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Patrick Henry Community College

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Patrick Henry Community College, a comprehensive two-year institution, services Martinsville city as well as Patrick and Henry counties. PHCC is a top tier leader among community colleges in areas such as athletics, technology, and unique program offerings. By providing a multitude of innovative curricula such as motorsports, entrepreneurship, and mechatronics. PHCC is changing lives and enriching the community it serves. PHCC is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution.

Partnerships hail high schoolers' engineering challenge and new workforce certifications

MARTINSVILLE, VA – Starting on June 26, high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors will be tinkering with advanced manufacturing equipment and hob knobbing with industry leaders in the engineering, technology, and manufacturing sectors. Using these resources, students will go head-to-head in a product design competition. Vying for a chance to win big, students will dive into career exploration and tech innovation as they work through the product development phases in an industry-standard fabrication laboratory.

For this innovation challenge, *teams* of students will design, produce, and pitch a unique product in four days. Through the competition, students experience the manufacturing process – from design to production – in real time. Then, they will experience real-life competition as they pitch their products to a panel of judges for a chance to win an unparalleled opportunity for aspiring engineers.

“These students aren’t just learning about engineering, advanced manufacturing, and entrepreneurship, they are experiencing it hands-on in real-time with very real stakes,” says Tiffani Underwood PHCC’s Coordinator of Community Development Programs.

The winning team will receive two months free access to PHCC’s Fab Lab. This is a \$60 value per student that will empower the students to create, discover, and learn on industry-standard software and equipment. The FabLab is a three-story cutting-edge lab space designed to enable entrepreneurs, businesses, and innovators to develop models and working prototypes.

Due to the materials and resources that are required for each student attending the camp, the week-long experience is valued at \$250 per student. Thanks to partnerships with Dream it. Do it. Virginia and the Virginia Manufacturers Association’s workforce affiliate the Manufacturing Skills Institute (MSI), PHCC can offer the class for only \$20 per student.

The partnerships also open the door for another opportunity for students at PHCC. Starting in July, the college will become an Assessment Center for the MSI Academic and Workforce Partner Network and will offer the MSI Manufacturing Specialist (MS) and Manufacturing Technician Level 1 ©(MT1) industry certifications. These assessments provide students with an opportunity to enhance their resume with valuable credentials and to stand out in the competitive job market.

PHCC officials say they continually hear from local and national employers that credentials are critical for job seekers. “Virginia businesses are struggling to fill middle skills jobs – those that require more than a high school diploma but less than a bachelor’s degree,” says Dr. Craig Herndon, Vice Chancellor for Workforce Development, Virginia Community College System. Because of the short-term nature of these credentials, which can be acquired in just months or even weeks, Herndon says, “Virginia’s Community Colleges are poised and eager to supply Virginians with the skills they need to acquire the credentials demanded by businesses.”

“Industry certifications help expand the pool of credentialed workers in advanced manufacturing in our region, and we look forward to adding these credentials to our existing portfolio which includes the MSSC Certified Production

Technician, American Welding Society, and Siemens Mechatronics Levels 1 and 2 certifications,” says Rhonda Hodges, PHCC’s vice president for workforce, economic, and community development.

For more information about the Engineering Technology Camp, please contact the Thomas P. Dalton IDEA Center at 276-656-5461 or www.dreamitdoitvirginia.com. For more information about certifications or industry credentialing, contact Workforce, Economic, and Community Development at 276-656-0260.

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