

# A-B Tech **EDUCATION** Journal

FALL 2020



## **Dr. John Gossett Joins A-B Tech as 7th President**

A-B Tech responds to COVID-19

Deborah Wright leads Continuing Education  
and Workforce Development

**ABTech**  
Community College

# A-B Tech EDUCATION Journal

FALL 2020

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Gossett in the Advanced Manufacturing Center

John D. Gossett, Ed.D., officially began his tenure as A-B Tech's seventh president on July 1. Selected by the college's Board of Trustees following a competitive search process, he previously was president of McDowell Technical Community College in Marion and has worked in the NC Community College System for 32 years.

Gossett's career in higher education began as a Business Administration instructor and department chair at Mayland Community College. He also served Mayland as Assistant Vice President for Academic Services, Associate Vice President for Workforce Development, Director of Research and Planning, and Vice President of Student Development. He joined McDowell Tech in 2012 as Vice President for Learning and Student Services and was selected as its president in 2016.

Gossett also has served on numerous local, regional and statewide boards and committees in support of community college education and economic development initiatives. His professional interests include community and small business development, as well as leadership development for staff and students.

Gossett holds a B.S. in Marketing from the University of Tennessee, an M.B.A. from Appalachian State University, and an Ed.D. in Adult and

Community College Education from North Carolina State University, where his doctoral dissertation focused on the role of community colleges in economic development.

He and his wife Julie are the proud parents of four adult children, two daughters-in-law, and one grandson.

Although Gossett began his new post in the midst of a pandemic with most of his employees and students working remotely, he has made a remarkable effort to get to know the college and its communities in Buncombe and Madison counties. He graciously responded to questions about his perceptions, experiences and goals after three months in his new role.

**Q. After three months as A-B Tech's president during an unprecedented pandemic, how has it impacted your transition to the new job?**

This pandemic is something none of us have ever experienced so we all are "plowing new ground" to some extent. Everyone I've reached out to for a meeting has been gracious to talk with me and so I'm learning as much as I can about the communities we serve. Everywhere I go people are so supportive of A-B Tech and say great things about what we mean and have meant to them over the years. That makes my transition far easier. However, not seeing faculty, staff and students in person is a real burden. We enter the community college industry because we want to help others so teaching and learning at a distance has made that challenging at best. But we do have a few students on campus and when I find them, I engage them and am happy to discover that the pandemic hasn't changed their plans and goals for the future.

**Q. What are the biggest challenges on your plate thus far?**

The most practical challenge is putting faces with names, especially when I can't see the faces! The serious challenges are the ones all community colleges are facing right now: how will the pandemic change our industry? How will the faculty/student interactions change? Can we still ensure student success and preparedness for the workforce or success at the University for those seeking transfer? Will our students return who were either unable to continue their education due to technology or unwilling to come back due to the virus? With shrinking state budgets, can we effectively train and educate our students in order to grow the economy again? Can we appropriately advocate with elected local, state and federal leaders to help them understand that community colleges are the single best agency to reinvigorate our communities once this pandemic is over?



Gossett and his wife, Julie

**VISION**

Changing Lives, Strengthening Communities

**MISSION**

Dedicated to student success, A-B Tech delivers quality education to enhance academic, workforce, and personal development.

**VALUES**

Excellence, Integrity, Supportive Learning Environment, Innovation, Service, and Engagement





Gossett chats with Nursing students



Gossett with Dental Hygiene faculty

### **Q. What has most surprised you about A-B Tech?**

I continue to be blown away by the talent here at A-B Tech! Everyone I have met is stellar in their roles and has done a good job of bringing their people along so that our younger employees are well-prepared. My direct reports are all passionate about their jobs and the parts they play for student success. I've also been pleasantly surprised that we have a "small-school" feel. By that I mean the faculty seem to know their students and care about them as people. Student Services staff are focused on removing barriers to student success. Our Workforce Development division is constantly discussing ways to improve their services and offerings to the community. Information Technology staff are ensuring that everyone has and understands how to use the current technology for virtual education. There just doesn't seem to be many silos here. Everyone is helping each other which is so unique, especially in a time of great stress.

### **Q. How are you getting to know the community and what community roles are you assuming on behalf of the college?**

I have taken every opportunity to meet as many of our partners and friends as possible. The Foundation Board has been very gracious, our elected officials have welcomed me warmly, the two County Managers with whom we work have been great. A Foundation Board member and great friend of the College, Mr. O'Neal Shelton, took me on a tour of Madison County which really helped me meet and better understand our service area and the distances they have to travel to get to our classes in Marshall and Asheville. I've met past Presidents (Ray Bailey, Dennis King and Joe Barwick), our Board of Trustees, members of the State Board of Community Colleges, local leaders, and friends of the college from all walks of life. I have already been asked to join the Board of the Community Colleges of Appalachia, the Workforce Board through Land of Sky and the Buncombe County Economic Development Coalition. All of these are valuable resources to help our college teach our students to be prepared for the world of work.

