

Goal 1: Higher Education will help Illinois business and industry sustain strong economic growth.

What is Joliet Junior College now doing that advances this goal and related actions?

The staff at the college have assumed many leadership roles in key district economic development agencies. The college has become a visible presence in the business community by keeping a close tabs on the economic development of the region as well as providing guidance in terms of training and workforce development. The staff belongs to many business advisory committees. For example, faculty and staff belong to the Bolingbrook Local Development Corporation, Fairmount Community Partnership, Lockport Development Council, District 525 Adult Regional High School Council, Will County Local Workforce Investment Board, Grundy County Workforce Youth Council, Grundy Economic Development Council, Illinois Adult Continuing Education Association, Illinois Professional Association-Special Needs Taskforce, Illinois Community College Foundation, and the National Business Education Association Work force. As such, the college keeps abreast of the industrial and business development in the district. Membership also affords the college opportunities to determine the educational needs of the community.

During the past twelve months the college has had an active presence on the local Workforce Investment Board and now has over 60 programs approved for WIA funding. The college has outreached to local business and industry and entered into third party relationships in order to establish degree programs in cosmetology, pharmacy technician, and radiology. Due to the space limitations currently challenging JJC with enrollment increases, these third party agreements allow the college to use business and industry sites to deliver a part of the credit instruction.

The statistical data for this category is somewhat inconclusive. The average number of businesses served over the three year period (00-02) was 445 for JJC. This is roughly 1/11 of the entire community college system number which was served. The data on the number of individuals who received customized training increased drastically in 2002. This runs counter to the state trends which actually show a decrease in number of individuals trained. JJC experienced a slight drop in the number of workshops provided and offered significantly fewer non-credit computer training classes. During the last three years the business/industry outreach section of the college (IET-Institute of Economic Technology) offered over 70 workshops in quality process improvement. This was the largest number offered by any institution in the state. The Institute of Economic Technology also provided an array of customized training, most conducted on site. This included the development of training activities for Northwest Hospital, BP Amoco, Starcon-, Ameritech, Citgo Refinery, City of Joliet, Will County Sheriff's Department, Toyal America Inc., American Cylinder, Acme Steel, and Arrow Labs.

What specific actions does Joliet Junior College intend to undertake in the coming year (or two) to advance this goal and related actions?

The challenges facing any business and industry training unit in the current economic environment is how to provide cost effective programs in a time of diminishing resources. The obvious answer is to make more of these experiences on-line and Joliet Junior College has taken a positive step by hiring more professionals who will help with online curriculum development.

The JCC Foundation's Business and Industry Taskforce, which committed in 2001 to fund raising efforts to construct a Process Control Technology Laboratory, has been successful in 2002 with securing a commitment for about \$200,000. This group has been working with academic affairs to identify other areas in which they can attempt to raise funds. These efforts are the very spirit of Goal 1 of the Illinois Commitment, where business and industry has some training or staffing needs and works closely (through advisory committees and financial resources) with a community college to establish a program.

The work in adult education is also a critical component of Goal 1. Joliet Junior College has one of the three largest adult education programs in the state and is directly involved in training Illinois citizens for employment. Programs developed under WIA funding allow individuals to become involved with one of the construction trades, prepare for work with computer data entry, and prepare for entry into the hospitality industry. Much of the Division of Adult and Family Services time over the next two years will be spent on getting non-English speaking clients ready for entry into the job market. Two new full-time and several part-time employees have been hired to work with this segment of the work force. This work will be just as critical to maintaining economic vitality in Illinois.