

**2010-15 Performance Funding Cycle
2012-2013 Employer Satisfaction Project
Summary Report¹
Northeast State Community College
Blountville, Tennessee**

Rationale

Today's difficult economy demands that community colleges work closely with employers to ensure that their workforce training needs are being met. The need for a new and highly skilled talent base is more critical now than ever before. Northeast State Community College (NeSCC) is committed to the goal of involving employers in an effort to better prepare future graduates.

NeSCC has been an active participant in the move toward performance measurement, increased accountability, and market responsiveness. Integral to these efforts are attempts to increase knowledge of and responsiveness to the education and training needs of area employers.

An important part of this effort is the Employer Satisfaction Survey process. With this in mind, the goals of the Employer Satisfaction Survey project are: (1) to measure the college's institutional effectiveness in producing graduates with appropriate skills training and general education skills; (2) to gauge employer's satisfaction with the graduates of Northeast State; and (3) to allow employers input into the continuous improvement of programs being offered by the college.

Northeast State has targeted several programs for review. Those include:

Technical Education A.A.S. Degree programs:

- Computer and Information Sciences- Concentrations:
 - Computer Programming,
 - Personal Computer Management,
 - Internet & Web Development,
 - Networking Systems
- Electrical Technology- Concentration:
 - Electromechanical

Health-Related Professions-A.A.S. Degree programs:

- Allied Health- Concentration:
 - Medical Laboratory Technology
- Cardiovascular Technology-Options
 - Invasive Option
 - Non-Invasive Option

The survey population will include the employers of graduates of the targeted programs during the past three years. The Health Related Professions programs will also be utilizing their Program Advisory Committees which consist of the major employers of their graduates. Since the programs being surveyed are so diverse, Northeast State recognizes the importance of being flexible and open

¹ Note: Items in gray font are from the proposal and included to provide explanation of the processes undertaken by the College.

to gathering the most usable data by the most efficient methods available, thus we are proposing the use of the Program Advisory Committees for the Health Related Professions programs.

Sampling Plan

NeSCC is proposing the use of the mail survey model based on a modified version of the Tailored Design Method as the primary instrument for gathering data from all of our targeted programs. The process will be updated to incorporate an email as one of the specified mailings. A link on Northeast's website will be developed so that respondents can complete the survey on-line if they choose. Again, the Health Related Professions will also administer the survey to the Program Advisory Committees. The survey population will include the employers of graduates of the selected programs during the past three years (2008, 2009, 2010).

The Health Related Professions programs are proposing to use the same survey but administer it in a group setting to the employers serving on the specific Program Advisory Committees for the Medical Laboratory Technology program and both Cardiovascular options. Each individual concentration/option has a committee that assists the college in identifying the needs of the local workforce and advises on how those needs could be more effectively met by the graduates of the program. Companies represented on the Program Advisory Committees are those who historically employ graduates from the programs.

The proposed Employer Satisfaction Survey will proceed on the following timeline:

- 2/1/13-Program Advisory Meetings conducted for targeted Health Related Professions programs
- 3/1/13-Brief letter announcing upcoming survey sent to identified employers
- 3/5/13- Survey mailed which includes letter outlining purpose, methods of response (online, mail, etc.) and importance of responding to the survey
- 3/12/13 -Thank-you postcard mailed expressing appreciation for responding, and indicates if response has not been mailed it is hoped that it will soon
- 4/3/13- Replacement survey mailed to nonrespondents indicating that survey has not been received and urges the recipient to respond
- 4/17/13- Final contact made by telephone to those remaining nonrespondents
- 5/1/13- Final deadline for return of surveys
- 5/4/13- Deactivate online survey link

Additional Contact Efforts that were Implemented

After following the above noted process, several surveys had not been returned. The following steps were added to the process in an attempt to increase the number of responses to the survey:

- Lists of those companies not responding were forwarded to the appropriate deans for further contact attempts
- Calls were made once again to those companies that could not be reached

