

The Philanthropy Initiative

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Louisiana's Workforce Challenge

It is apparent that a training and education gap exists today in Louisiana. Businesses with major operations in the state cannot find qualified employees. Under-skilled workers find it difficult to earn a living wage and provide for their families. Jobs go unfilled or are filled by workers recruited from out-of-state or internationally. Nearly 70 percent of businesses considering moving to or expanding in Louisiana cite workforce issues among their greatest concerns.

The LCTCS Steps Up

Education, business and government leaders are placing an urgent and dramatic new emphasis on workforce training and professional-technical education through the Louisiana Community and Technical College System for the tens of thousands of skilled jobs that are currently unfilled. Through bricks and mortar improvements, development of new programs to meet workforce demands in growth sectors of the economy, and unprecedented student recruitment and retention efforts, the LCTCS is stepping up to the challenge of bridging the education and training gap.

Although relatively new in comparison to state systems created decades ago, the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) is actively pursuing a strategic plan designed to make it one of the nation's best in terms of student success and service to local business and industry. By the year 2012, the LCTCS plans to triple enrollment from the current 52,000 to 160,000 students in order to meet the state's workforce needs.

In order to meet these goals and transform the state, unprecedented investments will be required in facilities and programs. The State of Louisiana is making significant investments in building and renovating LCTCS campuses and expanding workforce training programs. This is money well spent. A study commissioned by the American Association of Community Colleges revealed that every dollar state and local governments invest in America's community colleges produces \$18 in future economic growth.* (*CC Benefits, 2003*).

The Role of Foundations

While tax dollars will fund basic operations, the success of LCTCS in meeting the workforce needs in communities all around the state will require private investments and support from business and industry partners as well as individuals. In this regard, the LCTCS affiliated foundations are expected to play a critical role. Because of the relative youth of the LCTCS, the vital work of creating a culture and tradition of philanthropy for community and technical colleges in Louisiana is still in its early stages.

Overall the capacity of the affiliated LCTCS foundations to secure significant contributions is limited. Most colleges have no staff and few resources dedicated to foundation development and fundraising activity. Even so, among our foundations, a pattern of good stewardship of resources and an absolute commitment to students and local economic concerns has already been established. (*See Addendum B, Executive Summary of Status of LCTCS Foundations*)

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Going forward, we must look to our affiliated foundations to provide the financial margin that will ensure quality and enable our colleges to meet the competitive expectations imposed by the 21st century. These foundations are essential to ensuring scholarships, enhanced facilities, new program development, and endowment support.

Donors to Louisiana's community and technical colleges and their foundations will see an immediate, local return on their investment. With many of our students choosing to reside and work in their communities following graduation, the education and training they receive stays in their local community, contributing to its economic and cultural vitality.

The Vision

The LCTCS recently created the position of Executive Director of System Advancement to strengthen and support affiliated foundations at every community and technical college in the system. These foundations will provide a focal point for developing a community of friends and donors whose contributions will enhance local efforts and support the transformation of Louisiana's workforce.

To facilitate and encourage leadership for this effort, the LCTCS Foundation is proposing a ***Philanthropy Initiative*** to provide targeted, customized support to the colleges and their foundations. Funds generated by this initiative will be directed to the colleges and their local foundations to be used for education and training, staff and board development, best practice resources, technology tools, and support for local capacity building campaigns to fund staff, conduct feasibility studies, and other capacity-building services and support, thus creating a systematic, proactive, growth oriented environment. (*See Addendum A, Philanthropy Initiative Program Plan*)

The benefits to students, families, business and communities from the "***Philanthropy Initiative***" will be most pronounced at the local level. Students will have lifelong access to the state-of-the-art education and training they need to prepare for skilled jobs that offer living wages and opportunities for career advancement. Businesses will have access to highly skilled employees who are ready for work. Communities will become more vibrant and sustainable because businesses will prosper and families will thrive.

The "Philanthropy Initiative" – Investing in the future of Louisiana

The LCTCS Foundation invites you to make an investment in the future of the State of Louisiana. The LCTCS Foundation seeks \$500,000 over three years for the "***Philanthropy Initiative***." This investment will stimulate and leverage additional investment from the colleges and their communities. This is an opportunity to jump-start a statewide effort to build the college affiliated foundations and attract donors - an effort that otherwise would require a decade or more to achieve.

Louisiana's workforce needs are critical. With your support, the LCTCS will deliver. Please join us in making the "***Philanthropy Initiative***" a success. Your investment will pay dividends for years to come.