

Business & Industry and GCCC Succeed as a TEAM!

By Sharon Keller
and Dan Schroer

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The mission of the Greene County Career Center (GCCC) is “Empowering students through advanced technologies, integrated instruction and community partnerships to succeed in career, college and life.” We are proud to say that the Greene County Career Center has empowered students to achieve amazing success through community support, while developing dynamic business and industry partnerships.

The GCCC offers 33 high school career technical programs at the main campus in Xenia, Ohio; the Greene County Agricultural Research Center, also in Xenia, Ohio; Clark State Greene Center in Beavercreek, Ohio; and in the seven comprehensive high schools throughout Greene County. Each program offers instruction using 21st-century technology. For example, students at Xenia and Fairborn High Schools learn engineering through advanced robotics technology, students in digital media develop webcasts with the same computer technology as media experts in Hollywood, and welding students can learn to become pipeline welders through specialized equipment located on the main campus. These are just a few of the examples that make our education cutting edge. But these opportunities would not have been possible without the support and dedication of our business and industry partnerships.

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in developing success for students. TEAM stands for “T”eacher involvement, “E”xpert opinion, “A”ttitude and “M”ind-blowing education. The strategies provided in this article are based upon 41 years of collective administrative and educational leadership and support, as well as from the advice gained from many professional mentors. At no point will we say that we have all the answers or that these are the best strategies for everyone. We are only saying that these strategies have been helpful and effective in our years of education.

Teacher Involvement

Our career and technical education (CTE) teachers have active advisory committees that enhance the CTE program to become a vital, positive force for education. Members of the committees may include former students, parents of current students, and representatives of business, industry, labor and community agencies. The committees provide valuable advice, guidance and assistance on how a program’s curriculum, facility and equipment should be updated, modified or expanded to meet the current employer needs for knowledge and skills.

The committees also assist in student-recruitment events, as well as providing students with training opportunities, finding full or part-time jobs, and arranging field trips, tours and meetings to establish relationships between education and industry.

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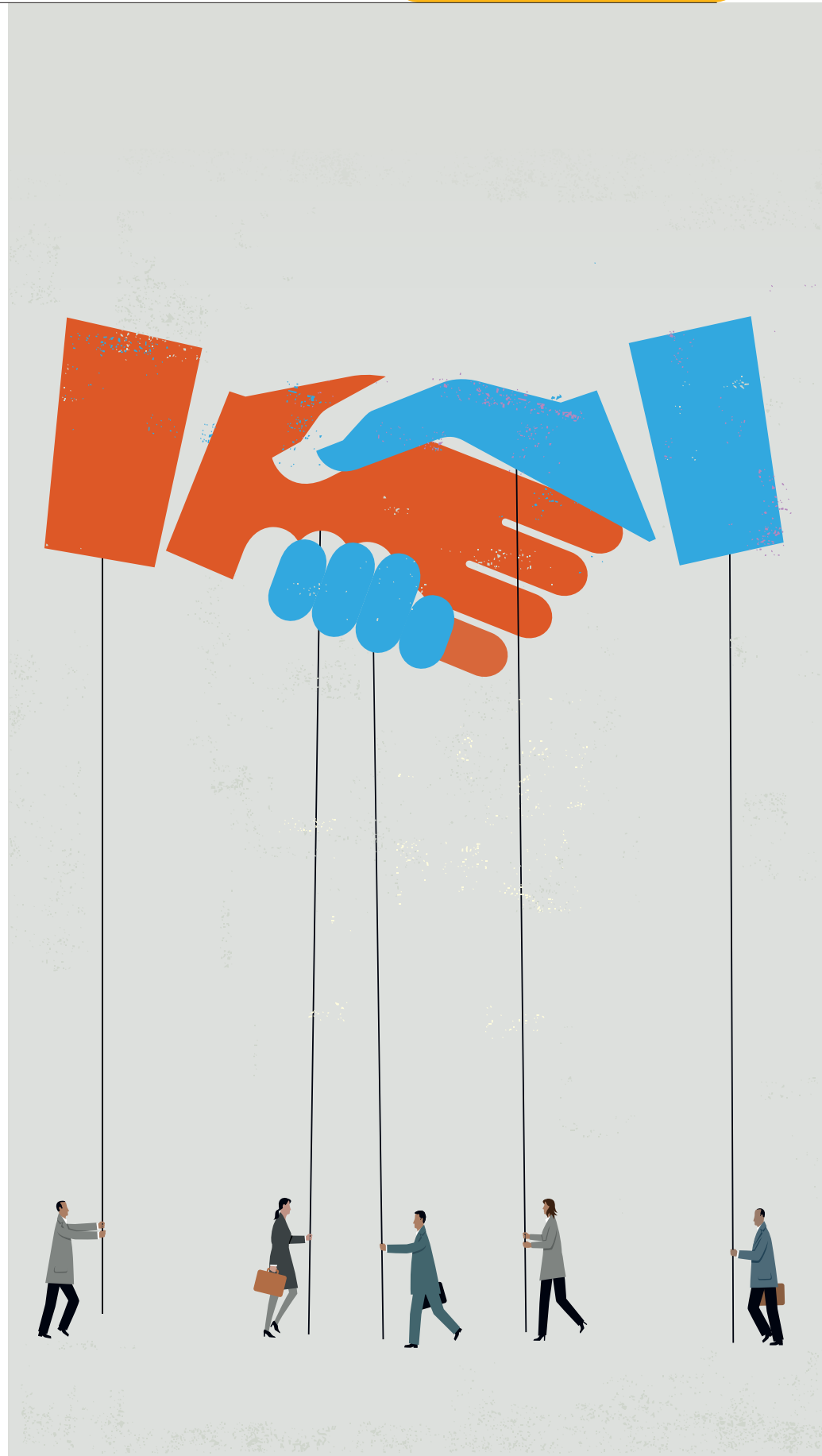
Our teachers encourage student participation in career and technical student organization (CTSO) competitions, meetings, events and leadership opportunities.

