M-CAM in Review

Over the last four-years, the impact of the Department of Labor’s M-CAM grant has been felt across GRCC’s campus, student body, and the community we serve. The grant – awarded in 2013 - has allowed GRCC to make significant improvements to manufacturing programs in a variety of ways.

Career Coaches, funded by M-CAM, now give students a go-to resource for assistance with enrollment and program completion, dramatically increasing completion rates across multiple programs. Job Developers, funded by M-CAM, act as a liaison between employers, faculty members, and graduating students, helping boost employment placement rates for manufacturing programs. Purchases of modern equipment, funded by M-CAM, have enabled GRCC to augment existing programs like welding and machining, while also promoting the development of new courses and courses in areas like Mechatronics and Industrial Sewing. Also, thanks to M-CAM, GRCC has been able to finalize a curriculum alignment to industry credentials, promoting clear transfer processes between all eight M-CAM community colleges.

To date, the M-CAM grant has directly touched more than 600 students. These students are stimulating local industries by supplying employees with in-demand skills. With less than two full months of M-CAM-funded operations remaining, impacts like these - made possible through M-CAM - are timeless and will continue far beyond the end of the grant.

Thank you - to all of our new and existing partners - for your involvement these last four years. From community organizations to local employers, none of this would have been possible without you. Moving forward, we are excited to continue the movement started by M-CAM – together.

Mobile Manufacturing Trailer Hits the Road!

GRCC is proud to offer a real manufacturing experience with the Mobile Manufacturing Lab (MML).

The MML allows people to experience the latest in advanced manufacturing technology first hand and at their location. The MML contains a virtual welder, 3-D printer, mini mill, and mini lathe.

The MML is in high demand! The GRCC M-CAM staff has visited more than 30 different locations in 2016. We estimate that over 3,000 people have come on board. This includes students of all ages, as well as employers and community partners.

The Discover Manufacturing Employer steering committee met on August 15 to review numbers and discuss a new manufacturing production course for late Fall 2016. The M-CAM Mobile Manufacturing lab was requested by the LIFT (DOD’s Lightweight Innovations for Tomorrows) Eastern Michigan employers to be at the Goodwill Industries of Detroit Manufacturing event on August 9, 2016.

Over 200 individuals used the trailer and were exposed to manufacturing careers. West Michigan Works sent an e-mail newsletter out to over 800 manufacturers in western Michigan telling manufacturers again about M-CAM and asking for their participation in interviews for M-CAM students.

Students Succeed at GRCC

Leonel came to GRCC without a job and with an interest in learning how to weld so he could develop a career for himself. Leonel enrolled in the Welding Technician Job Training Program. Although he had no background in manufacturing, he learned quickly by coming to class every day, being attentive, and applying himself to his learning. Immediately after his October 8th graduation, Leonel accepted a job offer at Zinger Sheet Metal for $15.00/hour! Leonel’s instructor, Nate Haney, said that Leonel’s success was a great example of how an individual can come to GRCC with no background in a skilled-trade and become successful through hard work and great attendance.

Kindel Furniture, a high-end Grand-Rapids based furniture manufacturer, reached out to GRCC Job Developers because they were looking for a talented and artistic individual to operate their wood-cutting CNC machines. The Job
Developers toured the Kindel facility and relayed the information to the CNC/Machining instructor. The instructor referred Matthew, a CNC student, to Kindel. Matt was hired on September 5th in a customized part-time position that would allow him to start working while completing the CNC program at GRCC. He is making $13.00/hour. and will be promoted to full-time upon graduation and likely receive a pay raise.

Jerrittia came into CNC with a good resume of experience. She has done direct care and worked in a factory operating machines doing Quality Assurance on auto parts. She wanted to make a change and earn more money. Her husband suggested that she become a CNC Technician. She took on the suggestion as a challenge to compete with him. At the end of the class Jerrittia was getting the interviews for a job as a Technician. She found one just before the class ended. In August, she began working for Imperial Design as a CNC Tech.

**Employer Partnerships are a Win-Win**

While conducting student-retention efforts, GRCC’s M-CAM Job Developer John James called Termolen and Hart on October 5th to arrange the sending of an employment verification form and spoke with the company’s president, Steve Vanzytveld. Steve verified the student’s employment and the two began discussing M-CAM, GRCC’s manufacturing training programs, and Steve’s skilled-trade’s needs. After several days of emailing, Steve asked if John would be interested in touring the Termolen and Hart facility.

John toured the facility on October 18th, where he learned that Steve’s staff had three GRCC Welding Alumni onboard. Two of these three students were M-CAM Participants. Termolen and Hart is a small shop and only has four welders. Thus, 75% of their current welding staff were trained by the GRCC welding program.

Steve explained to John that he has found some very talented employees from GRCC. Steve then made the commitment that when he starts his anticipated expansion, he will look for more welders from GRCC’s M-CAM programs.

**What’s next?**

As always, GRCC will continue to meet your needs for a skilled workforce. We still need your input. There are several ways to get involved in developing your future workforce. We need employers who are willing to interview students and provide feedback. We are also in need of industry professionals to review curriculum, offer tours of your facilities and provide internships. If you are interested in any of these opportunities, please contact David Lovell, (616) 234-3168 or davidlovell@grcc.edu.

As the conclusion of M-CAM efforts nears, we are still here to help! Employers interested in recruiting students from our programs may contact John James at (616) 234-3167. Prospective students interested in training programs may contact Mandy Vanderhill at (616) 234-3383 or Mike Cooper at (616) 234-4365.