

WEBINAR EXPLAINS HOW IRSC ADDED ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS WITH ATE GRANTS & CULTURE CHANGE

How Indian River State College (IRSC) leveraged Advanced Technological Education grants from the National Science Foundation to develop 14 STEM technical workforce programs over 20 years was the subject of the CCPI-STEM Southeast Regional Hub meeting in January.

Dr. Ed Massey, IRSC president emeritus and the CCPI-STEM Southeast Regional Chair, talked about the culture change that accompanied his challenge to the IRSC STEM faculty in 2000 to rethink the curriculum.

“Very few of our technical programs had very much enrollment because we were not training what the industry wanted. So we had to upgrade those things or we had to build new programs,” he said.

From 2000 to 2021, IRSC added created nuclear technology, laser/fiber optics, advanced manufacturing, and electric vehicle programs with \$24 million in ATE grants. IRSC leveraged these successful programs to obtain \$115 million in state funds and \$14 million from the entrepreneurs and other community sources.

In addition asking faculty for ideas to invigorate the curriculum, Massey said he and other administrators along with the faculty had to build relationships in the community, particularly with industry.

“You have to change and you have to change your culture....You can't bring in this complex a program and put it on top of an old culture and expect to get something different than you've been getting,” he said.

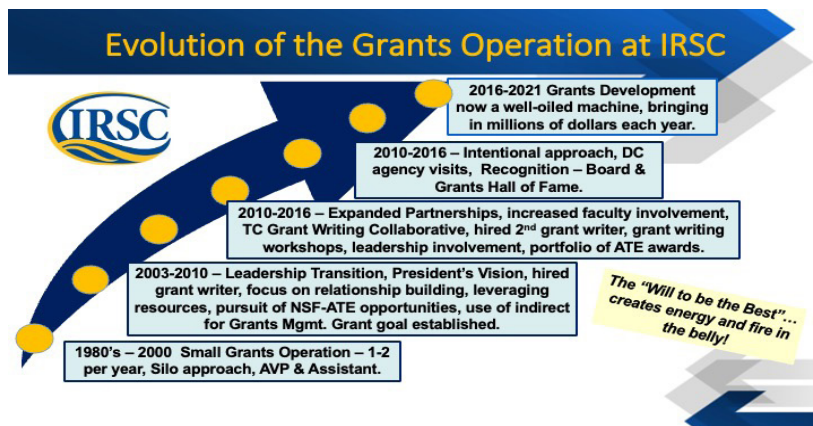
He emphasized that culture change has to come from the top down—from the president and cabinet members—to faculty and staff. “You won't get there without the involvement of the whole organization,” he said.

He suggested that presidents convene community meetings that can help the college identify regional workforce needs and inform residents and employers about the college's plans and programs.

Dr. Tina Hart provided details about IRSC's intentional efforts to develop internal and external relationships that helped the college obtain grants. Hart, who is data coordinator for CCPI-STEM's Southeast Hub, had several leadership roles during the expansion of IRSC's grants operations and was vice president of enrollment and student services when she retired in 2021.

“We just want to encourage you today to start. Just start. And it begins with a vision and it begins in some very simple ways with leveraging resources you already have,” she said, pointing out that faculty and staff members' expertise can directed toward the development of ATE grant proposals.

Hart posed these questions to the administrators in the audience: “What do you already have in place that can be re-imagined or expanded? How can you inspire the people that are on your campus about what opportunities are available? How can you recognize them?”



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