The teachers not only instruct on a day-to-day basis, but they also actively work with students on job sites and projects. GCCC staff hire former students for projects because the staff has confidence in the training and education the students received while attending a CTE program.

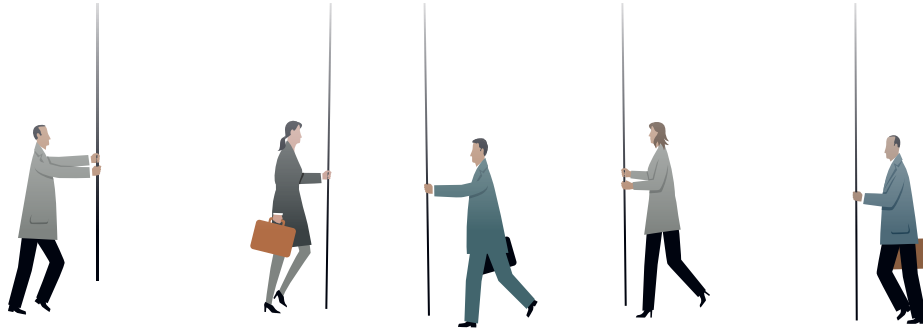
Expert Opinion

GCCC is honored to have so many community partnerships and supporters. Three years ago, we decided to become “gold sponsors” for all the chambers of commerce in Greene County. While each of the five sponsorships was only \$2,500, this investment has been critical in our relationship building, as well as bringing in expert opinion to the career center. We are involved in all chamber board meetings, ribbon-cutting ceremonies, social activities and professional-development meetings. This has brought business connections to all our adult and secondary programs. All five chambers have held events at the career center where the leaders have been able to tour GCCC facilities and speak with students.

We are also involved in all three Rotary Clubs in the county. By attending the weekly meetings, we have been able to spread our positive message to another group of business leaders. Each Rotary has also held meetings at the career cen-



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ter, where the culinary arts students have catered the meeting, and the group has been able to tour the facility.

Three years ago, the Business Advisory Council was developed to report directly to the superintendent. This group meets two times a year to provide guidance for the vision and direction of the career center. The group is comprised of the chamber of commerce presidents, state legislators representing GCCC, business leaders from each of the seven school districts and postsecondary leaders. Members of the council have spent time in classrooms to provide insight on what they observed in the classrooms and laboratories.

