



WISCONSIN PERFORMANCE & ASSESSMENT OF SKILL STANDARDS

NEWSLETTER

“Wisconsin has a great opportunity to change the way we prepare our workforce for modern industrial careers... We can help fill our manufacturers’ need for skilled workers by taking the lead...in adopting the MSSC standards and certification for our workforce...”

US Senator Herb Kohl

PHASE II FUNDING FOR WisPASS

Wisconsin Senator Herbert Kohl again has proven his dedication to his home state, and his deep understanding of its needs, especially those which also strengthen U.S. manufacturing nationwide. In March 2005, Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) was informed by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Employment & Training Administration that Senator Kohl had successfully sponsored new earmark legislation from Fiscal Year 2005 in the Labor, HHS and Education appropriation, to continue the WisPASS pilot in Wisconsin. The earmark funds available in July 2005 are to be used to accomplish its Phase II program (also see page 4).

plished tasks that include:

Policy/Proctor Guides

Provided test centers with consolidated information to administer and proctor MSSC online assessment modules.

Test-taker Flyer/Brochure

A one-page explanation of the MSSC assessments and summary of WisPASS program (Phase I).

Director’s Council

Established to advise the WisPASS Program Director in strategic planning and operations; promote MSSC standards.

Consolidated Test Results

Testing was conducted at three test centers across Wisconsin, and involved employees of small to large firms.

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In the past year, WisPASS has accom-

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WisPASS is funded by a U.S. Department of Labor grant and administered by Milwaukee Area Technical College.

WISCONSIN SKILLS CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Wisconsin Governor Doyle’s “Grow Wisconsin” program, promoting state-wide **economic development**, is aimed at **increasing jobs** for residents. This calls for viable businesses that are growing and seeking people. “Industrial jobs” are crucial, since manufacturing is part of the economic fabric of Wisconsin.

the sectors that form the backbone of our industrial strength.

It can be argued that **resources already exist** and programs are already underway that in aggregate promise achievable, near-term success in reaching the goal of job creation in the manufacturing sector.

Existing programs that support manufacturing in Wisconsin include:

- Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) Advanced Manufacturing Solutions

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Relocating and growing manufacturing firms in Wisconsin hinges on promising and **supplying the “right” workers**, sometimes called knowledge workers, who match the needs of each firm and

MSSC DECIDES CUTSCORES USING WISPASS DATA

A crucial meeting of the MSSC Assessment & Documentation Committee was held in Phoenix, Arizona on March 17 and 18, with the purpose of reviewing the WisPASS pilot phase results, set cutscores, discuss the MSSC certification process and plan for a “national rollout” for MSSC test/certification in the Fall of 2005.

agreed that a practice test would be available online.

There is a \$50 registration fee that is required of each test-taker, and a \$45 charge for each assessment module. There will be provision made for a “group discount” basis.

It was recommended by the committee that test-

<u>Number of Pilot Tests</u>	<u>Overall Cutoff Scores</u>	<u>Percentage Certified</u>
Safety – 403	80.5%	53.6%
Quality – 353	78.4%	26.1%
Manufacturing Process – 366	74.5%	32.0%
Maintenance – 366	75.7%	27.3%

Pat Rickard, Committee Chair and Executive Director of CASAS, did an excellent job as facilitator and Dr. Kitty Manley of NOCTI reviewed the pilot assessment data analysis and cut-score results in detail.

Analysis of the demographic profiles revealed that the assessments and the various results, when compared with “success,” revealed that:

- Those in industry did better than postsecondary and secondary students
- People with recent manufacturing experience (and longer experience) scored highest
- Full-time workers did better than part-time workers
- Those with university education scored highest, with military & “votech,” second and third highest
- White and Native Americans scored higher than Hispanic and African Americans
- Bilingual workers scored lower than those who are “English only”
- Scores were correlated (high to low) with highest level of education
- Those “very comfortable and comfortable” with computers scored best

Because of feedback from test centers about test-taker experiences (and pre-test needs) it was

takers be given no more than 2.5 years to complete all four modules (this includes training time). Sixty days between one module and the “retest” was recommended. The certification date would be the date of successful completion of the last module. A fee of \$75 was recommended for recertification. The test associated with that milestone would consist of only “new” questions and provisions for MSSC certification, and would require approximately one-half hour to complete.

Discussions of “marketing of MSSC standards” were interspersed among other topics. It was the general conclusion that the biggest deterrent in the marketplace (to company and/or test-taker participation) was lack of understanding of the standards. It is necessary to come up with as many ways possible to explain, and to show value in, the MSSC certification. It is the intent of the MSSC to have a “national rollout” in October 2005, probably in Chicago. This event has been “scripted,” and envisions a national figure as “keynote, testimonials from companies, and opinions from both labor and education (workforce development) professionals. The other main features of the program are to be practical workshops and feedback sessions.

Look for information at the MSSC website, or at www.matc.edu/wispass.

CRITICAL CORE SKILLS & WTCS MANUFACTURING PROGRAMS

For manufacturers to remain competitive in the global marketplace, they must stress innovation and efficiency, and find or prepare highly productive knowledge workers. The training and education of such workers become critical in a high performance and high technology workplace.

