

Presented at Opening Plenary by:
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***Caterpillar Dealer Service Technician Training Program
History and Goals of the Partnership***

On May 18, 1998, Caterpillar, Inc. announced the proposed plan between Caterpillar Inc. and Illinois Central College to create a program that would provide top-notch Dealer Service Technician Training for students interested in working for Caterpillar dealerships. This program, called “Think Big”, was designed to be a one-of-a-kind, “model” program that was entirely Caterpillar specific and Caterpillar endorsed with the intention of preparing a skilled workforce to be employed as Caterpillar dealer technicians, an occupation with high demand.

The program coordinator was hired in May 1998, and the coursework began for the first class of students in August 1998. Since construction for the new facility to house the program on the ICC campus began in August 1998, the program’s classes were conducted at Caterpillar Incorporated’s facilities (building JJ, in East Peoria) until the new building was completed. The first classes were taught in the new building on Illinois Central College’s East Peoria Campus the summer session of 1999. The first seven “pilot” students graduated May 2000.

The Uniqueness of the Partnership

The Caterpillar Dealer Service Technology program at Illinois Central College was the first program created in conjunction with Caterpillar to fill the demand for trained technicians to work in dealerships that buy, sell, and repair Caterpillar equipment and machines.

Caterpillar, Inc., Caterpillar’s dealerships (Altorfer Inc., Patten Tractor and Equipment Company, and Whayne Supply Company), and ICC worked closely together to establish a model, two-year curriculum. As of 2004, this program has been replicated at fourteen colleges in five countries.

The program that has been introduced at each of these schools trains students specifically how to service Caterpillar equipment using cutting-edge diagnostic and maintenance systems, advanced technologies, and high-tech tools. This unique program combines real-world experience and training. For each 16-week semester, students spend eight weeks at ICC doing hands-on training in state-of-the-art labs and classrooms and they spend eight weeks on internship at the dealerships doing hands-on training with a one-on-one mentor to back up what they have learned.

Representatives from Caterpillar and Illinois Central College worked closely with independent Caterpillar dealers and ICC to develop the curriculum for the program. This partnership ensured that the curriculum met the needs and adequately prepares students for the workforce.

Partnership Results

We allow our dealerships that are sponsoring our students to directly have a say as to whom they will sponsor by making the dealerships the heart of our selection process and ensuring them a higher quality of student that fits their dealerships needs.

Employment Opportunities for students who complete the CATTK program at ICC

The placement rate for students completing this program is approximately 90%, with 83% entering into full-time employment with their “dealer sponsor” and the remainder pursuing other options, either employment with another dealership or continuing their education at a four-year college or university.

Our students who successfully complete the program stand a good chance for advancement and are in demand. The Caterpillar dealerships recognize that students from the program are knowledgeable of Caterpillar equipment and have the ability to contribute as a technician at their dealership. This extensive training will help the students when they begin their working careers and provide them the skills and basis for continued learning to enable them to advance in their careers.

How Caterpillar Inc. has benefited from the partnership

Caterpillar benefits by having a high-quality training source for its dealer network. Prior to the development of this program, Caterpillar provided its own training for those who worked at their dealerships. With the increasing demand for trained technicians, this cooperative program became a better solution to meet Caterpillar training needs.

Caterpillar further benefits by knowing that a skilled workforce for its dealer network is continually being developed. Caterpillar dealers must be able to service and repair existing Caterpillar equipment. This is not possible without qualified, trained technicians.

How the college has benefited from the partnership

Caterpillar has donated time, money, and effort towards making the Caterpillar Dealer Service Technician Training Program a success. Beyond funding the building, Caterpillar has ensured that the building is equipped with the latest equipment from the shop to the classroom. Caterpillar professionals have worked closely with the college to establish a curriculum to meet the needs of the industry. This ensures that faculty are preparing the students to enter the workforce in the technician field with the most advanced training possible to date. Additionally, Caterpillar dealers assist with the recruitment of students.

Caterpillar has donated equipment and also participates actively in the education of students in other programs. Even before the Caterpillar Dealer Service Technology program, Caterpillar donated scholarship money and supported programs through offering internships/apprenticeships to students at Illinois Central College.

Gains realized by the community

There is better quality service at the dealerships because of this program. The community gains from a better rate of service at the dealership. Customer satisfaction is also an important element in Caterpillar service. When customers pay for Caterpillar machines, they expect to have the best service possible. Technicians who are trained well and like their jobs make customers feel more at ease and more confident in the service they receive. A happy customer is more apt to return to a dealership that has great service and will also share their experience with others.

***Illinois Central College
Respiratory Therapist Program***

History

An educational program for respiratory therapy had been strongly supported by local respiratory therapy personnel since the late 1970s. In 1980 an Advisory Committee was established and consisted of therapists, physicians, and administrators from OSF Saint Francis Medical Center, Proctor Community Hospital, and Methodist Medical Center as well as Illinois Central college administrators and faculty. A needs survey in 1980 verified the need for a formal respiratory technician and therapist program in this area. In 1981-82 further advisory committee meetings were held, and visits to local hospital departments and with various program directors of other respiratory programs were made by Illinois Central College administrators.

After several visits and careful consideration, it was decided that budgetary constraints prevented the establishment of a respiratory therapy educational program. Following this decision, the College administration informed the Advisory Committee that a respiratory therapy educational program was not feasible due to the financial constraints. During the late spring of 1983, OSF Saint Francis Medical Center administration proposed that the earlier decision be re-evaluated, and subsequently the services of a consultant representing the accrediting body for respiratory therapy education were utilized. Following a positive report from the consultant, as well as affirmative responses from a second needs study, OSF Saint Francis proposed that they enter into a joint venture with Illinois Central College to establish a respiratory therapy educational program. The letter of agreement became effective on June 30, 1984, and the first class entered in August of 1984.

Conditions of Partnership

The agreement specifies that Illinois Central College will be the sponsoring institution and will ultimately be responsible for the total educational experiences provided to respiratory therapy students including the granting of degrees. OSF Saint Francis Medical Center will provide space for an appropriately equipped classroom and laboratory located in the medical center. The cost for one of the two faculty members, the clinical coordinator, as well as the laboratory materials and supplies, will be absorbed by Saint Francis, Illinois Central College will provide the salary and benefits for the program director.

This joint venture program has been working well since inception in 1984. Since that time, over 300 students have graduated from the program; with the majority of the graduates finding employment in the Peoria area (100% of our graduates find jobs in the field upon graduation). Today, entry-level graduates are starting their new careers at approximately \$17.00 per hour.

Even with the program housed locally there continues to be a shortage of respiratory therapy personnel...not only locally, but also regionally and nationally. As enrollments in health programs dropped a few years ago, some colleges closed their programs; this has placed an additional strain on the workforce shortage. Illinois Central College weathered the storm. OSF Saint Medical Center has established a respiratory therapy scholarship program...an opportunity to receive an Associate Degree at ICC as a Respiratory Therapist FREE of charge. The

scholarship pays for tuition and books each semester, and also gives a cost of living allowance to the students. In return, the student has a part-time work commitment with Saint Francis while attending the program (they get paid approximately \$10.00/hour for this), and it is hoped that upon graduation the scholarship recipient will wish to work there. This new partnership has helped to keep the respiratory therapy program at maximum enrollments the past few years.

As described, Illinois Central College, OSF Saint Francis Medical Center, and the local healthcare community have all benefited from this twenty-year partnership that will continue to flourish into the future.