### **Q. How did you decide to build a career in community colleges?**

To be honest, I didn't know I wanted to be a teacher until Mayland Community College offered me the job. However, it

didn't take long to discover what a difference we can make. Community College students tend to stay close to home so it's up to us to help them be as good as they can be. After all, they will be the entrepreneurs and local leaders of the future.

### **Q. Who benefits from attending community college?**

Everyone! To be fair, for those young people who need fraternities and sororities, or dorms then a university is probably their best bet. But for those people who are focused on moving quickly toward their future, who want career choices for good paying jobs, who might be interested in a career change, who would like to save money, and stay close to home where you are a name rather than a number, then we have something for you at A-B Tech.

### **Q. What is A-B Tech's role in economic development and how do you envision it going forward?**

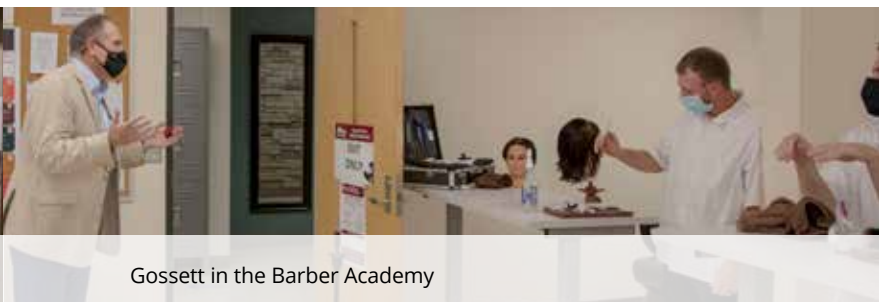
Economic Development is truly in every facet of what we do by preparing students for the workforce and/or preparing students to transfer to a university where they will eventually go into the workforce. We also have a strong Small Business Center who oversees our Small Business Incubator program. The Blue Ridge Food Ventures is a good example of helping people who have an idea turn it into reality through an Incubator system. Our Customized Training program works closely with business and industry to help train their workers on new and expanding ideas and equipment. That makes those businesses more efficient and effective which helps them become more competitive. We will be at the table to help our Economic Development Coalitions, Chambers of Commerce and local elected officials recruit, retain and grow businesses.

### **Q. Given the likelihood of more demand for higher education from mid-career adults, fed by the ongoing technological disruption of the workforce, how do community colleges meet those needs?**

We can be remarkably nimble in our training and education for the changing workforce. Our Workforce Development division practically invented the practice of serving students when and where they need it. Our Curriculum programs can almost be as quick to address changing industry needs and far quicker than our friends at universities. That's why we



Gossett visits Culinary students



Gossett in the Barber Academy



The Gossetts and their children



Gossett presides over Dental Hygiene graduation

need to have strong Advisory Committees/Councils to help us know what is going on in the world and help us predict the future.

**Q. What are the biggest changes you have witnessed in the community college system in the course of your career and what factors drove them?**

When I came to the industry in the late 80's we were primarily technical schools. Not long after there was a push to enhance the university transfer portion of our mission. That is when many community colleges in North Carolina dropped or changed the "Technical" part of their title. For instance, when I was there, Mayland Technical College became Mayland Community College. It feels like the pendulum is swinging back to our roots and therefore technical programs are gaining prominence. Does that mean the university transfer programs are going away? They never will! We will always serve that population well. However, with the push for more people in North Carolina possessing more credentials and led by the MyFutureNC initiative, there is a growing emphasis in technical skill development. The goal as identified by MyFutureNC is two million credentials by the year 2030. The North Carolina Community Colleges will lead the way in the effort and drive most of the growth in credentialing. Our nimbleness will allow us to meet the goals.

**Q. What do community colleges need from the state of North Carolina to fulfill their mission and meet the growing needs of students and communities? Are there any specific needs due to the impacts of COVID-19?**

Through the various iterations of the Federal CAREs Act, we have been able to meet most of our needs for personal protective equipment, cleaning supplies and scholarship support for students. Our biggest need moving forward are funds to offer more sections of courses. While we are teaching 75 percent of our courses virtually this Fall, those that must be hands-on in labs and shops require social distance. That requires, in many cases, the splitting of a class into two sections. We need funds to pay for the additional instructors and/or lab technicians.

**Q. Looking into the future, what are several major things you hope to accomplish at A-B Tech in the next five years?**

I expect we will continue be focused on helping students move to a better place in life economically through education and training. I expect our programs will be closely connected to their industries, and in the case of University Transfer the schools where our students go, so that changes in the world can be met quickly and effectively through up-to-date course offerings. I expect we will be responsive to community needs wherever we can lend our assistance and expertise. Therefore, the vision is that our communities will look first to A-B Tech as a potential solution because we have the people here who can help. After all, "Community" is our middle name.



