



# Enhancing Partnerships Between Job Corps and Community Colleges

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Management & Training Corporation (MTC) is an international corporation dedicated to helping people realize their learning potential. MTC creates nurturing environments in which education is encouraged and recognized. MTC manages and operates 25 Job Corps centers in 18 states for the U.S. Department of Labor, preparing disadvantaged youth for meaningful careers. MTC also operates privatized correctional facilities around the world with approximately 11,700 beds under contract. The MTC Institute is the research division of MTC, which is dedicated to promoting innovations, exemplary practices, and projecting trends that are relevant to job training and corrections. The work of the Institute is geared towards a broad audience including policy makers, educators, researchers, practitioners, state and federal officials, workforce development entities, correctional agencies, and Job Corps centers.

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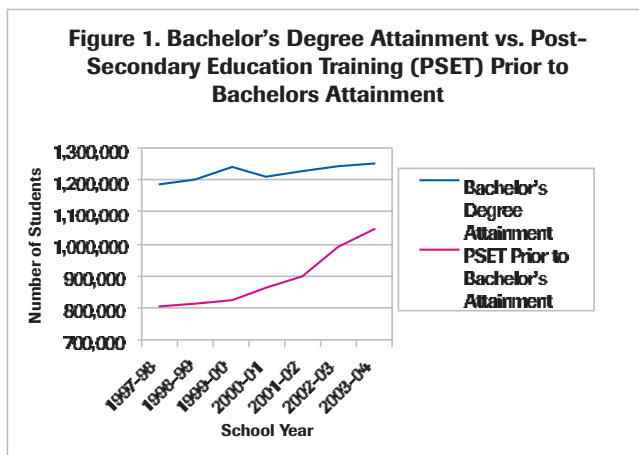
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# Enhancing Partnerships Between Job Corps and Community Colleges

## INTRODUCTION

The demand for skilled workers is on the rise as baby boomers begin to leave the workforce, leaving behind generations that are not able to numerically match those leaving. This demand will continue to rise until there is a sizable deficit in the rate of skilled workers to available jobs. Such a deficit can already be seen by looking at the number of students who do not finish high school. This number is now as high as one student dropping out every nine seconds, a rate that costs the U.S. \$260 billion annually, according to Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, secondary education alone can no longer provide the necessary training required of skilled workers in today's workforce. Although this is an alarming fact, essential change is already taking place in the form of post-secondary education and training (PSET).



Today's labor market requires PSET as a basic requirement for success in all fields. As Figure 1 demonstrates, the rate at which PSET is acquired prior to receiving a bachelor's degree has grown greater than the actual attainment of a bachelor's degree itself.<sup>2</sup> Demand for and access to PSET will continue to increase in the future, as will the demand for employees who have the skills and desire to learn and who are also able to participate fully in the knowledge-based economy.

Today, 90 percent of the fastest growing jobs in the U.S. require some form of PSET.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the National Center for Education Statistics reports that 92 million people, or 46 percent of the U.S. adult population, have participated in some form of adult education, proving that more adults are seeking PSET

every day.<sup>4</sup> The need for retraining and skill acquisition has never been more important for a generation or workforce. Gone are the days of working for the same company for 20 years; it is now expected that the average employee will have between 10 and 14 careers in his or her lifetime.<sup>5</sup>

Student success in the global economy increasingly relies on their ability to learn and re-learn as they adapt to changing workforce structures. Former Secretary of Education Richard Riles has noted that none of the top 10 jobs that will exist in the future actually exist today, due to the fact that these jobs will employ technology that hasn't been invented to solve the problems we haven't yet imagined.<sup>6</sup> With such quick development and change in the workforce, every employee must be ready to learn as well as erase the board and learn again and again and again.

## JOB CORPS AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES CAN BENEFIT FROM INCREASED INTEREST IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Both Job Corps and community colleges are in the best position to benefit from this increased interest in PSET, as both help to provide education and training to a specific proportion of the population that needs to be better trained to fill the many vacancies that will open when baby boomers retire and as the economy grows. Economic growth in the U.S. will be fueled, not by raising the academic and training achievements of the economically advantaged, but by raising the academic and training achievements of the economically disadvantaged.

There is a growing demand in America for stronger student academic skills. The Early College High School Initiative<sup>7</sup> seeks to create a situation where students are challenged by coursework that is more rigorous. The initiative enables students to earn both a high school diploma and college credits towards a degree. Research provides evidence that high school graduation rates are improved and students are ultimately better prepared to be successful in the workforce. Just as community colleges are partnering with high schools to create early college programs, so to should community colleges partner with Job Corps to provide similar opportunities for students who are seeking to improve their academic skill levels.

