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GBC celebrates 18 years of partnership offering students accelerated degrees

ELKO — Great Basin College has led the state of Nevada, and the entire nation, in the development and delivery of accelerated degrees in a variety of career and technical areas.

Since 1994, GBC has partnered with regional business and industry in the Maintenance Training Cooperative or MTC. MTC scholarships provide students enrolled in diesel, electrical, instrumentation and welding technology, and industrial millwright technology, with a 48-week program leading the successful student to an associate degree and, more often than not, a well-paying job in the regional economy.

According to GBC President Lynn Mahlberg, the college has a long history of successful response to business and industry needs in rural Nevada.

“GBC’s MTC scholarship program is a model for providing rigorous training in technological areas. Our instructors have worked closely with (the) industry to develop curriculum that trains students in the latest technologies and provides the strong work ethic required in the local workforce.”

GBC developed the accelerated program in 1994. At the time, the mining industry could not recruit skilled technicians to work in the growing industry. The local workforce did not have the skills required to operate and maintain the state of the art equipment and facilities required in the modern mining industry.

College officials and mining experts partnered to solve the problem. Soon, dozens of students were being trained to fulfill the needs of local industry.

Since that time, hundreds of students have graduated from GBC’s CTE programs.

MTC is reliant on a strong public-private partnership.

“MTC partners are businesses and industries engaged in many aspects of the mining industry. The organizations provide scholarships for students to study in the areas where there is a growing need for skilled employees. They provide scholarships, and often, on-the-job training opportunities for students,” said Bret Murphy, dean of applied science at GBC.

CTE instructors are scholar-practitioners. That is, not only are they excellent instructors, they are seasoned professionals in their area of expertise.



“Students learn from skilled instructors who have years of experience in the workplace. They bring both their practical and teaching skills to the classroom. It is a very effective combination,” Murphy said.

The accelerated course work is certainly not without rigor. According to Murphy, student experiences are much like their experiences in the workplace.

“First of all, they are trained to national standards, and the curriculum adheres to the requirements of our accrediting agency. Students are assessed on everything from the quality of their work, to whether or not they show up in the classroom labs on time. We watch them very closely. If they don’t perform, they’re dismissed from the program. But, when they do perform and graduate, they usually find themselves employed in a good job.”

The college expects the demand to continue.

GBC Chief Development Officer John Rice reported on findings from research the college has performed in the last couple of years.

“Area business and industry predict a shortage of technically skilled workers in the next three to five years. GBC is positioned to help fulfill that need, and allow our students to capitalize on the robust economy of northeast Nevada,” he said.