Gossett hands out poker chips inscribed with A-B Tech and "Grace" to remind people to extend grace to one another, students, and themselves, especially during the pandemic.



Gossett visits classrooms on the first day of Fall Semester



Gossett with machining students





Beth Stewart

# “You want us to do what?”

## VICE PRESIDENT OF INSTRUCTION DR. BETH STEWART DESCRIBES CONVERTING TO ONLINE INSTRUCTION DURING COVID-19 IN ONLY TWO WEEKS

On the evening of Thursday, March 13, I wrote an email to my faculty and staff regarding A-B Tech's pandemic response. On my recommendation, the Executive Leadership Team agreed to extend spring break by a week, then use that two-week period to transition as much of our instruction as possible to a virtual environment. As I wrote the email, I kept wondering how many of my faculty were going to ask me, “You want us to do what?” Being a fan of old Universal monster movies from the 1930s, I envisioned a scene with my faculty and staff with pitch forks and torches outside my office. Instead of chasing Frankenstein's monster out of the village, they were after me.

I'm pretty sure when I hit send on that email, my hands were shaking.

Instead of the worst-case scenario I imagined, the incredible happened. It proves something that I've been saying for a long time now. You will not find more talented, dedicated faculty and staff at any college or university anywhere.

How does a community college accomplish redesigning nearly its entire curriculum in two weeks? The simple answer is through innovation and hard work. On March 13, there were 1,167 sections of classes in session. Only twenty-one percent of those classes

were 100 percent online. We faced multiple challenges moving so many classes to a virtual environment including a skills gap for some faculty, inadequate technology to teach remotely, and concerns about Internet access, to name a few. To overcome these challenges, we identified technology resources scattered across campus and reassigned them to faculty. We launched rapid professional development on a variety of topics like Zoom, Moodle, and online best practices. We also offered virtual labs to our faculty where they could get individual help redesigning their classes. We secured virtual labs for science classes and simulators for Allied Health classes.

We also knew that there were some classes that simply could not finish instruction remotely.

Faculty, deans, and department chairs worked to create socially distant ways of continuing to teach these classes safely for the rest of the spring. Within a week, we were told that, with the exception of Emergency Services classes, we had to stop all face-to-face instruction.

### The question then shifted to, “now what?”

We went back to the drawing board and that's when the real magic happened. Faculty came up with innovative ways to teach complex, intensive hands-on courses remotely. For example, students in the Personal Training class conducted personal training sessions with clients via Zoom. Cosmetology allowed students to do demonstrations on mannequin heads via Zoom for skills evaluation. By March 31, the number of classes that could not finish the semester remotely went from 127 to 44.

A few guiding principles organically emerged in March that we still follow today. First, we are determined to keep classes rigorous and ensure that stated student learning outcomes are met. Second, investing in people and technology is paramount. Third, we accepted early on that this massive shift to virtual education would not be perfect in the spring. We are taking steps to improve virtual education as we go, such as:

- Purchase laptops, mobile hotspots, simulators, and other technology that will allow faculty to teach, and students to learn, from home with the best tools possible.
- Incorporate principles from the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development's (NISOD) Best Practices for Online Education into all classes.
- Envision new ways to ensure rigor by offering remote proctoring services.
- Improve upon already existing remote library services and developed new, robust virtual tutoring services.
- Incorporate Trauma-Informed teaching techniques into classes with the understanding that students are experiencing more stress in their lives due to the pandemic.

Due to a special waiver from the state, Emergency Services classes continued to meet in person throughout the pandemic. And now that some of the restrictions have eased, about 20 percent of our classes in the areas of Allied Health, Culinary & Hospitality, Cosmetology, Engineering & Applied Technology, and Emergency Services are meeting in person this fall. These faculty are to be commended for their service to our students.

None of this could happen without amazing people. Faculty. Deans. Department Chairs. Support staff in Instructional Services, Information Technology, and Professional Development. I tell them regularly that I appreciate them. I also tell them that saying “thank you” is woefully inadequate. The effort was and continues to be mighty. The payoff will make us better, stronger, and more flexible in the future.

It turns out not a single person asked me, “You want us to do what?” Instead, they moved mountains. They always do.

# A-B TECH INSTRUCTORS DELIVER Quality Online Instruction

When A-B Tech converted to online instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic, the college's faculty received training to ensure quality, but many instructors also had to get creative to teach complex subjects online.

In Mathematics, Chair Tammy Sullivan said the department was busy all summer training, learning and developing courses. She recorded content in videos and math labs were reinvented using formats such as Kahoot, Google Drawings, Desmos Classrooms and breakout live-group work.