- Additional emails were sent and employer booths were visited at local career fairs in an effort to obtain additional feedback

Proposed Survey

Northeast State’s proposed 2012-2013 Employer Satisfaction Survey is attached (See Appendix A). The survey instrument was designed by the Employer Satisfaction Project Committee which includes vice presidents, academic deans and representatives of the Institutional Effectiveness, Career Services and Student Success Offices. The survey developed for the purpose of this study was not validated so the data derived from the survey will be presented in their simplest form, reported in percentages and will be based on an assessment of varying degrees of subjectivity by individuals who complete the survey.

The Academic Deans were given the option of adding questions that pertained directly to their areas of study. The Dean of Advanced Technologies, overseeing the Electrical Technology-Electromechanical program, and the Dean of Business Technologies, overseeing the Computer Science Programs, both opted to include additional questions. Those surveys are attached. (See Appendix B)

Response Rate

The response rate for the 2013 Employer Satisfaction Survey was 69%. Of the 39 employers surveyed 27 responses were received. The total includes the information gathered in the Medical Laboratory Technology and Cardiovascular Program Advisory Committee meetings.

Preliminary Analysis of Results for 2013

The overall results of Northeast State’s Employer Satisfaction Survey were very positive. The results revealed that graduates are being adequately trained for the skills needed to perform the ever changing requirements of today’s workforce. The responses to survey questions are attached. (See Appendix C)

Key results from this study are as follows:

- **Overall performance:** The overall performance of new graduates employed appears to be very good. Of the 27 employers responding, including Medical Lab Technology, Cardiovascular Invasive and Noninvasive, 85% indicated that the overall performance of Northeast States graduates was either excellent or good.

9. Overall quality of your Northeast State graduates.

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
<i>Valid</i>	<i>Excellent</i>	11	40.7	40.7	40.7
	<i>Good</i>	12	44.4	44.4	85.2
	<i>Fair</i>	4	14.8	14.8	100.0
	<i>Total</i>	27	100.0	100.0	

- **Technical ability:** Skills training is critical in any area and the feedback received from employers indicates that they perceive NeSCC graduates to be able to understand and use technical information. Of the employers responding 89% responded positively to the technical ability of the graduates.

6. Ability to understand and use technical information.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Excellent	14	51.9	51.9	51.9
	Good	10	37.0	37.0	88.9
	Fair	3	11.1	11.1	100.0
	Total	27	100.0	100.0	

- **Leadership skills:** The leadership skills of recent graduates were rated at 56% overall. Comment: This has been identified as an opportunity for improvement. This will be addressed in the table included under the Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement section.

4. Potential to lead or guide others.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Excellent	6	22.2	22.2	22.2
	Good	9	33.3	33.3	55.6
	Fair	12	44.4	44.4	100.0
	Total	27	100.0	100.0	

Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement

The survey results were analyzed by the appropriate academic deans and their faculty. Corrective action objectives were set forth and responsible personnel and projected completion review dates were documented. Those responses are as follows:

Program: Allied Health, Medical Laboratory Technology (MLT)	
Strengths	Overall, employers seem satisfied with the graduates of the Medical Laboratory Technology Program as evidenced by their ratings on the Employer Satisfaction Survey. Employers rated graduates “excellent” or “good” on eight of nine questions. The remaining question considered the students potential for leadership and was rated “fair”. Comments made by the employers confirmed that the MLT curriculum provided the graduates the needed foundation of knowledge for the occupation. Additional comments attested to the soft skills of the students, distinguishing them as hard working, motivated, self-starters.
Opportunities for Improvement	The employers included two comments to the survey’s question on how we could better prepare future graduates. One employer commented that there was a need for additional equipment in the MLT program, although they did not specify what

