



Workforce Initiative Program

Summary:

WATC recognizes the need to augment technical skills with highly valued employability skills (or soft skills) to ensure that those who land the job, keep the job once they begin to perform in the professional environment. A collective sample of national employers indicate that the current educational system in the United States is not doing enough, fast enough to prepare for a vibrant economic future for our children and our nation (Cavanagh et. al., 2006). WATC is working to change the conversation that centers on workforce employability by seeking to provide instruction in areas centered on character development and workplace ethics that have previously been described as innate or all together not present in otherwise qualified employment candidates.

Program Components:

The Workforce Initiative program is comprised of four components that are integrated into WATC credit based technical programs. The four components consist of instruction comprised of workplace skills and behaviors (i.e. attitude, attendance, appearance, effective communication skills, entry level leadership, effective collaboration and cultural diversity) divided into a learning experience that includes an introduction, reinforcement, application and assessment. Completion of the program results in students who are prepared to demonstrate quality workforce skills and behaviors and have obtained a national recognized credential in work ethics.

Introduction: *Blueprint for Personal Success* 2 credit hours (30 contact hours)

The professional world is full of challenging situations, including conflicting personalities, miscommunication, and cultural differences. In this course, students will learn about typical workplace etiquette protocols, communication standards, and cultural awareness strategies in order to navigate these common obstacles. This course will prepare students by educating them on the importance of establishing and maintaining their professional image in the workplace. Whether students are working on the manufacturing floor, in a medical facility or in a professional office setting practicing professional etiquette will help ensure that their occupational environment is positive and productive. Students will integrate internal attitudes with external behaviors so that their personal attributes reflect the expectations of their future employers. The course provides a study of human relations and professional development in today's rapidly changing world. The course prepares students for living and working in a complex society through a focus on professionalism, work ethic, teamwork (collaboration) and oral communication. Topics include: Goal Setting, Entry Level Leadership, Communication, Teamwork and Diversity, Career Management, Lifestyle Design, and Disruption in Industry.

Reinforcement: *Bring Your "A" Game Training (8 contact hours)*

Designed to instill foundational workplace behaviors and values in today's workforce, this series of 8, one hour workshops offer a hands-on opportunity for individuals to explore what work ethics look like in a true professional setting. Topics include: attitude, attendance, appearance, ambition, accountability, acceptance, appreciation.

Application: *Professional Scenarios*

An opportunity for students to demonstrate their ability to respectfully address authority and issues of conflict with colleagues and supervisors in the professional environment. Workforce Education and Development works with program directors and faculty to create the professional scenarios that equip individuals to respond appropriately to issues and circumstances that often cause friction in the workplace.

Assessment: *Reflection / Evaluation*

WATC provides a common criteria and method of evaluation to assess an individual's aptitude and awareness of soft skills. The program ensures that employees and employers can identify growth and development as part of the learning experience within the program.