

# A-B Tech EDUCATION Journal

SPRING 2024

## The AI Revolution

Next NC Scholarship covers tuition

Trailblazer Evening College launches this fall

**ABTech**  
Community College

# A-B Tech EDUCATION Journal

SPRING 2024

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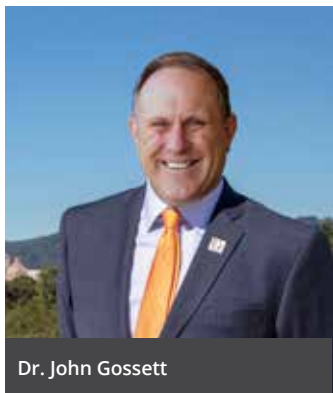


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# A Message from the President



Dr. John Gossett

When most people are deciding whether to attend college, the top factor is usually cost. The good news is that the cost of attendance at A-B Tech is already low at about \$3,000 in tuition and fees per year for in-state students. Even better this year, North Carolina is offering the Next NC Scholarship to all state residents, and it will cover tuition and fees for anyone

with a household income of less than \$80,000. Students with the greatest need could qualify for even more assistance.

If you're on the fence about attending college or you are a parent deciding where to send your child, this is the year to enroll because most A-B Tech students qualify for what is essentially *free tuition* that doesn't have to be repaid. All you need to do is apply to A-B Tech and fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by August 15 to determine eligibility for the Next NC Scholarship. The Next NC combines the federal Pell Grant with state-funded financial aid into one scholarship award. Current NC high school graduates also are eligible for the state's Long Leaf Commitment Scholarship with no income threshold.

The Next NC Scholarship is a game-changer that builds on North Carolina's long tradition of providing low college costs and strong financial aid in order to increase access to higher education. We're also fortunate at A-B Tech to have strong support through our Foundation to provide scholarships for students who may not qualify for Next NC. If you want to attend college, we usually can find a way to make it affordable.

To be eligible for the Next NC Scholarship, students must be:

- A North Carolina resident who is eligible for in-state tuition.
- A high school graduate (high school equivalency completers are eligible).
- From a household with an annual Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) of \$80,000 or less.
- Enrolled in an eligible undergraduate curriculum program for the 2024-25 academic year.
- Taking at least six credit hours per semester (part-time students will receive a partial award).
- Meeting the Satisfactory Academic Progress standards of the school they plan to attend.
- A student who has completed the 2024-25 FAFSA, with a resulting Student Aid Index (SAI) at or below 7,500 (once complete, the financial aid office at the college/university they plan to attend will determine and confirm eligibility).
- Learn more at [abtech.edu/NextNC](https://abtech.edu/NextNC).

If you have questions or need help, our staff in the Bailey Student Services Center on the Asheville campus is available weekdays and at special events. We will have the Find Your Future College & Career Expo on June 27 from 3-6 p.m. that will provide campus tours and assistance with enrollment, financial aid, residency, and more; and a special FAFSA Day on Saturday, June 29 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. We hope to see you on campus this fall!

Sincerely,

John Gossett  
President

### RISE Culture of Service Statement

A-B Tech commits to demonstrating an inclusive and welcoming culture of respect, integrity and support for everyone.



# A-B Tech's 2024 Commencement

A-B Tech celebrated its 2024 Commencement ceremony on Saturday, May 11, at Harrah's Cherokee Center in downtown Asheville. A-B Tech President John Gossett presided over the ceremony and Asheville entrepreneur Ginger Frank, founder and CEO of Poppy Hand-Crafted Popcorn, delivered the keynote address.

The college awarded more than 850 degrees and diplomas in more than 60 programs for the 2023-24

academic year (fall, spring and summer semesters), and about 400 graduates participated in the ceremony. The Class of 2024 included the first Cardiovascular Sonography graduates and 60 high school students who earned tuition-free associate degrees from A-B Tech before graduating high school. Read more about commencement and our graduates at [abtech.edu/news](https://abtech.edu/news).





President John Gossett and Commencement Speaker Ginger Frank



# Cardiovascular Sonography Program Graduates First Class



A-B Tech's first Cardiovascular Sonography graduates earned their degrees in May, qualifying them for jobs in one of the nation's fastest growing health professions. Also known as echocardiographers, cardiovascular sonographers are trained to use imaging technology to assist physicians in identifying heart problems. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts cardiovascular sonography jobs will continue to increase faster than average over the next decade.

Program instructor Kelli Harrell said cardiovascular sonographers are in demand locally because of Asheville's large retiree population. The field has appeal for the starting salary of \$33 per hour and the fact it requires only a two-year degree. It offers the same pay and benefits of a nursing job "without the blood and IV's", Harrell said.

The first class, which began the program in 2022, were primarily adult students ages 21 to 58 who changed careers. Graphic designer, stay-at-home mom, restaurant manager and used car salesman were just a few of their previous jobs. All received generous scholarships, which allowed them to take time off work and focus on their studies.



David Fleming, 28, is a graphic designer who loves to draw detailed portraits of people that include carefully thought-out proportions. Craving a more consistent career where he could make more money, he spoke with a nurse friend, who pointed out his gift for detail and advised him to check out medical sonography.