# Enhancing Partnerships Between Job Corps and Community Colleges

## Job Corps

Job Corps was established by President Lyndon Johnson in 1964 to help underprivileged youth, ages 16 to 24, by providing academic and job skills training, in a residential atmosphere, so that they can rise above their economic situation and become successful. Job Corps does this by providing both remedial and academic programs, helping many receive their high school diploma or complete their GED. Job Corps also provides more specific career and technical training (CTT) in a variety of areas to help students gain the marketable skills needed to succeed in today's workforce. To date, Job Corps has trained and educated more than 2 million young people, serving over 65,000 students per year through 122 Job Corps centers across the United States and Puerto Rico.

Overall, Job Corps is a program that has helped many become more independent, there are some obstacles that Job Corps has when it comes to training and academics. Because of the criteria required to enter these training programs, restrictions are placed on those who can take advantage of Job Corps. Also, the limited budgets hinder the ability to keep up with rapidly changing technology, and some Job Corps training programs may not be using the most up-to-date equipment available. Academic training can be difficult as Job Corps is constantly adding to its student population on an open-entry basis. There is no schedule for entry and exit, which makes it difficult to coordinate classes to meet the many individual needs the Job Corps student faces.

Despite these obstacles, Job Corps has proven to be one of the best places where people from an economically disadvantaged background can have a second chance at school and gaining CTT skills in order to fully succeed in the workforce. Job Corps students are trained in the CTT areas that will best suit them and the economy. These students have been able to move past their poor economic situations and have become skilled machinists, carpenters, plumbers, electricians, auto mechanics, and health care professionals.

## Community Colleges

Community college systems are the fastest growing post-secondary education systems in the United States. Because of this growth, community colleges have been helping America grow economically by providing an education to many people who would

never have received it; they also serve as a source for retraining. Started nearly 100 years ago with Joliet Junior College, they have been inclusive institutions welcoming all, regardless of wealth, gender, ethnicity, or previous academic experience. The process of making higher education available to the maximum number of people continues to evolve at 1,600 public and independent community colleges.<sup>8</sup>

Though community colleges continue to grow and offer ever expanding curricula, they still face a number of obstacles themselves. The largest challenge by far is budgetary; many community colleges receive funding from states, and unlike the federal government, all but two states are required to have balanced budgets. This means that the funding the states receive is finite. If states find themselves in poor financial times, state legislatures will attempt to remedy the issue by cutting various budgets, including those of community colleges. Another major obstacle that these colleges face is that of competition for prospective students. This competition comes from the variety of specialty and private higher education programs that are attractive to students and people seeking retraining.

Community colleges, however, have found ways to overcome these obstacles by wisely investing limited resources in new technology and equipment that can benefit their students. As new technology and advances have arisen, community colleges have added new courses and training programs to accommodate the changing student needs. Because community colleges are so quick to respond to changes in the workplace, they are constantly evolving. This allows them to be open to new ideas, emerging technology, and innovative administrative methods, making them an attractive option for prospective students.

**Economic growth in the U.S. will be fueled, not by raising the academic and training achievements of the economically advantaged, but by raising the academic and training achievements of the economically disadvantaged.**

## Shared Mission

Both Job Corps and community colleges can use their advantages to overcome mutual obstacles; they are also attractive to the economically disadvantaged third of the population because of the open nature of their admissions process, training, and overall education.

# Enhancing Partnerships Between Job Corps and Community Colleges

Job Corps and community colleges provide a relatively open admissions process, allowing for those who might not make it past a four-year college admissions board to enter and receive an education. Furthermore, community colleges and Job Corps provide more substantial remedial education than traditional four-year colleges, allowing students to become better prepared for higher levels of academic courses or training. In many instances they also provide GED, high school diploma, and college-prep programs, opening yet another door to potential students. Job Corps and community colleges also provide career and technical training in a variety of areas for those who do not wish to pursue a full academic program. Job Corps, for example, offers PSET to people who might be the first in their families to receive further education or training, and families who have first-time community college enrollees represent 39 percent of all student enrollments.<sup>9</sup> Because of these similarities, both Job Corps and community colleges offer an environment where anybody can succeed.

## HOW PARTNERSHIPS CAN EXPAND CAPACITY AND OPPORTUNITIES

Partnering allows for the sharing of many different, but always scarce, resources. Resources that can be shared can range from instruction time to programs offered, and it can be easily said that partnering allows for better use of the resources that both Job Corps and community colleges have. A partnership can take many forms, but the best is one that does not duplicate too many programs or services. To form a partnership means that both members can take advantage of the other's programs, expertise, and services without having to provide the same level of these programs, expertise, and services in return. This may include:

- Sharing management of remedial training.
- College CTT classes being offered at a Job Corps center.
- Job Corps housing students while they attend community college.
- Student teachers performing practicum or providing tutoring as part of their program requirements.
- Job Corps teachers receiving training at community college.
- Community colleges helping Job Corps students

seek employment.

