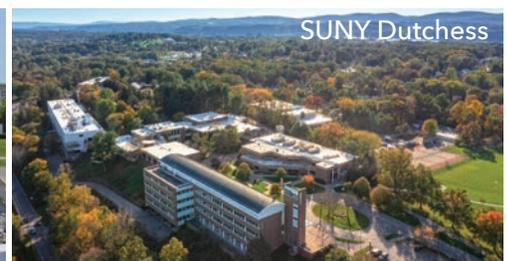


WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

HUDSON VALLEY EDUCATIONAL CONSORTIUM | DR. KRISTINE YOUNG

THE COMMUNITY COLLEGES OF MID-HUDSON REGION BAND TOGETHER TO IMPROVE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

One of the envied strengths of the United States of America is its diverse and multi-faceted system of higher education. The sector that claims the world's attention is our powerhouse research universities and the knowledge they create. Our own national fascination seems to be grabbed by a handful of so-called elite liberal art colleges and the individuals they attract. But there is a broad array of other types of institutions that comprise and well serve the complex needs of the U.S.



Overlooked all too often are the hyper-local workhorse community colleges. There are over 900 public comprehensive community colleges in the U.S. By definition, each of these colleges grants two-year degrees as its primary degree mission, and almost all do so in fields that transfer to four-year colleges, as well as in fields designed for direct entry into the workforce. The vast majority of these 900 colleges also work directly with local employers to create timely, specialized workforce training opportunities. This definition certainly befits the six SUNY community colleges in the following Mid-Hudson counties: Dutchess, Orange, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, and Westchester.

Community colleges serving the specific communities in which they are located have worked well for the 120 years we've been around as a sector. Even in the Mid-Hudson, it's not hard to argue that Yonkers is different in some ways than West Hurley! But this time-honored model has challenged community colleges to be responsive as certain skilled businesses and industries have become both increasingly specialized and distributed. Without a critical mass of students to prepare in any specific area, how can a community college responsibly create a program using taxpayer dollars? And if a modest number of students are found all across a region and not exclusively in one college's district, does that college have a responsibility to respond to another area's needs?

Your Mid-Hudson community colleges figured it out!

A REGIONAL WORKFORCE STRATEGY

Drawing on the heritage of the Hudson Valley Educational Consortium which was formed in the wake of September 11, 2001, to cooperatively create and deliver emergency services education in the community colleges of the Mid-Hudson, the six SUNY community colleges of the Mid-Hudson recently reestablished our collaborative ties as HVEWC, Hudson Valley Education Workforce Consortium. Recognizing that each college has different strengths in its faculty, facilities, equipment, curriculum, and relationships that it can bring to bear on regional workforce issues, we determined that our sum could be greater than our parts. Sometimes, HVEWC could be a solution to seemingly difficult workforce development problems.

