



In Touch with Industry
Through
Engineering Technology Education

SC ATE Center of Excellence Briefs

SC State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education

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Colleges, Industries Join Forces to Recruit ET Students

A new effort to attract students into engineering technology careers is being led by the South Carolina Advanced Technological Education (SC ATE) Center of Excellence.

The **SC ATE Scholars initiative** is a move toward a shared responsibility between colleges and employers for recruiting more students for engineering technology programs and graduating more technicians.

The Scholars initiative uses the SC ATE approach to engineering technology education.

This approach relies on an integrated, problem-based curriculum that uses real-world industry problems. Interdisciplinary teaching teams and student teams work in an environment that models the workplace.

Partnership effort

The SC ATE Scholars initiative is a partnership between three state-level entities, technical colleges, local industries and students.

The SC Department of Commerce and SC Technology Alliance have endorsed and actively support the SC ATE Scholars program as a way to enlarge the pool of technicians for an increasingly technology-intensive marketplace.



First year gets under way

In the Scholars initiative, industries help colleges identify, recruit and select students as SC ATE Scholars. The initiative offers competitive technical college scholarships (tuition, books and supplies) and related work experience with companies who are sponsoring ATE Scholars.

Florence-Darlington Technical College and Tri-County Technical College are piloting the Scholars initiative in the 1999-00 academic year.

To date, eight companies are committed to sponsoring 22 students at the two campuses. At least four additional companies plan to participate. The Scholars program is generating much excitement and implementation is expected to spread.

Strengths of the SC ATE Scholars program are expected to be:

- The partnership between technical colleges and industry to recruit students into engineering technology programs.
- Competitive student scholarships, paid for by industry partners participating in a local SC ATE Scholars consortium.
- Relevant work experience in a company sponsoring SC ATE Scholars.
- The association of company names with the advertising/marketing of engineering technology programs (SC ATE industry consortia contribute financially to the marketing/recruitment efforts of participating colleges).

For more information about the SC ATE Scholars initiative, visit the SC ATE Center web site at <http://scate.org> or contact the Center at 803-896-5407 or gainey@sbt.tec.sc.us.

New Marketing Materials To be Introduced

A general information brochure, recruitment brochure and two recruitment posters will soon be available for colleges to use to promote the SC ATE curriculum on their campuses.

All recruitment pieces will have space available for college-specific

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contact information. Colleges may also wish to insert information on their ATE engineering technology programs.

Samples of the marketing/recruitment pieces will be sent to college presidents, chief instructional officers, chief student services officers and ATE team leaders. Order forms will be sent to ATE team leaders.

Exemplary Faculty Report Examines Impact on Students

The biggest impact of the Exemplary Faculty project on students is helping students see the interconnectedness of their courses, according to faculty interviewed for the Exemplary Faculty final evaluation report.

(While faculty development will continue as part of SC ATE Center activities, the National Science Foundation-funded Exemplary Faculty project has concluded.)

The second most frequently mentioned impact for faculty and students is learning how to work in a team.

Other findings included:

- Increased communication among faculty.
- Increased innovation that has resulted from faculty collaboration.
- Faculty observation: "It addresses industry's request for teaching students

Cover of SC ATE general information brochure



how to work in teams. The technical education that students are receiving is the same, yet things are sinking in and sticking now...Hands-on demonstrations are helping students understand the material better."

1998-99 SC ATE Retention Results

The SC ATE curriculum was pilot-tested in five colleges in the 1998-99 academic year. Dramatic improvement in student retention in engineering technology programs was demonstrated.

The one-semester pre-engineering technology curriculum showed a 76 percent student completion rate, considered high for first-year students. Typical retention for similar students and colleges nationwide is about 50 percent.

For first and second semesters of the new engineering technology core curriculum, a fall completion rate of 94 percent and spring completion rate of 100 percent was achieved.

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