

Rural Recovery

An Economic Development Strategy for Region C

Presented to
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Table of Contents

I. Executive Summary	i
II. Policy Question.....	1
III. Problem Statement.....	1
Region C Today.....	2
Education in Region C.....	4
A Hybrid Strategy for Region C.....	5
IV. Methodology.....	6
V. Recommendations	8
1. Kenan Fellows	8
Kenan Fellows in Region C.....	8
Using Partnerships Between ECHS and Community Colleges	11
2. Community Colleges.....	12
Community Colleges as Engines of Growth	12
2A. Manufacturing Image Campaign	14
2B. Opportunities for Innovative Programming.....	16
Leading Innovation in Community Colleges.....	17
3. Regional Economic Development Hubs.....	18
Overview and the Case of the Danville Regional Plan	18
How Hubs Can Drive Regional Economic Transformation.....	20
Potential Challenges and the Need for Regional Cohesion.....	22
VI. Funding.....	23
1. Kenan Fellows	24
2. Community Colleges.....	25
3. Regional Economic Development Hubs	26
VII. Conclusion	27
VIII. References	29
Appendices.....	A
Appendix 1: Kenan Fellows Interest Teacher Survey.....	A
Appendix 2: Recent Community College Graduates.....	B
Appendix 3: Community College Instructors	C
Appendix 4: Business Survey.....	E

I. Executive Summary

Policy Question

What practices will better align educational outcomes to greater employment opportunities in Region C?

Problem Statement

North Carolina Regional Planning District C is comprised of Cleveland, McDowell, Polk, and Rutherford Counties. For generations, its economy relied on textile mills, apparel factories, and furniture manufacturers. By the mid-90s, almost half of Region C's workforce was employed in the manufacturing sector. Today, manufacturing employs only seven percent of Region C workers.² One out four unemployed people in Region C are former manufacturing workers.³

As Region C struggles with an exodus of stable, middle-class jobs, it also faces an out-migration of human capital. Compared to other counties in North Carolina, workers in Region C are older and less educated. Only 25 percent of working age adults hold an associate's degree or higher. By 2019 the median age will be 46 years old.⁴ These shifting demographics make it difficult to attract new employers, especially in the rapidly evolving field of manufacturing, where employers are clamoring for skilled workers.

² Isothermal Planning and Development Commission. (2013). *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Isothermal Region*, page 11

³ Isothermal Planning and Development Commission. (2013). *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Isothermal Region*, page 12

⁴ Access NC Community Data. (Dec. 2015). *Workforce Development Board: Region C WDB*

The realities of the new global economy have left Region C in a recession-like condition. However, the region is not without its geographic and cultural advantages. Most of Region C is within commuting distance of Asheville, Charlotte, and Spartanburg. An abundance of hiking trails, along with notable antebellum architecture, and natural resources such as Lake Lure, Chimney Rock, and Linville Caverns, makes the area an appealing place to live or visit. Any development initiative within Region C should be an investment in both the area's human capital (people-based) and its appeal as a viable alternative to urban living (place based).

Danville, Virginia exemplifies a people and place-based combination strategy, which could act as a model for a regional development plan for Region C. The Danville Regional Plan focused on developing both the research and employment opportunities in the town and surrounding area, while also investing in amenities to improve the town's livability. The comprehensive development strategy has given Danville and the Southside region a competitive edge toward attracting new residents from nearby urban centers

Methodology

We grounded our research in quantitative demographic data along with an in-depth examination of economic development and education literature. We interviewed teachers, school administrators, economic development experts, and people with a range of experiences in human capital development. A trip to the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research in Danville, Virginia, provided an opportunity to view how a single initiative can foster both people and place-based development within a non-metro community. The question of how to most effectively foster development within Region C necessitates an in-depth understanding of the characteristics that make the region unique. Thus we created a set of surveys aimed at students,

educators, and business professionals within the region. We believe that these surveys hold promise as mechanisms for gathering human-centered, ethnographic data directly from stakeholders throughout Region C.

Recommendations

1. Expand the number of Kenan Fellows in Region C by three to four participants per year and target the expansion to early college high schools in Region C.
2. 2A. Region C's three community colleges should partner with regional and global manufacturers on a "manufacturing image campaign" to improve the perception of advanced manufacturing work.

2B. The community colleges should also explore the potential for new programming, such as an outdoor leadership certification or a fermentation sciences degree, aimed at capitalizing on the unique geographical and cultural strengths of the region.
3. Stakeholders should collaborate to create a regional development hub between Shelby, Marion, and Rutherfordton.

II. Policy Question

What practices will better align educational outcomes to greater employment opportunities in Region C?

III. Problem Statement

Region C includes Cleveland, McDowell, Polk, and Rutherford Counties in southwestern North Carolina. These four counties, all named for Revolutionary War heroes, found their niche in cotton production.⁵ The region's first documented cotton mill opened in 1855 in Cleveland County.⁶ By 1960, over 25 mills operated in Cleveland County alone.⁷ Railroad lines carried cotton from the region to Charlotte, Asheville, and Charleston for worldwide distribution.⁸ Textile mills, apparel production, and furniture manufacturing dominated the region's economy until its peak in 1994, when manufacturing employed 40 percent of all workers.⁹ At that time, Region C's workforce was two times more concentrated in manufacturing than the rest of North Carolina and three times more than United States as a whole.¹⁰

⁵ Lewis, J.D. (n.d.). *Cleveland County, NC*.
Ferguson, Nancy Ellen. (n.d.). *Rutherford County, NC*.
Placak, Joseph. (n.d.). *Polk County, NC*.
Lewis, J.D.. (n.d.). *McDowell County, NC*.