Fleming found he naturally gravitated toward the visual aspect of the field and has an ability to abnormalities in imaging. "I love the pathologies of the heart and trying to visually tell the difference in identifying a mass even if I don't understand it scientifically," he said. "My drawing background helps me get there faster."

Tracy Fisher, 44, was drawn to the field because both her father and her brother suffered from heart issues. After being a stay-at-home mom for over two decades, Fisher

began taking general education courses online at A-B Tech in 2018. When she saw the new cardiovascular sonography program in 2020, she realized she'd found her match. Having never been to college, Fisher struggled the first semester, but was able to get tutoring from Harrell. Scholarships covered rising grocery costs, car repairs and gas for clinical sites, which could be over an hour from her Candler home. In the end, her hard work paid off with her degree and a new job with Mission Health.



Jeremy Woody, 34, wanted a career with consistent hours and benefits where he could help others. After working for 10 years in the food industry, he felt ready for a formal education, something he'd put off for years. "I was

home schooled. So, I had a preconceived notion that I wasn't college material, that I couldn't do school."

A "do-it-yourselfer" who taught himself to remodel his house and fix his car, Woody still had to push himself to take that leap of faith toward college, but he's glad he did. Though the program was challenging, Woody said he succeeded thanks in great part to regular study sessions with classmates and the encouragement of his fiancé. He ultimately received an academic award for his GPA and excelling at clinical education. He recently began working at Mission Health and found that he thrives in the fast-paced world of the emergency room.

He's also realized how much he loves learning in a classroom environment fueled by discussions with like-minded people. After establishing himself at Mission, Woody hopes to pursue a bachelor's degree in health science or management. "I want to keep learning and see: How far does that rabbit hole go?"

To find out more about A-B Tech's Cardiovascular Sonography program, visit [abtech.edu/Cardiovascular](https://abtech.edu/Cardiovascular).

# Counterbalance Program Expands Equitable Access to Higher Education

The process of going to college for many can feel overwhelming. From navigating financial aid forms, to paying tuition and juggling studies with employment, the average student must work hard to succeed. For historically underserved students who struggle with extra hurdles such as poverty, mental health, or English language fluency, attending college can feel impossible.

That's where A-B Tech's Counterbalance program steps in. Now in its third year, Counterbalance is designed to retain current students and attract former students who face financial or other life hurdles. Funded by a generous multi-million grant from the Dogwood Health Trust and several smaller state grants, Counterbalance has served over 350 students to date. Many of these students owed A-B Tech between \$30 to \$8,000 and had dropped out because they were unable to register until their outstanding balances were paid. Others were current students on the verge of dropping out due to financial hardship and other challenges.

Erika Lett, Executive Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, who oversees the program and its three full-time staff, said the program is a great example of A-B Tech's core philosophy: Respect, Integrity and Support for Everyone (RISE) in action. "We're not just putting it on signs; we're actually living it," she said. "We are helping students graduate with little or no debt. It's a remarkable opportunity to equitize access to higher education."

Counterbalance was established to assist A-B Tech's underserved students who are low income, the first in their families to attend college, or from other historically disadvantaged populations. In addition to receiving a list of students who have outstanding balances, Counterbalance gets referrals from faculty and staff who identify students struggling with a range of issues.

Once enrolled in the program, students receive funds, mentoring, and regular support throughout their college careers. Mandatory monthly meetings with an assigned college navigator are meant to encourage and connect students with services, campus activities, and community.

For April Cyr, 33, Counterbalance helped make a career change possible. Cyr was working as a freelance private chef when the pandemic hit. Health struggles combined with inconsistent income and family strife drove them into depression. In exploring A-B Tech's programs, Cyr learned about Counterbalance and decided to study Information Technology.

"I wouldn't be able to be in school if I had to pay tuition out of pocket while living under the poverty line," they said. Having obtained a Digital Media Technology certificate, Cyr discovered a love for web design and coding and is now pursuing an accessibility tech certificate in hopes of making the internet and websites more accessible for low-income people.



**Erika Lett, EdD,**  
Executive Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Nikki Beck, 46, was overwhelmed by the rigors of A-B Tech's nursing program and on the verge of dropping out when an instructor referred her to Counterbalance. A college navigator helped her hone her goals and switch to an Associate in Arts transfer degree. After graduating in 2023, she's now working on a BA in Social Work at Mars Hill University. "Anybody I can tell about that program, I will," Beck said of Counterbalance. "They helped me regain confidence, helped me graduate and get out of debt."

Carmen Govea, 51, first came to A-B Tech for English language lessons, then finished the Workforce Preparation and Introduction to Machining (WPIM) program, and now hopes to get a certificate in Mechanical Engineering Technology Automation and Robotics. The Mexican-born single mother had worked for several years in electrical equipment manufacturing at Hubbell Incorporated in Arden but after years of physical labor, she wanted to switch to a job that focused more on using her mind and love for detail. "I wanted to work in manufacturing quality control, but I didn't have the money for school because I work for rent, and I don't have extra money. (Counterbalance) opened doors for me," she said.

Lett said the Counterbalance program is expanding in exciting new ways. Faculty in Cosmetology, Nursing and Human Services partnered with Counterbalance this year by taking on mentorship roles for Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) students. In the coming year, Lett hopes to expand faculty mentoring to other programs and to partner with community organizations that intersect with students as a way of bridging the gap between college and community.

