

**Written Testimony  
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**Statewide Issues**

- The number of jobs requiring technical training, certifications or associate degrees is outpacing the number of people available to fill them despite the fact that many pay above-average salaries. *(Texas Comptroller, 2008)*
- Community Colleges across the state work with local businesses, industry leaders, school districts, and other stakeholders to provide educational opportunities that help insure a skilled workforce.
- Multiple pathways to high school graduation and postsecondary training & education will help reduce the skilled-worker gap and could help reduce dropout rates; current state policy tends to focus on a single path to a four-year degree.
- Ensure that state academic requirements, such as those represented by the “four-by-four” policy and high school GPA calculation standards, do not prevent or discourage students from enrolling in career and technology courses.

**Examples of College Collaborations**

**Bell Helicopter and Amarillo College**

Over the last decade, Amarillo College and Bell Helicopter Textron Inc. have collaborated to train hundreds of workers for Bell’s military aircraft assembly center in Amarillo. The company has worked closely with Amarillo College to develop a training program preparing students to work at the assembly center. Students enroll in the training program through Amarillo College, a community college, and are responsible for paying about \$1,500 in tuition for the program.

Upon completing the training, students are guaranteed a preferential hiring interview at Bell. Students who interview but do not receive jobs immediately remain in the applicant pool for future job openings.

More than 450 students have graduated from the program and more than 220 have been hired by Bell Helicopter. Starting hourly wages range from \$12.50 to \$22.70, depending on previous experience. Graduates of the program who do not go to work at Bell have learned skills they can use for similar jobs in the areas of composites, machining and assembly. They receive official college transcripts they can use to help land those jobs.

Community support, including the training partnership with Amarillo College, played a key role in Bell Helicopter's decision to locate the assembly center in Amarillo. The facility now employs 731 Amarillo residents, with plans to expand in the near future. This partnership has reaped rewards for the company, the community college and the community.

### **McLennan Community College and the Heart of Texas Workforce Center**

McLennan Community College (MCC) and the Heart of Texas Workforce Center work together to train workers for employers in McLennan and Falls counties. MCC's Corporate and Professional Training Department delivers consulting services and customized corporate training. Trainers listen to each client's challenges and design solutions to meet their goals.

Over the past five years, 23 local employers have received Employee Development Fund grants from the Heart of Texas Workforce Board. Using discretionary training funding, the Heart of Texas Workforce Center and MCC have focused on the immediate needs of local businesses, promptly designing and delivering training initiatives in computer technology, Occupation Safety and Health Administration safety certification, English and Spanish workplace readiness, customer service and supervisory leadership, among others. This partnership between local employers, the Heart of Texas Workforce Board, and MCC has provided training to more than 850 workers over the past five years.

### **Odessa College**

#### Occupational Safety and Health Technology

Odessa College also offers a 100 percent online course in occupational safety and health technology (OSHT). The OSHT degree is designed for people who want to advance in a company safety or environmental department or for those seeking employment in the field. The two-year program produces safety and environmental professionals with the background needed to create a safe and healthy work environment that complies with current regulations.

The program allows students to pursue their careers without interruption while enrolled in school. The estimated salary for an OSHT officer ranges from \$30,000 to \$50,000 annually. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools has approved the OSHT degree program. Odessa College is one of only six Texas community colleges approved to offer a full online degree program.

### **The Laredo Community College Economic Development Center**

The Laredo Community College (LCC) Economic Development Center (EDC) attempts to coordinate work force, economic and community development efforts within the college's district. The EDC focuses on strategies designed with the help of area businesses to meet key industry needs, with particular concentration in the oil and gas, manufacturing, hospitality, international trade and health sectors.

The college EDC plays an active role in Laredo's economic growth by surveying area employers to identify their training needs and integrating them into LCC's curriculum. In this way, LCC can ensure that its students have the tools they need to prosper in the local as well as global economies.

For example, when Conoco-Phillips, one of the state's largest oil producers, asked LCC to consider offering a training program for lease operators, the EDC led the development of the program. With the company's support, the EDC is creating a series of associate degrees in applied science, safety training and industry awareness to prepare individuals for jobs in the oil and gas industry

The EDC also is developing a Workplace Literacy Council, which will address the challenges facing the large share of the South Texas population that lacks the mastery of English needed to perform basic job tasks.

### **Alamo Colleges - Academies**

San Antonio's Alamo Area Academies educate and train high school students for high-skill, well-paid industry jobs. The academies are a partnership of community businesses, the Alamo Community College District (ACCD), 17 school districts in the San Antonio area, the city of San Antonio, Alamo Workforce Development and others.

ACCD in partnership with the independent school district (ISDs) in the San Antonio area offers industry-driven dual-credit courses through three individual Alamo Academies: the Alamo Area Aerospace Academy, which started in 2001; the Information Technology and Security Academy, which opened in 2002; and the Manufacturing Technology Academy, which opened in 2004. The two-year Alamo Academy high-tech training and education program is free to high school juniors and seniors. ACCD provides the instruction and facilities at no cost, and the ISDs pay for the student's books and transportation.