- Establishing career centers at Job Corps centers that would not only benefit the students of Job Corps and community colleges, but also the surrounding community.
- Job Corps providing opportunities for part-time work for community college students.
- Counseling community college students who wish to drop out of college and encouraging them to explore Job Corps, thus retaining a student to until completion of his or her education or training.
- Receiving grants or other additional funding when a partnership works at providing better education and training for the Job Corps demographic.
- Job Corps students volunteering for a variety of projects at the community college.
- The Community College serving as a satellite Job Corps campus.

## Examples

- The Kittrell Job Corps Center, in Kittrell, North Carolina, has a strong partnership with Vance-Granville Community College. Not only are students enrolled at Vance-Granville, but the college provides on-center instructors to teach the GED, adult high school, and certified nursing programs. Vance-Granville has also been very responsive in providing new courses when needed.
- In Chicopee, Massachusetts, students from the University of Massachusetts tutor at the Westover Job Corps Center every semester as part of their TEAM program. This provides both training for the tutor and helps Job Corps students attain their academic goals.
- The Westover Job Corps Center also has partnerships with several community colleges in the area. Holyoke Community College (HCC) sends a representative once a month to the center to discuss programs, admissions policies, and what the college can offer to the students. There is also coordination between the admissions office for advising and placements testing for Job Corps students. In addition, HCC performs the GED test for Job Corps students and is currently working at making arrangements to have a permanent representative from HCC at the center.

# Enhancing Partnerships Between Job Corps and Community Colleges

Other partnerships include the Springfield Technical Community College, where eight students are enrolled in programs varying from engineering to business programs, and the Asnuntuck Community College, where the Director of Machine Technology recruits Job Corps students for the precision machine technology and electronics control technology programs.

- In Portland, Oregon, the PIVOT program has entered into a program that Portland Community College (PCC) calls the Portland Area Vocational & Technical Education Consortium (PAVTEC). PAVTEC is an association of professional, technical, and workforce development instructors, and instructors that teach at the PIVOT facility must meet qualifications equivalent to an instructor at PCC. Though the PIVOT instructors currently only teach at PIVOT, they are also qualified to teach at PCC, allowing PIVOT students to earn up to 17 college credits through out their vocational training. PIVOT instructors could easily be adjunct professors for PCC through this type of program.
- Delaware's Wilmington Job Corps Center has an articulation agreement with Delaware Technical & Community College, which allows Job Corps graduates from facilities maintenance, culinary arts, and business technology to receive credits at the school upon enrollment. Specifically, business technology students receive 12 or more credits for successfully completing their trade and certifications.
- The Charleston Job Corps Center, in West Virginia, has 45 slots at West Virginia Community and Technical College, which is located on the campus of West Virginia State University. Prior to enrolling in college, students must complete on-center programs, including a college preparatory class. Slots are available each January and August, and students reside in the dorms at West Virginia State University. Students continue with all Job Corps benefits while enrolled in Job Corps Advanced Career Training.

Job Corps centers can also serve as a satellite campus for community colleges, these colleges are given an opportunity to reach a larger portion of the population within the area. This type of partnership has the advantage of allowing for growth without large building projects. It also allows community college students living near a Job Corps center to better understand what happens at Job Corps.

Job Corps centers can also provide a location for internships or practicum training for community college students. A Job Corps center is a dynamic place that provides a variety of services to its students, and internships can be available in any number of departments such as health care, human resources, financing, and education. Such centers greatly benefit those performing the internship, since about a third of all interns receive job offers from where they are interning.<sup>10</sup> These students will have an added edge in the workforce when they graduate; this will benefit Job Corps centers by providing a supply of workers that can help provide new and creative energy to the Job Corps program.

## THE BENEFITS OF A PARTNERSHIP

San Francisco's Glide Church, an inner-city institution that feeds over 1,000 people a day, partnered with Mission Community College to give many that the Glide Church was serving access to education and workforce development. After two years, 50 people taking advantage of the partnership obtained well-paying jobs as information technology specialists.<sup>11</sup> Both partners provided their skills jointly, helping economically disadvantaged people by exposing them to the workforce and educational opportunities that they otherwise never would have received.

A partnership between Job Corps and community colleges can reap the same benefits for those who enter either institution, including providing a continual flow of students to community colleges. This thereby increases enrollment numbers and also provides the needed education and CTT required for students to succeed in the global economy. The college-bound population is limited due to the competition for students between community colleges and traditional four year colleges, and with 45 percent of first time freshman entering community colleges, Job Corps provides an additional source of students.<sup>12</sup> By partnering with Job Corps, community colleges would have a virtual monopoly on a new cohort of students that the traditional four-year schools typically pass over.

