



## 2018 Award Recipient

### Tri County Tech

One of 29 public technology centers in the Oklahoma Career and Technical Education System, Tri County Tech (TCT) serves the residents of three counties and has a vision of inspiring success through life-changing learning experiences. It provides high school programs, adult programs, customized business and industry training, and conference and event meeting services. TCT strives to break the cycle of poverty for the students it serves by offering them opportunities that they would otherwise not have, providing support services, and keeping tuition low for the adult students. Program offerings include pre-engineering, medicine & bioscience, culinary arts, cosmetology, early child care education, automotive technology, precision machining, construction technology, auto collision repair, marketing management, computer repair, networking, and welding. TCT also offers a Practical Nursing Program and Dental Hygiene Program.

### Student-Focused Processes and Results

- With the goal that no student should be denied access to education based on his/her ability to pay, TCT launched its own foundation. (Many of TCT's students come from generational poverty, with more than 70 percent of high school students qualifying for free or reduced lunch.) Students receive financial tuition assistance (only adult students pay tuition); gas cards; and money for medications, clothing, and food, including backpacks filled with food for the weekends. Between FY2014 and FY2018, foundation scholarships grew from \$60,000 to \$250,000. Flex programs for adults permit these students to participate in career programs while still employed in less-skilled positions.
- Rates for completion/retention and placement for students after graduation have been in the top 25 percent nationally for eight fiscal years. TCT has also delivered the top state completion/retention rate for full-time students in five of the past seven years. The adult average wage for graduates is above the growth rate for state and national wages, increasing to \$19 per hour in FY2018 compared to a state and national average of about \$15 per hour.
- Seventy percent of TCT's high school program graduates move on to further education in college or adult technical schools.
- In support of the TCT goal that students complete their studies without the burden of debt, tuition is held low and scholarships are plentiful. The highest priced adult tuition at approximately \$4,500 for the Practical Nursing Program is still much lower than the tuition for other regional programs, which can cost more than \$36,000.
- TCT has created learning spaces (nearly 270,000 feet of interior space distributed through nine buildings) to engage multiple styles. Instructional program areas are supplied with the space, materials, and equipment required for each career program, including video conferencing equipment, a patient simulator, a virtual welding trainer, a digital panoramic x-ray system,



### Highlights

- With the goal that no student should be denied access to education based on his/her ability to pay, TCT launched its own foundation. Between FY2014 and FY2018, foundation scholarships grew from \$60,000 to \$250,000.
- Rates for completion/retention and placement for students after graduation have been in the top 25 percent nationally for eight fiscal years. TCT has also delivered the top state completion/retention rate for full-time students in five of the past seven years.
- Seventy percent of TCT's high school program graduates move on to further education in college or adult technical schools.
- Based on the GPTW survey, TCT engagement results for most workforce segments have been in the top 10 percent nationally each year since FY2014.



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a plasma cutter, 3d printers, a sewer pipe camera, fitness facility equipment, an auto collision repair paint booth, video creation equipment, and 600 computers.

- Overall satisfaction for full-time high school and adult students has increased each year from FY2016 to FY2018, with FY2017 and FY2018 levels above 90 percent of five other Baldrige Award education winners' results. Segmented satisfaction results for 11 out of 17 TCT programs have improved or maintained levels above 98 percent.

### Senior Leadership and Community Support

- In full transparency, senior leaders share organizational performance through measurement and reporting systems, monthly Superintendent Forums attended by all employees, and workgroup-level communications. Community interest and concerns are addressed through meetings with partner schools, towns, and the Board of Education.
- To date, the Vision 2020 goals for two competency-related objectives (concerning fiscal and operational effectiveness, and employee development and well-being) are 100 percent complete. With stakeholder and other input received, planning is well underway for Vision 2025.
- Most results for the ethical behavior of senior leaders and governance are near or above the top 10 percent results on the national Great Places to Work (GPTW) survey. Each year from FY2014 to FY2018, 100 percent of human resources/marketing, operations, and The Strategy Center groups have ranked management as honest and ethical in the GPTW survey.
- For the past five years, GPTW survey results related to senior leaders keeping employees informed, setting clear expectations, answering questions, seeking suggestions, and involving employees in decisions show sustained performance at or better than the national top 10 percent or organizations across most workforce groups.

### Workforce-Focused Processes and Results

- Work process improvement is led by Workgroup Directors and is shared through the Workgroup Plan of Excellence Process, which includes a workgroup performance measure evaluation, workforce requests, budget request and revenue projections, cycles of learning review, and future work process improvement recommendations. TCT engagement results for most workforce segments have been in the top 10 percent nationally each year since FY2014.
- TCT has been named a *Fortune* magazine top-50 best small/medium workplace in the nation for two straight years. Workforce climate results, especially for safety, benefits, and pay, have been consistently near or above the 95th percentile of the national GPTW survey each year from FY2014 to FY2017.
- An innovative Performance Pay System focuses compensation on mission-driven key performance measures, workgroup action plans, and individual action plans. Although the high school program faculty has an organized bargaining unit called the TCT

Teachers' Association, it has chosen not to negotiate for over 10 years. Instead, the faculty has trusted the senior leadership team to provide equitable salary, benefits, and contract terms, based on the Performance Pay System.

- TCT's workforce is dedicated to its mission, with 100 percent contributing to the TCT Foundation, which has increased its financial support of students by 169 percent over a five-year period.

### Financial and Marketplace Results

- The responsibility for raising local controllable revenue is shared throughout the organization. Despite a strategic decision to forego federal funding beginning in FY2015, and despite a 24 percent reduction in state funding from FY2009 to FY2018, overall revenues grew 16 percent from FY2009 to FY2019. During this same period, TCT increased the total fund balance, which provides cash flow, by 103 percent.
- Enrollments for core students have grown by 2 percent from FY2015 to FY2018, while total customers have grown by 29 percent over the same period. New education offerings have included leadership and other tailored training to local large businesses Phillips 66 and Siemens in Bartlesville, OK; and specialized training to the Osage Nation and The Pioneer Woman (celebrity chef Ree Drummond) in Pawhuska, OK. In addition, TCT has partnered with the Boys and Girls Club in Nowata County, OK, to develop a new center to encourage the very young to enjoy learning.
- TCT improves its fiscal efficiency through strategic adjustments to generate higher revenues from fewer customers while reducing costs. For example, at the same time aggregate customers for The Strategy Center and community education have declined by 389 students from FY2015 to FY2018, revenues for those programs have increased by 37 percent, representing over \$470,000 in additional funds.

#### For more information:

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#### Baldrige Performance Excellence Program

The Baldrige Program educates organizations of all sizes and from all sectors in organizational performance management and improvement. We also administer the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. Our key services are to identify and recognize role-model organizations, share best management practices, and help organizations achieve best-in-class performance levels. We are the only public-private partnership and Presidential award program dedicated to improving U.S. organizations.

For more information on the Baldrige Program:  
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