Associate Chair Cindy Moore is teaching both "real time" and "my time" math courses. She recorded her lectures so that students have access to the same material they would receive in a seated classroom environment. "I made sure to include explanations and address common mistakes, in addition to showing how to solve problems," Moore said. "I've also worked to adapt labs and activities to a digital format so that students can still get a hands-on experience with manipulatives, but in an online platform."

"I am excited to have students live, regardless of the place or format," Sullivan said. "I look forward to student feedback on ways to include other types of technology I have yet to discover. Together, we are stronger and can make the courses a positive learning experience."

In the Art Department, which features classes that were meant to be hands-on, instructors created PowerPoints and live demonstrations. "We are all planning on demonstrating techniques using webcams from our home studios during our Zoom classes. Our plan is to replicate as good a studio experience as possible," said Sharon Trammel, Fine Arts Chair.

Instructor Derek Rhodarmer has been using videos

on YouTube as a preemptive measure to set a positive and encouraging tone for his classes and to assuage any fears about online instruction, while English instructor Jonathan Rich

dresses in superhero costumes to lighten the mood and keep his students engaged.

Dr. Buddy Tignor, Anatomy & Physiology instructor, has been using Zoom for lectures, labs, and office hours to give students every opportunity for face-to-face time. He also uses a cloud-based version of Anatomage from the National Library of Medicine's Visible Human Project, which provides high definition 3D renderings of the human body.

Hospitality Instructor Walter Rapetski said using Zoom for online presentations has helped him engage guest speakers who can present remotely. "This semester, (Introduction to Hospitality) is taught online in real time and I was able to line up three speakers to Zoom in: Laura Harrison the GM of Harrah's Cherokee Casino Hotel, Pat Turnbull the Director of HR for Old Edwards Inn, and Joe Brumit, Owner/Chairman and CEO of Brumit Restaurant Group," Rapetski said.

presentations has helped him to engage speakers who have limited time.

"This semester, this class is taught online in real time and I was able to line up three speakers to Zoom in: Laura Harrison the GM of Harrah's Cherokee Casino Hotel, Pat Turnbull the Director of HR for Old Edwards Inn, and Joe Brumit, Owner/Chairman and CEO of Brumit Restaurant Group," Rapetski said.



Jonathan Rich



John Lyda

## Hand Sanitizer Made at A-B Tech

When COVID-19 created extensive needs for PPE, A-B Tech produced its own hand sanitizer at its Craft Beverage Institute of the Southeast and teamed up with other partners at A-B Tech Enka to produce, package and test hand sanitizers that were donated to Buncombe County Emergency Medical Services.

"We had an interesting collaboration between H & H Distillery, Blue Ridge Food Ventures and the BioNetwork at A-B Tech," said Chris Reedy, Director of Food, Beverage and Natural Products with BioNetwork.

The sanitizer was made by Cultivated Cocktails Distillery, formerly H&H. Staff at Blue Ridge Food Ventures, which is housed at A-B Tech Enka, bottled the sanitizer into smaller, more manageable packaging. Celtic Sea Salt donated 2,000 8-ounce bottles for the effort.

Reedy provided the final step of testing the alcohol volume of the product. "It passed with flying colors with over 70 percent alcohol," he said. The CDC recommends a hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol.

Staff at Blue Ridge Food Ventures worked on the organization's bottling line to fill, cap, and label hand sanitizer in 6oz, 8oz, 16oz bottles as well as 5-gallon dispensers for refilling empty bottles.

Tommy Ingallinera, facilities operations manager for Blue Ridge Food Ventures, coordinated production with Shannon Buchanan of Buncombe County EMS. "I'm really glad our staff were able to help Buncombe EMS in this time of need," Ingallinera said. "It's nice to know that we have the capacity and equipment to help out in an emergency like this."

A-B Tech's Craft Beverage Institute of the Southeast will be involved with future production, but CBI Director Jeff Irvin and Brewmaster John Lyda already have produced 301 gallons of sanitizer for the college's use.



Jill Sparks

# Startup Asheville and Online Webinars

## ASSIST BUSINESSES DURING SHUTDOWNS



When small businesses and entrepreneurs were particularly hard hit by COVID-19, A-B Tech accelerated the launch of its new Startup Asheville website to support them and drive local economic recovery. Spearheaded by the A-B Tech Small Business Center, Startup Asheville was created to help local entrepreneurs quickly and easily connect to support programs and resources, learn new skills, plug into the local ecosystem, and find inspiration from others.

The dedicated Startup Asheville webpage connects entrepreneurs to free and low-cost support programs and resource providers, including current COVID-19 relief. It can be accessed at [startupavl.com](http://startupavl.com) or from the A-B Tech Small Business Center website at [abtech.edu/SBC](http://abtech.edu/SBC).