⁶ White, Carl. (January 24, 2015). *Cleveland County - The Epic History*.

⁷ Lewis, J.D. (n.d.). *Cleveland County, NC*.

⁸ UNC, North Carolina Maps. (n.d.). *Railroad Map of North Carolina, 1900*.

⁹ Isothermal Planning and Development Commission. (2013). *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Isothermal Region*, page 11.

¹⁰ Isothermal Planning and Development Commission. (2013). *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Isothermal Region*, page 11.

Region C Today

Though still the largest industry in the region, manufacturing only employs 7 percent of the working population.¹¹ Residents especially began to feel the effects of a decline in the late 1990s when global competition and automation pushed industries to move production out of the state. Almost half of all manufacturing jobs left the region within ten years. The greatest decline occurred in 2009 when 3,000 people lost their jobs due to the closing of a group of boat manufacturing companies.¹² Region C now suffers from a higher unemployment rate than the state and an economic recession that persists even as North Carolina's urban centers rebound.¹³

The current unemployment rate of 6.5 percent includes over 11,000 residents, 22 percent of whom once worked in manufacturing, far outpacing North Carolina's rate (15 percent) and the nation (9 percent).¹⁴ The Isothermal Planning and Development Commission projects that Region C will lose another 3,000 manufacturing jobs by 2020.¹⁵ An increasingly older population discourages future job growth to replace these lost jobs. In 1990, the median age was 37.3.¹⁶ Access NC projects the median age will be 45.8 years old by 2019.¹⁷ Compared to the median ages of 32 and 35.3 in Mecklenburg County for 1990 and 2019 respectively, Region C's workforce is hardly ideal for long-term job investments.¹⁸ Those who work in Region C also earn

¹¹ NCWorks. (April 13, 2016). *Area Profile, Region C WDB*.

¹² Isothermal Planning and Development Commission. (2013). *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Isothermal Region*, page 11.

¹³ Isothermal Planning and Development Commission. (2013). *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Isothermal Region*, page 10.

¹⁴ NCWorks, (April 13, 2016), *Area Profile, Region C WDB*.

Isothermal Planning and Development Commission. (2013). *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Isothermal Region*, page 10.

¹⁵ Isothermal Planning and Development Commission. (2013). *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Isothermal Region*, page 20.

¹⁶ Access NC Community Data. (December 2015). *Workforce Development Board: Region C WDB*.

¹⁷ Access NC Community Data. (December 2015). *Workforce Development Board: Region C WDB*.

¹⁸ Access NC Community Data. (December 2015). *Mecklenburg County (NC)*.

far less than their peers in nearby urban centers. While the current median household income in Region C is \$38,031, workers in Charlotte earn \$54,559.¹⁹

Faced with steady unemployment rates, disappearing employment opportunities, and low-income jobs, many Region C residents turn to long commutes for jobs. Three significant urban centers surround this region: Asheville to the northwest, Charlotte to the southeast, and Greenville-Spartanburg to the southwest. A 2008 American Community Survey showed that 3,800 regional residents regularly commuted to South Carolina.²⁰ Polk County residents were most likely to commute; one-quarter of all of the county's workers did so. Similarly, almost 2,500 residents from Cleveland County regularly commuted to Charlotte.²¹ These employment opportunities helped to sustain some of the region's remaining economic viability.

Region C's long-term economic vitality depends on its ability to attract and retain people. The four non-metropolitan Region C counties suffer from stagnated population growth, in part due to a growing out-migration trend. Between 2000 and 2010, Region C's population grew by 1.5 percent per year. Yet projections show a slowdown to only 0.4 percent per year over the next decade.²² While Region C's population has not begun to decrease as a whole, its inability to attract and retain people is especially troublesome considering the state's overall population boom in the past decade. Since 2000, population grew in all of North Carolina's economic regions.²³ Southwest North Carolina, which includes Charlotte and Region C, grew by 28.8 percent, above the state average of 20.1 percent.²⁴ Nearly two-thirds of all growth during this

¹⁹Access NC Community Data. (December 2015). *Workforce Development Board: Region C WDB*.

Access NC Community Data. (December 2015). *Mecklenburg County (NC)*.

²⁰ Isothermal Planning and Development Commission. (2013). *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Isothermal Region*, page 14.

²¹ Isothermal Planning and Development Commission. (2013). *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Isothermal Region*, page 14.

²² North Carolina Department of Commerce. (n.d.). *County Profiles*.

²³ North Carolina Department of Commerce. (n.d.). *Statewide Summary*.

²⁴ North Carolina Department of Commerce. (n.d.). *Statewide Summary*.

time came from out-of-state migration.²⁵ Economic development strategies in Region C must do more to entice these new North Carolinians to reside in its communities, rather than more urban areas, before the population boom slows down or ends.

Education in Region C

The region's workforce lacks the skills necessary for the types of industries that could attract people to turn the local economy around. The region's dependence on traditional labor-intensive industries results in relatively low educational attainment levels. Over one-fifth of the region's workforce does not have a high school diploma. Only one-quarter hold an associate's degree or higher.²⁶ Job forecasts show an increased demand for more technical skill sets. Without innovative educational opportunities to develop skilled workers, leaders will struggle to attract new industries to the region. Over 20 percent of all new jobs in Region C will require at least a two-year degree, leaving many residents unable to obtain them.²⁷

The existing educational systems in Region C aim to prepare the region's workforce for these future demands. Gardner-Webb University, the only four-year institution in the region, offers partnership programs with local manufacturing companies in order to ensure that students have the soft skills they need for employment.²⁸ Gardner-Webb serves approximately 2,700 students annually.²⁹ Isothermal Community College recently spearheaded efforts for a machining technologies program and received a \$25,000 grant from the Gene Haas Foundation to pay

²⁵ North Carolina Department of Commerce. (n.d.). *Statewide Summary*.

