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Connecticut Community Colleges Support Entrepreneurship Week
The CCCs prepare future business owners with diverse entrepreneurship programs

The Connecticut Community Colleges (CCC) are supporting National Entrepreneurship Week on February 21-28, with special activities offered in conjunction with the CCCs' innovative Entrepreneurship and Small Business academic programs and initiatives. This is the third year of the annual National Entrepreneurship Week, which encourages support for the growth of entrepreneurship education as a lifelong process. The Week is promoted by The National Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education, whose mission is to champion entrepreneurship education, provide advocacy and leadership, and promote quality practices and programs. (For more information, go to www.nationaleweek.org).

The theme across the State of Connecticut during National Entrepreneurship Week is "Entrepreneurship Empowers Everyone!" In her proclamation declaring the special week in the State of Connecticut, Governor M. Jodi Rell emphasizes that "entrepreneurship is vital to Connecticut's growth and prosperity in both the near and distant future in this highly-competitive, global economy," and "entrepreneurial education can bring together the core academic, technical and problem-solving skills essential for future entrepreneurs and successful workers."

"Entrepreneurship is truly a win-win situation for all involved," said Theresa Janeczek, assistant professor of entrepreneurship and business at Manchester Community College. "It empowers individuals to generate their own jobs while stimulating our local economy."

The United States is transforming into a global, entrepreneurial and knowledge- and innovation-based New Economy, according to The 2008 State New Economy Index released in November 2008 by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation and the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation (ITIF). "Being well positioned means that state economies need to be firmly grounded in the New Economy," reports the study, which defines the New Economy as rooted in information technology and "a global, entrepreneurial, and knowledge-based economy in which the keys to success lie in the extent to which knowledge, technology, and innovation are embedded in products and services."

The Index gives Connecticut an overall ranking of sixth in the nation regarding the degree that the structure of the state economy matches the ideal structure of the New Economy.

According to the Kauffmann Foundation, "States at the top of the ranking tend to have a high concentration of managers, professionals and college-educated residents working in 'knowledge jobs'—those that require at least a two-year degree." The Index ranks Connecticut second in the nation based on seven Knowledge Jobs indicators, reporting that "In today's New Economy, knowledge-based jobs are driving prosperity...Such skilled and educated workers are the backbone of states' most important industries, from high value-added manufacturing to high-wage traded services."

The Index stresses that "the current slowdown, caused in large part by higher energy prices and excesses in the housing market that have spurred turmoil in the financial services industry, will not last forever." The most effective companies take advantage of slowdowns to better position themselves for subsequent periods of strong economic growth, it reports, and states should be focused on "whether their economies are well positioned for robust growth and innovation over the next decade."

The Connecticut Community Colleges educate new entrepreneurs through both credit and non-credit programs and courses, ranging from Associate Degree and Certificate Programs in Entrepreneurial Studies to specialized programs, such as the arts entrepreneur, a credit certificate program offered by Quinebaug Valley Community College, which provides emerging artists with useful business management skills and a pathway for future career growth. Numerous workshops and seminars in business planning, marketing, and small business finance are also offered by the CCCs

throughout the state. Gateway Community College hosts the Gateway Small Business Center in collaboration with Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE); SCORE "Counselors to America's Small Business"; the U.S. Small Business Administration; and the U.S. Department of Commerce. Other Connecticut Community Colleges will be developing similar Small Business Centers.

After one course in Entrepreneurship at Manchester Community College, Brandon Rankl used what he learned to start his own junk removal business, Mr. Junk. "The Manchester course equipped me with the knowledge and confidence to start my own business," Rankl said. "Entrepreneurship education gives you the essential tools to become successful in today's business environment."

Rankl is continuing to work towards his associate in science degree at Manchester Community College while running his small side business. "Community college has given Brandon the flexibility he needs to pursue his degree at the same time that he's putting what he's learning to work to build his own business," said Janeczek. Explains Rankl, "The Entrepreneurship Program not only earns you a degree, it gives you hands-on lessons of what to expect when you're calling the shots."

Another student who is studying Entrepreneurship while owning a small business is Ivy Roster, a Housatonic Community College student and owner of Ivy League Enterprises LLC, which offers virtual assistant services. Says Roster, "Working virtually allows me to be one click away from my clients' needs." Joaquina R. Abner, also studying Entrepreneurship at Housatonic CC, is chief executive officer of W.A.T.H.E., LLC.

"Our economy grows because of our entrepreneurs and their creative thinking," said Professor Rose Bednarz-Luglio of Gateway Community College. "Our students are either going to be entrepreneurs or work for entrepreneurs, since approximately 99% of businesses in the U.S. are small businesses."