Attitude

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In May 2012, GCCC conducted a stakeholder satisfaction survey. This survey was sent to business and industry

leaders, partner school district personnel, postsecondary representatives, parents and chamber of commerce members. Here are some of the results:

- 94 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they were very satisfied with the quality of programs at the career center.
- 90 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they were very satisfied with the communications from the career center.
- 80 percent agreed or strongly agreed that career center students are prepared for postsecondary education.
- 86 percent agreed or strongly agreed that faculty and staff work extremely well with students.
- 98 percent agreed or strongly agreed that the career center has educational value for the residents of Greene County.

Mind-blowing Education

We are very proud to share the following success stories of graduates of GCCC. Each benefitted greatly from the business and industry partnerships.

Deanna Collier is the CFO/office manager for Rainbow Data Systems, Inc. (RDSI) in Beavercreek, Ohio. In her position, she handles all financial, human resources and benefit responsibilities for RDSI. She also oversees the contracts and invoicing for the company.

When asked about her experiences, Deanna commented, "I graduated from Greene County Career Center in 1995 with straight A's and a scholarship to Sinclair Community College. I attended college while working full time as an administrative assistant for Hammelman Corporation. Within six months, I was hired as an administrative assistant at Regent Systems Inc., and [I] worked my way up to a junior programmer. Another eight months passed and I formed a company with three of my co-workers and became the CFO/office manager for DB Technical Consultants, Inc., which merged in 2000 with RDSI. I stayed on as the CFO/office manager and still love my job after 16 years. I owe my accomplishments and career to the education I received through my technical training at the career center."

Kiersten Dutenhaver is a 2011 graduate of GCCC. Kiersten was gifted with great drive and motivation to excel. Early in the welding program, she showed great potential, both academically and in mastering her welding skills.

She had a great fascination with the welding processes, asking how and why they worked and how to produce the highest quality of weld possible. Simply, "good enough" was not in her vocabulary.

Kiersten completed the two-year welding program at GCCC in little more than a year. She received special permission to continue her welding education at Hobart Institute of Welding Technology in Troy, Ohio. Kiersten received a full scholarship to attend Hobart and enrolled in the nine-month welding program. She received credit for both welding skills and



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knowledge she had achieved at GCCC.

Kiersten successfully completed the structural welding and advance pipe welding program at Hobart, earning several welding certifications in the process. Kiersten was awarded the DeWine Scholarship for \$25,000 to further her education, and she is currently enrolled as a sophomore at Ohio State University, where she is pursuing her degree in the welding engineering field.

Austin Poffenberger completed the electrical wiring program in 2012. Austin participated in GCCC's school-to-work program his junior year, and his senior year with Chapel Electric. After completion of the program, Chapel hired Austin full-time. He has been accepted into the National Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee (NJATC) apprenticeship program. Austin also competed at local, regional and state SkillsUSA events in residential wiring. Austin maintained 95 percent attendance, a 3.2 GPA and was eligible for a \$3,000 tech prep scholarship from Sinclair Community College.

Houston Dean completed the Allied Health Technologies program at the career center. When asked about her experiences, Houston explained, "The Allied Health Technologies program at the Greene County Career Center gave me the foundations and the tools that I needed for a unique edge and advantage in my nursing career."

She continued by saying, "I am so glad that I made the choice to attend the Al-

lied Health Technologies program at the Career Center. I didn't realize how much this program helped me until I began nursing school at Kettering College. I had such an advantage over many of the nursing students in my class because of the Allied Health Technologies program. I was much more prepared than I ever thought I would be, and nursing school would have been much more difficult without the devoted instruction from Ms. Russo and the other teachers at the career center."

Houston is now a registered nurse at Soin Medical Center in Beavercreek in their observation unit. She monitors patients with problems such as heart dysrhythmias, seizures and recent heart attacks for their safety and any changes in their health status.

Conclusion

We both have quite a few years to go in our professional careers, and we know that we will continue to face challenges along the way. We feel fortunate that we have been able to share ideas and brainstorm solutions with each other over the years. It is our hope that all schools will be able to TEAM for success as they embark on this rewarding and challenging path of business and industry partnerships. **T**

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Winter / Spring Webinar Series

Spring Into Advocacy for CTE!

MARCH

Continuing the Climb: Building Long-term Relationships with Policymakers

March 14 at 1:00 p.m. ET

APRIL

Business & Industry Partnerships

April 11 at 1:00 p.m. ET

MAY

Fundraising for Your CTE Program

May 9 at 1:00 p.m. ET

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