²⁶ Isothermal Planning and Development Commission. (2013). *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Isothermal Region*, page 15.

²⁷ Isothermal Planning and Development Commission. (2013). *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Isothermal Region*, page 27.

²⁸ White, Carl. (January 24, 2015). *Cleveland County - The Epic History*.

²⁹ White, Carl. (January 24, 2015). *Cleveland County - The Epic History*.

tuition for interested students.³⁰ Cleveland Community College and McDowell Technical Community College also provide opportunities, like two of the region's four Early College High School campuses, for advanced learning. All three community colleges have an average enrollment of 2,300 students. Over 3,000 students attend Cleveland Community College and roughly 1,500 students attend McDowell Technical Community College.³¹

These options in education have little effect unless the elementary and secondary schools can ignite students' passions and encourage them to continue their education. Despite a high graduation rate of 84.65 percent in 2015, only 61 percent of the region's students enrolled in college within 16 months of receiving their high school diploma.³² Many enroll at the local community colleges, but few complete their degree requirements. Isothermal, Cleveland, and McDowell Community Colleges graduate on average 19 percent of their students.³³

A Hybrid Strategy for Region C

Due to these challenges, Region C remains in a recession-like condition. The region needs a multi-pronged strategy to ignite its recovery. Some strategies used to spur economic growth revolve around place-based development ideas and others are person-based.

Place-based examples include The Danville Regional Foundation, which invested over \$75 million into the River District in Danville, Virginia.³⁴ The foundation acts as an investor for start-ups with the hope of drawing new businesses to Danville. The group's investments make

³⁰ Gavin, Mike, Isothermal Newscenter. (April 6, 2015). *Grant will benefit Machining Technologies Students.*

³¹ US News and World Report. (Fall 2013). *Isothermal Community College.*

US News and World Report. (Fall 2013). *Cleveland Community College.*

US News and World Report. (Fall 2013). *McDowell Technical Community College.*

³² North Carolina School Report Cards. (n.d.). *College Enrollment Report.*

³³ US News and World Report. (Fall 2013). *Isothermal Community College.*

US News and World Report. (Fall 2013). *Cleveland Community College.*

US News and World Report. (Fall 2013). *McDowell Technical Community College.*

³⁴ Interview, Clark Casteel. March 17, 2016.

Danville a more exciting place to live and work. Yet in order for businesses to come, employers must know that the Danville region has a sustainable, highly skilled workforce. To develop its workforce, Region C can look to the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR) in Danville, which works with the local community college in order to promote STEM learning.³⁵ The IALR invites local primary and secondary students for summer camps, internships, and other hands on learning experiences in order to develop a skilled workforce for the future.

The IALR's initial goals revolved around person-based strategies. Ten years later, the administration chose to modify its mission by attempting to balance the IALR's person-based goals with place-based initiatives. Today, with funding from the Danville Regional Foundation, the Institute conducts research for local farmers and businesses. The IALR also aims to provide local jobs for individuals with advanced degrees, all while continuing its mission to inspire Danville's next generation to pursue careers in STEM fields.³⁶

Region C can look to the IALR and the Danville Regional Foundation's approach to economic development. To entice businesses with higher paying jobs, Region C must develop both the area's human capital (people-based) and its appeal as a viable alternative to metropolitan areas like Asheville and Charlotte (place based).

IV. Methodology

We used qualitative data collection methods grounded in publicly accessible quantitative state and county workforce information to create an evaluation process. Since workforce development affects employers, potential employees, and those educators who prepare employees for the workforce, we interviewed North Carolina industry experts, teachers,

³⁵ Interview, Julie Brown. March 17, 2016.

³⁶ Interview, Julie Brown. March 17, 2016.

community college administrators, and teacher training program coordinators. Through these interviews, we assessed the challenges to optimize each stakeholder's role in Region C's workforce development.

A trip to the IALR in Danville, Virginia, gave us the opportunity to understand the complementary relationship between person and place-based development. We toured the facilities to grasp the rate of return of the IALR to the surrounding community and interviewed researchers to understand the benefits of their research to the greater Danville community. Ultimately, the IALR serves as a case study for our interest in a hybrid strategy between people and place-based development for rural economic development in Region C.

Our recommendations are inspired primarily by conversations with experts and examinations of the available data. However, we recognize that designing and implementing regional policy initiatives necessitates the input of local stakeholders and organizations at all levels. This principle aligns with the latest practices of The White House's Strategy for American Innovation, which recently recognized the importance of Human-Centered Design (HCD) in the public sector.³⁷ In an effort to obtain this type of localized, qualitative feedback, we created short surveys for Region C business owners, community college students and alumni, community college faculty, and public school teachers. With our short timeline and lack of professional connections within the region, we had difficulty dispersing the surveys, which resulted in a low response rate. However, we believe that the administration and analyzation of surveys similar to those we created would be a valuable piece of additional research.

³⁷ White House. (September 4, 2015). *Using Human-Centered Design to Make Government Work Better and Cost Less*.

V. Recommendations

1. Expand the number of Kenan Fellows in Region C by three to four participants per year and target the expansion to early college high schools in Region C.
2. 2A) Region C’s three community colleges should partner with regional and global manufacturers on a “manufacturing image campaign” to improve the perception of advanced manufacturing work.