"The launch of Startup Asheville at this time takes on even more significance as it is a resource that can help so many small business owners navigate our current crisis," said Jill Sparks, executive director of the A-B Tech Small Business Center. "Startup Asheville is a strategic commitment by A-B Tech to promote entrepreneurship and the multitude of entrepreneurial resources available within our community. This 'one-stop' digital platform will make it easy for entrepreneurs to find what they need when they need it, as well as maintain a comprehensive calendar of related community events."

Startup Asheville's resource-rich website also provides access to free support, including:

- On-demand training on essential startup topics
- Easy access to the Small Business Center at A-B Tech
- Community event calendar, including online webinars and events
- Inspiring stories of local entrepreneurs, mentors, and more
- A private community messaging and collaboration platform

Startup Asheville is one of 10 similar initiatives launching throughout Western North Carolina this year, each led by community colleges and their presidents, who are members of the NC Rural Community College Alliance.

As of 2015, almost half the workforce in the country worked in small businesses and companies with fewer than 20 employees had the largest net gains in jobs, Sparks said. "The rate of new business start-ups also has far outpaced business closings, and the survival rate has continued to increase. This is due largely to the rising talent of entrepreneurs and the expanding wealth of resources available to them. When this pandemic recedes and the doors are flung open again, it will be our small businesses that determine how quickly and how prosperously our economy recovers."

The NC Rural Community College Alliance was formed by Dr. Garrett Hinshaw, president of Hickory, NC-based Catawba Valley Community College in 2019 to align the efforts of a group of bold leaders who are united in activating and accelerating rural entrepreneurship.

Startup Asheville was developed in partnership with A-B Tech's strategic partner, Supportedly, and made possible through the support of the John M. Belk Endowment and NC IDEA.

The Small Business Center, in conjunction with the N.C. Small Business Center, also responded to the pandemic outbreak by offering multiple free webinars to help businesses navigate issues related to the coronavirus, including such titles as "Preparing Your Business for the Threat of the Coronavirus"

"The A-B Tech Small Business Center and its partners took steps to ensure business owners and entrepreneurs have the resources they need to get through this crisis and prepare for economic recovery," Sparks said. "We are continually creating new programming to help our clients and work in partnership with a number of federal, state, and local organizations to provide the information and strategies to help."



# Endowed Nursing Chair Established TO HONOR THE LATE JACK FERGUSON



Jack and Carolyn Ferguson

A-B Tech and its College Advancement department have partnered to establish the Jack and Carolyn Ferguson Endowed Nursing Chair, which is the college's first-ever endowed chair. The Fergusons are largest donors to A-B Tech in its 61-year history.

"The A-B Tech Foundation is grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Ferguson for their commitment to educating students at A-B Tech and supporting the needs of our Allied Health faculty and their programs," said Amanda Edwards, Executive Director of A-B Tech College Advancement. "It is fitting that our first endowed department chair position be named in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Ferguson and their long-term support of A-B Tech, especially the nursing program."

Jack Ferguson passed away in May and the A-B Tech community thought it was important to recognize the couple's long and storied support of A-B Tech, and specifically the Allied Health programs.

"Mr. Ferguson is already missed on the Foundation Board and among the staff," Edwards said. "He had a wonderful sense of humor, a deep need to give back to the community, and a constant curiosity about what our students are learning. One of my favorite memories of him is when he handed me a million-dollar bill and tried to convince me it was real! Moments later, he handed me a check for a million dollars."

The Fergusons began their charitable giving to A-B Tech in 1999 with a pledge to support the Foundation through three charitable remainder trusts. Two buildings on campus bear the Ferguson name, including the Allied Health and Workforce Development building.

The Fergusons have provided over \$8 million dollars in charitable support. In addition to all the students they have supported through scholarships, their giving ensured that allied health students had the most current technology and equipment in their classes located in the Ferguson Allied Health building.

The Fergusons history of involvement with the college dates back to 1959 when A-B Tech was established. Then a salesman at Lowe's, Jack Ferguson worked closely with the builders who constructed and remodeled campus buildings. The couple's two daughters also graduated from A-B Tech's Nursing program and both their sons attended the College.



## DONATIONS TO A-B TECH FOUNDATION Increase During COVID

The COVID-19 pandemic has generated an outpouring of generosity from people and organizations seeking to help students who have been impacted.

The A-B Tech Foundation was awarded a \$10,000 grant from the Walnut Cove Members Association's (WCMA) Coronavirus Emergency Grant Fund and \$25,000 from the SEH Tabitha Foundation. The funds went directly to the Jan and Dennis King Student Emergency Fund to help students with housing security, living expenses, education.

