

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

GEN X, GEN Y & THE BOOMERS | *Terrific Together?*

PICTURE THIS | *When Nurses Wore White Caps*

FORSYTH TECH WANTS YOU! | *Meet George McLendon*

2008
Report to the
Community

tech

QUARTERLY

The Magazine of Forsyth Technical
Community College

Volume 1, Number 2 Fall 2008



a whole new world

How Global Commerce Is Changing the Way We Work

ForsythTech

More Than You Know

The Cause We Can All Support ~ Forsyth Tech

There's no better way to invest in the future of our people and our region than through a gift to Forsyth Tech. For almost 50 years, our community college has been growing to meet the evolving needs of individuals and employers. The continued growth and ongoing strength of Forsyth Tech depend on private as well as state support.

Your contributions to the college, through the Foundation of Forsyth Technical Community College, are tax-deductible to the extent provided for by law. Your gift can be made in honor or in memory of a person close to you. Your donation may be designated for scholarship aid, or for a particular program or purpose.

For more information about how to give to the annual fund, to include Forsyth Tech in your will, and to provide ongoing support to this valued resource that benefits everyone, visit www.forsythtech.edu/foundation.

The
Foundation
of Forsyth Tech



From the President


Dr. Gary M. Green

Putting Service First

The fall semester started with record enrollment, a reflection of many economic factors, and, I think, a reflection of the enhanced value of a technical college degree. For traditional-age college students, career changers and displaced workers, there is no place like Forsyth Tech for learning relevant theory and in-demand skills. In the lead story this quarter, you'll read about our commitment to global commerce education. Our college has also become a more technologically sophisticated community this fall, with the launch of our intranet, My TechLink, and the opening of our wi-fi coffee shop on the Main Campus.

In these pages, you'll find emphasis on the many ways Forsyth Tech serves our community:

- > Read about how Sue Marion and her staff in the Corporate and Continuing Education division came to the rescue of a group of laid-off workers – in a matter of hours.
- > Look at the new Northwest Forsyth Center – a state-of-the-art training facility for the people who serve all of us – law enforcement officers, firefighters and emergency medical technicians.
- > Meet George McLendon, who for decades has been a staunch advocate of the equal opportunity philosophy of the community college – and who brings his upbeat, caring spirit to one of our most effective mentoring programs.
- > Take a trip back in time to see just how far our Nursing program has come.

It would be no exaggeration to say that Forsyth Tech touches every person in our service area. The degree programs, college-in-high-school courses, personal enrichment courses, continuing education or development programs at work that you may have participated in are just the beginning. So many of the people who keep us safe, who take care of our health, who build our homes, keep our automobiles running, and staff our organizations of every kind – learned how at Forsyth Tech. We're here to serve, in hundreds of ways. 

YOUR Community College, YOUR Tech Quarterly

As you turn the pages of Tech Quarterly, there's a good chance you'll come across a name you know, a face you recognize. That's no coincidence. One way or another, Forsyth Tech touches every person in our community. And a walk across our Main Campus is as close as you will ever get to a microcosm of our community. That diversity of age, race and educational background is one of the greatest strengths of Forsyth Tech. Just ask our students and instructors.

Because of the abundance of programs and interesting, inspiring people who work and learn at Forsyth Tech, our college is always *More Than You Know* – more than any single person can grasp. We'd love to have you add your thoughts regarding any of the individuals and ideas you read about in Tech Quarterly. If you're an alumna or alumnus, we welcome your memories of your Forsyth Tech, and a photo for our Flashback section, if you would like to share one.

Please direct your letters to Dr. Sharon B. Covitz, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Forsyth Technical Community College, 2100 Silas Creek Parkway, Winston-Salem, NC 27103, or scovitz@forsythtech.edu.

Contents

- 1 > From the President
- 2 > The Honor Roll
- 3 > A Whole New World: How Global Commerce Is Changing the Way We Work
- 10 > A Learning Space for Local Heroes
- 12 > Who Works Here?
- 13 > Who Goes Here?
- 14 > 2008 Report to the Community
- 21 > Why I Support Forsyth Tech
- 22 > Take It From Tech
- 24 > Flashback
- 26 > Alumni Spotlight

Forsyth Tech welcomes diversity and is dedicated to meeting the needs of students with disabilities, as mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act. For more information, please contact Michelle Bratton, Coordinator, Disabilities Services Office, at 336-734-7155 or mbratton@forsythtech.edu.

Beefing Up Biotech

Forsyth Tech has received three grants from the North Carolina Community College System BioNetwork:

> Dr. Kevin Conley, Program Coordinator, Nanotechnology, wrote a grant for an atomic force microscope. This \$136,212 grant will give biotech and nanotech students and faculty hands-on experience in instrumentation and quantitative measurement.

> A model for tracking graduates of biotechnology programs will be funded with a \$21,834 grant. Dr. Russ Read, Executive Director, National Center for the Biotechnology Workforce at Forsyth Tech, is developing the tracking program, with input from students, faculty, economic developers and industry.

> Instruments for use by organic chemistry students will be purchased with a \$45,543 grant written by Dr. Debbie Prichard, chemistry instructor. These instruments will give students the opportunity to combine high-performance liquid chromatography exercises with gas chromatographic exercises, providing the analytical chemistry experiences most desired by employers.

A Vote of Confidence

for Our Continuing Education Vice President



Sue Marion, Vice President, Corporate and Continuing Education, was elected president of the North Carolina Community College Adult Educators Association by

the association's 550 members – community college presidents and continuing education administrators, instructors and staff. The association promotes the advancement of adult education and lifelong learning. Of the 800,000 students served annually by North Carolina's community colleges, 720,000 are in continuing education programs.

A New Site for Nursing Students

Associate Degree Nursing students will gain clinical experience in behavioral health at the Veterans Administration Community-Based Outpatient Clinic in Winston-Salem, thanks to a \$10,000 grant from the Northwest Area Health Education Center.

Clipitty-Clop Into the Curriculum

A course in Amish culture will be offered as part of the Humanities curriculum in the spring semester. The new offering was triggered by students interested in horse-and-buggy communities, and developed by an instructor who has personal experience of living in such a community. An Amish community in Yadkin County has heightened awareness of this lifestyle and philosophy in our region. The classes will be on Tuesday evenings at the Swisher Center in Kernersville.



The Farmer at the Dell

The Forsyth Tech Small Business Center partnered with the Stokes County Cooperative Extension Service and N.C. A&T State University to train farm families to use computers in their farming operations to become more competitive in the marketplace. Twelve Stokes County farmers participated, each receiving more than 60 hours of training. Instruction included using the computer for record-keeping and management, enhancing decision-making skills through computerized programs, and learning to use the Internet and email.

Support from the System

The North Carolina Community College System awarded these grants to Forsyth Tech in the past several months:

> **\$44,667** to assist Forsyth Tech and the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools in strengthening and spreading awareness of courses that provide college credit to students still in high school. Goals include increasing enrollment, providing staff development opportunities and preparing students for high-demand, high-wage occupations.

> **\$30,000** for the Minority Male Mentoring Program. The goal is to improve the academic success and graduation rates of minority male students.

Four Women Named to Administrative Posts



Wendy R. Emerson was promoted to the position of Vice President of Business Services, succeeding Kenneth Jarvis. She had been Dean of Financial Services since 2005, and before that was a state auditor for 12 years.



Rachel Desmarais assumed the new position of Vice President of Information Services, responsible for integrating information technology into the college's infrastructure as well as its academic programs. She was department chair of Forsyth Tech's Thomas H. Davis /TEC Center for six years.



Jennifer B. Coulombe was hired as Director of Corporate Education. She comes to Forsyth Tech from BB&T, where she earned the Six Sigma Black Belt certification.



Jewel Cherry was named Interim Dean of Enrollment and Student Services. Before assuming this position, she was Director of the Student Success Center. Jewel has more than 14 years of experience with the North Carolina Community College System.



a whole new world

How Global Commerce Is Changing the Way We Work



When Rick Yokeley is out and about, he often wears the name badge that identifies him as a Forsyth Tech employee. He has his reasons.