2B) The community colleges should also explore the potential for new programming, such as an outdoor leadership certification or a fermentation sciences degree, aimed at capitalizing on the unique geographical and cultural strengths of the region.
3. Stakeholders should collaborate to create a regional development hub between Shelby, Marion, and Rutherfordton.

1. Kenan Fellows

Stakeholders should expand the number of fellows in Region C by three to four participants a year and target faculty positions in the four early college high schools in Region C.

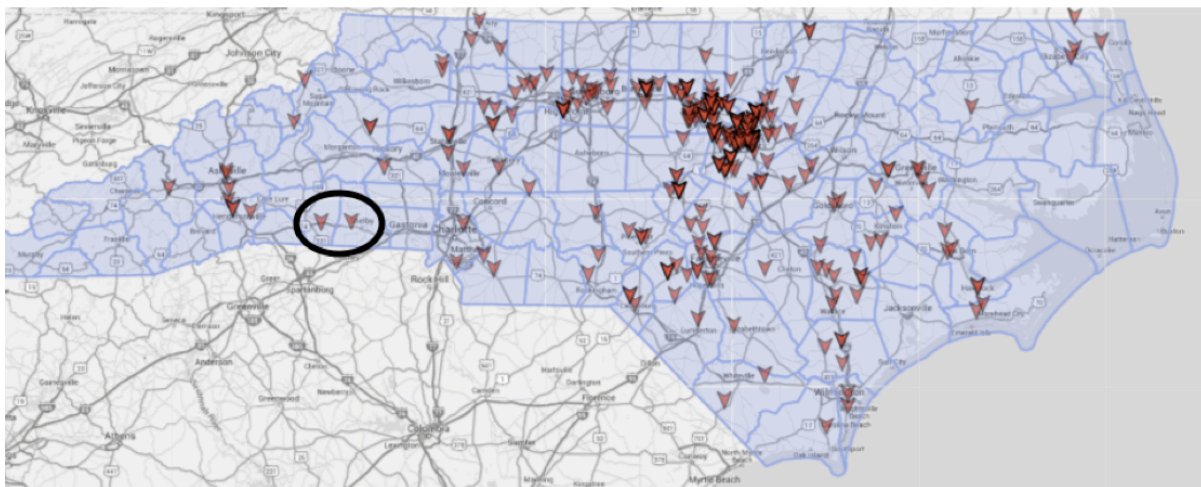
Kenan Fellows in Region C

North Carolina State’s Kenan Fellows, a Science, Engineering, Technology, and Mathematics (STEM) teacher training program helps a cohort of secondary STEM teachers across the state to align their curricula with workforce skills. The program uses federal grants and donations to match teachers with STEM companies in their regions with hands-on roles during a three-week summer externship. Expanding the fellowship within early college high schools (ECHS) in Region C would give STEM teachers in these smaller college-oriented high

schools the opportunity to build on pre-established relationships with three Region C community colleges. Teachers complete a summer externship focused on STEM research in well-equipped facilities on community college campuses, and under the mentorship of experienced practitioners and faculty in community colleges.

As Region C’s population ages, Kenan Fellows could act as a key catalyst in equipping the area’s younger generation for future high wage jobs in North Carolina. After their summer externship, fellows collaborate with each other throughout the academic year to integrate skills necessary for STEM jobs into their Common Core aligned curriculum. Each fellow must publish a publicly accessible unit of lessons as part of their STEM curriculum.³⁸ The program gives career long teachers a knowledgeable network to prepare students for the STEM workforce and innovation in higher education.³⁹ Over 350 fellows take advantage of this network statewide, but only two are now in Region C.

Kenan Fellows Center Around City Hubs



Heather Roof was a Region C fellow from Rutherford County during the 2011-2012 academic year. As a 7th grade math and science teacher, she completed her externship with Ply

³⁸ Interview with Heather Roof. March 4, 2016.
³⁹ Kenan Fellows Program (n.d). “Kenan Fellows Program: About Us.”

Gem, a manufacturing company in Spartanburg, South Carolina that creates house and door siding piece. Heather came to understand the computation skills necessary to efficiently operate robotics, mix the appropriate amount of chemicals for the siding pieces, and to ensure Ply Gem was a waste free company.⁴⁰ After her externship, Heather collaborated with other fellows in her cohort to implement clear and innovative curriculums to help her students master computational skills. Heather recommended the fellowship to her coworkers, but found little interest due to the long commute to any possible externship opportunities during the summer break.⁴¹ Heather's inability to inspire her coworkers to apply highlights STEM employment disparities between city hubs and less populated areas.

City hubs, such as Charlotte and the RTP area, host far more fellows due to the multitude of externship opportunities amongst museums, universities, and hospitals in metropolitan areas. As more Region C residents lose manufacturing jobs, the Kenan Fellows administration has struggled to find externship and employment opportunities in the STEM field within the region.

Targeting Kenan Fellows recruitment towards science and math teachers in ECHS addresses the geographical disparities introduced with expanding the program by using person based development. ECHS have 15-20 STEM teachers and curriculum directors already within the region. Region C's four ECHS have partnerships with Isothermal Community College, Cleveland Community College, and McDowell Technical Community College. Since Region C ECHS are located on community college campuses, the schools have already laid a foundation to link secondary and postsecondary career missions. The program's goals of preparing teachers to implement career aligned curriculums mirrors ECHS' goals of creating more educational and

⁴⁰ Interview with Heather Roof. March 4, 2016.