"Many students have lost their jobs due to COVID-19 as they work in the hospitality, restaurant, and tourism industry," said Amanda Edwards, Executive Director of A-B Tech College Advancement. "The current directive to delay issuing eviction orders does not mean that students do not have to pay rent, just that they are not to be evicted right now."

In just one month, there were 29 requests to A-B Tech's Student Emergency Fund totaling more than \$12,000. Fifty-eight percent of those requests were for rent and utility bills, which was up 11 percent the previous academic year. Funds from the WCMA grant are for any emergency needs except food.

"The Foundation has raised funds from Board members, Trustees and friends of the College," Edwards said. "These emergency requests already surpass the number of funds raised and the Foundation is supplementing that balance with limited resources."

"When students are able to go back to work, and hopefully are able to find gainful employment, the need for emergency funds will level out or decrease," said Edwards. "But right now, the most vulnerable students are coping with the possibility of withdrawing from their education, the one thing that is their best chance for overcoming the financial setbacks they are facing today."

To help, visit [abtech.edu/giving](https://abtech.edu/giving) or call 828.398.7177.



Deborah Wright

# Deborah Wright

## NAMED VICE PRESIDENT OF CONTINUING EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Deborah Wright has been named A-B Tech's Vice President of Continuing Education and Economic & Workforce Development. She began the position in

in Boston, Wright collaborated with the city of Boston and Bunker Hill Community College to secure a \$3 million federal grant to expand workforce development training and apprenticeship programs in the city. She also served on the Massachusetts Apprenticeship Advisory Board.

Wright grew up in a military family and has traveled extensively. She has a bachelor's degree from the California Institute of Art, a master's in business administration, and is pursuing a doctorate in educational leadership.

In addition to helping lead economic development efforts for the region, Wright's early initiatives for A-B Tech include starting a minority real estate mentoring program, recruiting more people of color to serve as continuing education faculty, and exploring funding opportunities to help more adults obtain workforce training.

January and was quickly forced to help reimagine her division during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A passionate advocate for adult learners throughout her extensive career, Wright previously spent 14 years with Montreat College, where she helped launch and lead the expansion of the School of Professional and Adult Studies as its inaugural Charlotte campus director and later as Vice President for Adult Studies.

In her most recent position as Dean of the College of Professional and Continuing Education at Wentworth Institute of Technology

## A-B Tech Works to Protect

### FIRST RESPONDERS

As A-B Tech strives to focus on the "community" aspect of its mission during the coronavirus pandemic, members of the college's Emergency Services division are helping to protect area first responders from exposure by donating Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other supplies, providing certified face mask fittings, and creating critical training videos. Emergency Services Dean Clint Gorman is A-B Tech's representative to Buncombe County and North Carolina Emergency Management during the pandemic. Gorman was part of the first epidemic management team in Buncombe County years ago when he served as the county's EMS training officer and has played an active role in Buncombe County and state disaster management for decades.

PPE is critical to protect first responders during a pandemic, Gorman said. For instance, they must wear a mask that seals to the face during calls. These masks have to be fit-tested and properly fitted by certified personnel.

"Anthony Green (EMS Chair) is certified and he does it for our EMS students," Gorman said.

"When it became apparent that county and city Fire Departments needed to fit-test a lot of firefighters, Anthony, Rick Patton and Greg Gore were deployed to help. They have fit-tested over 300 people and are still doing it."

Gorman and his staff are developing a training video for Buncombe County on when PPE is required. "It can be a gown, N95 mask, surgical mask, gloves or eye mask, but depends upon level of the situation. It's very important not to waste equipment and know exactly what needs to be worn in any given situation," Gorman said.

A-B Tech EMS Instructors Darin Jackson, Brian Newsome and Matt Reese also produced a video about COVID-19 Infection Control for first responders to help train personnel in our area and elsewhere in the state. Posted on YouTube, the video was viewed almost 1,300 times in less than a week.

Gorman delivered supplies donated by various A-B Tech programs to Buncombe County Emergency Management and Madison County Emergency Management, including: 600 gowns, more than 200 masks and N95 masks from EMS to Buncombe County Emergency Management and 100 gowns and 100 surgical masks to Madison County Emergency Management

20,000 gloves, 150 gowns and 300 surgical masks donated by the Nursing Assistant program  
200 masks, 50+ containers of hand sanitizer and wipes from Cosmetology and computer labs  
More than 100 disposable coveralls from the Craft Beverage Institute of the Southeast

"We would usually run through all of these supplies quickly, but the restrictions on face-to-face classes means we aren't using them right now and the need is greater for responders," Gorman said. "Our folks have really stepped up to help."



