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Montrose training facility turns 30

'Trusted' Professional Development Center has trained 34,000 workers.

By Kelly Corrigan

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Montrose touts shops that have served customers for decades, but one of its local facilities known for training employees in the local workforce is celebrating its 30th anniversary.

The Professional Development Center that Glendale Community College established in 1985 has trained 34,000 workers across 4,600 companies.

The center receives funding from the state's Employment Training Panel supported by the unemployment tax that California employers pay.

Kimberly Holland has served as the center's executive director for the past 28 years, working to fulfill the center's mission of helping businesses thrive by providing custom curriculum across several skill areas, including business, computer, master planning, engineering, manufacturing and computer-aided design.

Classes include cyber-security skills, social-media marketing, computer programming, conflict resolution and customer service.

"Employers look to [the center] as a trusted resource for training," Holland said.

The center tracks employees' wages to find how much more they earn after completing a training class, and according to Holland, an employee, on average, earns \$1.24 more per hour 90 days after training — and the average climbs to \$5.40 more per hour two years after training.

The program was highlighted last week by the Glendale Community College board of trustees, and the college's President/Supt. David Viar spoke to how rare it is for a college to offer such a program that is dedicated to economic success and viability.

"It truly is one in a few of community colleges that does this kind of work for its community," he said.

Locally, the program has offered classes to Glendale-based employees at such companies as ACCO Engineered Systems, Chromatic, Inc., Cygnet Stamping & Fabricating and Avery Dennison.

During the 2014-15 fiscal year, which began in July 2014, 1,114 students completed a training program, with 1,070 of them ranging in age from 25 to 64. Thirty-three of them were younger than 25 and 11 were 65 years old or older.

Of those 1,114 students, 35% had completed some college work, and 57% of the students were Latino, and the second highest percentage — 16% — were Asian.

This past July, the center was awarded its 37th contract from the state's Employment Training Panel, worth \$826,000.

Last month, the center signed a memorandum of understanding with California Manufacturing Technology Consulting, a nonprofit consulting company, for \$125,000 to provide training to local manufacturing employees.

College trustees said the center's profile in the area has grown consistently, contributing to its success.

"It's obvious that we are a critical element for an education, of course, but specifically for economic development," said trustee Anita Quinonez Gabrielian.