⁴¹ Interview with Heather Roof. March 4, 2016.

career opportunities for marginalized students. Particularly for Region C, both missions in tandem can educate over 650 ECHS students for region specific careers.⁴²

Using Partnerships Between ECHS and Community Colleges

To ensure externship opportunities within the region, Kenan Fellows can use federal grant money to bolster programs in advanced manufacturing technologies at the three local community colleges where the ECHS are located. Fellows can use facilities to operate robotic machines and other manufacturing technologies utilized by students in the community colleges, community college faculty members, and their own ECHS.

In Rutherford County, Isothermal Community College began the “Ultimate Community Partnership” with North Carolina State University to enhance educational opportunities to replace old textile and manufacturing jobs.⁴³ Kenan Fellows can take advantage of the ongoing place based economic partnerships with NC State to strengthen Isothermal's mechanical drafting manufacturing, and mechanical engineering technology degree and certificate programs. Kenan Fellows program directors could use fellowship funds for engineering technologies to attract faculty, students, and create opportunities for internships in Region C.

Cleveland Community College and McDowell Technical Community College offer plenty of programs that would benefit from funding advanced technologies including, computer integrated machining and industrial systems technology. The colleges have limited full time faculty. Funding for programming and machinery, would attract more part-time and full-time faculties members, as well as students looking for a real world educational experience. Kenan

⁴² Public Schools of North Carolina. (2015).

⁴³ NC State. (November 16, 2015). *Community Partnership Links Education, Jobs.*

Fellows can work with these faculty members to learn the purpose of advanced technologies, and how integrate machinery into their curriculums.

In order to receive applications for Kenan Fellows from ECHS teachers, program directors should meet with the four ECHS principals and school directors to ensure mission alignment of Kenan Fellows and ECHS faculty. The program can use the two Kenan Fellows alumni in Region C to lead information sessions and discussions to show the need for STEM teacher development, especially for the ECHS faculty teaching underserved students. As future fellowship opportunities arise through federal grants, Kenan Fellows should randomly survey K-12 teachers across the four counties to better understand the appeal and limitations of the fellowship.

2. Community Colleges

We have two specific recommendations for Region C's community colleges. First, the Region's three community colleges should partner with regional and global manufacturers to launch a "manufacturing image campaign" which aims to improve the perception of advanced manufacturing work. Second, the community college leaders should explore the potential for new programming, such as outdoor leadership or fermentation sciences certifications, aimed at capitalizing on the unique characteristics of the region.

Community Colleges as Engines of Growth

Community colleges are uniquely positioned to drive economic growth, particularly within rural communities. Their close proximity to local businesses and familiarity with local economic conditions allow them to tailor program offerings and address the unique needs of their

communities. In places where the most talented students leave for four-year colleges and urban centers, community colleges can serve students who are more likely to stay and build a life in their hometowns. Educational resources in rural communities often go disproportionately to the most promising students, which exacerbates a cycle of rural “brain drain” and results in the continued depletion of human capital in the regions that need it most.⁴⁴

By better preparing what sociologist Patrick Carr calls the “stayers” to participate in a 21st century economy, the community colleges of Region C can function as engines of both person and place-based development. Recent research has identified three ways in which community college can function as more efficient engines of rural development.

First, community colleges should develop strong student pipelines from high schools. Isothermal Community College in Rutherford County is placing an emphasis on creating this sort of pipeline. Their “College 101” initiative brings students to campus as early as elementary school for events that last as long as a week. At these events students receive information on finance, success, self-advocacy, job skills and the importance of continuing their education. Isothermal identified this initiative as an institutional “best practice.”⁴⁵

Second, community colleges should create and sustain substantive partnerships with local industry. These partnerships were a primary focus of Governor McCrory’s recent #ALIGN4NCWORKS strategic plan, as well as his recent statewide “1,000 in 100” workforce tour. All three of Region C’s community colleges utilize dozens of partnerships with local employers. These partnerships remain a strategic focal point for community colleges across the state.

⁴⁴ Carr, Patrick J. (2009). *Hollowing out the Middle: The Rural Brain Drain and What it Means for America*.

⁴⁵ Gavin, Mike. (n.d.). *Workforce Learning Summit Innovation / Best Practice*, page1.

Third, momentum is growing behind the creation of streamlined curricular pathways for community college students. In 2014, the American Association of Community Colleges identified the creation of guided curricular pathways as one of their core recommendations in a report titled “Empowering Community Colleges to Build the Nation’s Future.”⁴⁶ The same year, Scott Ralls, the former President of the North Carolina Community College system announced that the creation of “defined, structured pathways” would become an academic emphasis of the state’s community college system.⁴⁷

These three pillars of reform – pipelines, partnerships, and pathways – serve as a well-researched and widely understood foundation for re-considering how our community colleges operate. Therefore, we chose to look beyond these core practices when considering how the community colleges of Region C can more effectively foster economic development.

2A. Manufacturing Image Campaign

First, we recommend a renewed emphasis on the marketing of advanced manufacturing career tracks to high school and community college students. According to a 2014 study from The Manufacturing Institute, over half of US-based manufacturers plan to increase domestic production over the next five years and over 75 percent of manufacturers report a moderate to severe shortage of skilled workers.⁴⁸ The inefficiencies hurt profits and further incentivize manufacturers to “go where the talent is.” In most cases, this focus on talent means moving to metro areas where more skilled workers reside. This fact makes it especially difficult to convince firms to relocate in rural areas facing both a talent exodus and an aging population.

⁴⁶ American Association of Community Colleges. (2014). *Empowering Community Colleges to Build the Nation’s Future*.

⁴⁷ Wheeler, Burgetta Eplin. (March 28, 2014). *Challenges, Successes of the NC Community College System*.

⁴⁸ Accenture, The Manufacturing Institute. (2014) *Out of Inventory: Skills Shortage Threatens Growth of US Manufacturing*.