# Career & College Promise High School Dual Enrollment Program Provides Tuition-Free Classes and a Head Start on College

By Dr. Fairley Patton



Fairley Patton, EdD,  
Vice President for Student Services

A-B Tech has long stood as a champion of opportunity and accessibility in higher education, particularly through its Career and College Promise (CCP) dual enrollment program, which offers high school students in Buncombe and Madison counties a head start on their college education at a fraction of the cost.

CCP students not only earn college credits that are transferable to all public NC universities, but also gain exposure to the college environment early in their academic careers. The program serves as a crucial bridge for students transitioning from high school to college, helping them acclimate to higher education demands in a supportive environment.

The growth of the program at A-B Tech is testament to its success and appeal. From 2012 to 2023, the program expanded by over 160 percent, reflecting both its popularity and increasing recognition of its value to students and parents. This surge in enrollment highlights the trust and interest from the community and underscores the college's commitment to providing accessible educational pathways.

One of the most compelling aspects of the dual enrollment program at A-B Tech is its affordability. Tuition and most fees are waived for participating students, who are only responsible for consumable fees, textbooks and supplies. CCP significantly lowers the financial barrier to higher education, opening the door for many students who might otherwise be unable to afford college and enabling them to begin accumulating credits without financial strain.

For many high school students, particularly those from underserved communities, dual enrollment is more than just an academic program; it is a gateway to future opportunities. CCP students can get ahead in their education, exploring their interests and making more informed decisions about career paths and academic majors before even graduating from high school. CCP partnerships with our local school systems also have increased access for underserved student populations in rural areas such as Madison County.

Dual enrollment significantly impacts the local region by

preparing a more educated workforce equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet local employment needs. Students often take courses that align with regional economic demands, providing them with a competitive edge in the job market upon graduation. This alignment not only benefits students but also the region by contributing to economic development and prosperity.

CCP also fosters a culture of lifelong learning and continuous improvement, which are vital in today's rapidly changing world. Students who participate in dual enrollment are more likely to continue their education beyond high school and achieve higher academic credentials. In recent years, more CCP students also have earned A-B Tech degrees before graduating high school. Sixty CCP students earned A-B Tech degrees in 2024.

With its impressive growth, commitment to affordability, and focus on equity, A-B Tech's CCP program exemplifies the college's mission to provide meaningful teaching and learning experiences that respect and support every student's journey. For students in Buncombe and Madison counties, dual enrollment is not just about earning college credits, it's about opening doors to a brighter future.

To learn more, visit [abtech.edu/CCP](https://abtech.edu/CCP).

## High School Student Naidelyn Aguilar-Martin Earns A-B Tech Degree First Step on Path to Becoming an Immigration Lawyer

As the daughter of Mexican immigrants, Naidelyn Aguilar-Martin, 18, saw from a young age the struggles her parents faced in the United States. From filling out medical forms to registering her younger brother for school, Aguilar-Martin helped them with English as much as she could. "I wanted my parents to feel they belonged here. That feeling of being an outsider in a new country and not being able to communicate; I knew there was a better life."

Aguilar-Martin, a 2024 graduate of Buncombe County Early College and A-B Tech, says her long-term goal is to become an



# Mariana Flores Elected A-B Tech's First Latinx SGA President, Wants to Help Students Connect



Marianna Flores, 19, became the first Latina elected as president of A-B Tech's Student Government Association (SGA) last January and was recently elected to another term for the 2024-25 school year.

Flores knows firsthand the challenges that come with learning a new language and finding her place in the community. When she was just 14, her family moved from El Salvador to North Carolina.

"I wanted to talk and have a voice, but not being able to speak English was holding me back," she said. "I worked every week trying to learn as much as I could, and after six months I began to understand."

In her new role, Flores is using her voice to advocate for students and members of A-B Tech's fast-growing Latinx population, which comprised 15 percent of the college's curriculum students in the 2023-24 academic year. A second semester business student, she also helped start a Spanish Language club, *Nuestra Voz*, last fall and began attending SGA-organized events like outdoor salsa dancing for Hispanic Heritage Month. Flores realized she loved the feeling of being immersed in the college community and decided to get more involved in the SGA.

"I'd been very involved in my high school," she said. "I was the Secretary of our SGA. I felt that after four years, now it's time to step out a little more."

Flores credits her parents with encouraging her to reach for her dreams. Her father, an engineer, owned his own company in El Salvador and from the time she was a young girl, she accompanied him to work. "He taught me how to manage business and money," she said, adding that she'd like to have her own fashion design company one day.

For now, Flores is focusing her energy on building student engagement. Having experienced the repercussions of Covid as a high school student, she believes that her generation is still suffering from isolation and social challenges related to spending too much time at home. Students who are studying online, she said, can feel especially isolated. "They don't reach out to their professors. They don't ask for help. They're used to being by themselves in front of a computer and being alone."