Anthony Green



Deborah Wright and President John Gossett visit Advanced Manufacturing Center

# A-B Tech's Advanced Manufacturing Center

## RENOVATED FOR STATE-OF-THE-ART TRAINING

Identifying the need to meet employment and skills requirements in the ever-growing manufacturing sector, A-B Tech developed an Advanced Manufacturing Center (AMC) in 2014 and used \$1.3 million from the Connect NC Bond to fund renovations to its Maple Building. Over the past five years, North Carolina Community College System equipment allocations and grants from Duke Energy and Golden LEAF also helped the college acquire more than \$3 million in state-of-the-art training equipment.

The final phase of renovations, which included converting the lower level of the building into a new machine shop and industrial maintenance training lab space, was completed in April of this year. The AMC is now a state-of-the-art complete teaching and training facility that houses the college's Customized Training Program for business and industry training, the Composites Training Center of Excellence, the Industrial Maintenance & Automation Academy, and the Machining Training Center.

High-tech training equipment includes industrial controls trainers, PLC trainers, robotic trainers, manufacturing production simulators, industrial sewing machines, soldering, and electro-mechanical assembly equipment, and all-new machine shop equipment, CNC mills, and lathes. AMC is comprised of over 30,000 square feet of instructional labs, shop spaces, classrooms, advanced manufacturing career coaching lab, forklift operator training space, conference and student collaborative areas, staff offices, and areas for training the employees of local manufacturing companies.

Training in the center is accomplished in several ways. Training for employees of local manufacturers is accomplished through North Carolina's Customized Training Program. Short-term training that is open to the public and prepares people for jobs in advanced manufacturing is also housed at AMC.

Certified Production Technician is a 6-week, 120-hour course that combines independent online work with flexible face-to-face instruction and leads to the national industry-recognized core skill certification, Certified Production Technician (CPT) from the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council Program completers are guaranteed direct connections to local manufacturers that are hiring full-time jobs with benefits. The CPT curriculum covers safety, quality practices and measurement, manufacturing processes, production awareness, and maintenance awareness. In essence, it prepares people to successfully work on any manufacturing floor! The structure of the class allows flexibility so current employment, travel, childcare, and many of life's hurdles can be set aside.

Programs such as Fundamentals of Machining (15 weeks to completion), CNC Machining 101 (5 weeks to completion), Certified Production Technician (6 weeks to completion), Industrial Maintenance Academy (Electrical, Automation/Controls, Mechanical – 15 weeks to completion), Industrial Sewing (6 weeks to completion), and Composites Technology (6 weeks to completion), lead directly to good-paying full-time jobs with benefits, and A-B Tech connects students to these jobs.

Other training related to advanced manufacturing includes Lean Six Sigma Yellow, Green, and Black Belt, Lean Six Sigma Value Stream Mapping, OSHA 10 for General Industry, Forklift Operator, and top-quality leadership workshops such as Situational Leadership, 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, Communicating for Leadership Success, Coaching for Peak Performance, and more. Several of the classes qualify for scholarships. Learn more by calling [828-398-7295](tel:828-398-7295) or email [elizabethjcarr@abtech.edu](mailto:elizabethjcarr@abtech.edu).



# MONTHLY WEBINAR EXPLORES the Business of Craft Beverage



Craft Beverage Institute Brewmaster John Lyda and Director Jeff Irvin



Small Business Center Associate Director Duane Adams

The A-B Tech Small Business Center, in collaboration with the Craft Beverage Institute of the Southeast and Burial Brewing, recently launched a monthly webinar series to discuss a variety of topics related to starting, owning, running and working at small businesses in the craft beverage industry.

The webinars are the perfect fit for any aspiring entrepreneur, people looking to plug in a unique skill set, and people who have a genuine interest in the craft beverage industry.

Participants hear from professionals and entrepreneurs from around the country who work in a variety of areas, including brewing, sales, marketing, and human resources. There are also discussions on some of the challenges of starting and running a small business including revelations of day-to-day operations and big picture goals.

All webinars take place via Zoom and have limited capacity to ensure participants can engage in meaningful dialogue. People viewing the webinar will also have the opportunity to connect with panelists after the event.

Webinars will take place monthly for the remainder of 2020 from 3 to 5 p.m. Remaining sessions include:

- October 22: I've opened a business, now what?
- November 19: Moving product - Sales and Quality Control
- December 17: Hiring People - Human Resources and Management Tools

These programs are offered for free on a first-come, first-served basis, but space is limited. For full program descriptions and registration links, please visit [abtech.edu/SBC](http://abtech.edu/SBC) and click on **Seminar Calendar**.



# New Academic Programs AND DEGREES LAUNCHED



## NEW 100% ONLINE ACCELERATED AA DEGREE PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY FOR HIGH ACHIEVERS

A new Accelerated Associate in Arts degree can be completed in 15 to 18 months began this fall. This is a unique opportunity for high-achieving students who are ready for college and plan to pursue a four-year degree. Save time and money while staying at home and completing a degree online with quality instruction, smaller classes, and caring faculty and advisers who will help you succeed.