If strangers comment on the badge, Rick has an opening to tell them that he's the coordinator of the Global Logistics program.

Then he gets to answer their questions about what global logistics is. And if the person seems pretty sharp, Rick goes to work on recruiting.

So far, he has recruited two people from his dentist's waiting room into the program, and two who were in an IRS office where he went to pick up some forms.

The challenge is that little boys and girls don't dream of being a supply chain analyst, or an import/export specialist, or a distribution

(continued)

“America is a giant warehouse now..”

~ Rick Yokeley, Coordinator, Forsyth Tech Global Logistics Program



Getting the goods from Point A to Point B is a complex challenge in the global economy. Rick Yokeley said that jobs in logistics and supply chain management require people with analytical ability, communications skills, and innovative ideas.

center manager. And their parents and teachers generally don't point them to these careers, because they don't know about them either. But in the global economy, the supply chain is where the jobs are, from pickers and packers and forklift operators on the warehouse floor to top decision-makers in the executive suite. The processes that move raw materials to factories to warehouses to retailers to customers – and sometimes back – represent many businesses' best opportunities for controlling costs, adding value and staying competitive.

“We're redefining our whole economic base,” said Rick Yokeley. “America is a giant warehouse now, and somebody has to manage the flow of goods.”

All up and down the chain, theoretical education as well as specific skills are required, because nobody is born knowing how to be an inventory manager or an import broker. Rick said most of these new economy jobs are more challenging than the jobs they replaced. People with analytical ability, math knowledge, good communication skills and the ability to come up with innovative ideas can make themselves very valuable, he said, because their smart solutions can quickly have an impact on the bottom line.

Sue Marion, Vice President of Corporate and Continuing Education, said there is no single type of person or personality especially suited for logistics and supply chain work. Companies involved in logistics need good leaders and managers, responsive customer service representatives, analytical information technology specialists and many more.

Taking the Training to the Workplace

One such company is Liberty Hardware. The company has its corporate headquarters and a large distribution center in Winston-Salem. Its manufacturing operations are spread over eight factories in China, and its products are sold all over the world.

“This is a vastly different economy than it was even five years ago,” said Hunter Webb, a training and development specialist at Liberty Hardware. “Individuals need to be able to adapt quickly and to take on additional responsibility to lead people and processes. We've got to have those people to move us forward and to be future leaders of the organization.”

Forsyth Tech provides on-site professional development training at Liberty Hardware on a regular basis. One instructor provides most of the training, and she understands the company's culture well, Webb said. It's not only a cost-effective way of providing training, he said, but a popular one, as employees greatly enjoy these sessions in improving personal productivity and interpersonal skills.



Information technology is in the driver's seat, at Liberty Hardware in Winston-Salem – and at virtually all distribution and logistics companies.

Employees also know that these skills position them for promotion. “Industry has seen a renewed interest in developing its current workforce instead of looking outside,” Webb said. “We're good about promoting internally.”

That holds true at another Winston-Salem-based distribution company, Kaplan Early Learning Company, which provides educational materials, toys and furniture to child care centers and schools.

“It's imperative that we provide training so that our employees can advance their skills,” said Pattie Knight, Human Resources Manager at Kaplan. Of the more than 250 people who work at the distribution center, the majority are in office jobs, including customer service, marketing, purchasing, publishing, IT and finance. Forsyth Tech provides computer training on site.

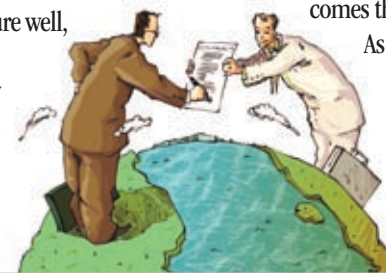
“It's absolutely awesome that they're willing to come to our site,” Knight said. “They're so easy to work with, and we've been impressed with the instructors.”

Best of all, she said, employees who learn Excel or PowerPoint or another program often begin using the new tool immediately. “There's an immediate return on investment,” she said.

From Off-the-Cuff Advice to Associate Degree Programs

As Forsyth Tech administrators have surveyed and spoken with area employers about training needs in global logistics, one that comes through loud and clear is a big-picture perspective.

As the field has grown over the years, most of the training has been piecemeal, and on the job. But employers say people can perform their jobs better if they know how the whole supply chain works, and the interdependencies involved.



When Dr. Gary Green came to Forsyth Tech as President in 2001, he announced his intention to start a Global Logistics degree program in his inaugural address.

It was a visionary move, Rick Yokeley said, putting Forsyth Tech ahead of the curve in this field. Rick, who has spent his whole career in logistics after earning his undergraduate degree in economics and his master's degree in history, said the only formal education available for decades was short workshops and conferences.

"The first logistics course I had was at Forsyth Tech in 1967," he said. The course was a three-day seminar taught by a specialist from R.J. Reynolds Tobacco.

Now the educational opportunities are abundant, and the challenge is to raise the level of awareness of the excellent career paths available. Many of the people in the Global Logistics programs already have bachelor's degrees or MBAs, he said, and most are already working in the field. This semester, 150 people are taking global logistics courses for credit, including 75 people who are majoring in it. In addition to Global Logistics degree, diploma and certificate programs, Forsyth Tech also offers Logistics Management as an elective concentration in the Business Administration degree program.

As Rick Yokeley noted, global logistics and supply chain management have become full-fledged academic disciplines, with bachelor's and master's degree programs offered at area universities. His hope is that this education about this field will also reach in the other direction – to middle schools and high schools.

Thinking About Tomorrow

"Picture a naked man, wearing only a rain barrel," said Bernie Yevin, Dean of Business and Information Technologies.

"This is where you'd be in a world without logistics. There is virtually no clothing, furniture or consumer electronics made in the United States anymore. Brazil is now the number one supplier of oranges to the U.S. Almost everything we buy and use is manufactured or assembled offshore."



At Forsyth Tech, Tom Jaynes, Director of Industrial Training; Sue Marion, Vice President of Corporate and Continuing Education; and Jennifer Coulombe, Director of Corporate Education, take pride in customizing training for local businesses.

The new realities have changed how we behave and how we buy things, he noted. And customer expectations and demands are continually giving rise to innovation. With developments in smart bar coding, for example, Bernie Yevin said it will soon be possible that the gallon of milk you buy at the store will be hooked up to a RFID system in your refrigerator. That will trigger information that the milk has reached its expiration date or has been almost all consumed and needs to be replaced. The information will be automatically conveyed back to the grocery store, which will add it to your virtual shopping list, debit the price of another gallon from your bank account, and deliver it to your house or have it ready for you to pick up.



Call Us Aerotropolis – Poised to Be the Hub

Could the Piedmont Triad become a national hub of global commerce? Business leaders and economic development experts say yes. Our location is ideal, positioned midway between the major markets of New York and Miami, DC and Atlanta and on the path of major highways, close to the seaports of Wilmington, Morehead City, Charleston and Norfolk, equipped with extensive rail service, and home to trucking companies and third-party logistics companies.

More than that, the Triad is shaping up to be an aerotropolis – a complete logistics infrastructure built up around an airport. According to the Piedmont Triad Partnership, the Triad has almost 4,000 companies operating in transportation, warehousing and wholesale, and more than 67,000 people working in logistics and distribution businesses. Piedmont Triad International Airport is a Foreign Trade Zone, which gives significant advantages to companies importing goods and materials from abroad.



Behind the heavy lifting is some sophisticated decision-making. Supply chain issues have moved from back room to board room in recent years.



Q: What does it take to put the right item in the right quantity at the right time in the right place for the right price?



A: The right education.