The overall ethnic makeup of Job Corps is varied in the groups it serves. Everyone can acknowledge the benefits of diversity, especially on a college campus. Community colleges can easily tap into Job Corps' many different minority groups and foreign-born student base, helping to diversify the student body and creating a better learning environment for all.

# Enhancing Partnerships Between Job Corps and Community Colleges

By combining resources through the various partnerships listed above with countless others, Job Corps and community colleges can coalesce ever smaller resources to provide the most effective services at the best cost. Creating a partnership that provides a savings but still increases services is the best type of partnership as it enables both partners to better fulfill their goals and help those for whom they were established, giving assistance to those in need of education or workforce development.

Job Corps Centers can provide remedial education that 42 percent of incoming community college students need before they enter their fields of study.<sup>13</sup> Job Corps also works with students who need remedial work before they enter their respective CTT program. By doing this it would reduce the number of students in college remedial programs, minimizing the frustration that some students have when required to wait to take core courses at community colleges. This may in some ways promote the use of community college resources in improving other offerings.

This can best be accomplished through a Memorandum of Understanding or an Articulation Agreement that would spell out such things as:

- The purpose or objectives.
- Center responsibilities.
- College responsibilities.
- Mutual expectations.
- General terms and conditions (e.g., duration, methods of modification or renewal and other provisions).

As Job Corps and community colleges work together in partnerships, they provide access to higher education to people who previously would have never considered even looking into going to college. Because most of the Job Corps students come from a disadvantaged background, college is only a myth that others talk about, let alone achieve. If Job Corps students were able to attend classes at a local community college, the mystification of the process would be eliminated, providing a new view of college for these potential students. They could see that not only can they attend college classes, but they can also succeed and graduate from college.

## CONCLUSION

Partnerships are established to allow all involved to use resources more wisely and expand overall opportunities. An expansion of the partnership between Job Corps and community colleges will provide a number of benefits to both partners including, but not limited to, the sharing of facilities, professors, and students.

The most important aspect of a Job Corps/community college partnership is the demystification of PSET, thereby providing training to a person who would otherwise probably not receive such an opportunity. Though students that enter Job Corps are at different levels academically, the PSET gained at the Job Corps centers will establish a new norm, one that establishes the foundation of lifelong learning, a desire that Job Corps graduates will need to succeed in an ever-changing workforce. In order to fully enhance a student's understanding and access to college, Job Corps students need to become better informed of the advanced training that they can receive through community colleges. Overall, Job Corps students need to be given exposure to college from the moment they begin their program at Job Corps.

A recent report from American College Testing reported that the skills needed to enter the workforce out of high school are the same skills needed to be successful in college.<sup>14</sup> If disadvantaged youth can succeed in a vocation, then they can also succeed in PSET. However, Job Corps students need to fully understand that they can go on to PSET and excel; Realizing that potential should bring on an atmosphere of lifelong learning which needs to be created and instilled in these students. With 39 percent of community college enrollees being the first in their families to attend college, a partnership between these colleges and Job Corps will further assist new students and their extended families with the hurdles they will encounter, allowing them to further succeed in the global economy.<sup>15</sup>

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> AYPF (n.d.). *AYPF: "The work group" is in country's top twelve programs for high school drop-outs*. Retrieved September 14, 2006, from <http://www.camdenmatters.org/category/index.cfm?c=28&infoID=635>
- <sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics, annual. Note: The table is deceiving as PSET also includes attaining of a bachelor's degree and beyond, thus increasing the number of people involved in PSET.
- <sup>3</sup> Emily S. DeRocco, Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor. (2006, July 11). Opening plenary: innovate to compete. Anaheim, CA.
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- <sup>6</sup> Gunderson et al.
- <sup>7</sup> Bill & Melinda Gates foundation in partnership with the Carnegie Corporation of New York, The Ford Foundation, and the W. K. Kellogg Foundation are sponsoring the Early College High School Initiative. Information retrieved October 3, 2006 from <http://www.earlycolleges.org/>
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- <sup>9</sup> American Association of Community Colleges (2006, January). *Community College Fact Sheet*. Retrieved August 9, 2006, from [http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/AboutCommunityColleges/Fast\\_Facts1/Fast\\_Facts.htm](http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/AboutCommunityColleges/Fast_Facts1/Fast_Facts.htm)
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- <sup>14</sup> ACT. (2006, March) *Ready for college and ready for work: same or different?*
- <sup>15</sup> American Association of Community Colleges (2006, January). *Community College Fact Sheet*. Retrieved August 9, 2006, from [http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/AboutCommunityColleges/Fast\\_Facts1/Fast\\_Facts.htm](http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/AboutCommunityColleges/Fast_Facts1/Fast_Facts.htm)

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