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Doing what matters at San Diego City College

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San Diego City College is putting people to work. Thanks to a $200,000 grant from the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office, City College is working with the business community, reviewing curriculum, and sponsoring workshops and job fairs for its students.

Throughout the spring, a number of career-focused activities took place. In February, Phil Blair, chief executive officer and owner of Manpower, Inc., a multinational human resources consulting firm, led an on-campus career preparedness workshop for faculty and counselors.
During the interactive workshop, Blair shared strategies from his book “Job Won!” for acquiring and refining the tools needed to secure employment and build a successful career. The workshop focused on ensuring that community college students are job-ready when they graduate.

Following the career workshop, on-campus interviews were conducted in February and March for more than 250 available jobs in the area. Nearly 200 students interviewed with recruiters, and nearly all qualified for job offers for positions that ranged from administrative assistants to engineering technicians.

Résumé writing assistance was provided to help students prepare for the job interviews. Additionally, students were offered complimentary hair and makeup services from the college Cosmetology Department and professional work clothes from the student-managed Fantastique boutique.

These job-readiness activities are part of the “Doing What Matters for Jobs and the Economy initiative,” an effort from the California Community Colleges Information and Communications Technology and Digital Media Sector. City College Dean Rose LaMuraglia, an ICT/Digital Media Deputy Sector Navigator for San Diego and Imperial counties, said the workshop is just one of many projects she and her colleagues are working on to help community colleges establish academic pathways to provide job-ready employees.

City College President Anthony Beebe said, “Helping students prepare for the professional work world is a key component of a complete education. With nearly a 100 percent job offer rate for our student applicants, it shows our students are prepared for the work world.”

Another effort launches in fall 2015, when San Diego City College offers a Business Information Worker (BIW) readiness certificate. The BIW program includes courses in Business Communications, Human Relations, Information Systems, and Microsoft Excel, among others.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics forecasts robust growth through 2022 in professions using those skills, such as secretaries and administrative assistants. In California, office clerks, secretaries, administrative assistants, receptionists, and information clerks were among the professions with the most openings from 2013 to 2015, according to the state Employment Development Department’s Labor Market Information Division. There were roughly 15,500 openings for secretaries and administrative assistants alone – not counting legal, medical, and executive secretaries – during that time period, with a median hourly wage of $17.99 and a median annual income of $37,416.

“The BIW program is a first step,” LaMuraglia said. “We’re not saying get your BIW and leave school. We’re saying, get your BIW, get a job, stay in school, earn your associate degree, and get a bachelor’s degree. But this is a first step, an important step, along the journey.”

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