Forsyth Tech provides education and training for careers in global commerce in both credit and continuing education, on our campuses, online, through our Small Business Center, as customized training in the workplace, and through co-operative education programs. Here are some of the components of careers in global logistics and supply chain management:

Logistics & Supply Chain Management

- > Global Logistics
- > Health Care Supply Chain Management
- > Lean Manufacturing
- > Heavy Equipment & Transport Technology

Logistics Modules

- > Introduction to Logistics & Supply Chain Management
- > Operations Planning
- > Transportation & Distribution Management
- > Purchasing
- > Health Care Supply Chain Management

International Business

- > International Business
- > Import/Export Management

Supply Chain Information Technology

- > Electronic Commerce
- > Database Management
- > IT Project Management
- > GIS/GPS
- > RFID
- > Information Systems Security

Leadership and Management Skills

- > Logistics Management
- > Project Management
- > Team Development
- > Customer Service

DDI Development Modules

- > Lean & Six Sigma
- > Leading Change
- > Optimizing Team Performance
- > And Dozens More



Many such technological advancements are already on our doorstep. Forsyth Tech recently took on a project for Industries for the Blind, to implement a curriculum for teaching visually impaired people supply chain competencies in inventory accountability, barcoding/RFID, global sourcing and distribution center operations. Industries for the Blind manufactures mattresses and other products, and this training will enable blind people to use specialized computer software and hardware to take on more of the supply chain tasks of

buying materials and storing and moving the merchandise. Funded with a grant from Duke Energy, the project is expected to become a model for training people with certain disabilities to work in logistics. Rick Yokeley wrote the grant application. Tom Jaynes, Director of Industrial Training, will co-manage the grant with him.

Technology is driving change in the global economy, and technological knowledge is a requirement of the new and evolving jobs created by global commerce. In our area, the place to acquire that knowledge is Forsyth Tech. 



When it's all about moving the merchandise, picking up speed is where gains can be made in customer service and competitive edge.

Made in North Carolina

At KobeWieland, a Skillful Workforce Is a Competitive Strategy



If you're going to be manufacturing copper products, you need to have a good feel for how the metal behaves, says Brian Alley (above), Training Program Manager at KobeWieland. Apprentices get that sense by designing and building tabletop copper structures.

At the KobeWieland Copper Products plant in Pine Hall, state-of-the-art manufacturing equipment from Germany and Austria is arriving almost every week. It's all part of a \$71 million upgrade that is creating 65 new jobs over a period of three years. With almost 500 fulltime employees at the facility, KobeWieland is already Stokes County's largest private employer, and pays wages well above the county's average.

Most of the employees at the plant are engaged in the manufacture of copper pipe and tubing for the air conditioning and plumbing industries. Almost all the pipe they make is for the North American market.

"Most of our competitors have moved their manufacturing operations to Mexico," said Brian Alley, Training Program Manager at KobeWieland, a company formed by a Japanese steel maker and a German metal company. "The plan here is that the combination of new technology and experienced workers will pay off better than moving offshore."


For the skilled workforce it needs, KobeWieland depends heavily on Forsyth Tech. "I can't say enough about the faculty and administrative personnel I've worked with at Forsyth Tech," said Alley. "They've gone out of their way to remove the barriers to education faced by our labor force."

Alley went on to name a dozen Forsyth Tech staff members who have worked with him on everything from computer training to GED to co-operative education. One innovative training initiative is a two- to three-year apprenticeship program that involves course work at Forsyth Tech and in-house plant-specific training. Of the 14 apprentices in the program, four are high school seniors. The students go to high school in the mornings, take classes at Forsyth Tech some afternoons and work at the plant on the other afternoons through a co-op education program. The company pays the students an hourly wage both when they're at work and when they're attending their college classes. The apprentices will end up with valuable credentials as well as skills, an Industrial Systems Technology machine operator's certificate and a state-issued journeyman card.

Alley is a big believer in apprenticeship programs, and he traveled to Germany to learn how to set one up. Machine operators don't always learn how equipment works, but Alley thinks that is important.

"These guys will have the theoretical background to handle situations where the machine doesn't do what it's supposed to do," he said.

That kind of knowledge supports the company's production goals, by cutting down on expensive downtime, but that's not the only reason why KobeWieland wants well-educated employees.

"People enjoy their job more when they're more involved and know more," Alley said. "In the first part of the apprenticeship, they go through all parts of the plant and get to understand the big picture. That understanding makes a difference in safety and in turnover. Our company is making an investment in the people to match the investment in equipment." 



A Learning Space For

LOCAL HEROES

The long-anticipated Northwest Forsyth Center is now home to Forsyth Tech's training programs for police, firefighters and emergency rescue technicians. The new building at 3111 Big Oaks Drive in King also houses general education and Certified Nursing Assistant and Industrial Technology programs.



52 Pick-Up. The new center sits on 52 acres. The building itself is designed to be expandable, and Forsyth Tech's master plan calls for the addition of one or two more buildings on the site in the future. Next up for this location: a fire training center.

Plumb Wonderful. Fire Protection students used to have to go far afield to learn about sprinkler systems. The equipment for the sprinkler trailer in the Northwest Forsyth Center was donated by members of the American Fire Sprinkler Association, Carolinas Chapter. High Point Sprinklers donated the labor. And Joe Harrison, President of the Association chapter and an employee of High Point Sprinklers, helped make it all happen. Dr. R. Scott Ralls, President of the North Carolina Community College System; Forsyth Tech President Gary M. Green; and Senator Richard Burr check out the impressive new gear.



A Cut Above. After the official ribbon cutting, dignitaries and guests toured the state-of-the-art facility. Among the amenities: a furnished apartment that is used to simulate crime scenes and accident scenes for Criminal Justice students and fire and rescue students; an Emergency Medical Science lab that accommodates an ambulance and is equipped to project the procedures performed by students in the ambulance onto a large screen; and a padded room for weapons training.



You're Invited To
A Unique Ribbon Cutting
On July 18

Tie a Yellow Ribbon. About 200 people attended the opening ceremony. Senator Richard Burr was the featured speaker for the occasion. After some interior finishing and furnishing, the center welcomed its first classes in the fall 2008 semester.



It's a Sign of the Times. Forsyth Tech is having an extended growth spurt. The Northwest Forsyth Center added 40,000 square feet of much-needed classroom space. The local architectural firm of Ersoy, Brake, Appleyard designed the building, and Triad Builders of King was the general contractor. The building was financed with state bond funds.



george Director of Recruiting mclendon

"We're sitting right here in an apple orchard," says George McLendon. Actually, he's sitting in his office in the Allman Center on Forsyth Tech's Main Campus. When George started working at the college in 1970, the land was an orchard, about 400 students were enrolled, and the campus consisted of two buildings. He has longer service at Forsyth Tech than almost anyone, and no staff member has more passion for his work than George McLendon.

"I've been at Forsyth Tech over half my life, and enjoyed every minute of it," he says.

A graduate of Winston-Salem State University, George began his career in the 1960s, an exciting time for education in North Carolina, when the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, Governor's School and other innovative academies were in their infancy. He worked as a counselor at the North Carolina Advancement School, an experimental residential school for high-potential students who were not realizing their potential. The school drew its faculty and staff from the most prestigious universities in the nation, and the methods pioneered there have had a lasting impact on education.

That experience shaped George's ideas about education, and has had an effect on the course of his career. He went back to school himself, and got a master's degree in guidance counseling at N.C. A&T University, and was a guidance counselor at Forsyth Tech for 12 years. He then served as Director of Admissions for 14 years, and has held his present position for the past decade.

"I like the philosophy of the community colleges," he says, "the open door policy, and the ability to take students where they are. Everybody didn't do all their homework in high school. This gives them a second chance to succeed."

"And everybody doesn't need to go to Harvard," he says. "I have a special love for the vocational programs."

George pulls out an envelope full of color photographs. There are no people in the pictures, just empty rooms with shiny wood floors.

"I put in a laminate floor in my house," he says. He's clearly as proud of that as he is of the framed certificate on his wall that proclaims him to be a nationally certified counselor.

"It makes you appreciate what these guys do," he comments.

Dependably Devoted

George McLendon tends to stick with what he starts. He's been married for 41 years, and is a father and grandfather. He's a deacon at his church, Mt. Pleasant Baptist.