Flores hopes to help ease this isolation by having the SGA design events that cater to students' socioemotional needs. "I want to reach out to help people and let them know there's a lot of things they can do for their mental health, for education and community. They can be more involved. Even students studying online, I want to have them come to campus and meet their professors face to face".



immigration lawyer. With an Associate in Arts transfer degree and a Criminal Justice certificate from A-B Tech, she is now well on her way to pursuing her dream. She will attend UNC-Chapel Hill this fall to study political justice and then plans to attend law school.

Aguilar-Martin took tuition-free classes at A-B Tech through the Career & College Promise dual enrollment program. "It seemed like

a good way to get a head start with the college process," she said. Being on a college campus, she said, had many benefits, including access to campus events and groups where she met older students and could explore new interests.

At 17, Aguilar-Martin decided she wanted an internship in immigration law. She tried to find a match through school, but had trouble because she was a minor and the work was

confidential. Following a lead from a teacher, she set up her own interview with a local office specializing in both criminal and immigration law and landed an internship for a full school year. Her duties included filling out immigration forms and helping with Spanish translation. The experience helped to galvanize her dreams, also sparking a deeper interest in criminal law.

Juggling the responsibilities of high school and college classes, an internship, and a part-time job wasn't easy; but Aguilar-Martin eased her stress by getting a tutor, seeing friends, and dedicating evenings to homework.

She celebrated her A-B Tech graduation with her family, who she says, is proud of all she's accomplished. "I want to help families like mine ... with immigration laws," she said. "I want them to feel they belong here and can have a better life."



Beth Stewart, EdD,  
Vice President for Instructional Services



# AI Revolution Comes to A-B Tech

By Dr. Beth Stewart

When I was six years old, I saw Star Wars. Ever since, my dream has been to own my own droid. My droid would have R2-D2's cute body and irascible attitude and C-3PO's vast knowledge (fluency in over six million forms of communication). Growing up, my droid would have helped me with math in high school and statistics in my doctorate program, not to mention dozens of daily tasks at my current job. Yeah, it would be cool to have a droid.

Here's the crazy thing: my dream of having a droid will likely soon be a reality. It won't be as adorable as R2-D2, but the technology is already as smart as C-3PO. Of course, I am talking about Artificial Intelligence (AI). In less than a year, AI has taken the world by storm.

## What is AI?

AI technology refers to the development of computer systems capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence. These tasks include learning, reasoning, problem-solving, understanding natural language, recognizing patterns, and making decisions. AI impacts almost every work sector with AI technologies including ChatGPT, Claude, HeyGen, Midjourney, and CoPilot. AI agents are entities

designed to operate without direct human intervention. Agents aren't new. If you've talked to Siri, let Roomba vacuum your floor, or had Netflix suggest a movie, you've already interacted with an AI agent.

Yes, I said an entity. If you are scared by the idea that AI is becoming sentient, like Skynet in *The Terminator*, you are not alone. In 2014, the great physicist Dr. Stephen Hawking warned that if we tried to "create thinking machines, then it will pose a threat to our existence." Hearings in Congress in 2023 included discussions of the risk of unregulated AI, including bias, privacy concerns, cyberattacks, and misinformation.

Then there are threats to jobs. A recent survey by IBM predicted that up to 40 percent of the workforce will need to reskill to manage AI in the next three years. According to LinkedIn, 85 million jobs might vanish by 2025 due to AI.

While there are legitimate concerns about AI, I am far more optimistic about what AI will mean for the future. Ginni Rometty, former CEO of IBM, said, "the reality is this technology will enhance us. So instead of artificial intelligence, I think we'll augment our intelligence." While LinkedIn predicts 85 million jobs will vanish, they also predict 97 million new jobs will be created because of AI. Dr. Lane Freeman, Director of Online Learning at NCCCS, aptly stated, "AI won't replace people. People who have AI skills will replace people."

## Embracing AI

Higher education must be at the forefront of the Artificial Intelligence revolution, yet multiple colleges and universities are either banning or discouraging the use of AI or ignoring AI in the hopes that it will go away. However, many respected institutions, such as my alma mater Vanderbilt University, are actively embracing AI and encouraging innovation.

At A-B Tech, we are embracing AI, too. We instituted a new policy that requires AI and any derivative technologies, such as machine learning and large language models, to be used responsibly. Under this policy, faculty must designate their classes as either AI Prohibited, AI Permitted, or AI Permitted (Limited Use Only).

In July, we will hold our first Chair AI Symposium, covering topics such as AI ethics and prompt engineering. Dr. Andrea Crowley, Executive Director of the NC Student Success Center, will be one of the speakers. Due to high interest, we've opened the symposium to other members of the campus community.

Many faculty and staff are already using AI for various projects, both personal and professional. Interim Vice President Cris Harshman used ChatGPT to analyze the results of several personality tests to gain a deeper understanding of his leadership style. Dean Ron Layne is

using ChatGPT to refresh his calculus skills. Dean Clint Gorman uses Pi as a personal assistant on his phone, renaming it Beauregard. Executive Assistant Shana Zimnoch uses Perplexity for research and ChatGPT to transcribe meeting minutes. I asked ChatGPT to analyze my Dungeons & Dragons character using Myers-Briggs and to tell me how to better play my character.

