



Gulf Coast Process Technology Alliance

New Release

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Contact: Harry Wood

Public Affairs Director

(254) 582-3216 Cell: 409-988-6448

www.hgwood.gcpta@sbcglobal.net

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Most Gulf Coast community and technical colleges are placing between 90 and 100 percent of their Process Technology (PTEC) graduates in jobs with chemical and refining plants and oil and gas production facilities, a report from the Gulf Coast Process Technology Alliance (GCPTA) says.

Because of the demand for technicians in process industries, the colleges continued to reflect an increase in the Process Technology degree enrollments. They went up three percent, according to the report after a 23 percent increase that was recorded in the fall.

Enrollment at the GCPTA member colleges that offer the PTEC program now exceeds 4,500.

“Spring enrollments traditionally show a decline from the fall semester,” said Harry Wood, public affairs director of the GCPTA. “And some did among the Gulf Coast colleges, but some grew as much as 40 percent where jobs are plentiful and the demand for technicians is great.”

Nunez Community College in Chalmette, LA, saw its headcount grow 40 percent from the fall to the spring, from 206 to 288. The college is growing despite having to deal with the after-rigors of Hurricane Katrina, which heavily damaged its campus.

Facilities have not been rebuilt.

“We have relocated to a new venue,” said Program Director Larry Goodwin. “The gymnasium is now our temporary home. It houses our offices, classrooms and lab. We continue to seek qualified instructors for our growing needs.”

In early February, Louisiana Technical College at Ascension, LA., had placed 19 of its 20 fall graduates. Paul Waggenpack, the PTEC program director said, “One graduate is still looking.”

The college with the largest enrollment continues to be in Louisiana; however, Sowela Community Technical College at Lake Charles with 430 students replaced the Louisiana Technical College-River Parishes campus at Reserve, LA, as having the most PTEC students. LTC – River Parishes placed 95 percent of the 60 students it graduated in December in Process Technology jobs.

Word must have gotten around about the high placement of PTEC graduates in jobs at LTC-Ascension, because its headcount enrollment in the program grew 31.5 percent from fall to spring.

In Texas, similarly high placement of PTEC graduates was also shown by Texas community colleges. Michael Speegle, program director at San Jacinto College in Pasadena, TX, reported 98 percent placement, while his enrollment of 320 in the fall grew more than nine percent to 350 in the fall.

College of the Mainland in Texas City, TX, had placed 90 percent of its fall graduates when it reported its numbers to GCPTA. It also had an eight percent increase in enrollment from 320 to 346 students.

Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College in Gautier, MISS, didn't have any trouble placing its 21 fall graduates, and its headcount showed an increase of three students from 82 to 85, according to Tommie Broome, a PTEC instructor.

“The need for Process Technicians is almost of epidemic proportions,” said Wood of GCPTA. “Attrition and new job creation are so rapid in parts of Gulf Coast that colleges are having trouble the students they have before they get jobs.”

The Gulf Coast Process Technology Alliance is a regional alliance made up of industry representatives and education providers who are responsible for developing, improving and maintaining the standardized Process Technology (PTEC™) curriculum

at colleges in Louisiana, Texas and Mississippi. The GCPTA concentrates on promoting a two-year associate of applied science degree in Process Technology.

. The American Petroleum Institute in a Workforce Challenge Survey estimates that more than half of the present process technicians will retire in the next eight years. In addition, industrial expansion and oil and gas exploration along the Gulf Coast are creating new job opportunities that will further tighten the supply of technicians. That number could be in the tens of thousands, Wood said.

The current average starting wage of a Process Technicians is \$23 an hour.

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