Bednarz-Luglio and Janeczek spoke on "Service Learning: Students Learn By Teaching Others" in January 2009 at the 6th Annual Conference of National Association for Community College Entrepreneurship (NACCE), of which the Connecticut Community College System is a member.

Among the special activities at the CCCs celebrating Entrepreneurship Week will be "preliminary elevator speech" competitions at Gateway Community College in New Haven, Manchester Community College, and Housatonic Community College in Bridgeport. An elevator speech, which is a concise and carefully planned description of a business idea to a potential group of investors, should be communicated in one minute, the estimated time that one would have during an elevator ride with an executive. "Preparing an elevator speech helps students focus on articulating their ideas in a clear, concise manner," said Janeczek. "It reinforces for students the importance of strong communication skills in the workplace." The U.S. Small Business Administration and Connecticut Venture Group are partnering with the Colleges to sponsor the competitions which help students practice essential entrepreneurial skills.

Samplings of some of the other National Entrepreneurship Week activities at the CCCs, free and open to the public, include:

- Capital Community College (Hartford):
 - Nancy P. La Guardia, professor, marketing/management, Capital Community College, will speak on "Encouraging Students to Become Successful Intrapreneurs and Entrepreneurs (regardless of discipline)" at a workshop that will include a panel of business professionals who will share their experiences about how college professors and mentors played a role in their success: scheduled for April 2009 at Capital Community College.
For more information, contact Professor La Guardia at 860.906.5174, nlaguardia@ccc.commnet.edu
- Gateway Community College (New Haven):
 - Roy Snider, Director of WOW Marketing for Stew Leonard's, the world's largest dairy store, will share his message that business is all about attitude: Long Wharf Campus, Room 160, on February 23, 12:00pm-1:00pm.
 - Effective Advertising, discussion with panelists from WTNH, the *New Haven Register* and Clear Channel Communications: Long Wharf Campus, Room 160, on February 23, 7:00pm-9:00pm.

- Getting Green in Business, a representative from the Connecticut Secretary of the State's Office will moderate a discussion on environmental responsibility, with panelists from United Illuminating, Connecticut Business & Industry Association, Stew Leonard's, and the Regional Water Company: Long Wharf Campus, Room 160, on February 24, 7:00pm-9:00pm.
 - Credit Awareness Seminar: Professor Lorraine Li of Gateway Community College will lead a discussion on credit management and financial planning for entrepreneurs: Small Business Center, Room 207B, on February 25, 2:30pm-4:00pm.
 - Communications Skills for Business Success, with guest speakers from WTNH-TV, Kaplow Studios, and Telemundo: Long Wharf Campus, Room 160, on February 25, 7:30pm-9:00pm.
For more information, contact 203.285.2198, rbednarz@gwcc.commnet.edu, or skapinos@gwcc.commnet.edu
- Housatonic Community College (Bridgeport):
- Success Skills Building, speaker Mike Roer, Connecticut Venture Group: February 24, 9:30am.
 - Sales and Profits for Small Business Start-up, speaker Timothy Cataldo, Uppity Shirts: February 26, 9:30am.
For more information, contact Pamela Pirog, ppirog@hcc.commnet.edu
- Manchester Community College (Manchester):
- Create a Business Plan: February 23, 5:00pm-7:00pm.
 - What is an SBA Loan?, speaker William Tierney, U.S. Small Business Administration: February 24, 12:30pm-2:00pm.
 - Twelve Attributes of a Top Business Owner, speaker Jeff Segal, Connecticut Investors Group, LLC: February 25, 11:00am-12:30pm.
For more information, contact Theresa Janeczek, 860.512.2626, tjaneczek@mcc.commnet.edu
- Three Rivers Community College (Norwich):
- Are You Credit Wise? workshop, speaker Cecilia Hughes: February 24, 1:00pm.
For more information, contact Larry Flick, lflick@trcc.commnet.edu
 - Effective Communication workshop, speaker Bill Turner, vice president, public relations, AT&T: February 26, 10:00am.
For more information, contact kmccoy@trcc.commnet.edu or mvalentin@trcc.commnet.edu

"Entrepreneurship is a driving force of the U.S. economy," said Marc S. Herzog, Chancellor of the Connecticut Community Colleges. "Our Entrepreneurship programs encourage small businesses development by preparing students with the skills they need to succeed as competitive and innovative entrepreneurs in the 21st century economy."

Visit the Connecticut Community Colleges at www.commnet.edu.