He's served for 10 years as treasurer for this six-county region of the Admission Recruiters in Education Association. He's in his sixth year as Forsyth Tech's Campaign Manager for the United Way. And he serves on the board of the State Employees Credit Union.

And George has a lifelong love of sports. He played basketball in high school, and since then he's been officiating basketball games at high schools and colleges. He also referees softball and volleyball games. His great passion is golf, and he plays whenever he gets the chance.

Sometimes it's the small decisions that make a big difference in people's lives. For Joy Onuma, it was walking into the student government office at Forsyth Tech.

This self-described "quiet, shy girl" made that decision last year. Today, she's the President of the student government.

Joining the organization wasn't an easy decision for Joy. Her family moved to Winston-Salem from Nigeria when she was 17 years old. Her father was already in town working when the family relocated. Joy attended North Forsyth for her last two years of high school. She says relocating halfway around the world had its challenges.

"It was kind of hard," she says. "I was still trying to find myself. At that stage, I was trying to fit in a little bit. When I got to Forsyth Tech, it was like starting all over."

Part of that process included joining student government. The group takes on service projects

for the school, such as blood drives, an angel-tree project during the holidays and helps organize the annual Fall Festival. For Joy, joining student government was as much about opening herself up to opportunities as it was interacting with student leaders and learning from them.

"I wanted to grow out of my shell," she says. "I just wanted to find out more about myself and to give myself an opportunity to be a leader. I hope I'll be that role model for people too."

Joy didn't aspire to be a leader when she was a kid. Like many young people, she dreamed of being a singer. Growing up in Nigeria, she played keyboard and also loved to dance. If performing didn't work out, she thought she might end up being an accountant, because of her dexterity with numbers. More recently, she became fascinated with medicine, citing African-American pediatric neurosurgeon Ben Carson as one of her role models. Joy is in the pre-pharmacy program at Forsyth Tech.

As a leader, Joy is not a rabble-rouser, but she says she hopes that other students are inspired

by her commitment to academics and student government.

"It's kind of hard trying to lead by example," she says. "One of the challenges I face is trying to find that balance between my school work and working in the [student government] office."

Joy is considering applying to pharmacy school at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill or Campbell University once she graduates. When that day comes, she knows there might be some tears leaving Forsyth Tech.

"At this school, we have great teachers, and that's something about Forsyth Tech I love," she says.

This fall, the student government council is on a membership drive. All curriculum students who pay the student activity fee are eligible to apply for membership on the council. For anyone who might be nervous about joining, Joy says it's a step worth taking.

"Maybe some people have fears, but it just takes courage to give yourself the opportunity to grow," she says. 

joy President, Student Government Council onuma

Happy to Be Here

Joy comes from a mid-size city in southern Nigeria called Aba. According to britannica.com, the population in 2004 was about 820,000. Joy says the city is a good place to grow up, despite Aba's relatively high poverty level. The city's education system has been impacted by the economic climate. Students in this country, Joy says, don't know how good they have it.

"Here in the U.S., you have resources. Those resources are not available to students there. Sometimes teachers don't show up and you're left to study on your own," she says.

The lack of resources made it tougher for students in Aba, but it gave those who wanted an education a strong work ethic. That's something Joy brought with her to this country.



More Than You Know

2008 Report to the Community



When she heard the news, she was aghast.

Sue Marion, who is Vice President of Corporate and Continuing Education,

was watching a TV news broadcast one evening in September when she learned about 20 people, laid off from a local company, who tried to prepare themselves for new careers in medical assisting. Unbeknownst to them, the pricey school they enrolled in was not accredited. After an expensive waste of precious months, these people had neither the skills nor the credentials to re-enter the labor market. Sue was on the phone the next morning, determined to help. Assisted by the able staff of the Corporate and Continuing Education division, she had most of these people in her office for an 8:30 a.m. meeting the following day, laying out for them a customized program to receive the training they needed at Forsyth Tech, starting immediately. The division also found scholarship funds for most of these students, who had exhausted their resources.



These are just two initiatives of the past year, two instances where Forsyth Tech rose to the occasion, responded to the need, and joined with others beyond our walls to bring about educational excellence, workforce development and service to the community.



For a kid, the American Dream just might be a two-wheeler.

Mark Walker, coordinator of the Auto Body Repair program, often says that he can teach students how to repair vehicles and how to make money,

but that it is just as important to learn to give back to the community. Last fall, he proposed that members of the Motor Sports Club volunteer to repair and rebuild donated bicycles and tricycles to give to needy children. Mark's idea became A Bicycle Built for You, a first-time effort that was an overnight success. WXLV-TV and WMYV-TV became media sponsors. The Clear Channel radio stations in the area helped publicize the need for new and used bikes. Mock Orange Bike allowed the college to purchase parts at cost, with donations from individuals. More than 1,000 bikes were brought to several Forsyth Tech locations – an overwhelming response from the community. A dedicated crew of 65 auto body repair students cleaned, sanded, assembled, painted and polished 560 bikes on weekends, often joined by other students. During the holidays, The Salvation Army distributed the bicycles and tricycles. And a new way for the college to partner with the community was born.



More Than You Know

2008 Report to the Community



The Drones of Academe

More college transfer students, more people who want to upgrade their skills, more people who want to, or have to, change careers – it adds up to more students overall. Forsyth Tech experienced a nine percent increase in enrollment in credit programs over fall 2007, a total of 7,903 students as of the second week of the semester.

It's a trend we know will continue, for many reasons, including the fact that the Millennial Generation, people who were born around the turn of the century, is a large generation, bigger even than the post-World War II Baby Boom. Our facilities are bursting at the seams now, and we will need to keep adding classrooms, labs, shops and parking space to meet the demand. Based on the plans for the next decade, Forsyth Tech requested an educational facilities bond referendum that would allow for expansion of the Main Campus.

Another factor in increasing enrollment has been our concerted effort to get the word out about all that Forsyth Tech has to offer. Our recruiting initiatives – from viewbooks to radio spots to a MySpace page – all won awards in the district competition of the National Council for Marketing and Public Relations in both 2007 and 2008.

With heavy demands come long lines on registration days. At the walk-in registration days in July and August, we turned the sign-up saga into a Registration Celebration. Students found helpful green-shirted student ambassadors, information tents and color-coded signs, free refreshments, and live radio remotes from the campus – a welcoming first impression.

We're always working toward creating a better campus experience, and students now have a new gathering place. Bytes & Beans Café in the Parkway Building offers coffee, tea and snacks, and free wi-fi.

Getting a Jump on Post-Secondary Education

What's your idea of the typical Forsyth Tech student? The fact that for many years the average age of our students has been 29 doesn't tell you much. Traditional college-age students, career changers in their 30s, 40s and 50s, and even people in their 70s and 80s, who always intended to go to college, fill our classrooms.

This fall, the average age may have dropped a little. We now have more than 60 ninth-graders enrolled in Early College of Forsyth, a joint program of Forsyth Tech and the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools. These students will be eligible to get both a high school diploma and an associate's degree in five years, and will be able to enter colleges in the University of North Carolina system as juniors. Those who elect to stay in the program for just four years will earn a college transfer diploma, which will allow them to enter four-year colleges as sophomores.

All classes are held on the Main Campus at Forsyth Tech, and the size of each entering group is being limited to under 100. Despite rigorous admission criteria, a virtual absence of typical high school extra-curricular activities and a challenging academic program, Early College has immediately met with an enthusiastic reception. These teens' parents have many reasons to celebrate their kids' acceptance into the program. Tuition – even for all the college courses – is free.

Early College is the latest of our college-in-high school programs. Dual enrollment courses in the high schools, for which students receive both high school and college credit, are also tuition-free, and are gaining in popularity. This year saw a 41 percent increase in dual enrollment.

With the economic downturn and the continually increasing costs of college, more students and their parents are seeing the wisdom of spending the first two years at a community college. We're enrolling more students who plan to earn professional degrees after their bachelor's degrees, and who foresee a staggering load of debt mounting up. Besides the very affordable tuition, more than 1,670 college transfer students this fall are appreciating the excellent instruction, small classes, and personal attention and mentoring that are so often missing in large universities.



