \$2.5 to \$5.0 million for individual institutions and from \$2.5 to \$20.0 million for consortia. All 16 technical college districts applied for Community College and Career Training grants, and three districts received grant awards totaling approximately \$4.7 million over the next three years.

Western, Southwest Wisconsin and Chippewa Valley Technical Colleges will receive federal funds as part of a three-state, eight college consortium project, Bridges2HealthCare, led by Northeast Iowa Community College. The Bridges2HealthCare project is focused on improving, expanding, and re-designing career ladders in the health sector. Technical colleges will work alongside other consortium members to improve links between Job Centers, remedial education, and other early entry points in the pathway, expand classroom access within several career paths. Specific strategies to be implemented include designing courses that integrate adult basic skills and occupational instruction, providing more intensive advising, tutoring, and intervention efforts, short-term healthcare academies, academic preparation and bridge boot camps, new online preparatory programs, and test out options to ensure student progression through training and reduction in duplication of work.

Through the Bridges2HealthCare project, Western Technical College will receive approximately \$2.1 million over three years. Chippewa Valley Technical College will receive approximately \$1.9 million over three years and Southwest Wisconsin Technical College will receive approximately \$700,000 over three years.



Daniel Clancy, President  
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### Strategies for Evaluating Education and Training Needs of Unemployed

In Wisconsin, recently unemployed individuals typically come in contact with a Wisconsin technical college in one of three ways:

- as part of a "Rapid Response" to large plant or business closings, or "mass" layoffs;
- through a local Job Center; or
- individual initiative to contact a technical college.

When a plant or business employing 50 or more individuals in Wisconsin plans to shut down or conduct a "mass layoff" – at least 25% of the workforce or 25 employees, whichever is greater – it is required under s. 109.07, Wis. Stats., to notify workers and the Department of Workforce Development. Every technical college is part of a local or regional Rapid Response team, which also typically includes experts in Unemployment Insurance, federal retraining grants and opportunities, and other workforce development programs. These teams provide information to individuals facing unemployment, often at the work site, to assist in retraining or re-employment.

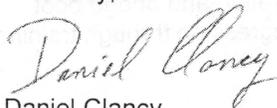
If a business or plant closing or layoff does not require notification, recently unemployed individuals may seek services at a Wisconsin Job Center. Typically, Job Center personnel include technical college faculty and staff, and a number of Job Centers – such as in Fennimore, West Bend, and Marinette – are located on a technical college campus. In addition, some recently unemployed individuals may take the initiative to come directly to a technical college to obtain course or program information or to enroll.

Regardless how a Wisconsin technical college is accessed, the education and training needs of the recently unemployed are evaluated on an individual basis using multiple strategies. For example, all new technical college enrollees undergo formal academic assessments. All technical college students are provided career planning and counseling, advising, and enrollment assistance, including financial aid counseling and referral to retraining programs for eligible dislocated workers. Technical colleges provide free academic and basic skills preparation at extended times and multiple locations, including local job centers and workforce development sites. To ensure recently unemployed individuals have maximum access to online courses and support services, technical colleges also evaluate students' computer literacy and have expanded appropriate computer-use related tutorials and assistance programs.

Despite the extraordinary pressures that have accompanied unprecedented enrollment growth –nearly 40% in the past 10 years and the rapid rate of change in instructional technology and workplace skills – Wisconsin's technical colleges continue to provide unemployed workers with relevant, in-demand skills and knowledge. Even in today's competitive job market, employers continue to seek individuals with technical college credentials and WTCS graduate placements have remained strong.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide additional information on this important topic. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Daniel Clancy  
President  
Wisconsin Technical College System

cc: Joint Audit Committee Members  
Joe Chrisman, State Auditor