



# Diversity Works

Office of University Partnerships

Minority-Serving Institutions Developing Partnerships, Building Communities

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## Business Education and Mentoring Program Creates a Pathway Out of Poverty

Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime, says the old Chinese proverb. The project staff of North Carolina A&T State University's (NCA&TSU) Construction Management and Safety Office of Sponsored Programs, under the leadership of Dr. Musibau Shofoluwe, is using this logic of self-sufficiency to assist residents of southeast Greensboro, North Carolina. The 2006 Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council census showed that this majority minority community had high poverty, declining income, and low educational attainment. However, after speaking with residents of southeast Greensboro who reported declining income, university staff discovered that these individuals had something not stated in the census. They had hobbies and skills that they used to earn extra income but did not know how to translate them into viable businesses.

So NCA&TSU decided to provide them with tools to start, develop, maintain, and stabilize a small business. They developed the Business Education and Mentoring Program, a comprehensive program that is affordable, effective, and meaningful in scope; creates a pathway out of poverty; and removes barriers to wealth creation.

"This program is an extension of the university's Minority Enterprise Training and Development program funded by a previous Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) Office of University Partnerships (OUP)," stated Tamara Dix, project manager. "It takes aspiring entrepreneurs and current business owners and provides them with the fundamentals of business development and management. Participants take courses in QuickBooks, marketing, advertising, understanding contracts and leases, business structuring, business plan development,

strategic planning, insurance, handling taxes, and creating operations budgets. The program also works to polish their soft skills and public speaking through individual and group presentations. We want each student to leave the classroom with the confidence to close a deal and the skills to do so. Our ultimate goal is for the business to grow and create jobs."

Throughout the process, program participants are assigned a mentor from NCA&TSU staff, the local business community, the Senior Corps of Retired Executives, and the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce. This mentoring continues for 1 year after they complete the program.

"By the time they complete their business plans and hands-on mentoring, they are ready to start a business," said Dix. "That's what happened to the four businesses operating in our Business and Entrepreneurship Skills Training (BEST) Center, which serves as a resource center for program participants."



Project staff (l. to r.); Felicia Andrews, project assistant; Jacqueline Harris, project assistant; Dr. Musibau Shofoluwe, project director; Tamara N. Dix, project manager.

## HSIAC Grantee Provides MMAP for Financial Stability

Nationwide, Hispanic Americans are opening businesses at a rate that is three times as fast as the national average, and one in two Hispanic households (49.7 percent) owns their homes. But for the low-income, predominantly Hispanic families living near Los Angeles Valley College (LAVC), in Valley Glen, California, these attainments are far removed from their daily reality. These communities are plagued by high poverty rates and low rates of homeownership and small business or microenterprise ownership. With funds from its 2007 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Hispanic-Serving Institutions Assisting Communities (HSIAC) grant, LAVC is providing a Money Management Awareness Program (MMAP) to educate these individuals in financial literacy; foster financial stability; increase use of traditional banking institutions and homeownership; and develop, stabilize, and strengthen microenterprise ownership and entrepreneurship.

"LAVC is committed to developing programs and training that drive the economic sustainability of the community," said Dr. Deborah diCesare, dean of economic development. "By developing partnerships with Junior Achievement, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), and the city of Los Angeles, LAVC was able to create a multifaceted program geared in financial literacy."

"The first class was offered as a pilot class in October of 2008 at LAVC," explained Bernadette U. Perez-Gilbert, program director. "Since then, we have offered 7 training sessions and served a total of 167 students. Our facilitators are LAVC instructors who are certified in the field of finance. Prior to their classes, they receive a train-the-trainer session conducted by staff from FDIC."

MMAP runs for approximately 9 weeks. The curriculum is patterned after the FDIC Money Smart training program for adults and combines theory with hands-on application. The entire program is 27 hours and consists of 18 hours of instruction in basic financial management literacy. Topics include financial literacy, budgeting, credit, home or business ownership, banking, and predatory lending. Then, students can take one of two paths: 9 hours of homeownership or hands-on entrepreneurship experience at the Junior Achievement Finance Park, an interactive environment where they apply their knowledge of financial literacy. Students are assigned an identity and profile for use at the

park and must develop a family budget within their annual income. Mandatory budget items include rent, transportation, utilities, living expenses, and education.



*MMAP participants at Finance Park.*

"MMAP's goal is to train 300 individuals over a 3-year period in financial literacy and help them develop a personal finance portfolio," explained Perez-Gilbert. "Of this number, 200 will receive training in the entrepreneurship track and 100 will receive training in the homeownership track. To date, we have trained 167 individuals: 87 in homeownership and 53 in entrepreneurship. We plan to train the remaining 133 individuals by November 8, 2010, the completion date of the program."

Program participants leave the program with the following:

- Ability to create and maintain a written budget plan.
- Knowledge of how to obtain a credit score.
- Information on traditional banking services.
- Ability to recognize predatory lending.
- Knowledge of homeownership.
- Knowledge of entrepreneurial principles.

"Responses to MMAP have been extremely positive," said Perez-Gilbert, with many individuals indicating that they have made positive life changes in their finances:

"I have changed my checking account to one that does not charge fees," stated Lorraine Sharkey.

"I'm doing more online. No more paper billing," said Patricia Perez.

"I can now manage my budget in a better way," said Anastacio Diaz.