Distinguished Visitors

The National Center for the Biotechnology Workforce at Forsyth Tech was chosen by the U.S. Department of Labor to be the site for a national conference held in February. About 100 people attended the Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) BioScience Institute.

Then, in April, Forsyth Tech was host of the state community college system's third annual BioForum. Dr. Anthony Atala of Wake Forest University, world-acclaimed for his groundbreaking work in the field of regenerative medicine, was the keynote speaker.

We were proud to be a point on the campaign trail as the presidential race heated up. Senator Hillary Clinton spoke to a capacity crowd in the auditorium at West Campus on March 27. She chose this venue during her first campaign visit to North Carolina to underscore her assertion that community colleges are key to revitalizing the economy. The event brought 60 media representatives to our campus.

For May's graduation ceremony at the Joel Coliseum, we welcomed Dr. Donald Julian Reaves, the Chancellor of Winston-Salem State University, as the commencement speaker. Some 1,100 individuals were awarded degrees, diplomas and certificates.

More Than You Know

2008 Report to the Community

More Than You Know

2008 Report to the Community



Living in the Flat World

We never forget that we are preparing students to work and succeed in the global economy, and each year brings more opportunities for cross-cultural experiences. A sampling from the year just passed:

A delegation of eight mayors from Moldovan municipalities about the size of Kernersville came to visit. They stayed with host families in Kernersville, and met with town administrators, as well as with Winston-Salem city and state officials, to learn about local government. These representatives from the former Soviet Union country met with local students and took in local culture, including a Wake basketball game, a NASCAR race, the Kernersville Christmas parade and the Tanglewood Park Festival of Lights.

Wendy Barnhardt, coordinator of Cardiovascular and Medical Sonography Technology, took one of her students to Nicaragua, on a trip with a cardiologist to conduct research on rheumatic heart disease. She takes one or more students each year on these research excursions.

Four Danish students from Niels Brock Business College in Copenhagen spent the spring semester taking Financial Services courses at Forsyth Tech. As part of this exchange program, Forsyth Tech students will have the opportunity to study at Niels Brock this year.

And a crew from Japanese national television came to see us. The documentary they produced drew parallels between the economy of Japan and that of North Carolina, and made the point that young people and displaced manufacturing workers here have an advantage – our fine system of community colleges.

Our People, Our Strength

Forsyth Tech was named by *The Business Journal* as one of the 30 Best Places to Work in the Triad. Staff and faculty members who go above and beyond the call of duty make this a rewarding place to be. Here are a few who were honored, and brought us honor, in the past year:



Dr. Conley Winebarger, Vice President, Instructional Services, is a 2008 graduate of Leadership Winston-Salem, a 24-year-old program with the mission of educating, connecting and energizing leaders to serve and improve the community.

Eliza Sieswerda, academic advisor in the Student Success Center, received the Shining Star award. The award recognizes outstanding work in building positive relationships with students, faculty and staff.

Jerry Arehart, Program Coordinator, Dental Assisting, returned to Forsyth Tech in November after serving in the Naval Reserves in Kuwait since January, 2007.

Herbert Burns, Department Chair, Architectural/Construction Technology and Program Coordinator, Digital Effects and Animation, was the recipient of the C. David Kepple Memorial Faculty Award. Herb is also Forsyth Tech's representative in the Center for Design Innovation and president of the American Belarussian Relief Organization.

Cindy Weaver, Coordinator of Instructional Planning, was selected as 2008 Staff Member of the Year. Cindy earned her Associate Degree in Executive Secretarial Science from Forsyth Tech, and has been employed by the college for 30 years.

Sherri Bowen, Executive Assistant to the President, was elected to the Executive Committee of the Professional Board Staff Network, an organization within the Association of Community College Trustees. She is a member-at-large for the Southern region.

Dr. Sharon B. Covitz, Vice President, Institutional Advancement and Executive Director of the Foundation, received a Woman of Vision award from the YWCA.

Dr. Gary M. Green was named by *The Business Journal* as one of the Piedmont Triad's most influential people.

The Face of the Community: The Forsyth Tech Student Body

Nothing shows the breadth and blossoming of Forsyth Tech more clearly than our student population. For some, it's the first step to a bachelor's degree, for others it's the new graduate school. For some, it's the means to a promotion or a new career. For some, it's a way to get a head start on college while still in high school, for others it's the road to the basic education that for too long eluded them. For some, it's the way to acquire the technological tools that are redefining our world, for some, it's where they will learn to be leaders. For all, Forsyth Tech is a vibrant environment for growth and accomplishment.



Forsyth Technical Community College Board of Trustees 2008-2009 Membership Roster

- Jeffrey R. McFadden, Chair
- Edwin L. Welch, Jr., Vice Chair
- Beaufort O. Bailey
- Ann Bennett-Phillips
- John T. Eagan, Jr.
- Joyce E. Glass
- Gordon B. Hughes
- Frank L. James
- Robert F. Joyce
- Andrea D. Kepple
- Dewitt E. Rhoades
- Kenneth M. Sadler, DDS
- Joy Onuma, President, Student Government Council, Ex-Officio Member

The Foundation of Forsyth Tech Board Members 2008-2009

- Nancy W. Dunn, President
- Thomas E. Ingram, Vice President
- Haywood Edmundson V, Member-at-Large
- Gary M. Green, Ed. D., Secretary
- Kenneth W. Jarvis, Treasurer
- Kerry L. Avant
- David P. Barksdale
- Marshall B Bass
- Gregory J. Beier
- Penni P. Bradshaw
- Jeffrey P. Brennan
- Jeffrey T. Clark
- Andrew J. Filipowski
- Beverly Godfrey
- Murray Greason
- David C. Hinton
- Gordon B. Hughes
- W. Colon Moore
- James R. Nanton
- Ched W. Neal
- Christoph Nostitz
- R. Alan Proctor
- Mehran Ravanpay
- Dewitt E. Rhoades
- Travis Simpson
- William W. Sutton
- Ramon Velez, M.D.
- Edwin L. Welch, Jr.
- Robert C. Vaughn, Jr.
- Sharon B. Covitz, Ph. D., Executive Director
- Victor I. Flow, Jr., Director Emeritus
- Paul Wiles, Director Emeritus

More Than You Know

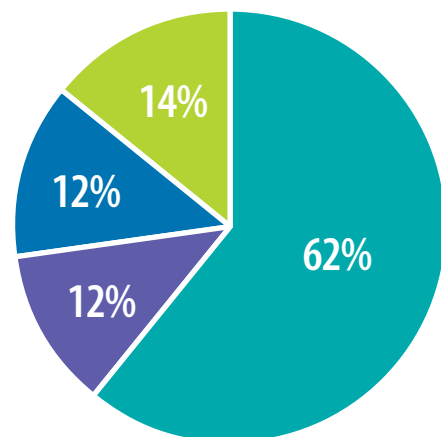
2008 Report to the Community

More Than You Know

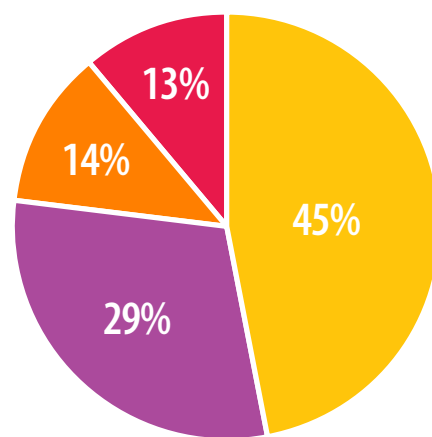
2008 Report to the Community

Forsyth Tech Community College Revenues & Expenditures For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2008

Total Budgets	Dollar Amount
Revenues	50,749,420
Capital	5,162,417
Total Budgets	55,911,837

