An 80+ Year Legacy of Workforce Development

Los Angeles Trade-Technical College has an 80+ year history of educating and preparing the Los Angeles workforce for careers in industries that fuel the regional economy. The college began in 1925 by offering a course in power sewing at a manufacturing plant—hence the roots of the college are firmly grounded in workforce education and economic development.

Today...Trade-Tech is a substantial provider of career-technical, workforce education in Los Angeles. In the last five years alone over 75,000 individuals have participated in career-technical education and training programs at the college.

Our history began shortly after the close of World War I, when members of the Los Angeles Board of Education, the Chamber of Commerce, and business and labor leaders held a series of conferences to talk about Los Angeles’ need for a centralized vocational training program. Out of those meetings came the initial concept of what would become Trade-Tech, modeled on a class in power sewing offered to downtown garment workers. By the end of 1924, training programs in “beauty culture”, printing, plumbing, and the building trades were offered at various locations around the city and briefly consolidated in a soon-to-be outgrown building located at Eighth and Grand Avenues.

In the early Spring of 1925, the Los Angeles Board of Education created the Frank Wiggins Trade School, naming it after a prominent Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce member who had been a driving force in promoting the development of vocation training. The school relocated to a new building at 1646 South Olive Street in 1926, and through the ensuing years gained a reputation for the success of its graduates in industrial careers as well as the dedication of its faculty and staff.

The advent of World War II created an exponential demand for the college’s training programs in support of the war effort. The college’s Aircraft and Welding Trades departments operated directly under the supervision of the federal War Production Training Program, while the majority of other programs were quickly reformatted to provide short-term training of six to ten weeks’ duration, often at war production plants located throughout the city.

The end of the war and the return to a civilian economy, together with the infusion of federal funds for training veterans, led to an expanded demand for education and training at the college. In July of 1948, in response to veteran’s retraining needs as well as Los Angeles’ post-war population boom, the college was granted the authority to expand their curriculum and offer an Associate in Arts degree in vocational disciplines as well as academic and Liberal Arts areas.

LATTC moved to its current location in 1957. In 1966, an existing educational institution with a strong business program, Metropolitan College, was merged with Trade-Tech, resulting in an even broader range of educational offerings. Finally, in 1969, LATTC joined the newly formed Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD), making LATTC one of the nine colleges that comprise the District.

Trade-Tech occupies a unique position among institutions of higher education. Throughout eight decades, the college has remained true to its’ founding premise of vocational education, while expanding to provide transfer programs, adapt to rapidly changing technologies and remain responsive to the needs of the surrounding community. Students come from all over the Los Angeles basin to participate in our unique mix of programs, some of which have been in existence since the school’s inception. As of Fall 2006, the campus is undergoing massive renovation and building programs under the auspices of Proposition A and AA bond funds, and we look forward eagerly to the next eighty years of community service.