



Gulf Coast Process Technology Alliance

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Enrollment in PTEC

Programs up 27%

Enrollment in college process technology programs across the Gulf Coast region grew by 27 percent this fall in anticipation of the demand for workers over the next three years, according to a Gulf Coast Process Technology Alliance (GCPTA) report.

Gulf Coast oil and gas production industries and chemical and refining plants estimate they will need 10,000 new process technicians by 2010. The demand will result from industrial expansions and retirements.

"We are pleased with the 27 percent increase in enrollments at the GCPTA-endorsed colleges," said Steve Ames, president of GCPTA. "It is an indication that the word is getting out about the high paying, in-demand jobs."

Member colleges of GCPTA registered 4,486 students in PTEC courses this fall, showing an increase of 27% over 2006.

Gulf Coast Process Technology Alliance is a partnership of processing industries and educational providers who promote Process Technology as a two-year associate of applied science degree curriculum. The Alliance members are located in Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi.

"The reason is increased publicity by our industrial partners on the demand and annual income for PTEC grads in the near future," said Joe Hutchins, program director at Sowela Community Technical College in Lake



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Charles. "Also contributing to our growth were comments by the industrial partners that the PTEC Associate of Applied Science degree is required (for employment)."

Hutchins said outreach efforts by Sowela and its industrial partners to rural high schools in the Lake Charles area, promoting Sowela as a good program, also helped.

Sowela's enrollment grew 57 percent from 274 in the fall of 2006 to 414 in fall 2007.

Anita Brunsting, program director at The Victoria College in Victoria, also attributed her program's 50 percent growth to industry hiring PTEC graduates. Brunsting said word of mouth about good jobs and high pay has been a big factor in her enrollment growth.

Huge increases at schools in Louisiana were the result of activities, which were funded through grants from Gulf Coast Process Technology Alliance. Summer camps for females, open houses and career awareness workshops for teachers helps bolstered their sharp surges.

"Success and placements of recent graduates in industry, recruitment and advertising of the curriculum, quality of the curriculum and teachers involved in the process industry, industry support and an increase in student performance scores" led to a 30 percent rise in enrollment at Louisiana Technical College in



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Ascension, according to Program Director Paul Waggenpack. LTC's enrollment soared past 100 to 101 for the first time in the college's history.

The largest percentage enrollment increase was at Louisiana Delta Community College, where the change was from 9 students to 78. Jackie Johnson, PTEC instructor, said, "Several open house events were sponsored this past spring and summer, which increased awareness of the PTEC program significantly. We also have received an abundant amount of media coverage/support, both from the television stations as well as the radio stations (free of charge). And lastly, word of mouth...I have a large number of students who have enrolled simply because 'someone told them' about the PTEC program."

"I believe this increase is the result of a lot of recruiting efforts such as meeting with local high school faculties, an open house at Eastman Chemical, a camp for female and male high school students and the increase amount internships available," said Bobby Smith, program director at Texas State Technical Institute in Marshall.

Scholarships and internships, made possible through grants from BP America and Shell Oil Company, are available annually through GCPTA. Colleges also receive scholarship contributions and student internships through local partnerships like the one between TSTC and Eastman Chemical.



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Mike Speegle, program director at San Jacinto College in Pasadena, TX, agreed with Bobby Smith on one point and that being the power of word of mouth. "Our students hear about these great jobs from our students and our graduates or their mothers and fathers." San Jacinto increased its enrollment 26 percent this year.

College of the Mainland in Texas City, TX continues to enroll one of the largest number of process technology students among the 15 GCPTA endorsed colleges with 278. "Many companies are hiring," said Jerry Duncan, COM program director, "That always brings people into the program"

Duncan noted that College of the Mainland now has more day students than night. "People want to get in, get their degrees and get out as soon as possible," said Duncan.

College members of GCPTA support high school programs where students can earn college credits toward their degrees. At College of the Mainland, high school students are enrolled on campus in a co-enrollment arrangement.

Louisiana Technical College-River Parish at Reserve, LA, has 33 students enrolled in PTEC classes while attending high school. LTC-River Parish's enrollment has grown from 318 to 460 this year, which Program Coordinator Glenn Sellers credits with a new career awareness the college has started with public and private schools.



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“Word of mouth, a Times Picayune newspaper article, recruiting in the high schools, several job fairs, as well as students seeing other students actually getting jobs and internships throughout our region,” said Sellers.

Reinstituting a program at Taylor Career Center in the Beaumont Independent School District, Lamar Institute of Technology is teaching two courses to 21 students --health safety and the environment this fall and Introduction to Process Technology in the spring.

For Larry Goodwin, program coordinator at Nunez Community College in Chalmette, LA., it has all come together this year. The college’s enrollment more than doubled with what Goodwin said was a huge outpouring of industrial support and community interest. Students are returning to Nunez after a two-year battle to restore campus facilities after the college was devastated by Hurricane Katrina.

Nunez now has 208 students in Process Technology, by far the largest single program on the campus. Nunez is also involved in developing a close relationship with the engineering department at Tulane University, as the result of a National Science Foundation grant.

Tulane and Nunez are developing relationships through practical experiences for Tulane engineering students and Nunez PTEC enrollees.

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