### New AI Degree and Certificate

In Fall 2024, A-B Tech will offer a new Information Technology: Artificial Intelligence degree and certificate. According to Dana Moore, Dean of Engineering, Transportation and Technology, the program is designed to equip students with comprehensive knowledge of AI tools and their application across various real-world scenarios. The curriculum encompasses courses in computer ethics, programming, and database administration. The certificate is particularly suited for IT professionals seeking to deepen their understanding of artificial intelligence.

AI also will make its way into most of our academic programs. We must teach our students to be what Ethan Mollick, author of *Co-Intelligence: Living and Working with AI*, calls “the human in the loop.” As AI becomes more integrated into our daily lives, human judgment and decision-making remain crucial. We must continue to teach critical thinking skills and the importance of being an informed citizen. AI will be able to help us teach these topics in new and exciting ways. Of course, we must teach our students the ethical use of AI to avoid bias, privacy concerns, cyberattacks, and misinformation. We also need to teach the importance of implementing guardrails to avoid some of the more sinister predictions regarding AI.

Now you may be wondering if I used AI while writing this article. Yes, I did. Pi helped me outline my thoughts. ChatGPT 4o helped me explain what AI is, edited the article for clarity and grammar, and helped me reduce the wordcount. It’s almost as good as having a droid.

Artificial Intelligence is going to be the most disruptive thing to happen to higher education and the rest of the world in my lifetime. Colin Angle of iRobot said, “It’s going to be interesting to see how society deals with artificial intelligence, but it will definitely be cool.”

### AI Timeline

- **November 2022:** Open AI’s ChatGPT demo released to public
- **2023:** ChatGPT use gains momentum
- **Spring 2023:** AI task force established at A-B Tech
- **Spring 2024:** AI training for faculty began
- **May 2024:** AI policy and procedure adopted
- **July 2024:** AI Summit for Faculty and Staff
- **Fall 2024:** New AI degree and certificate

# Highlights of A-B Tech’s AI Policy and Procedures

It is the policy of the Board of Trustees that Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) as well as any derivative technologies such as machine learning and large language models, are used responsibly, ethically, and in compliance with all regulations. Applicable to all students and employees at A-B Tech.

### Use of AI in the Classroom

Use of AI in the classroom is an evolving situation. While it can easily be used for cheating, AI is here to stay, and educators will be remiss in their duties if they do not prepare their students for a professional world that either already includes active use of AI or soon will. Faculty are to ensure that students understand the appropriate and ethical use of this technology.

### Required Syllabus Statement

All A-B Tech instructors are required to include a statement regarding AI in their syllabi. The syllabus template includes three statements approved by college administrators. When instructors create their syllabi, they will choose one of the following:

1. *AI Prohibited* All assignments submitted in this class must be original to each student. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT, in the completion of course assignments is prohibited and will be treated as a violation of academic integrity.
2. *AI Permitted* In this course, students are encouraged to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT in the completion of their work. Students must disclose any AI-generated material by providing in-text citations, quotations, and references. It is the students’ responsibility to ensure the accuracy and appropriateness of information used from AI tools. [Instructor specific requirements related to acknowledgement or use of AI tools can be entered here.]
3. *AI Permitted (Limited Use Only)* In this course, students are permitted to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT for specific assignments, as designated by the instructor. Students must disclose any AI-generated material by providing in-text citations, quotations, and references. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure the accuracy and appropriateness of information used from AI tools. AI use is permitted for the specified activities and assignments.

### College Use

AI tools should be leveraged for enhancing productivity and efficiency while mitigating the risks associated with misuse or inappropriate use. This includes reducing the risk of copy infringement, plagiarism, or misrepresentation of original works. It also includes protection of security of proprietary data and information. A-B Tech employees are provided clear guidelines regarding the proper use of generative AI tools like ChatGPT, as well as any derivative technologies such as machine learning and large language models.

The full AI policy and procedures are available at [abtech.edu](https://abtech.edu) under **About/Policies and Procedures**.



# A-B Tech Launches Trailblazer Evening College

As part of A-B Tech's ongoing commitment to providing adult students with flexible scheduling options, the college is launching its Trailblazer Evening College this fall.

More than 70 percent of A-B Tech students work full-time or part-time and more than 25 percent have children, leading to greater demand for classes outside of normal business hours. Many of these students indicate they prefer flexible online, hybrid or evening options that work with their lifestyles.

"We're doing everything we can to open up avenues of success for our students," said President John Gossett. "This is something we know will help adult students who want to pursue an education while working and raising families."

While A-B Tech has expanded online education significantly since 2020, primarily due to demand during the COVID-19 pandemic, there are programs that must be taught in person, as well as many students who prefer in-person classes.

The Trailblazer Evening College will include existing evening classes across the college's academic, continuing education, workforce, and adult education programs this fall, and ultimately expand to include more degrees and certificates that can be offered 100 percent during evening hours.

"Flexible scheduling is fundamental to building a more highly educated and skilled community," said Jason Fair, Dean of Academic Support and A-B Tech Online. The college also will provide evening academic and support services, including tutoring, Fair said. It's Center for Academic Achievement will be open until 7 p.m. two days a week and offer virtual weekend hours.