Critical Core Manufacturing Skills (CCMS) are basically those skills in addition to the technical skills that are needed by all manufacturing-related program graduates and incumbent workers taking workshops/seminars throughout the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS). These skills will be integrated into existing WTCS programs, at individual colleges, to help students focus on demonstrating competency in these core skills. It also leads to use of a portfolio system, now being developed, to show employers a level of competence.

These critical core manufacturing skills (CCMS) include: work cooperatively in teams; work productively; listen effectively; demonstrate a positive attitude; maintain a safe work environment; communicate clearly; demonstrate integrity; follow directions; apply problem

solving strategies; adaptability; apply mathematical reasoning; think critically.

The Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) has isolated and specifically identified those “core skills” that modern production workers need, to fill the gap between academic/socialization and the more technical job-related skills. The four MSSC assessment modules are “gap analysis” tools that point out training needs to reach competency in safety, quality, maintenance awareness and manufacturing process. Upon successfully “passing” all modules, workers attain a portable MSSC Certificate. (See companion article pertaining to nationwide implementation.)

Using artifacts of experience and training, that incorporate the CCMS, an online portfolio is being made available by the WTCS. Imbedded among the performance and proficiency indicators will be the results of MSSC assessments and certification when achieved. The portfolio is scheduled to be online and initially functional by the end of 2005, for use by Wisconsin students and workers.

(Phase II Funding - Continued from page 1)

Lessons Learned

To assist both the MSSC Board and NOCTI (online test organization), valuable insights were reported.

Recruiting Material

Recapitulation and packaging of the value of the MSSC standards; their use in assessment and certification.

Phase II will accomplish three major objectives:

- **Promote MSSC certification for Wisconsin companies/workers; establish new assessment centers across Wisconsin**
- **Develop/deliver customized training for MSSC certification to Wisconsin partner firms on a pilot basis, while outlining training responses for workers in emerging manufacturing sectors**
- **Build a constituency in Wisconsin that promotes manufacturing as a career, and bases education and proficiency on the use of MSSC standards**

The companion article, “MSSC Decides Cut-scores”(page 2), specifies the “passing” score for each assessment module that WisPASS administered on a pilot basis in Phase I. In parallel, McGraw-Hill (Glencoe) publishing has developed a textbook based on the MSSC production standards. It will be on bookshelves in May 2005.



(Left) The WisPASS Program Coordinator, Herb Centeno, discusses feedback from pilot MSSC assessments with MSSC board member from industry.

WisPASS PHASE II SCOPE

Our state's economic prosperity hinges on a healthy manufacturing sector, offering more jobs for the right kind of people. These knowledge workers need to be well educated and trained, have a strong work ethic, be self-reliant and embrace life-long learning.

Productivity for the manufacturing sector can be optimized only if production workers have progressed to the stage where they can be called knowledge workers. They must possess broader knowledge and skills than most now possess, and be comfortable with cross-training, multi-tasking, teaming, problem solving and product-based work. Knowledge workers will be engaged in technology and be responsible, as well as productive. These "right kind" of people in production will appreciate life-long learning and use Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) credentials as a portable job reference when moving from firm to firm; with more frequency than today.

Leaders at all levels in each manufacturing organization must understand and recognize desirable behavior. They must also seek out productive, frugal, data-driven decisions. The MSSC standards structure and assessment protocol actually facilitate this type of leadership, offering pertinent data gathering and real-time process awareness.

To stay competitive, manufacturers will seek to expand markets across the globe and continue to automate factories. In order to reach better productivity levels they will invest in commensurate skills for production workers in U.S. factories.

Making decisions that rely on MSSC standards-based data leads to positive changes in economic indicators used by businesses, and value commonly measured by profitability and increased market share. As examples

(Program - Continued from page 1)

- Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) WisPASS Program
 - MATC's 21st Century Urban Technical Education Project
- Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Programs (WMEP & UW-Stout)

Senator Kohl, in supporting the WisPASS program

of this contention consider:

Safer workers – experience fewer injuries, reducing worker compensation claims; are available (less downtime), resulting in increased throughput, maintained schedules, and pleased customers.

Quality performance – means reduced scrap and rework; facilitates lean practices; yields satisfied internal and external customers.

Maintained machines – reduce process interruptions; improve delivery schedules; lead to delighted customers.

Process awareness – isolates root causes; focuses on bottlenecks; facilitates data collection; controls variability; meets customer expectations.

In Phase II of WisPASS, core manufacturing skills training, based on the MSSC testing and analyses, will be integrated with appropriate, existing curricula at universities and colleges across Wisconsin.

PHASE II COMPONENTS

- Promotes MSSC certification for Wisconsin companies and workers and establish new assessment centers across Wisconsin
- Develop/deliver customized training for MSSC certification to Wisconsin partner firms on a pilot basis, while outlining training responses for workers in emerging manufacturing sectors.
- Build a constituency in Wisconsin that promotes manufacturing as a career, and bases education and proficiency on the use of MSSC standards.

seeks to blend Wisconsin initiatives with **national imperatives**, such as adopting MSSC production standards. Wisconsin is seen as promoting and energizing programs that support and sustain manufacturing health - an example for our nation.

A state-based assessment, training and certification system for knowledge workers is a robust tool that, in collaboration among all Wisconsin initiatives, will indeed "**Grow Wisconsin**".