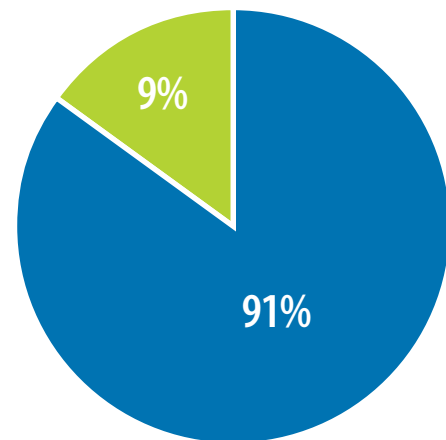


Revenues	Dollar Amount	%
State	31,073,311	62%
Tuition	6,315,031	12%
County	6,153,207	12%
Other	7,207,870	14%
Total Operating Revenues	50,749,419	100%

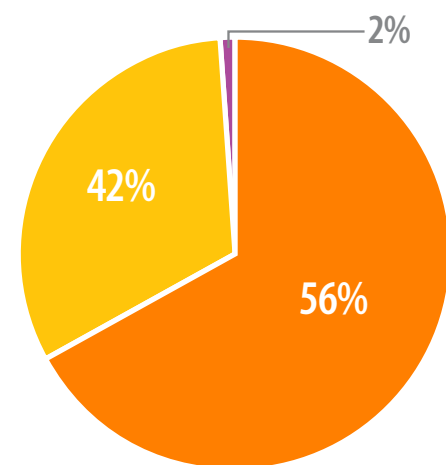


Expenses	Dollar Amount	%
Instruction	25,071,431	45%
Instructional Support	16,185,720	29%
Physical Plant	7,651,623	14%
Student Services	7,102,149	13%
Total Operating Expenses	56,010,923	100%

Forsyth Tech Foundation Revenues & Expenditures For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2008

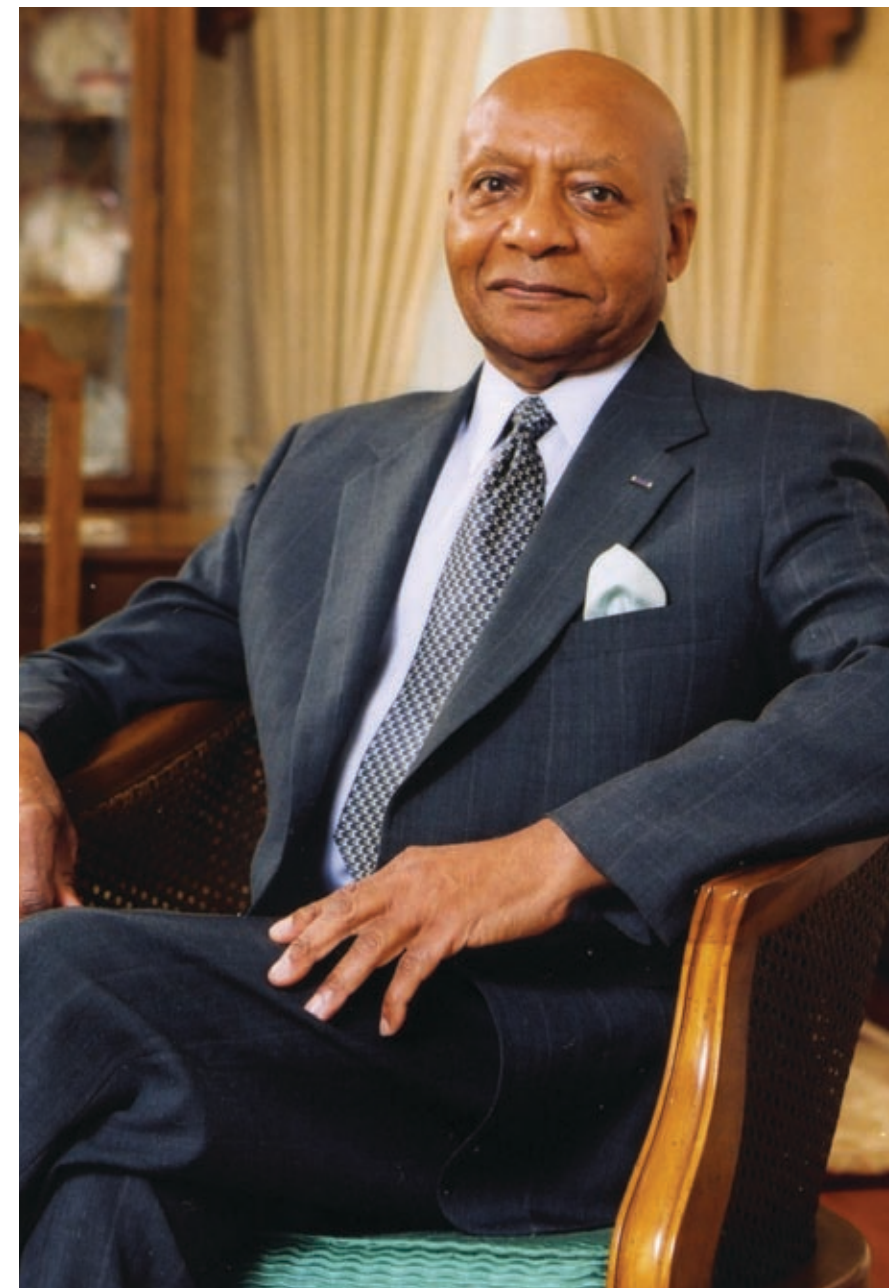


Revenues and Other Sources	Dollar Amount	%
Contributions	962,550	91%
Investments, Interest and Realized Gain	95,771	9%
Total Revenues	1,058,321	100%



Expenses	Dollar Amount	%
Scholarships/Contributions to Forsyth Tech	523,988	56%
Supporting Services	393,669	42%
Other Expenses	15,829	2%
Total Expenses	933,486	100%

Why I Support Forsyth Tech



MARSHALL B. BASS

"Education is the road that gets you up," said Marshall Bass, who is one of Forsyth Tech's generous benefactors.

Mr. Bass, who retired as a senior vice president of RJR Nabisco in 1991, now devotes his life to civic and charitable causes. He spearheads many initiatives that benefit young people, including the Marshall B Bass Children's Fund, and serves on many boards of directors, including The Foundation of Forsyth Tech.

"I love the way the college is being run," he said, commenting on President Gary M. Green's strong and visionary leadership.

In this past year, Mr. Bass donated \$25,000 to establish a permanent scholarship for Forsyth Tech. "My primary philanthropic giving is to support scholarships," he said. "I don't give to bricks and mortar."

Mr. Bass began his own post-secondary education at the University of Maryland. He served in the U.S. Army for 23 years and is a veteran of World War II, and the Korean and Vietnam conflicts. His last military post was at the Pentagon, where he was an aide to then-Vice President Hubert Humphrey. It was Humphrey who advised him to go into industry, he said, and he spent 24 years at RJR Nabisco.

Mr. Bass's knowledge of and relationship with Forsyth Tech go back to the late 1960s, when he was Director of Human Resources at RJR. "Forsyth Tech is a strong school. It has always been an outstanding school," he said.

How You Can Support Forsyth Tech

Forsyth Technical Community College serves more than 50,000 students annually in degree, diploma and certificate programs, and continuing education courses. To make educational opportunities widely available, and to meet the needs for a well-educated, skilled workforce, Forsyth Tech depends on private contributions from people like you.

The Foundation of Forsyth Tech, a non-profit organization, is the fundraising arm of the College. Your gift to Forsyth Tech through the Foundation will support:

- > **Scholarships for deserving students**
- > **Technology for classrooms, labs and shops**
- > **Professional development grants for faculty and staff**

Your Gift Creates a Strong College and a Strong Community

Choose your level of support:

President's Club	\$10,000 and up	Leaders	\$250 - \$499
Pinnacle Club	\$5,000 - \$9,999	Champions	\$100 - \$249
Pacesetter's Club	\$1,000 - \$4,999	Friends	Up to \$99
Directors	\$500 - \$999		

Give online: Use your credit card to make a secure donation at www.forsythtech.edu/foundation/online-form.