Closing this skills gap in such a non-metropolitan area such as Region C will require both firms and community colleges to collaborate in changing public misperceptions about manufacturing careers. For generations, manufacturing jobs provided workers across all educational levels with reliable careers that provided decent benefits and pathways into the American middle class. As those traditional manufacturing jobs began to disappear, so did the public's faith in manufacturing work as a viable career option. The American Manufacturing Partnership (AMP) has identified this disillusionment with manufacturing work as a "critical" component of the current skilled labor shortage. Simply put, advanced manufacturers can provide good jobs for skilled workers but are hindered by a public perception that manufacturing work is unsafe, unreliable, and low paying.

We recommend that education and business leaders partner to act on the AMP's suggestion of a "manufacturing image campaign" across Region C. In the fall of 2013, the AMP created a Manufacturing Image and Engagement team tasked with exploring ways in which a public information campaign could most effectively set about changing public perceptions of manufacturing work.⁴⁹ The work of the Image and Engagement Team yielded a number of recommendations and isolated attempts at launching this work, including the creation of a National Manufacturing Day. However, the AMP has yet to finance or launch a formal marketing campaign. Making an earnest attempt at such a campaign presents an opportunity for stakeholders in Region C to act as pioneers in an endeavor that would be new, exciting, and potentially very effective.

⁴⁹ The President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology. (October, 2014). *Report to the President: Accelerating U.S. Advanced Manufacturing*.

2B. Opportunities for Innovative Programming

Our second recommendation is to explore the potential for innovative program offerings in Region C community colleges. If rural community colleges want to attract a new student population, and leverage their particular geographical or cultural strengths, they must offer programs that are both appealing and regionally unique. Certain program offerings within Region C reflect this imperative, such as McDowell Tech's Equine Sciences program. Yet a great deal of untapped potential exist in areas such as tourism, outdoor recreation, and the fermentation sciences.

While structural challenges can often slow the pace of curricular innovation in community colleges, a number of schools and states have created exciting and economically relevant programming. In 2008, the state of Kansas approved a \$155,000 grant to Cloud Community College to expand its wind energy technology program.⁵⁰ Southwest Community College, in Jackson County, opted to take advantage of its proximity to the mountains and rivers of Western North Carolina by launching an Outdoor Leadership Program. This unique program offers an Associate's Degree in Outdoor Leadership, which includes more than six industry standard certifications, including Wilderness Therapy and Emergency Wilderness Medicine.⁵¹ In 2014 Asheville-Buncombe Community College launched one of the country's first Associate's Degrees in Fermentation Sciences. Potential students camped out in front of the registrar's office. On the day that registration opened, the inaugural class reached full capacity in less than 20 minutes.⁵² The program has received national recognition as an example of community

⁵⁰ Carr, Patrick J. (2009). *Hollowing out the Middle: The Rural Brain Drain and What it Means for America*.

⁵¹ Southwestern Community College. (n.d.). *Outdoor Leadership*.

⁵² Inside Higher Ed. Fain, Paul. (January 30, 2014). *Will Work in Beer*.

colleges collaborating with leaders of a rapidly growing industry in a smart, collaborative way.⁵³ Similar programs could also hold a great deal of potential within Region C.

Leading Innovation in Community Colleges

Actively and earnestly exploring the potential implementation of these recommendations will require an institutional willingness to innovate. In their book “Re-Visioning Community Colleges: Positioning for Innovation,” education researchers Debbie Sydow and Richard L. Alfred note that community colleges are often “predisposed to avoiding risks.” Sydow and Alfred also observe that “a combination of factors including shared governance, academic autonomy, and other characteristics unique to higher education and specifically community college require leaders to navigate through a minefield” if they wish to implement substantive innovation.⁵⁴

These recommendations present relatively low-cost development options compared to other economic initiatives or disruptive educational ventures. However, they will require the ideological investment of an array of stakeholders, both across and within organizations. The work of the AMP’s Image and Engagement Team and the implementation of new programming at Southwestern and Ashville-Buncombe Community Colleges provide a framework for understanding how these proposals might be implemented. In concert with other people and place-based development initiatives, these recommendations could yield substantial human capital returns. However, even in isolation, they have the potential to bring new energy and investment to the economic development effort within Region C.

⁵³ Inside Higher Ed. Fain, Paul. (January 30, 2014). *Will Work in Beer*.

⁵⁴ Alfred and Sydow. (December 27, 2012). *Re-Visioning Community Colleges: Positioning for Innovation*.

3. Regional Economic Development Hubs

Stakeholders should establish and invest in regional economic development hubs in Shelby, Marion, and Rutherfordton, to build up amenities and general livability so the region can compete with nearby metropolitan centers for more high-skilled residents.

Overview and the Case of the Danville Regional Plan

Regional economic development hubs are micropolitan centers where public and private partnerships invest significantly to improve amenities and quality of life. The hubs aim to develop into places that can compete for new residents with nearby metropolitan centers and feed off their economic growth. Region C has three ideal candidates for development hubs: Shelby, Marion, and Rutherfordton. They represent the three largest towns within the region and already have several attributes that make them amenable to place-based investments. Public entities at the local and state levels can work together with private individuals and organizations to develop local infrastructure, public health, education, and other sectors to improve the quality of life for residents. Furthermore, community leaders from all three towns can coordinate development efforts to better secure funding from programs such as North Carolina's Main Street program. These investments can transform Shelby, Marion, and Rutherfordton into attractive destinations for people looking for a hometown with high livability and a low cost of living. Due to their proximity to thriving urban centers in Asheville, Charlotte, and Spartanburg, Region C's development hubs are positioned well to feed off their neighbors' economic energy.

