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## MCC, UConn working together to expand manufacturing program

By Joseph T. O'Leary Journal Inquirer | Posted: Tuesday, May 19, 2015 11:59 am

MANCHESTER — Manchester Community College and the University of Connecticut will team up to develop new programs thanks to a new grant.

MCC's Business, Engineering, and Technology programs are expected to get a boost from the partnership with the Huskies and a \$1.1 million, four-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Center for International Business Education and Research, or CIBER.

It was UConn's responsibility to find academic partners that can benefit from program improvements related to the grant, said Michael Jordan-Reilly, public relations associate for MCC.

"UConn chose Manchester Community College because of its already thriving BET programs, and its leadership and commitment to excellence in the Connecticut Community College network," MCC President Gena Glickman said in a news release.

"MCC has a longstanding relationship with UConn and so when the opportunity to partner on this grant arose, UConn approached us," said Leia Bell, the executive director of the MCC Foundation. The grant is aimed at developing university partnerships with community colleges. "We feel very fortunate to have been chosen as UConn's partner."

The grant is intended to show students the increasingly global marketplace in today's economy where even small businesses can become global players, and to help students develop new skills in that area.

The program is tied to manufacturing and will focus on "next-shoring," where large manufacturers develop global strategies that involve domestic production as well as overseas elements.

"Even a small business can be a global enterprise in the 21st century," Glickman said in the statement, "and the opportunity for our students to get that perspective will serve them and our economy well as students enter the job market and become contributors in the business world."

Sulin Ba, associate dean of academic and research support at UConn's School of Business, said the grant's cycle is from October 2014 to September 2018, which

means some programs have already been put into action, while others are still in development.

She added that MCC's existing focus on manufacturing made the connection between the schools a "mutually beneficial partnership."

One of the flagship aspects of the program, Ba said, is a new short-term, study-abroad program that will be open to both UConn and MCC students. Starting in June 2016, students will get a chance to visit Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia to study economies in sub-Saharan environments and new manufacturing processes.

Addis Ababa is an eager partner with UConn already, she said, as it already works with its engineering program, and expanding the schools' connections by including MCC will further improve their relationship.

In the works as well is a virtual study abroad program, Ba added. While UConn encourages study abroad programs, they're often very expensive. A virtual program would allow students unable to pay that high cost to still participate. It's likely that program would be made available to all Connecticut community colleges in the future.

MCC will also host events related to the grant, including the CIBER International Quiz Bowl in which New England community college students will compete based on their knowledge of the manufacturing world. Ba said this is intended to expand the grant's capability to reach others, not just MCC, and will increase knowledge surrounding the topic.

Other advances stemming from the grant include a two-day program to improve community college curriculums, where faculty will be trained about internationalization, and curriculum development grants at MCC to further enhance programs there.

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[Home Page](#)

---

[Page One](#)

---

[Business](#)

---

**[Connecticut And Region](#)**

---

[Crime And Courts](#)

---

[Living](#)

---

[Nation And World](#)

---

[Opinion](#)

---

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---

[Sports](#)

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**Towns**

---

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