	was needed. One employer commented that the students could benefit from additional communication training for health professionals.
Corrective Action Objective	The MLT Program laboratory contains equipment that meets/or exceeds the NAACLS standards for accredited programs. To address the employer concern of additional equipment needed within the MLT program, the topic will be added to the Agenda for the next MLT Program Advisory Board meeting to obtain their input as to what equipment may be needed. If equipment needs are identified, they may be included in the subsequent year's budget cycle. The MLT Program faculty will review curriculum for ways to incorporate additional communication training within the accreditation guidelines.
Responsible Personnel and Completion Review Date	Rose Marie Spangler, MLT Program faculty will include Laboratory Equipment Discussion to the agenda for the next MLT Advisory Board Meeting to get the board members input. Review Date: After MLT Program Advisory Board Meeting, TBD (C. Marshall and RM Spangler) Rose Marie Spangler, MLT Faculty will review curriculum for ways to incorporate additional communication exercises. Review Date: At end of Fall 2013 semester. (C. Marshall and RM Spangler)

Program: Cardiovascular Technology, Non-Invasive Option	
Strengths	Overall, employers seem satisfied with the graduates of the Cardiovascular Technology Program (CVT) as evidenced by their ratings on the Employer Satisfaction Survey. Employers did not note any categories that needed improvement. Comments made by the employers confirmed that the CVT Program curriculum provided the graduates the needed foundation of knowledge for the occupation. Additional comments attested to the soft skills of the students, distinguishing them as willing to do many tasks and adaptive to change.
Opportunities for Improvement	The employers included two comments to the survey's question on how we could better prepare future graduates. One employer commented that there was a need for updated Echo equipment in the CVT program. One employer commented that the students could benefit from additional exposure to Stress Echo and Pediatric Studies, both of which are low volume studies in clinical sites.
Corrective Action Objective	The CVT Program laboratory contains equipment that is several years old and does not contain updated technology. Funds have been requested and allocated for the purchase of two Echo Machines that have technology equivalent to local healthcare systems. The purchasing process will begin in July 2013. S. Mason, CVT Non-Invasive Instructor, researched supplementary teaching methods to simulate Stress Echo and Pediatric case studies.
Responsible Personnel and Completion Review Date	C. Marshall, Dean of Health-Related Professions and S. Mason, CVT Program Director will complete paperwork to purchase 2 new Echo Machines. Review Date: End of Fall 2013 semester to confirm 2 new Echo machines were purchased and are being utilized in CVT Non-Invasive Laboratory. (C. Marshall and S. Mason) S. Mason, CVT Program Non-Invasive Instructor will review with C. Marshall, Dean of Health-Related Professions methods utilized to supplement actual case exposure to Stress Echo and Pediatric Studies.

Review Date: At end of Fall 2013 semester. (C. Marshall and S. Mason)

Program: Cardiovascular Technology, Invasive	
Strengths	Overall, employers seem satisfied with the graduates of the Cardiovascular Technology Program (CVT) as evidenced by their ratings on the Employer Satisfaction Survey. The employer did not note any categories that needed improvement. Comments made by the employer confirmed that the CVT Program curriculum provided the graduates the needed foundation of knowledge and strong skills due to laboratory practice time. Additional comments attested to the soft skills of the students, distinguishing them as motivated workers.
Opportunities for Improvement	The employer included one comment to the survey's question on how we could better prepare future graduates. The employer commented that Peripheral Vascular case volumes were increasing in the Cath Lab and the CVT Program should continue to incorporate the knowledge and skills for these cases into the curriculum.
Corrective Action Objective	The CVT Program Invasive instructor will continue to incorporate peripheral vascular anatomy analysis and case specific information into the curriculum.
Responsible Personnel and Completion Review Date	The CVT Program Invasive instructor will review with C. Marshall, Dean of Health-Related Professions methods utilized to expand peripheral vascular exposure. Review Date: End of Fall 2013 semester. (C. Marshall and Invasive Instructor)

