Federal Grant Award

Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) were awarded a $15M, multi-year US Department of Labor (USDOL) Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College & Career Training (TAACCCT) grant in September 2014. The proposal, referred to as the Connecticut Advanced Manufacturing Initiative (CAMI), was among thousands of proposals competing for federal dollars in the fourth and final round of TAACCCT. Connecticut’s story of critical need was compelling; the proposal clearly outlined the current, and future, skilled trades shortage in the state, as a result of our rapidly aging workforce, the advent of new and exciting technology, and the increase of manufacturing positions flooding into the region. Funding for CAMI comes at a time when political and employer-based support for advanced manufacturing is at an all-time high.

CAMI represents an opportunity to replicate our nationally-recognized Advanced Manufacturing Center (AMC) model and scale-up delivery across all colleges. Grant funds will be used to expand both the academic and physical infrastructure over the next three years. USDOL funding is primarily being used to hire additional instructors, renovate the instructional labs, purchase state-of-the-art equipment, design new curriculum, provide additional support services to participants, and recruit potential students.

The success of the Advanced Manufacturing programs, in terms of their ability to recruit, provide competency-based education, and place graduates is high-paying jobs, relies heavily on the development of strong partnerships. CAMI strengthens industry-based partnerships, expands our relationship with the state’s Regional Workforce Investment Boards, and formalizes our partnership with the Connecticut Technical High School System.

Curriculum Design

CAMI presents an opportunity to develop new short-term curriculum, with a focus on third-semester certificates that are designed to be a compliment to the Advanced Manufacturing Center one-year Manufacturing Machine Technology program. These certificates include the following:

- Advanced Machine Technology
- Additive Manufacturing
- Tool & Die
- Mechatronics
- Metrology
- Metal Fabrication
- Electro-Mechanical Technology
- Manufacturing Principles & Practices

In addition to developing short-term certificates, the CAMI Consortium colleges will partner with Charter Oak State College to convert several classroom-based, lecture courses into either online or hybrid models to, among other things, accommodate the non-traditional student who may be working full-time, a single parent, or who simply needs a more flexible schedule.

Industry-Recognized Credentials

CAMI pledged to continue the work CSCU had already begun towards NIMS and AWS certification for their students and instructors. Between October 2014 and May 2015, the CAMI Consortium colleges have awarded 333 NIMS certificates in the following areas:

- 116 = Measurement, Materials & Safety I
- 73 = Job Planning, Benchwork & Layout I
- 72 = CNC Milling Operations I
- 66 = CNC Turning Operations I

Hiring Personnel

CAMI provides $7.7M in salary and fringe for new grant-funded employees which represents nearly 40 additional staff. We are well underway with approximately 80% of the full and part-time staff hired.

Building Capacity

The CAMI grant, and preexisting bond funding, will give CSCU a rare and exciting opportunity to improve their advanced manufacturing facilities, which will include the purchase of state-of-the-art equipment, renovation, and bricks and mortar construction. With design complete on most of the planned projects, we are excited to announce that groundbreaking is slated to begin this fall at many CAMI Consortium community colleges.

- Manchester
- Asnuntuck
- Three Rivers
- Quinebaug Valley
- Housatonic
- Naugatuck
In 2014 we were still experiencing a 22.9% national unemployment rate for recent high school graduates, while the CSCU Advanced Manufacturing Centers boast a 98% post-graduation job placement rate. They are still being referred to as Connecticut’s best kept secret. A large part of CAMI will address marketing and recruitment - getting them in, trained, and employed.

Women in Manufacturing

At HCC’s quarterly Advanced Manufacturing advisory meeting, Rich Dupont, the AMC Director, announced that their program has experienced a 35% increase in enrollment since 2014. They are particularly proud of the 7 female students that were among the Spring 2015 graduates, all of whom have been placed in jobs throughout the greater Bridgeport region. Rich talks about “planting seeds” early; it is no surprise that HCC has also partnered with The WorkPlace, their regional WIB, in a summer 2014 initiative called Girls in Tech, which they plan to duplicate next summer in a continued effort to introduce local youth to an array of advanced manufacturing careers.

Employer Acknowledgement

CSCU’s community colleges have many outstanding employer partners. This quarter we would like to highlight Sound Manufacturing and Evolution Aero.

Dr. Kelli Vallieres, President/CEO of Sound Manufacturing, has been working since last fall with Mike Gentry, FT Instructor at Three Rivers Community College (TRCC), to develop curriculum for their new Precision Sheet Metal program. She has lent her expertise and unique industry perspective, to TRCC’s plans to renovate and expand their advanced manufacturing labs. Dr. Vallieres can also be found serving on numerous college and state-wide manufacturing committees and supporting recruitment efforts at Quinebaug Valley Community College.

Evolution Aero has been extremely supportive of the advanced manufacturing program at Manchester Community College (MCC). They have repeatedly opened their doors to provide tours of their facility, hosted pre-apprentices, hired program graduates, serve on the MCC Manufacturing Advisory Committee, and have recently joined the MCC Board of Directors.

Employer Fast FACTS

Numerous employers came forward and pledged to support CSCU in the competitive grant process. The following are employer resources that were leveraged in the CAMI grant:

- 52 letters of support
- $6,000 cash-match for supplies
- $25,000 equipment purchases
- 35 additional internships
- 11 additional scholarships
- 51 additional post-graduation jobs
- $111,400 in-kind support

Regional Workforce Investment Boards

The CAMI grant has distributed a little over $1M in grant funding to Connecticut’s five Regional Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) to provide support for additional Recruitment & Retention Coordinators. The additional Coordinators will send their time between the American Job Centers, college campuses, employers, job fairs, etc. We are already seeing a return on the investment as several of the colleges report increased referrals, closer contact with their WIB, and several innovative practices are being deployed. In total, the WIBs have also leveraged approximately $1,052,935 in in-kind support of the CAMI program.