Danville, Virginia established a regional development hub which can serve as a model for Region C. Southside, the region where Danville resides, bears remarkable resemblance to Region

C due to its status as a rural area that has relied on agriculture and manufacturing.⁵⁵ Similarly, it struggled to adapt to the economic trends that led to the departure of traditional industries. Starting in 2000, area leaders worked together to move the region beyond its declining industry base to create a more stable, diversified, and competitive economy with increasing wages for residents.⁵⁶ They formed the Danville Regional Plan, which focused on strategies that would bring high-wage, high-skill jobs with significant growth potential to the region. The plan recognized that a prerequisite toward effectively targeting these jobs was investing in the infrastructure and quality of life amenities necessary to attract skilled talent. The Danville Regional Plan directed funding toward establishing high-speed internet throughout the region, an advanced research and higher education institute, education and workforce development programs, and a civic loan program to support quality of life improvements. Infrastructure and amenities improvements over the last decade have turned Danville into a hub for the Southside region.

Region C could adopt Danville's example in Shelby, Marion, and Rutherfordton. The three communities could collaborate through resource sharing and setting up a unified planning committee to strengthen their case for funding, as well as presenting a cohesive regional strategy that aligns local goals. Over time, combined public and private investments can build each into competitive locations for new residents and stimulate the regional economy through spillover effects from their individual growth and development.

⁵⁵ Pierson, Andrew. (September 2013). *Reshaping Rural Development Through Knowledge Clusters: The Case of Danville and Southside, Virginia*, page 23.

⁵⁶ Pierson, Andrew. (September 2013). *Reshaping Rural Development Through Knowledge Clusters: The Case of Danville and Southside, Virginia*, page 24.

How Hubs Can Drive Regional Economic Transformation

Regional development strategies often seek to address human capital deficits in an effort to attract large jobs projects, particularly in manufacturing. However, investments in rural communities must go beyond developing human capital through workforce development programs and recruiting traditional industries. People-based economic development strategies are only effective in these areas if they mix with place-based strategies that help keep people from leaving with the skills they have developed. Metropolitan areas inherently hold an advantage over their less urban neighbors because they economize on the transportation cost of goods, workers, and ideas.⁵⁷ Cities facilitate learning and accelerate the diffusion of new ideas, along with encouraging specialization and trade.⁵⁸ They become highly attractive to skilled workers who largely want to locate near other skilled people and the firms that hire them. Likewise, cities tend to have greater quality of life than micropolitan or rural communities, due to a higher conglomeration of amenities.⁵⁹ The challenge for small cities and towns is to find ways to diversify their local economies, which often specialize in specific industries. Specialization leaves communities vulnerable to global price shocks or the increasing threat of outsourcing as global trade generates international competition from areas with much lower wages. Investing in programs that promote economic diversification and attract a skilled workforce can help rural regions mitigate the traditional economic struggles they continue to increasingly face.⁶⁰

Developing regional hubs in multiple locations within Region C can help it move beyond the historical drawbacks that have perpetuated its economic decline. With the region's central

⁵⁷ Kahn, Matthew E. (December 2009). *Cities, Economic Development, and the Role of Place-Based Policies: Prospects for Appalachia*.

⁵⁸ Kahn, Matthew E. (December 2009). *Cities, Economic Development, and the Role of Place-Based Policies: Prospects for Appalachia*.

⁵⁹ Kahn, Matthew E. (December 2009). *Cities, Economic Development, and the Role of Place-Based Policies: Prospects for Appalachia*.

⁶⁰ Kahn, Matthew E. (December 2009). *Cities, Economic Development, and the Role of Place-Based Policies: Prospects for Appalachia*.

location between three metropolitan areas (Charlotte, Asheville, and Spartanburg), it can successfully siphon off some of these areas' new populations by offering an enticing alternative to living in the city.⁶¹ Although Region C already offers a competitively low cost of living, it cannot attract new residents from these cities unless it can compete from a livability perspective as well.

Shelby, Marion, and Rutherfordton already have features that make them inviting for people looking for a bargain in terms of high livability and low cost of living. All three have robust downtowns which host annual festivals that bring in regional tourism.⁶² Furthermore, Shelby has already invested in local projects that seek to set it up as a hub for commerce, such as the recently completed \$19 million LeGrand Center conference facility, meant to attract resources and businesses to the town.⁶³ Shelby is near Gardner-Webb University, a private, four-year institution, which could help the town build on its high-skilled workforce.

A development strategy of investing in education, health and wellness, economic and community development programs could build on the amenities already available in Shelby, along with Marion and Rutherfordton. Targeted investments will allow the towns to compete with their metropolitan neighbors in terms of livability, where their lower cost of living already provides an advantage. Developing a reputation for affordable, high quality of life would make the towns more attractive to bargain hunters, which is a niche that could be even more valuable as baby boomers reach retirement age.⁶⁴

⁶¹ MIT. (n.d.). *Living Wage Calculator*.

⁶² Cleveland County Chamber of Commerce, City of Marion, Town of Rutherfordton.

⁶³ Shelby Star. (January 26, 2013). *How's Business at LeGrand Center?*

⁶⁴ Kahn, Matthew E. (December 2009). *Cities, Economic Development, and the Role of Place-Based Policies: Prospects for Appalachia*.