Send a check: Make your check payable to Forsyth Tech Foundation. Mail to The Foundation of Forsyth Tech, 2100 Silas Creek Parkway, Winston-Salem, NC 27103-5197.

Get more information: Learn about gifts you can make in honor or in memory of individuals, matching gifts, charitable trusts and bequests, and gifts of stocks and property. Call Dr. Sharon B. Covitz, Executive Director, The Foundation of Forsyth Tech, 336-734-7520 or email scovitz@forsythtech.edu.

When World Views Collide:



An Interview with Jennifer Coulombe, Director of Corporate Education



Q Jennifer, which generations do we see in the workplace now?

A Well, the Traditionalists – people born before 1946 – have mostly retired. The Millennials, people who have been born since the late 1990s, aren't in the workforce yet. Most people working now are Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y.

Q How are those generations defined?

A It's not a hard-and-fast thing. Baby Boomers are usually considered as people born after World War II, between 1946 and 1960. Gen X consists of people born between about 1960 and 1980. And Gen Y came into the world between 1981 and 1994.

Q What's an advantage of having several generations working in an organization?

A It's good to have a variety of perspectives, especially in terms of understanding, marketing to and serving customers. If something doesn't go over well with a particular age group within your company's walls, it probably won't go over well outside.

Q That assumes that organizations know what the people inside think, right?

A Yes, having a variety of perspectives on board is worthwhile as long as you value the input of each generation. It can be hard when there is just one person from a particular generation, and everybody else in another age group.

Q We know that these different generations not only have different perspectives, but also different goals for themselves.

A Definitely. It's helpful to employers to know how people define success at work, and what kinds of rewards matter to them. For Boomers, it's most often financial rewards they are looking for. Gen X people value time off, flexible schedules, the option of telecommuting – things that support family life. Gen Y young people want meaningful work; they want to have an impact on the world.

Q Are there certain character traits associated with each generation?

A Yes. Boomers typically have a strong work ethic and loyalty to organizations they work for. They are extremely hard workers. Gen X people were the first "children of divorce," latch-key kids. Both of their parents had jobs outside the home – which wasn't the case for most Baby Boomers – and in a sense, they raised themselves. That made them both more insecure and more independent than earlier generations. They may appear to be less loyal to employers.

Generation Gap #1: Music

Boomers: "Last Train to Clarksville" by The Monkees

Gen X: "Money for Nothin'" by Dire Straits

Gen Y: "Ironic" by Alanis Morissette

They expect to make career changes when necessary, and they're a little cynical. Gen Y are the children of Gen X, and Gen X are the helicopter parents we hear about. Gen X people are risk takers themselves, but they tend not to allow their children to take any risks. So Gen Y kids are very protected and have grown up being told they're special. They're collaborative, but they like being given a lot of direction and a lot of positive feedback.

Q What challenges do multiple generations present for managers and team leaders?

A Communication is a big one. Gen Y do most of their communicating on PDAs and cell phones. That's how they buy things and keep up with their friends and handle their finances and get their information. They're fine interacting with their work teams in that same way. They'll say, "Just text me the information." Boomers need some face-to-face interactions. They can use the technology, but they prefer more personal relationships.

Q How do generational differences affect loyalty to an organization?

A Gen X are less willing to give themselves totally to an organization than their parents were. They saw all the layoffs that started happening in the 1980s, and the jobs going overseas. They're not just drinking the Kool-Aid. On the plus side, that tendency to see things realistically makes them stay aware of what's going on in their industry. They keep their minds open and their skills up to date; they are very independent workers. Gen Y are available to work weekends and nights, anytime, anywhere, as long as they have the tools to do it – mobile email, laptops, etc. They don't have the "8 and skate" mentality. They will give of themselves outside of the 40-hour work week, and they can be stifled by all the structure of organizations. They want instant gratification.

Q Do any of the generations have real loyalty to their companies these days?

A Retention is a very big issue for employers. Getting new people up and running is a big expense, so employers today have elaborate retention strategies. Some even have an executive-level retention officer. With Baby Boomers, the work ethic is so ingrained that many of them want to work past the traditional retirement age, either by extending their work with a company or by starting second careers. But many Boomers have been the first to be laid off, and they know that giving 110% doesn't necessarily lead to job security. Being laid off and changing careers can be emotionally challenging for them, and they sometimes have a hard time grasping the idea of transferable skills. Gen X, on the other hand, are mentally and emotionally prepared to go where the quality of life is better. They're nimble, and they tend to have a multitude of skills. For Gen Y, constant change is just life. They're loyal to change.

Q Sounds like retention strategies are doomed.

A People move around a lot in their careers now, and there is less of a stigma associated with it. Turnover is a fact of life. Perhaps employers should consider dealing

with that reality rather than working so hard to fight the inevitable. Still, there are conditions they can provide to make their companies a good place to work that can impact retention.

Q What would those be, for each generation?

A For Boomers, long-term benefits, financial benefits, are important. For Gen X, quality of life things – flexibility, the ability to leave at 4 to watch a child's soccer game, for example – can make them want to stay at a company. For Gen Y, knowing that their contribution is valued is most important. They want to recognize their impact on the greater organization.

Q They say information is the oxygen of organizations. What kind of information does each generation need in order to survive?

A For Boomers, no news is good news. They grew up with the idea that if they weren't being criticized or punished, they were doing good work. Gen X wants to know what's going on in the company and the industry. For Gen Y, it's all about them. They want to know, "Did you get my last email? Did you like what I had to say?" They want instant feedback on anything they do, and they want their input valued from day one on the job.

Q Community colleges tend to be ahead of the game in knowing how to work with multiple generations, since a typical class has three generations of students. Does job training need to be tailored to generational differences?

A Yes. There are different learning styles and preferences among the generations. Younger people are usually more comfortable with online training and virtual classes. And in the classroom, we have to use a variety of media to effectively reach everyone – usually including something like a PowerPoint presentation, some discourse and discussion, and some video.

Q In the workplace, we often hear about friction between people of different generations. Is conflict inevitable?

A I don't think so. Where we most often see problems is when an organization has adopted the communication style of one generation, and excluded the others. Most students and faculty at Forsyth Tech would say that having different generations together in the classrooms and labs is a great strength of the college.

Q Are you saying that all the generations have a lot to learn from each other?

A Absolutely. In situations where age diversity is valued and honored, the convergence of multiple generations makes for stimulating, interesting, innovative results.

Generation Gap #2: Television

Boomers: "Bonanza," "Laugh In"


Gen X: "Seinfeld," "The Simpsons"

Gen Y: Reality TV, "Boy Meets World"

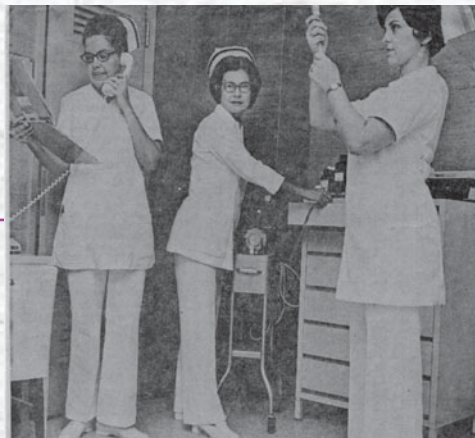
FORSYTH



The Way We Were: Nursing Education

This 1961 photo shows practical nursing students in the cafeteria at N.C. Baptist Hospital. A three-year practical nursing program was established at the hospital in 1954. It was a joint program with the Winston-Salem city schools Industrial Education Center – the forerunner of Forsyth Tech. In these years, hospitals ran most nursing schools. In 1971, Forsyth Technical Institute President Harley P. Affeldt led a successful effort to establish an Associate Degree Program at Forsyth Tech. In the application to the state board of nursing, he pointed out that there was a shortage of nurses in the state, and that the three hospitals in Winston-Salem – Baptist, Forsyth Memorial and Reynolds Memorial – had nursing vacancies. He made the case that tax-supported institutions – community colleges and state universities – should bear the responsibility for nursing education. 