## Available evening programs include:

### Associate degrees

- Associate in Arts: Business and Accounting Pathway
- Associate in Arts: Psychology Pathway
- AAS: Career Pilot Technology \*
- AAS: Aviation Management \*
- General Occupational Technology\*

### Certificates

- Early Childhood
- Electrical Wiring
- Instrument Rating Certificate
- Private Pilot Certificate
- Pre-Allied Health (Selective Program Pre-Major Courses)

\*Some online coursework may be required

### Continuing Education

- EMT (Madison and Woodfin Locations)
- AEMT (Woodfin Location)
- Nurse Aid
- Phlebotomy
- Course Clusters (Computers, Industrial Trades, Business)

### Basic Skills (Adult Education)

- High School Equivalency Preparation
- English Language Acquisition
- Workforce Prep & Intro to Machining for English Language Learners

To explore Trailblazer Evening College programs, visit [abtech.edu/programs](https://abtech.edu/programs) and view the Online/Evenings page.

# Community Health Workers Make a Difference

When the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a growing demand for community health support, A-B Tech's Workforce Continuing Education department responded by founding the Community Health Worker (CHW) training program.

The CHW program offers individuals an opportunity to earn a certification from the North Carolina Community Health Worker Association in a few short months. The program provides training and skills needed to assist people in adopting healthy behaviors and connecting to resources that will improve their quality of life, said Maria Spadaro, Director of Workforce Continuing Education.

Three women who earned the CHW certification recently shared the impact it has had on their lives, jobs, and community.

**Rosalina Arriola**, who works for Centro Unido Latino Americano in Marion, said she enrolled in the CHW program because she recognized the need for a bilingual community health worker in her community.

"I learned professional skills to have better communication with my clients, conflict resolutions, stress management, health issues including chronic conditions management," she said. "It also opened many doors to connect with other wonderful community health workers from different organizations."

**Angel Boone**, who is employed by Goodwill of NW North Carolina, said she decided to enroll after a friend recommended it. "They pointed out how my work as an Employment/Re-entry Specialist aligned with the principles



of community health work. Although I had never heard of CHW before, I thought it could benefit me."

The Community Health Worker class has greatly bolstered her effectiveness as an Employment/Re-entry Specialist, Boone said. "It gave me a deeper understanding of my Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Social Determinants of Health," she said. "This

knowledge has expanded my capacity to support individuals in overcoming employment barriers and the social stigmas they face upon reintegration into society after leaving prison. It has enabled me to offer more comprehensive assistance to those transitioning back into the community. Boone said CHW training also profoundly impacted her career journey, inspiring her to enroll in A-B Tech's Human Resources Technology degree program. "It laid the foundation for my continued growth and



development in human resources, where I aim to utilize my newfound insights and skills to make a positive difference."

**Leslie Capps**, who works for Western North Carolina Community Health Services and its Healthy Opportunities Pilot Program (HOP), said the class was a job requirement, but it also led her to pursue a Human Service Technology degree.

"I feel as though the CHW class is essential for people who want to begin their journey in service of marginalized populations; I think it's a great first step. I noticed that the CHW class fine tunes many of the aspects that are covered in the human service degree path in a way that is directly applicable to the field."

Working with the HOP program, Capps said she focuses on "social

determinants of health to empower community members to live their best lives. This is done through the delivery of healthy food boxes, transportation, housing management, and support for interpersonal violence. The class taught me to have patience. I need to be present in the moment."

For more information about the CHW program, email [workforceprograms@abtech.edu](mailto:workforceprograms@abtech.edu) or call 828.398.7900.



# Get Help with Fall Enrollment

Registration is now open for 2024 Fall Semester classes that begin August 19. Following is information to help prospective students explore programs and classes, apply for financial aid and scholarships, schedule a campus tour or watch a video tour, and more. We also invite you to call our Information Center at 828.398.7900.

## **Admissions: [admissions@abtech.edu](mailto:admissions@abtech.edu) or 828.398.7886**

- Application
- Residency
- Program placement and testing
- High school transcripts

## **Outreach and Recruiting: [abtech.edu/campus-tours](https://abtech.edu/campus-tours) or 828.398.7692**

- Campus tours
- Open houses

## **Advising: [advising@abtech.edu](mailto:advising@abtech.edu) or 828.398.7900**

- Selecting a program
- International students

## **Financial Aid: [FinancialAidOffice@abtech.edu](mailto:FinancialAidOffice@abtech.edu) or 828.398.7920**

- FAFSA
- Financial Aid
- Scholarships
- NextNC Scholarship (apply at [abtech.edu/NextNC](https://abtech.edu/NextNC))