For more information on the Los Angeles Valley College Money Management and Awareness Program, contact Deborah diCesare, Ed.D., Dean, Los Angeles Valley College, at 818-778-5522, or visit the college's website at [www.lavc.edu/jobtraining](http://www.lavc.edu/jobtraining).

## New Facility Underscores College's Commitment to Vocational Training

Belcourt, North Dakota, has approximately 2,440 residents. More than 900 of them are enrolled in some capacity at Turtle Mountain Community College (TMCC), which offers 4-year degrees in elementary education and secondary science teacher education, an array of associate degrees and certificate programs, and vocational training programs. Now TMCC is expanding its Career & Technical Education (CTE) program, which provides vocational training programs to address the job training needs of the local Tribal workforce. The college used its U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) 2006 Tribal Colleges and Universities Program (TCUP) grant to construct a 3,200-square-foot facility to provide new vocational programs, including residential and electrical wiring, welding and refinishing, and auto body and repair.

"Construction on the new facility began in 2006 by the SHP Construction Company and was completed in 1½ years," said Wannetta Bennett, TMCC sponsored programs grant officer. "The building is a precast concrete-and-steel structure. It has no partitions and is a big lab area with the flexibility to be used for a number of programs."

### Training Tomorrow's Workforce

The average age of North Dakota's electricians' workforce is 50, and there are concerns regarding the future of this trade. TMCC's 2-year Residential Electrical Wiring certificate program, which is being offered in the new facility, is a crucial step in addressing this concern. Through this program, which has a current enrollment of 15 students, TMCC is spotlighting the employment opportunities in this vocation, encouraging younger people to enroll in the program, and helping to train the state's next generation of electricians.

Students meet from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., 4 days a week. In year 1 of the program, students receive instruction in theory; basic electrician's math; a study of the National Electrical Code 2008 Handbook, which reviews regulations, standards, provisions for safety, and proper maintenance; Ohm's law, the formula for calculating and figuring out electrical wiring and installation; and safety.

During the first 16 weeks of the program, students spend 60 percent of the time in class and 40 percent in hands-on training. By the second semester, the breakdown is 2 hours of training for every hour of class work.

In year 2, there is more advanced wiring training and code work study. "Code work gives students an understanding of what to expect and the proper channels in which to work," explained Wayne Sande, program facilitator. Students also receive continuous hands-on experience in residential wiring, communication wiring, cable networking, equipment wiring, air conditioning, furnaces, and electrical heating systems.



*Hands-on electrical wiring training inside new vocational training facility.*

After successfully completing the program, students receive a certificate of completion and are credited with 2,000 hours of study and experience, which counts toward the 8,000 hours of study and experience required for the North Dakota state electrician's license. This program will be expanded soon to include commercial electrical wiring.

Sande is working closely with TMCC's entrepreneurial program to help program participants launch their own businesses, and he is also researching other college resources to find work placement for graduates.

Soon, TMCC will move its welding and refinishing program to the new facility. This 9-month program includes a comprehensive review of welding processes and students meet 4 days a week from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. They participate in 4 hours of in-class instruction on topics such as blueprint reading, metallurgy, welding symbols, job preparations, technical math, creative writing, computer literacy, and OSHA training, and they also receive 4 hours of hands-on training in the welding lab.

For more information on Turtle Mountain Community College Career & Technical Education vocational programs, contact Sheila Trottier at 701-477-7879.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Office of University Partnerships  
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Washington, DC 20410-3000

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*NCA&TSU continued from page 1*

NCA&TSU will use funds from its 2008 HUD HBCU grant to add a minimum of three suites and a multipurpose room for training and events to the BEST Center, expand its resource lab to accommodate additional businesses, and establish a microloan program to provide working capital for a minimum of six small businesses. The Greensboro Venture Capital Fund (GVCF), in conjunction with the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce, structured the loan process and will administer the funds. A typical GVCF loan ranges from \$5,000 to \$50,000. Through this program, applicants can request up to \$5,000 in assistance.

This fund is set up specifically for these businesses; however, receiving a loan is not automatic. Business owners are competing with their contemporaries for these funds. "The application process includes a business plan with a clear statement of purpose for the loan, financial statements, tax returns, and a credit

bureau report," explained Dix. "Also, participants must be in good standing with the program." Since these funds are necessary to help individuals jumpstart a small minority business, 25 percent of the loan will be forgiven should the recipient create employment for low- to moderate-income individuals and maintain their employment for at least 9 months.

"Currently, GVCF is receiving loan applications and processing loans," said Dix. "We are definitely on track to achieving our end-of-grant goals of establishing or stabilizing at least 5 new minority business, providing microloans to a minimum of 5 minority business, incubating a minimum of 4 new businesses, and providing technical assistance to at least 30 minority businesses."

For more information about North Carolina A&T State University's Business Education and Mentoring Program, contact Project Manager Tamara N. Dix at 336-256-0343 x 2277 or [tn Dix@ncat.edu](mailto:tn Dix@ncat.edu).

HUD's Office of University Partnerships (OUP) provides grants to institutions of higher education to assist them and their partners with the implementation of a broad range of community development activities, including neighborhood revitalization, housing, and economic development. This newsletter, *Diversity Works*, highlights the efforts of grantees in OUP's Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-Serving Institutions Assisting Communities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian Institutions Assisting Communities grant programs and includes a variety of interesting projects, compelling grantee profiles, and other valuable resources for minority-serving institutions.