Do you have photographic memories of your days at Forsyth Tech? We'd love to see them and to print some in future issues of Tech Quarterly. Send photographs by mail to Dr. Sharon Covitz, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Forsyth Tech, 2100 Silas Creek Pkwy., Winston-Salem, NC 27103, or electronically to scovitz@forsythtech.edu. Be sure to provide detailed information about who and what is pictured, and the year the photo was taken. Also include your address so that we can return the photo to you.



60s

In the late 1960s, pantsuits became acceptable career wear for women – and nurses were no exception. A few weeks after the first nurses in pants were spotted at Baptist Hospital, they were headline news in the local paper.



70s

The first Associate Degree Nursing class at Forsyth Tech graduated in 1974. The class included some people for whom miniskirts and white caps didn't work – the men who were beginning to enter the field of nursing.



80s

Hands-on experience has always been a huge part of nurses' training. Now, human beings are not so often called upon to be pincushions. Sophisticated simulations of people are used to help students learn to draw blood, intubate patients and more.



90s

The opening of Bob Greene Hall in 1991 was a banner day for the Nursing program and Allied Health programs. Greene Hall continues to undergo expansion and to be fitted with state-of-the-art equipment, with generous support from both Forsyth Medical Center and Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center.



00s

Few industries change as rapidly as health care. One megatrend influencing nursing education is the aging of the population, and the resultant growth of the field of gerontology. Now part of learning to be a nurse is learning how it feels to have impaired vision.

Dempsey Essick Has An Eye For Painting The Natural Beauty Around Us

simple things



Dempsey Essick wasn't born with a paintbrush in his hand, but it wasn't long until he realized art was his calling.

Dempsey, 55, was this year's recipient of Forsyth Tech's Distinguished Alumni Award. He graduated from the college in 1973 with a degree in mechanical drawing. Even though it was several years until he would begin his career as a professional artist, Dempsey credits his time at Forsyth Tech as the starting point for his career.

"At that time, the only way you could make a living as an artist was as a commercial artist. That meant pretty much working for a magazine or a newspaper or an arts company. The job market wasn't that big," he says. "In hindsight, that turned out to be a real blessing in that it gave me drawing skills from a technical aspect that I still use to this day in my freelance art."

Those skills have paid off in a big way. Dempsey has made his living as an artist for 20 years. His work is sold through 30 galleries in North Carolina and Virginia. He also sells his work out of his own store, Dempsey's Place, in his home town of Welcome. His work has been shown at The National Academy of Design in New York City, the National Watercolor Exhibition in California and the Rocky Mountain Water Media Exhibition in Colorado, and many other galleries.

The Making of a Self-Taught Artist

Quite a string of accomplishments for a man who prides himself on being a self-taught artist, and one who relies on a work ethic he learned growing up on his family farm.

But his career as a professional may never have gotten off the ground had it not been for a nudge from his wife, Shelley. She was working as Postmaster in Southmont, NC, and encouraged Dempsey to paint the Cottongrove Country Store, which she passed on her way to work every day. Dempsey, who was working then as a project engineer at Leggett & Platt, Inc., wasn't looking to change careers.

"I was using my artistic ability a little bit then, primarily in design work," he says. "But on the side, I was still doing

The Bird Man of Davidson County, Dempsey Essick watches birds, feeds birds and paints a small hummingbird into each of his artworks.

Devoting himself to his art full-time was a leap of faith for Forsyth Tech alumnus Dempsey Essick.



Society, and two of his paintings were in the 2007 North Carolina Wildlife Commission calendar.

Inspired by Hummingbirds

For the past 10 years, Dempsey has painted a small hummingbird into each of his paintings. It's a symbol that has great meaning to Dempsey and his family.

"The reason I started doing that was my daughter was 16 at the time, and she caught a hummingbird and held it for about five minutes," he says. "She was going through some medical problems at the time and that was kind of like an inspirational moment for us, and so I adopted the hummingbird as my mascot, so to speak."

His interest in birding has influenced his work of late, but Dempsey says his hometown has been of equal importance in his career. He lives in the home where he was born in Davidson County. Growing up, he lived a typical North Carolina farm life. In the winters, he would wake

up at 5 a.m. to milk the cows, and in summers, he worked in tobacco fields. He says his upbringing has not only influenced his eye for what makes a great painting, but also his work ethic.

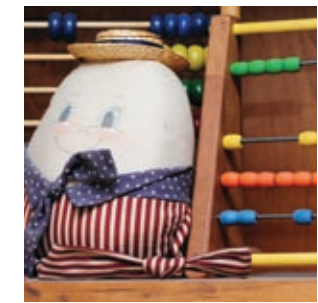
"When I was a kid, the first priority was work, it wasn't play," he says. "It's hard to get away from your roots. I don't want to get away from them."

It's that appreciation for home and the simple things that informs Dempsey's work. He says he's drawn to small scenes, such as a Ball canning jar filled with flowers or a scene of lilies in a field. Other people may never notice these scenes, but part of Dempsey's art is taking these small moments and giving them life on canvas.

"There is beauty everywhere. You just have to look for it," he says. "We walk by beauty every day, and we don't take time to notice it."

"For 20 years, I've been doing something that I love to do and make a living from – not many people get that opportunity," he says.

Not too bad for a self-taught artist. 



"An artist is not just paint and brushes and canvas."

my freelance watercolors as a hobby, giving them away to people as gifts, but not really selling anything."

After Dempsey finished the painting, Shelley wanted to hang it in her office. When they took it to be framed, the painting caused a sensation. The framer took orders for 50 more prints. So the Essicks took it one step further, borrowing the money to have 500 prints made of the watercolor. The gamble paid off. The run of 500 sold out in three weeks.

"That was the initial seed that grew into my art career, but I've always had the God-given talent ever since I was just a little fellow to be able to paint," Dempsey remembers. Wondering if that painting was a fluke, Dempsey painted a still life with no local ties and paid for another print run of 500.

"Lo and behold, it was on the market for only about two weeks," he says. "So we said, 'Maybe we got something here.'"

Quitting the Day Job

Six months later, he quit his day job and never looked back. His career as a professional artist was under way, but not without some anxiety. The Essicks' children, John and Beth, were young then, and Dempsey knew the move could be risky.

"When you have children at that point in time, you're buying homes, buying cars and in debt. It was a real step of faith," he says.

At first, his work focused on rustic scenes, landscapes and still lifes. He did a series of major paintings of scenes in Charleston, SC, that have proven enormously popular over the years. For each work, Dempsey says his process is pretty simple. He begins by sketching and putting down a quick thumbnail of the image as he sees it. Then, he'll do more sketching on the scene if it's a landscape. He finishes by taking a photograph or videotaping the scene. Video was especially helpful when he was working on the Charleston paintings back in his studio.

"What that did for me was it gave me an emotional lift when I was in my studio away from the subject matter," he says. "I could go play the video, and I could hear the cars. I could hear the people talking. I could hear the birds. I could see the limbs moving and the breeze blowing, and it gave me a sense of being there again."

"An artist is not just paint and brushes and canvas. There is an emotional aspect of it that really drives you. If it gets too dry and stale, it's difficult."

More recently, Dempsey's work has moved toward wildlife scenes, with a major focus on birds. He is a past president of the NC Bluebird



His paintings are shown and sold far and wide, but Dempsey Essick's home, his studio, his shop – and his heart – are in Welcome, NC.



“Ruby’s Day Lily” Artist Dempsey Essick, an alumnus of Forsyth Tech, was scouting for a group of daylilies that could be the basis of a large painting. In Ruby Potts’ gardens in Advance, he came upon this single flower and decided it would make a beautiful little picture on its own. He photographed the daylily to keep it fresh in his memory, and when he painted its picture, he added his signature touch, a hummingbird. For more information about Dempsey, turn to page 26 of this magazine and visit his website at www.dempseyessick.com.

ForsythTech

More Than You Know

2100 Silas Creek Parkway
Winston-Salem, NC 27103-5197