

PRESIDENT EMERITUS MASSEY PROMOTES CCPI-STEM IN SOUTHEAST



As chair of the Southeast Regional Network of the [Community College Presidents' Initiative in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math \(CCPI-STEM\)](#), Dr. Ed Massey likes to meet one-on-one and in-person with community college presidents. As president emeritus of [Indian River State College](#) (Florida), he has time for these meetings that he adds to speaking engagement trips.

Rather than talking about the success that Indian River State College had with multiple [Advanced Technological Education \(ATE\)](#) grants from the [National Science Foundation \(NSF\)](#) during his 32 years as president, Massey begins by asking the presidents these questions:

- What is your vision for transforming your technical programs to meet the current and future needs of your community's workforce?
- Are you meeting the needs of business?
- Do you want the college to be a bigger player in your region and with economic development organizations?

How the presidents respond shapes the individual conversations and which experiences Massey shares from his observation of other colleges and his personal experiences.

No two colleges or people are alike, so he offers ideas for college CEOs to think about if they want to create new partnerships with industry and submit NSF-ATE proposals to support their work. He also shares what he has learned during his conversations with businesses.

Many employers do not think they can go to community college campuses and talk with educators about their workforce needs. "But if invited, they will come. Or if you go see them, they will talk to you," Massey said, pointing out that community colleges are the conduit to all kinds of resources, including state, federal and private grants that interest employers.

Massey also gently directs presidents to consider the untapped potential of creative faculty whose ideas for improving technician education could be the basis of ATE grant proposals.

"The time invested by faculty and staff to write and submit NSF-ATE grants can reap great benefits in transforming the colleges' technical programs and meeting the community's workforce needs," he said. "An NSF grant is one of the most prestigious awards a college can receive."

ATE grants provide community college faculty with funding and other resources to test their ideas for improving technician education. ATE principal investigators act as researchers who execute their proposals, gather data about what did and did not work, report on their findings, and develop model programs that other community colleges can adopt and adapt. Massey points out that writing an ATE proposal and carrying out a funded project works best when the culture of a community college values innovation and its internal processes are structured to support faculty and staff with time and space as they experiment with new approaches.

"Where I grew up, there was an old saying, 'Let hunting dogs hunt,'" he said with a chuckle.

For community college leaders, he translates this adage into encouragement for them to give faculty support and freedom to pursue ATE grants as well as carry out initiatives when they are awarded funding.

"The college culture must provide an environment where change is anticipated and embraced. The culture also must encourage faculty to be innovative in developing 21st century high-tech programs," Massey said. Obtaining NSF-ATE funding helps community colleges upgrade existing technical programs and adds new high-skill programs in collaboration with employers in their communities.

"In this way, NSF-ATE grants drive enrollment growth in community colleges and stimulate economic development by upgrading technical programs to meet the needs of existing industry and attract new industry and jobs to the community," Massey said.

Email Massey at info@ccpi-stem.org to schedule a time to talk about using ATE grants to achieve strategic goals and support creative faculty.

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