Program: Computer and Information Sciences	
Strengths	Overall, employers seem satisfied with the graduates of the Computer and Information Sciences Program. Employers rated graduates "excellent" or "good" on 10 of 15 questions. For those questions not receiving a rating of "good" or better it was noted in the comments that improvements might be made with specific emphasis in certain areas. Employers confirmed that the curriculum provided the graduates the needed technical foundation for a computer science occupation. Additional comments attested to the excellent technical skills, problem solving abilities, and to the students willing attitude to jump in and make a difference, distinguishing them as major assets to their organizations.
Opportunities for Improvement	The employers included comments to the survey's question on how we could better prepare future graduates. Employers commented that there was a need for additional training in soft skills, especially in areas of professional responsibilities in the corporate world including physical appearance, mannerisms and showing respect for themselves and others in the organization; interviewing skills; critical thinking; etc.
Corrective Action Objective	The Computer and Information Sciences Program meets/or exceeds the Association of Technology, Management and Applied Engineering (ATMAE) standards for accredited programs. To address the employer concerns of additional soft skill training in the program, faculty will determine a plan to add these topics into various courses of the program. A plan will be developed specifically to include professional responsibilities for dress, mannerisms, attitude, respect for themselves, their field and other coworkers and how these

	traits can be made a permanent part of the curriculum. Once the plan is agreed upon it will be added to the agenda for the next Advisory Board meeting to obtain their ideas, suggestions and approval. Changes will be incorporated into the curriculum and approvals obtained through the curriculum committee as needed.
Responsible Personnel and Completion Review Date	Allan Anderson – Advisory Board Coordinator and Dan Perry – Computer and Information Sciences Department Head will convene department faculty to develop specific plan before next meeting of Advisory Board meeting in fall 2013. Allan Anderson will add item to Advisory Board meeting agenda. During the meeting of the Advisory Board, a discussion of thoughts, ideas and best options to help students in obtaining these skills will be determined. <u>Review Date:</u> Within 2 weeks after Advisory Board Meeting, start approval process (Dan Perry and Danny Lawson) with all necessary paperwork to be completed by end of Fall 2013 semester.

Program: Electrical Technology, Electromechanical	
Strengths	Areas of strengths listed on the survey by employers included, communication skills, technical knowledge, and work ethics. Overall the employers appeared to be satisfied with the Electrical Technology, Electromechanical graduates.
Opportunities for Improvement	In the category related to how Northeast State could better prepare future graduates, one employer indicated a need for smaller class sizes with more hands on training and access to lab equipment. Additional employer comments emphasized the importance of hands on skills.
Corrective Action Objective	The Electrical Technology, Electromechanical faculty will review the class size limits for labs to ensure students have adequate access to equipment. The faculty will discuss the topic with the advisory committee during the next committee meeting for recommendations concerning additional equipment needs.
Responsible Personnel and Completion Review Date	An agenda item will be added to the fall semester division meeting, requesting the review of lab size enrollment limits. The Electrical Technology, Electromechanical faculty will review the class size limits for the electromechanical labs and update the maximum limit where appropriate. Completion Date: Fall 2013 semester. The faculty will discuss the topic with the advisory committee during the next committee meeting for recommendations concerning additional equipment needs. Completion Date: Spring 2014 semester.

Summary

The goals of the Employer Satisfaction Survey project were: (1) to measure the college's institutional effectiveness in producing graduates with appropriate skills training and general education skills; (2) to gauge employer's satisfaction with the graduates of Northeast State; and (3) to allow employers input into the continuous improvement of programs being offered by the college. We have achieved these goals by administering the survey. Employers have had the opportunity to provide feedback in a customer friendly format. Based upon these preliminary results, the conclusion is that the academic programs under review were found to meet overall

employer expectations. Full assessment of the Employer Satisfaction Survey will be made in the fall in a meeting with the academic deans. Continuous improvements, where warranted, will be fully implemented at that time.