

CENTRAL PIEDMONT COMMUNITY COLLEGE

MEETING EMPLOYER NEEDS

Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte currently has around 145 students in apprenticeship programs. The college would like to create many more apprenticeship opportunities.

“We have the capacity to triple our number of apprenticeship students. We just need more employer partners to join us,” says Dr. Kandi Deitemeyer, Central Piedmont president.

In the mid-1990s, Central Piedmont worked with six manufacturers in the Charlotte region to establish Apprenticeship 2000, to build talent pipelines of highly skilled employees that fit the companies’ technical job needs.

Each partner company trains its apprentices onsite for their own workforce needs in trades such as CNC machinist, tool & die maker, mechatronics technician and injection molding technician. The 8,000-hour training program spans four years, during which time apprentices earn an AAS degree in Mechatronics Engineering Technology from Central Piedmont. Upon graduation, apprentices are awarded a Journeyman’s Card and Certificate by the State of North Carolina and a certificate from the U.S. Department of Labor. In addition, the companies cover the full cost of attending Central Piedmont and also pay the apprentices an hourly wage. The students finish the program with no college debt ready to begin full-time, well-paying work.

All but one of the Apprenticeship 2000 companies are based in Europe. Convincing locally based employers to invest in apprenticeship programs proved to be a challenge for the college. Understanding the traditional, European model of apprenticeship does not appeal to or meet the needs of many Carolina-based companies, Central Piedmont established Apprenticeship Charlotte in 2012.

Through Apprenticeship Charlotte, the college offers multiple apprenticeship models, including associate degree, diploma and certificate options with multiple entry points from high school through experienced



A Central Piedmont mechatronics student programs a CNC (Computer Numerical Control) machining center.

workers. The goal is to make apprenticeships more flexible to meet employer needs and provide shorter experiences to address critical workforce needs. The college also hopes to show how just about any industry can benefit from developing talent pipelines through apprenticeships. Central Piedmont currently has 13 Apprenticeship Charlotte company partners.

“Many times when U.S. employers hear ‘apprenticeship,’ they think manufacturing, large-scale investment and multi-year commitment. They also worry about apprentice loyalty after completing the program,” Deitemeyer explains. “At Central Piedmont, we can develop customized apprenticeship programs of varying lengths and investment to meet specific

employer needs. At the same time, our 24-year experience with apprenticeship programs shows the investment made by both the employer and the apprentice typically fosters a successful, long-time relationship.”

Currently, the vast majority of Central Piedmont’s apprenticeships are based in three programs of study – mechatronics, computer integrated machining and diesel-heavy equipment. The college sees opportunities in a much wider range of industries.

“Apprenticeship programs can be tailored for almost any industry, such as banking and finance, healthcare, the trades, automotive, hospitality, IT, business and marketing, and so on,” Deitemeyer adds.



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