



Strategies for Transformative Change

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE RESEARCH AND LEADERSHIP

Transformative Change Initiative Overview

The Transformative Change Initiative (TCI) is dedicated to assisting community colleges to scale-up innovations that improve student outcomes and program, organization, and system performance.

Transformative Change Definition

TCI defines transformative change as follows: Raising the individual, organizational, and system performance of community colleges to unprecedented levels without sacrificing their historic commitment to access and equity.

BUILDING A COMMON FOUNDATIONAL CURRICULUM WITH STACKABLE CREDENTIALS

Arizona Sun Corridor - Get Into Energy Consortium (ASC-GIEC)

The Arizona Sun Corridor - Get Into Energy Consortium (ASC-GIEC) is comprised of five community colleges and several industry partners across the state of Arizona working to strengthen and broaden the region's talent pipeline for the energy industry. Estrella Mountain Community College is the lead institution accompanied by Chandler-Gilbert Community College, Northland Pioneer College, Pima Community College and Yavapai College. As a round two grant recipient of the U.S. Department of Labor Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training program, the ASC-GIEC uses a variety of strategies to provide training with stackable industry-specific credentials that articulate statewide to related associate degree programs.

The GIE Competency Model: The centerpiece of the ASC-GIEC consortium activities is the industry-vetted Get Into Energy (GIE) Competency Model that delineates basic competencies (knowledge, skills and abilities), along with industry-specific fundamentals and technical competencies for programs of study in mining and energy across the consortium. The eight-tier stackable credential model was adapted from the Center for Energy Workforce Development, and industry input was given to identify essential skills. Students have opportunities to earn multiple credentials, coinciding with several exit and entry points on the way to the AAS degree. (A visual of the model appears on the back of this page.)

The model includes a common foundational curriculum of two courses, Career and Personal Development (CPD), and Energy Industry Fundamentals (EIF), which include required competencies for all students enrolled in a GIE program at any of the five colleges in the consortium. These two classes can be taken concurrently, and can typically be completed by a student in just one semester.

The CPD course focuses on the skills identified in tiers one through three of the Competency Model, which focuses on personal effectiveness skills, basic academic requirements and workplace requirements. In this portion of their training, students have an opportunity to develop a professional résumé, participate in mock interviewing, and test for either the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) and the SkillsUSA Employability Skills Certificate, or the NCRC Plus.

Tiers four and five of the Competency Model identify industry-specific and industry-wide technical skills. Students learn the basics of various generation, transmission and distribution systems, along with safety awareness and industry-related regulations. Upon completion of the course, all eligible students have an opportunity to test for the Energy Industry Fundamentals Certificate.

Upon completion of the CPD and EIF courses, the colleges use industry hiring data to help students select an occupational-specific pathway that culminates in a certificate or degree. Students can complete this occupational-specific training in the classroom, and/or during on-the-job training as part of an internship or apprenticeship.

Major Factors

- **Committed Employer Engagement:** The strength of the Competency Model is employer engagement in the development process to ensure that the skills taught to students meet the requirements for current and future employment demands in the region. In addition, employers regularly participate in student engagement opportunities, such as orientations, power plant tours and mock interviews. Some employers have modified their hiring practices to benefit ASC-GIEC students, and nearly all partnering employers are providing students and colleges with advanced notifications of employment opportunities. This employer commitment validates the program offerings to new and current students seeking a career in the energy industry.
- **Sustainability as a Common Goal:** The consortium has focused its collective efforts on building sustainable programs and pipelining strategies. From the start, the colleges and industry partners knew that in order to make these energy programs sustainable, a process would need to be in place to ensure that the college outputs of qualified candidates met the quantified demand of the industry. As a result, the consortium developed a supply and demand model, complete with industry hiring projections to allow for the appropriate number of students in each program of study to meet the hiring projects for each occupation. Likewise, the colleges agreed early on to create specialty programs at each college to help avoid outputs of students that surpass the quantified hiring needs of the industry partners.

Enrollment and Completion

At the time of this report, the ASC-GIEC colleges have served 1,839 students since 2012, accounting for 466 awarded NCRC credentials, 322 Employability Skills Certificates and 256 EIF Certificates. At Estrella Mountain Community College, the lead institution of the ASC-GIEC, students are passing the EIF and CPD courses at an average 85 percent success rate, with an average 92 percent retention rate. Of the 92% that continued in the program, 96% successfully passed their subsequent required courses. Thus, students completing the foundational curriculum are demonstrating a high level of commitment to completing their degree program.

Seven students from Yavapai College who were interested in working for Arizona Public Service passed the required pre-employment test. The college reported that completion of the CPD course, with its focus on skills that included resume assistance and NCRC completion, equipped the students for success with the essential first step toward employment.

During the program evaluation, students reported positive results, including feeling more prepared to get a new job, along with receiving promotions or increases in pay as a result of completing the training.

“The GIE foundational curriculum tells us as an employer that an incoming applicant has the basic skills needed to be successful in the workforce. Since implementing the curriculum, we have seen a higher output of candidates from the GIE programs who are able to compile a professional résumé, pass the required pre-employment exams, interview effectively and perform on the job.”

Dan Spiak, Talent Acquisition Leader at Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station

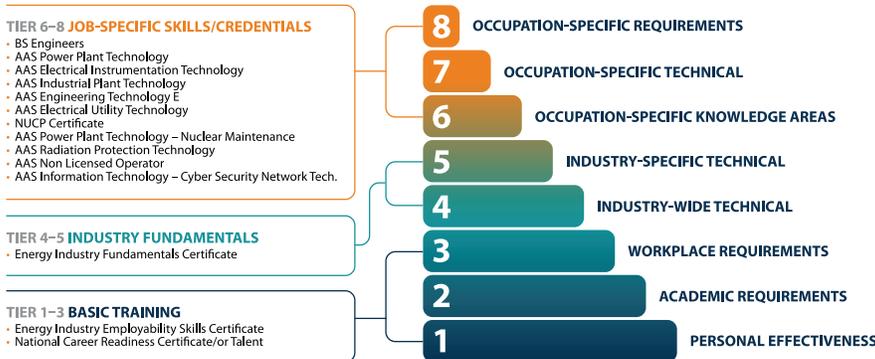
Responsive Employers

The foundational curriculum and stackable credential model has encouraged employers, such as Arizona Public Service (APS) - Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station (PVNGS), to modify their hiring practices to benefit GIE students. At PVNGS, any GIE student who has successfully passed the CPD and EIF courses, and has obtained a rating of gold or higher on the NCRC or NCRC Plus is awarded the opportunity to bypass the initial screening process when applying for an internship or apprenticeship at the plant. Any student who meets these criteria is automatically invited to take a pre-employment test, regardless of their previous experience, and is granted an interview upon passing the pre-employment test. As a result of this modification, 49% more GIE students were hired as a maintenance intern or apprentice with PVNGS in 2015 compared to 2013, prior to the establishment of these new hiring practices.



ARIZONA SUN CORRIDOR CONSORTIUM

Arizona Stackable Credentials



ENERGY COMPETENCY TIER MODEL FOR SKILLED TECHNICIAN POSITIONS IN ENERGY EFFICIENCY, ENERGY GENERATION AND ENERGY TRANSMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION

Supply & Demand: One Student-One Job

The colleges utilize career coaches to help students establish strengths-based goals, and select occupational-specific courses to address the skills in tiers six through eight of the Competency Model. The intent is to align student interests and skills with the hiring projections from the employers so that students are qualified for positions with openings after program completion.

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