## **Registrar: [registrar@abtech.edu](mailto:registrar@abtech.edu) or 828.398.7900**

- College transcripts

Explore programs: **[abtech.edu](https://abtech.edu)**

# 2024-25 Curriculum Program List

## Transfer Degrees

### Associate in Arts

### Associate in Arts in Teacher Preparation

### Associate in Engineering

### Associate in Fine Arts in Visual Arts

### Associate in General Education

### Associate in Science

### Associate in Science in Teacher Preparation

## Associate in Applied Science (AAS) Degrees

Accounting & Finance

Air Conditioning, Heating & Refrigeration Technology

Automotive Systems Technology

Aviation Management & Career Pilot Technology - Aviation Management

Aviation Management & Career Pilot Technology - Career Pilot

Biomedical Equipment Technology

Brewing, Distillation and Fermentation

Business Administration: General Business Administration

Business Administration: Marketing & Retailing

Cardiovascular Sonography

Computer-Aided Drafting Technology

Computer Engineering Technology

Computer-Integrated Machining

Construction Management Technology

Cosmetology

Criminal Justice Technology

Culinary Arts

Dental Hygiene

Diesel and Heavy Equipment Technology

Early Childhood Education

Early Childhood: Licensure Transfer Track

Early Childhood: Non-Licensure Transfer Track

Electrical Systems Technology

Electronics Engineering Technology

Emergency Medical Science

Emergency Medical Science Bridge Program

Health and Fitness Science

Hospitality Management

Human Services Technology

Information Technology: Information Systems

Information Technology: Network Management

Information Technology: Software and Web Development

Information Technology: Systems Security

Information Technology: Artificial Intelligence

Mechanical Engineering Technology

Mechatronics Engineering Technology

Medical Assisting

Medical Laboratory Technology

Medical Office Administration

Medical Sonography

Nursing - Associate Degree

Nursing - RIBN

Nursing - LPN to ADN Advanced Placement Option

Nursing - Paramedic to ADN Advanced Placement Option

Occupational Therapy Assistant

Office Administration: General Office

Office Administration: Finance

Radiography

Surgical Technology

Surgical Technology Bridge

Veterinary Medical Technology

Welding Technology

## Diplomas

Air Conditioning, Heating & Refrigeration Technology

Automotive Systems Technology

Biomedical Equipment Technology

Brewing Methods and Operations

Building Construction Science

Computer Engineering Technology

Computer-Integrated Machining

Cosmetology

Dental Assisting

Diesel and Heavy Equipment Technology

Distillation Methods and Operations

Electrical Systems Technology

Mechatronics Engineering Technology -

Maintenance & Reliability Diploma

Medical Office Administration

Office Administration

Nursing - Practical Nursing

Welding Technology

## Certificates

Accounting

Advanced Electrical Wiring

Advanced Machine Operator

Architecture/BIM

Automotive Systems Technology - Certificate I

Automotive Systems Technology - Certificate II

Aviation - Instrument Rating

Aviation - Private Pilot

Baking and Pastry Arts

Basic Emergency Medical Science

Basic Law Enforcement Training

Basic Welding

Biomedical Equipment Technology

Building Instrumentation & Control

Business Administration

Computer Engineering Technology

Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Machine Programmer

Construction & Millwork

Construction Management Technology

Cosmetology Instructor

Culinary Studies

Craft Beverage Lab

Criminal Justice

Diesel and Heavy Equipment Technology

Digital Design

Digital Video

Early Childhood

EDM & Fixture Specialist

Electrical Wiring

Electronics Manufacturing

Entrepreneurship

Esthetics Instructor

Esthetics Technology

Food Truck Operations

Green Building & Carpentry

Heating

Hospitality Management

Human Service & Substance Abuse Studies

Infant/Toddler Care

Information Technology: Computer Fundamentals

Information Technology: GIS Fundamentals

Information Technology: PC

Installation and Maintenance

Information Technology: Network Systems Administration

Information Technology: CCNA Preparation

Information Technology: Database Management

Information Technology: Front-End Developer

Information Technology: Back-End Developer

Information Technology: Software Programming Fundamentals

Information Technology: Cyber Forensics Analyst

Information Technology: Systems Security

Information Technology: Artificial Intelligence

Manicuring Instructor

Manicuring/Nail Technology

Mechanical Engineering Technology: Automation & Robotics

Mechatronics Engineering Technology - Basic Industrial Maintenance

Medical Coding

Office Management

Online Hospitality Management

Practical Meat Cutting

Quality & Lean Six-Sigma

Retail Marketing

Residential Design

Restaurant Management

Robotics & Multi-Axis Machining-

Robotic Welding

Solid Modeling

Solar Photovoltaic Energy Technology

Sustainability

Sustainable Agriculture and Construction

Therapeutic Culinary

Word Processing/Desktop Publishing

# Knowledge For The Next Generation



Cathy Horton,  
Chair of Culinary Arts and Hospitality

When Cathy Horton, A-B Tech's Chair of Culinary Arts and Hospitality, decided to start a new career in the food industry, she was quick to say yes to just about any opportunity that came her way. Write restaurant reviews? Sure. Cook for a wine dinner? Absolutely. How about working as a part-time chef at Sam's Club and handing out free nibbles to shoppers? Yep, why not?

But it was when she got the chance to teach a

private cooking class that she felt a spark of inspiration. "When I taught cooking classes, I saw the people in the class get excited about what they were doing," Horton says.

These days, Horton oversees a lot of cooking classes. As chair of the Culinary Arts & Hospitality Management department at A-B Tech Community College, she helms an award-winning program that routinely punches above its weight class and turns out highly successful graduates. Her department includes A-B Tech's popular culinary and baking courses, as well as its hospitality management program.

"I tell students all the time, 'They can never take your education away from you,'" she says. And a primary mission among A-B Tech's instructors is to impart practical knowledge, to teach students how to thrive in the day-to-day demands of restaurants, catering companies, bakeries, breweries, hotels, and country clubs.

