



Microsoft® Office Specialist

Helps Unemployed Workers Benefit from Certification as they Retrain at Community College

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Success Story



MOBERLY AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE BUSINESS AND OFFICE TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM

Location:

Moberly, Missouri

Program enrollment:

100 students per year

Success Metrics:

- Helping community college students obtain employment
- Retraining workforce
- Employer-valued credential

MOBERLY AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE OFFERS MICROSOFT OFFICE CERTIFICATION TO GIVE STUDENTS AN EDGE IN THE WORKFORCE

CHALLENGE

Moberly Area Community College (MACC) serves 5,000 students in Central Northeast Missouri. As a progressive institution, MACC strives to provide the academic and technological services their students need in order to be successful in the future.

An increased demand for Career and Technical Education has led enrollment in the MACC Business and Office Technology program to double in recent years. MACC Associate Professor of Business and Office Technology Susan Burden says they have a lot of students who are retraining after losing their jobs. "They have skills – just not the right skills in this day and age."

At the end of 2009, Missouri Governor Jay Nixon launched Training for Tomorrow, a \$12 million initiative to educate Missourians in high-tech fields and get them working in growing industries. In June 2010 MACC was awarded a \$696,000 Training for Tomorrow Grant to implement, expand, and enhance their training programs in high-tech, high-demand fields.

SOLUTION

MACC Dean of Career and Technical Education Dr. Greg Mosier had spoken with Certiport in the past and thought about embedding Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) certification into their Business and Office Technology courses. Originally he felt MACC students would not be able to pay for the tests, but the Training for Tomorrow Grant made implementing MOS certification a reality.

"Implementing the MOS curriculum into the Business and Office Technology program, plus giving students the opportunity to obtain an industry-recognized certification along with their college degree was an easy decision - a win-win-win," said Mosier. "We felt the program would win with a curriculum recognized and respected by business and industry, and the college would win for having a rigorous and valuable career and technical education program. The students win by having both a college degree and a professional certification that prepares them to be successful in the business world."

Professor Burden was also on board since she had previously worked for a Microsoft Training Center in Kansas City and knew exactly how valuable Microsoft certification was in the workforce.

MACC Career and Technical Education began to work with Certiport and immediately changed the Business and Office Technology curriculum to include the Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) exams. Just 45 days after receiving the Training for Tomorrow Grant, Governor Nixon visited MACC to help them kick off the MOS certification program.

MACC became a private Certiport Testing Center and they began by purchasing 1,000 exam vouchers from Certiport, and eventually bought 1,500 more plus Certiprep practice materials

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– **Susan Burden,**
Associate Professor
of Business and Office
Technology
MACC

to help students prepare for exams during the semester.

"Certiprep is invaluable – if you don't implement it, I think you are missing the boat," said Burden. "Halfway through the course my students take a practice exam, and then go back and do learning mode. In order to take the final exam, they have to score 700 on a practice exam."

The MOS exam became the final exam in Professor Burden's Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Access, and Microsoft PowerPoint classes. Once they confirmed the program was a positive experience for students, MACC purchased Certiport's Site License to offer all of their exams for one flat fee.

RESULTS

Today, nearly every student in the Business and Office Technology program earns at least one MOS certification, and more than 200 have been earned in the last year.

"We are extremely pleased with the addition of MOS certification to our Business and Office Technology program," said Mosier. "Our students are successful and we could not be happier."

Burden says the best part of implementing MOS certification at MACC is having an exit exam that validates her courses. The school just went through the accreditation process, and the exams were brought up multiple times to show they are teaching the industry standards.

"No one can ask me if I am really teaching my students anything valuable," said Burden. "Every teacher should have an exit exam like the MOS certification, it holds me accountable for what Certiport and Microsoft thinks are the essential elements to know in Word, Excel, Access and PowerPoint."

Burden is proud of the 80 percent MOS pass rate for MACC students, and many are also becoming MOS Masters.

"What is cool about the MOS tests, is once a student passes one of them, it breeds excitement for them to want to take more," said Burden. "Then they can put the logo on their resumes, and when other people see that logo it proves their expertise."

Lisa Gentner is one MACC student who found a job as a direct result of her training and MOS certification. Gentner was laid off when her employer outsourced her job to another country. She started attending MACC to update her skills and soon after MACC began to offer MOS certification. Gentner earned certification and upon graduation, was hired quickly by the MACC Registrar's Office.

"MOS certification went on my resume and it was definitely helpful in searching for jobs when I finished the program," said Gentner.

Gentner also teaches the MOS continuing education course at MACC, helping adults just like her retrain to update their technology skills for today's workforce.

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