CAET CHARRETTE SUMMARY

On November 1 Metropolitan Community College (MCC) hosted an input session for business and industry leaders to collaborate with MCC on what our proposed Center for Advanced & Emerging Technologies (CAET) concept could provide for the local community. The discussion identified a need for technicians and tradespeople to replace and enhance our current workforce. These newly trained employees will need to exhibit high-order technical skills rooted in technology while having a firm base in oral and written communications. The following is a compilation of what we heard from stakeholders:

Changing Industry = Need for a Changing Educational Model

- Problem/Project Based Learning (PBL) is required
- Training needs to be Multi-Disciplinary creating a hybrid employee
- Develop students’ Analytical and Problem Solving Skills
- Utilize all of the building as a “Living Lab” available for students and industry

Continuing Education/Training

- Provide customized training and credentials
- Adapt training to workforce/industry needs
- Training and education will be life-long requirements

Marketing

- Use MCC to improve public perception of technician/trades careers
- Better engage with K-12, especially high school for earlier paths to technical fields
- “Gold Collar” jobs, not “Blue Collar”

Interns/Apprenticeship

- Work with local industry and unions on clear entry path to jobs
- Create accountability and structure
- Mentorship development

Partnerships

- Highlight branded, co-location of industry
- Industry to help develop curriculum
- Better articulation to 4 year higher education
- Make it “Our (the Community’s) Technology Center” not just MCC’s

Among the discussion, several recurring trends emerged, which we identify as key takeaways for moving forward. The above are resources and notes for accomplishing our major tasks, which include not just improvements in the functioning of MCC as a college, but also the wider community:

- Education needs to become more responsive to industry needs
- We need to create a “pipeline” to jobs and careers
- Engaged partnerships are critical (Industry, Unions, K-12, Economic Development)
- Internships/apprenticeships will make students more successful