"A successful chef or baker knows more than just knife skills or how to develop a good palate," she says. "We want them to have a sense of responsibility, time management, organization, and leadership. We try to teach them how to be people that others want to work with and for."

Horton decided in the mid-aughts to pursue a job in restaurants, marking a mid-career shift after several years in the insurance business. She herself graduated from A-B Tech's culinary program, earning her associate's degree in 2008. "I went to A-B Tech thinking I'd just take a look at the courses they had—and when I left, I was enrolled in two classes."

In many ways, the path made perfect sense because Horton had always loved to cook. As a child in Minnesota, she'd earned a spot of privilege in her grandmother's kitchen, where she alone among the family was invited to help bake cakes. As a young adult, she eagerly awaited the arrival of

new food magazines, trying to re-create the magic from the glossy pages when she hosted Sunday brunches for her family and friends.

"When it was time for me to create a second act, I knew I still really enjoyed cooking," she says.

After graduating from A-B Tech, Horton accepted a job at a Hendersonville restaurant and was then hired by Season's at Highland Lake, a top-rated restaurant in Flat Rock, eventually working her way to the role of senior restaurant manager. She then started teaching a few courses at A-B Tech and was recruited as chair in 2016.

The art of being a successful chef is so much more than knowing how to cook, Horton says. It's also about navigating a highly competitive industry and doing well in a role that can be equal parts demanding and rewarding.

"There are lots of people who like to cook, but professional chefs have to be able to do so much more," she says. "Like saving a disaster. If something goes wrong and you still have to cook for 200 people on a Saturday night, you have to figure it out: save a broken hollandaise or fix a demi-glace, repair a dish that's been oversalted."

Every day within the classrooms of A-B Tech knowledge is imparted from instructors to students. And the apex of Horton's experience as department chair occurs when that cumulative knowledge allows a student to jump-start a career of their dreams.

One student who made an impression on Horton enrolled in the school's culinary program in his mid-40s after a few years in prison. "He told me his goal was to live at the beach. And today, he's running a restaurant in Myrtle Beach and living his best life," Horton says. "I still get phone calls from him and he stops by when he's in town."

Another student left a career in the military and information technology to launch a new chapter as a baker. Today, he's fully employed in that field. Still another student hit a series of glass ceilings among the ranks of hotel managers, but earned a hospitality management degree and now works in top management.

"These are the moments I love," she says. "Every day, I'm watching the next generation."

*Reprinted from Edible Asheville Magazine, Spring 2024.*



# News Briefs

## 2024 Employee Awards

Six employees were honored as A-B Tech's 2024 Employees of the Year during the college's spring picnic on May 8. They were nominated by peers and students earlier in the year, and final selections were made by the college's Faculty Senate, Staff Association, and Continuing Education & Workforce Development.

All winners receive a certificate and cash prize from A-B Tech. The Faculty Member of the Year and Staff Member of the Year also will be submitted in a statewide contest this fall. President John Gossett presented awards to the following employees:

**Faculty Member of the Year:**

Monique Worley, Instructor, Medical Laboratory Technology

**Staff Member of the Year:**

Dana Moore, Interim Dean, Engineering, Transportation & Technology

**Continuing Education Instructor of the Year:**

Jay Kaufmann, Coordinator and Lead Instructor, A-B Tech Barber Academy

**Advisor of the Year:**

Erica Whitsell, Education Navigator, Transitional Studies

**Adjunct Faculty Member of the Year:**

Michelle Payton, Instructor, English Department

**Part-Time Staff Member of the Year:**

Crystal Lucinian, Program Manager, Veterinary Medical Technology



## Culinary Team Wins American Culinary Federation Southeast Regionals

A-B Tech's student culinary team won the American Culinary Federation's Southeast Regional competition in April for a record-setting 15th time. The team is headed to the ACF National Competition in Phoenix in July. Coached by chef instructors Chris Bugher and Bronwen McCormick, the team includes (L-R): Rebecca McElreath, Yajaira Sandoval, Abbey Franklin, captain, Ethyn Jester and Avery Lathan.

## CFO Dirk Wilmoth Elected President of NC ACCBO

Dirk Wilmoth, A-B Tech's CFO and Vice President for Business and Finance, was elected president of the NC Association of Community College Business Office Professionals (ACCBO) for 2023-24. Wilmoth and his department also hosted ACCBO's annual state conference in April of this year at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Asheville.



# Campus Events

## National Student Leadership Society Ceremony



## Baking & Pastry Capstone



## Earth Day Celebration



## Global Education Photo Contest



## Pride Event



# Calendar of Events

June 13

**High School Equivalency Graduation**

June 20

**BLET Graduation**

June 20

**Aviation Open House**

June 22

**Barber Academy Graduation**

June 27

**Find Your Future College & Career Expo**

August 8

**New Student Welcome Day**

August 19

**Fall Semester begins**

For more news and events, visit **[abtech.edu](http://abtech.edu)**.



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# FIND YOUR FUTURE

## College & Career Expo

**Thursday, June 27,**

**3 - 6 PM**

A-B Tech Asheville Campus

**Fall 2024 classes begin August 19**

For more information, visit [abtech.edu/future](https://abtech.edu/future)  
or call 828.398.7900.

**Register NOW** for Fall Classes that begin August 19!



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