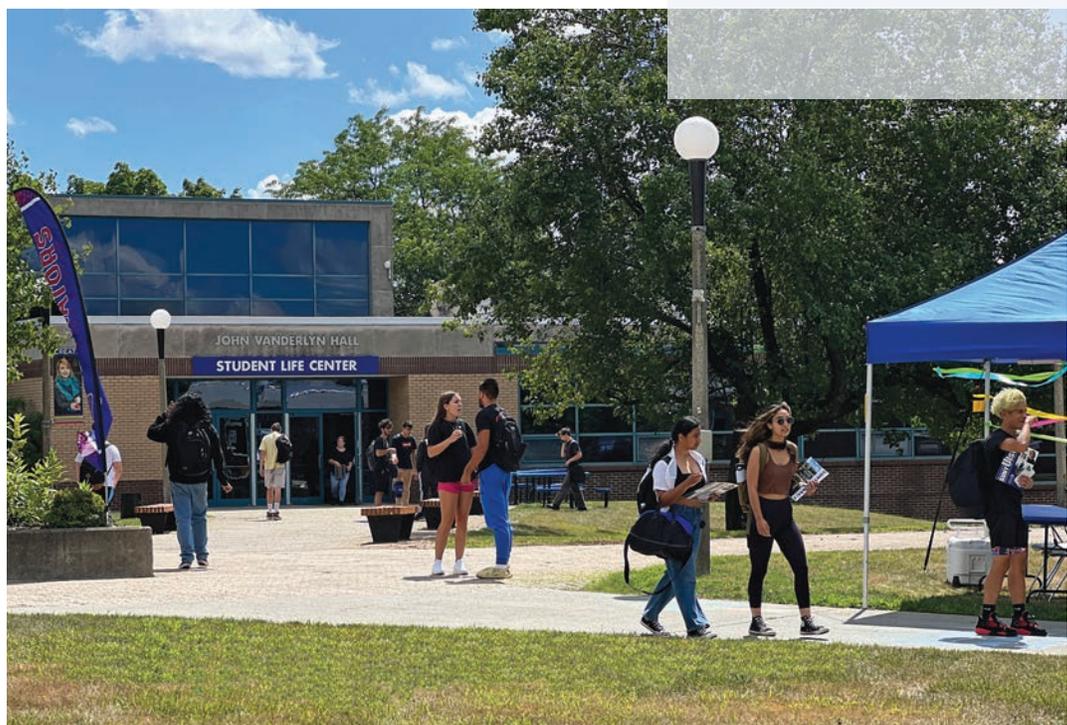


FOCUS ON ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

The first major proof of concept for HVEWC's Regional approach was winning a \$1.2 million SUNY Future of Work Center grant. Through this grant the HVEWC will, in collaboration with the Council of Industry and its members, strengthen its training offerings for Hudson Valley manufacturers. Dutchess, Orange, Rockland, Ulster, and Westchester Community Colleges are all participating. Ulster Community College, with its strong advanced manufacturing program is the grant lead. Over the three year life of the grant, advanced manufacturing employers will benefit from educational training in Certified Manufacturing Associate (CMfgA), Certified Production Technician (CPT/CPT+), Computer Numerical Control (CNC), Metrology, and NIMS Certification in the region.

HVEWC and the Council of Industry will convene interested manufacturers in the region to provide input on course offerings. The Future of Work grant to HVEWC is a key component of a region manufacturing sector workforce development strategy.

"... my intellectual delight and professional heart have been stolen by what community colleges can do for individuals and communities."



SUNY Orange, Newburgh Campus overlooking the Hudson River.



“It’s a rare opportunity to get to shape the workforce strategy for an entire region with an emerging industry sector.”

As president of Orange County Community College, I am thrilled to have a solution to bring all of these trainings to constituents in Orange County, but I only need to ask my team at Orange County Community College to create and deliver in their area of expertise (CMfgA).

THE CANNABIS OPPORTUNITY

Just this summer, Governor Kathy Hochul announced that HVEWC was selected to receive \$1 million to support the launch of cannabis accreditation programs. The timing of HVEWC’s emergence as a regional force could not have been better. As Rockland Community College’s Vice President of Economic Mobility and Workforce Innovation

Kevin Stump puts it, “It’s a rare opportunity to get to shape the workforce strategy for an entire region with an emerging industry sector.” With all HVEWC colleges participating and Orange County CC serving as the lead, the work will support the emerging cannabis industry by providing project management, industry/business development, curriculum development, education and training, student support services, and outreach and marketing. The project will focus on developing and implementing an employer-driven sector strategy and provide preference to serve populations who have been disproportionately impacted by the war on drugs. As President of Orange County CC, I am enjoying observing our workforce training department driving the grant as the lead college, and I celebrate the contributions that our outstanding horticulture faculty will make to the eventual curriculum, just as I know faculty at our sister colleges will contribute mightily to the other areas to be identified by employers.



I hold other sectors of higher education in high regard, but my intellectual delight and professional heart have been stolen by what community colleges can do for individuals and communities. The collaborative spirit and transformative potential of HVEWC is yet another reason why we should be looking at community colleges instead of overlooking them.

Dr Kristine Young is the President at Orange County Community College.





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