Academy students can earn 30 hours of college credit towards higher education and at the same time train for well-paid careers. In addition to the course work, all Academy students must work 40 hours per week in an eight-week paid internship between their junior and senior year. Students are also offered job shadowing and mentoring opportunities.

## **San Jacinto College**

The San Jacinto College District is located in the area where much of Houston's industry is located. With the Port of Houston Authority, manufacturing and petrochemical plants, and NASA's Johnson Space Center, San Jacinto College has been able to forge many partnerships to develop programs to meet the workforce needs. Here are a few examples:

### Maritime Training

The international shipping industry is responsible for around 90 percent of world trade. The Port of Houston Authority is a 25-mile-long complex of diversified public and private facilities and is ranked first in the United States in foreign waterborne tonnage; first in U.S. imports; second in U.S. exports; and second in total U.S. tonnage. Approximately 60 percent of mariners are 50 years of age or older. In conjunction with the Port of Houston, the Houston Pilots, Western Gulf Maritime Association, G & H Towing, Kinder Morgan, Diamond Offshore, Conoco Phillips, the United States Coast Guard, Mid-Atlantic Maritime Association, Texas A&M University at Galveston, Texas Southern University, the University of Houston College of Technology, and others, San Jacinto College is offering U.S. Coast Guard certified courses to upskill current worker licenses, and create pathways to careers for high school students. The programs San Jacinto College offers range from workforce training, maritime business, maritime logistics, and transfer programs to area universities with maritime bachelor's degrees.

### Eye care technology program

San Jacinto College offers a comprehensive training program for those students who have a desire to develop the knowledge base to perform skills under the supervision of licensed eye care professionals. This program is designed to correlate classroom and laboratory experiences with clinical experience in ophthalmic offices and clinics. The eye care technology program at San Jacinto College is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Ophthalmic Medical Programs (CoA-OMP). Graduates of the associate of applied science degree program are eligible to petition for examination through the Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology at the certified ophthalmic technician level. Graduates of any of the three levels (occupational certificate, certificate of technology, associate degree) are eligible to petition for examination through the American Board of Opticianry for certification as an optician or National Contact Lens Examiner. The eye care technology program at San Jacinto College enjoys a 100 percent job placement rate,

is the only accredited ophthalmic technician program in the state of Texas, and is one of only 10 programs in the United States.

#### Automotive Technology Program

Through partnerships with Chrysler, Ford, General Motors, Honda, Toyota, and others, San Jacinto College has developed an automotive technology program that not only meets industry needs, but also is certified by our industry partners. Students graduating from the automotive program are enjoying 100% job placement.

#### Process Technology and Instrumentation Programs

With the heavy manufacturing and petrochemical industries in our college district, partners such as Bayer, Lubrizol, Air Products, Ineos-Nova, Dow Chemical, Valero Houston Refinery, Kaneka Texas Corp., Dupont, Shell, Lyondell-Bassell Refining, and others are guiding the curriculum process so that we provide the trained workforce needed for these companies. In fact, Shell Deer Park has hired nearly 60 students from the process technology program in the last year.

#### Diesel Technology Program

San Jacinto College's Diesel Technology Program includes a rigorous curriculum based on industry need. Partners such as Cummins Engine Company, Detroit Diesel, Stewart and Stevenson, Penske Truck Leasing, Saia Freight Lines, Wartsila Engine company, and several others serve as an advisory committee to set curriculum to meet the workforce need. Over the last five years, students have enjoyed a consistent 95 percent job placement rate upon graduation.

#### Healthcare Pathways

San Jacinto College has partnered with area community colleges and businesses to create a Healthcare Pathways program. This program is funded through a \$4.7 million Department of Labor grant to train students who are constrained financially, or who meet other eligibility requirements. These students must be interested in pursuing training in the areas of electrocardiogram (EKG), phlebotomy, certified nurses aide (CNA), licensed vocational nurse (LVN), transition or mobility associate degree nurse (ADN) or medical laboratory technology. This grant also assists eligible applicants with English as a second language (ESL) courses, online reading skills classes, general educational development (GED) courses, and student success classes.

#### Veterans Programs

San Jacinto College is committed to America's military veterans and helping them achieve their college and career goals. Veterans interested in training in fields with increasing job opportunities may qualify for the San Jacinto College Veterans Workforce Development Project grant, covering up to \$2,100 for college tuition. Provided through the U.S. Department of Labor, the grant includes scholarships for up to 50 veterans per semester and can be applied toward credit or noncredit certificate programs in areas with increasing employment rates, such as welding,

non-destructive testing, payroll specialist, emergency medical technician basic certification, environmental safety specialist, truck driving, computer specialist, cyber-security, or other programs chosen on the basis of regional labor market demands.

With an influx of about 200 additional student military veterans each year, the College is also using funds from a Department of Education grant to open Centers of Excellence for Veteran Student Success at each of the three San Jacinto College campuses. More than 1,200 student veterans attended San Jacinto College last year.