



As Director Daniel Nicholes explains it, Worcester State College's Center for Business and Industry tailors its educational programs to meet the specific needs of area companies.

Workforce development in a global economy

In today's fiercely competitive business environment, businesses have only one strategic advantage that cannot be copied by their competition—a highly skilled, motivated workforce. The Center for Business and Industry at Worcester State College is helping area employers develop their workforces with certificate programs, workshops, on-site training and online courses, all designed to engage and challenge participants.

"Our programs are tailored to meet companies' specific needs with interactive discussions, individual exercises, role-play and case studies," explains Dr. Daniel R. Nicholes, director.

This fall, the Center will launch the newest of its eight certificate programs, Personal Leadership Development. The 33-hour, six-session program connects participants with leaders and leadership educators who will share a variety of points of view about how to achieve success, whether it be for profit, non-profit or political arenas.

Common themes include a focus on helping participants develop those leadership values, skills and goals that are uniquely their own. Coordinating the program is Jeanne M. Plas, Ph.D., who has received national and international recognition for her research and books on organizational leadership.

Another new program focuses on preparing participants to start and run their own businesses. The Certificate in Entrepreneurship program is taught by successful entrepreneurs and consists of 12 days of training.

"Entrepreneurs are the engine that creates new opportunity in the economy," Nicholes says. He noted a survey by Junior Achievement that found 78 percent

of young people want to own their own business someday and a recent article in USA Today reporting that the number of self-employed workers over the age of 50 has jumped 23 percent since 1990.

"Clearly, the ideas of starting and running one's own business is becoming a viable alternative to traditional employment for many Americans," Nicholes says.

Among other new offerings, a partnership between the Center for Business and Industry and Tower Hill's New England School of Gardening (NESOG) makes available six certificate programs in botany, horticulture, landscap-

ing and gardening skills at Tower Hill's facility in Boylston. The two institutions have also established opportunities to offer credit for courses delivered at Tower Hill.

These new programs join the Center's established offerings, which include certificate programs in supervision, human performance improvement, training, project management and business analysis.

The Center also offers more than 60 online certificate programs in eight areas of specialization: healthcare, Microsoft, Comp TIA networking, internet/graphic and web design, business/legal/travel, construction/automotive technology, videogame production and law& management.

Among the many benefits of the Center's workforce development programs:

- Training programs provide skill practice in current job responsibilities and issues; lecture and discussion of theory are directly related to skill acquisition; and workshops include exercises, job aids, and tools that improve job skills immediately.
- Programs can be customized or designed specifically for a particular organization and to accommodate workplace schedules.
- Trainers and consultants bring extensive training experience in a variety of companies, industries and the public sector.

"We are always looking for opportunities to build programs, workshops and seminars that meet the needs of area businesses," Nicholes says. As he looks to the future, he sees great potential in assisting local employers with global business development. "We welcome partnerships and collaborations," he says. "Our goal is to be a valuable resource in workforce development."

Worcester State College Center for Business and Industry



Address: 486 Chandler St., Worcester, MA 01602

Phone: 508-929-8126

Fax: 508-929-8100

Website: /wwwfac.worcester.edu/dgce/cbi/

Number of employees: 1

Top Executive: Dr. Daniel R. Nicholes, director

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