



Bellingham Technical College  
Press Release

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## **BELLINGHAM TECHNICAL COLLEGE AWARDED \$573,767 GRANT TO CONTINUE DEVELOPMENTS IN INNOVATIVE EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS**

Bellingham Washington – November 4, 2011 - Bellingham Technical College (BTC) was awarded \$573, 767 for the Hospital Employee Education and Training (HEET) Program Grant for the *Moving Forward* project allocated by the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. This is the third consecutive year BTC and its partners have received this grant.

Specifically, this new 2011-2012 HEET Grant promotes the combination of education, job re-training, intensive academic and career advising, as well as provides funding for necessary services, such as childcare and transportation, that existing healthcare workers need in order to meet their full potential. The goal of this new project (which should run for 2 years), is moving pre-college and college level incumbent workers through all necessary coursework needed to apply or enroll in health degree and certificate programs. BTC is partnering with Skagit Valley College, Whatcom Community College, Northwest Workforce Council (NWC), SEIU Healthcare (1199NW), SEIU Healthcare 1199NW Multi-Employer Training & Education Fund, UFCW2, WSNA and Northwest Alliance for Health Care Skills at five Northwest Washington Hospitals.

“This project addresses one of the most intractable issues in education – increasing the success rate of academically under-prepared, working adults seeking career advancement through education. All three community and technical colleges in our region, along with hospital employers and labor partners, are working together to pilot a single education pathway leading to the completion of college-level requirements for admission to nursing and other allied health programs. This pathway includes innovations such as common courses and pre-requisites, shared admissions requirements, as well as a variety of practical accommodations for working students,” said Gabriel Mast, HEET Project Director.

The *Health Occupations Pathway Program* works with entry and mid-level employees that are diverse, first-generation college, and/or facing job elimination/reduction. The colleges will implement a clearly defined health career pathway, with multiple entry and exit points, allowing incumbent hospital and clinic workers at the pre-college and college

levels to successfully complete college-level requirements for admission to Nursing and other allied health programs. The project will be coordinated regionally, with pilot projects focusing on common courses and prerequisites, shared admissions requirements, and a variety of practical accommodations for working adult students.

The career pathways will be divided into 1) a pre-college bridge program which leads low-skilled adults to credit-awarding college coursework and an industry-recognized certificate; and 2) a pathway to complete general education and health prerequisite courses for nursing and other allied health degree programs using enhanced and contextualizing curricula.

The 2010-2011 HEET Program, was extremely successful, serving 173 employee participants, with 145 students successfully completing their stated certificate/degree goal, a completion rate of 84%. Approximately 31% of participants were minorities/non-traditional students and 53% were the first in their families to attend college. The program had successful completers in Nursing (RN, LPN, NAC), Medical Assisting, Radiologic Technology, college level pre-program coursework, and Medical Terminology. In addition, 82 HEET students (47%) remain in school working toward a first or additional certificate or degree. The program also leveraged more than \$580,000 during the 2010-2011 academic year through cash and in-kind contributions from union, employer, and college partners. Approximately \$200,000 of direct student aid was awarded to participating students from HEET and Northwest Workforce Council funds in the form of tuition and fee scholarships, books, travel and child care reimbursements, and program materials.

“BTC is pleased to take the lead on this project for a third year. These multifaceted services provided by this award provide a smooth transition for hospital workers to enter a healthcare pathway,” said Carol Lager, Interim Vice President of Instruction at Bellingham Technical College.

### **About Bellingham Technical College**

Bellingham Technical College is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, and offers 35 associate degree and 64 certificate options providing professional technical education to support local and regional industry workforce needs. For more information, go to [www.btc.ctc.edu](http://www.btc.ctc.edu)

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