## A-B TECH'S NEW PSA PROGRAM

The Emergency Services division began a new Public Safety Administration program this fall to provide leadership training for experienced public safety professionals interested in promotion to management-level positions. Degrees and short-term certificate programs are available in Corrections Management, EMS Management, Fire Management, Law Enforcement Management, and Public Safety Management.



## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION BROADENS SCOPE

Early Childhood Education has changed its name and the scope of its work. It has expanded to include not only early childhood education but also K-12 education teacher preparation in response to the growing need for qualified teachers for all ages in North Carolina. The newly named department of Education now includes two new degrees in Teacher Preparation to complement their existing Early Childhood Education degrees. The department of Education now supports teacher preparation from birth through 12th grade.

## MEDICAL CODING NOW 100% ONLINE AND HYBRID

Medical Coding is now offered 100 percent online or in a hybrid method of delivery. This short-term class lasts three semesters and prepares individuals for entry-level employment opportunities in the healthcare specialty of medical coding. Medical coding is a specialized skill that involves converting patient medical records into codes for billing purposes.





# News Briefs

## STUDENT LIFE AND ORGANIZATIONS



Cheyane Verran  
President



Samuel Bonnici  
Secretary



Patricia Mathes

The Student Government Association officers for 2020-21 are Cheyane Verran, President, and Samuel Bonnici, Secretary. The SGA is committed to informing, guiding, serving, and advocating for students while offering opportunities for leadership, involvement, and personal growth.

Meetings are held via Zoom on Wednesdays twice a month at 4:30 p.m. Patricia Mathes, Student Life Coordinator, serves as an advisor.

## MULTICULTURAL STUDENT LEADERSHIP ASSOCIATION (MSLA) CLUB

Mathes is also an advisor to the Multicultural Student Leadership Association, a student organization designed to support the educational and professional aspirations of non-majority students and their allies enrolled at A-B Tech.

## COLLEGE LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE



The Community Relations & Marketing Department launched a newly designed college website, still located at [www.abtech.edu](http://www.abtech.edu), in July. The new site was designed, first and foremost, as a marketing tool for prospective A-B Tech students. Designed in collaboration with web design firm Bluespark and users from throughout the A-B Tech community, it is brighter, cleaner, easier to navigate, and more user friendly.

There are new digital experiences for Current Students and Future Students, as well as Student Resources, How to Enroll, and How to Pay sections. The Programs section has been organized by Academic, Continuing Education, Workforce, High School and Adult Education tabs; and there is a consistent look for each of these areas with blocks for individual programs. Additionally, there are career cluster blocks on the home page that bring together everything the college offers by areas of interest, including degrees, diplomas, workforce trainings, and classes.



# Campus Events

## AUTUMN IN ASHEVILLE GOES VIRTUAL FOR 2020

A-B Tech's annual Autumn in Asheville will still be held October 15, but it will be a special virtual event, created by the award-winning students and chefs of the A-B Tech Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management Departments.

The Autumn in Asheville: Virtual Cocktail Hour will be hosted on Zoom and will support the A-B Tech Foundation and the Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management Departments.



## COMMENCEMENT 2020

Members of A-B Tech's 2020 graduating class were not able to have an in-person ceremony this year. They will be invited to participate in 2021 commencement in May.



## PINNINGS AND GRADUATIONS

Clinical Massage students were able to graduate at the end of August. They had a slight delay from their projected June completion, but were able to celebrate. New Clinical Massage Class to Begin October 2020. Call [\(828\) 398-7624](tel:8283987624) or send an email to [relax@abtech.edu](mailto:relax@abtech.edu).



Mission Health Project SEARCH 2019-2020 graduates received their certificates in a drive-through ceremony. Project SEARCH is designed to help interns gain competitive employment by providing real-life work experience combined with employability and independent living skills training to assist young people with intellectual or developmental disabilities make successful transitions to adult life. A-B Tech is a Project SEARCH partner along with The Arc of North Carolina, Vocational Rehabilitation, Vaya Health and the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities.



Members of the Dental Hygiene Class of 2020 had their pinning on campus at the end of July with President John Gossett. They picked up their own degrees to keep physical contact at a minimum.



A-B Tech Woodfin held a pinning ceremony for graduates in the Emergency Medical Science program. Pictured is EMS Chair Anthony Green with graduates Nicholas Cook and Anthony Thomas.



## Calendar of Events

**October 15** Autumn in Asheville

**October 21** Late-Start Fall classes begin

**October 21** Deadline to apply for Spring Nursing program

**November 16** Registration for Spring 2021 classes opens

**November 25-27** Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday

**December 21-January 1** Closed for Winter Holiday Break

**January 11** Spring 2021 classes begin

**January 18** Closed for MLK Holiday



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