

SkillsTrac

Lake Campus program helps workers retain jobs

Workers in advanced manufacturing can gain a competitive edge thanks to the **SkillsTrac Training Consortium**. This partnership links Wright State's Lake Campus, Edison Community College, Sinclair Community College, and Upper Valley Joint Vocational School with industry partners to help workers acquire new skills.

"WE HAD TO ENGAGE BOTH OUR EDUCATIONAL PARTNERS AND THE COMMUNITY to make this happen," said Julie Miller, director of the Business Enterprise Center at Lake Campus. Funded by a grant from the Department of Labor, SkillsTrac trains workers in such areas as electrical safety, automation, and robotics. Twenty-nine companies have more than 200 workers enrolled in the program.

"The SkillsTrac program provides outstanding training to area employees to enhance or develop new skills in this ever-changing economy," said James Sayer, dean of Wright State's Lake Campus. "People need different job skills today than they did five or 10 years ago. The SkillsTrac program gets people ready for today's and tomorrow's economy."

Greg Bruns, a unit manager for Crown Equipment Corporation, has eight employees participating in the SkillsTrac program. "SkillsTrac has opened the doors for Crown

maintenance professionals to further strengthen their technical skills, sanity check their current skills, and build lasting relationships with peers at other organizations. SkillsTrac has provided the tools for the students to navigate out-of-the-box ideas and to prepare for the next step of their careers," he said.

John Jessup is an instructor at the Lake Campus lab. "Any technical training to bring the workforce up to present-day standards is highly beneficial," he said. "Our students are learning some technology that companies don't even have yet. They will be well qualified for a better position and looked upon more favorably than someone who hasn't had this training."

Multiple locations, along with a web-based curriculum, make the SkillsTrac program convenient

for workers. "They can go to any one of the colleges and get the same training," said Miller. The program also attracts older workers, bringing nontraditional students to campus. "Some of these folks have never set foot on a college campus before."

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— JULIE MILLER, DIRECTOR
BUSINESS ENTERPRISE CENTER,
LAKE CAMPUS



Tim Schoen, a maintenance operator for the Mercer County Sanitary Department, enjoys the convenience of the program. "I do the labs online at home at night and then come here to learn newer technology," he said.

"You can fit it into your own schedule at your own pace," said Dustin Dailey from St. Mary's Foundary. "I would recommend it to anyone in the maintenance industry."

"We're trying to match people's skills with the demands of an advanced workforce," explained SkillsTrac instructor Ray Lufkin. After mastering more than 30 labs and five skill levels, students receive a certificate when they complete the program.

Phil Goecke, who was recently laid off, hopes his SkillsTrac training will get him back into the workforce. "It's important to an employer that you have this certification," he said.

"We want to see more displaced workers get involved with this program," said Miller. "We're retraining for jobs that we know will be there when the economy turns around."