Potential Challenges and the Need for Regional Cohesion

Developing regional hubs has several implementation challenges that require consideration. The length of time required to see the impact of any investments can lead people to abandon them if the return is not sufficiently high. In the case of Danville, Virginia, investments have made modest impacts over the past 16 years. Since 2000, Danville has added a total of 1,738 information and high-tech (IHT) jobs and 20 firms. Assuming an average wage of \$65,000 per year and an employment base of 27,095, Danville's investments have amounted to only a \$0.55 return in the form of IHT wages for every dollar invested (public and private funds).⁶⁵ Transforming an entire community and regional economy takes time, and it can be difficult when traditional manufacturing jobs continue to disappear. Each major investment decision can suffer from long-term opportunity costs and path dependencies due to factors such as history, institutions, and geography.⁶⁶ Public and private leaders need to practice patience for programs to succeed. They must consider the strategy within a multi-decade time span, as Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill community leaders did during the 30-year development of the Research Triangle Park.⁶⁷

Along with problems of patience, regional hubs can cause inter-community competition for resources leading to a lack of cohesion between the hubs. As a regional strategy, the development hubs should work together in seeking out funding from local and state agencies, along with private organizations.

⁶⁵ Pierson, Andrew. (September 2013). *Reshaping Rural Development Through Knowledge Clusters: The Case of Danville and Southside, Virginia*, page 56.

⁶⁶ Pierson, Andrew. (September 2013). *Reshaping Rural Development Through Knowledge Clusters: The Case of Danville and Southside, Virginia*, page 58.

⁶⁷ Cirillo, Christopher. (April 28, 2013). *Birth of an Idea: The Creation of Research Triangle Park and Its Sustained Economic Impact on the Research Triangle Area*.

Community leaders in Shelby, Rutherfordton, and Marion should leverage the Council of Government entity for Region C to help coordinate funding and development efforts. The Councils are structured to promote cooperation between federal programs and state and local governments, particularly aimed at confronting issues concerning aging, transportation planning, workforce development, and community planning.⁶⁸ Regional hubs can also share resources with each other, particularly regarding data and analysis of different programs. Coordinating the hubs as an overall regional strategy will give them a better chance of success due to inter-community support based on a shared vision.

Finally, regional planners must take care not to fall into path dependence and over-specialization. Danville suffers for focusing too heavily on developments aimed at growing information and high-tech industries, which may not pay off in the long-term due to their assumptions about bioenergy markets.⁶⁹ Leaders should always focus on opportunities that offer the greatest number of well-paying, accessible jobs in market-driven fields, even if that means a change of course with their investment strategies. Regional development hubs can flourish if public and private sector leaders keep an open perspective regarding growth opportunities.

VI. Funding

We recognize that the implementation of our recommendations relies heavily upon the amount of available finances. For that reason, we have listed potential federal, state, and local revenue sources for each recommendation below. The variety of financial resources could add to the sustainability of each recommendation.

⁶⁸ Association of Regional Councils of Government (n.d.). *Our Mission*.

⁶⁹ Pierson, Andrew. (September 2013). *Reshaping Rural Development Through Knowledge Clusters: The Case of Danville and Southside, Virginia*, page 37.

Kenan Fellows

Federal grants and higher education institutions fund 47 percent of Kenan Fellows.⁷⁰ The program's administration applies for grants to foster partnerships with specific STEM industries in each county to for the \$1.2 million in annual program costs.⁷¹ These grants pay for the \$5,500 stipend each fellow receives, as well as additional professional development throughout the academic year. The second largest funding contributors, foundations and corporations, give 22 percent of program funding.⁷² As the amount of direct funding from the Kenan Institute and Kenan Charitable Trust decreases yearly, applying for more federal grants to increase funding is a sustainable option for Region C.

NC State Economic Development Partnership, Kenan Fellows, and the three community colleges with ECHS partnerships can apply for National Science Foundation (NSF) grants in Civil, Mechanical, and Manufacturing Innovation. The NSF's four different sectors in the program include advanced manufacturing and resilient and sustainable infrastructures, encouraging cross-disciplinary collaboration in research and design. In Region C, applications should highlight its well-established secondary and postsecondary partnerships as well as its educational and economic need for research and development in advanced technologies. Grant recipients can receive up to \$1.5 million for five years. Annual grant application periods are in February and September. Due to the immediate advantages to community college campus facilities, Kenan Fellows, ECHS, and the economic advantages each county receives, grant applications should be turned in by September 2016.

⁷⁰ Interview with Lisa Hibler. March 22, 2016.

⁷¹ Interview with Lisa Hibler. March 22, 2016.

⁷² Interview with Lisa Hibler. March 22, 2016.

Kenan Fellows received 22 percent of its funding from foundations and corporations during 2014-2015.⁷³ Other major smaller funding sources include state appropriations (7 percent) and in-kind donations (8 percent).⁷⁴ Other potential funding sources for Region C include the following:

- NSF's Industry & University Cooperative Research Program⁷⁵
- NC State- College of Education
- NC State- Industrial Extension Services
- Department of Energy's Industrial Assessment Centers Grant⁷⁶

Community Colleges

The exact cost of creating new courses depends on the nature of the specific course, yet a 2008 report from North Carolina Insight places the approximate cost of creating a new program offering at \$151,000.⁷⁷ It is unlikely that these funds would be made available from the North Carolina Community College System. Creating new programming would therefore require schools to eliminate existing programming or create new funding streams through grants or industry partnerships.

A number of global and regional manufacturers participated in the AMP Steering Committee that recommended the creation of an image-enhancement campaign.⁷⁸ These companies could represent important funding sources. They include:

- The Northrup Grumman Corporation
- Honeywell
- Overland Storage
- Caterpillar
- Alcoa
- The Dow Chemical Company

⁷³ Interview with Lisa Hibler. March 22, 2016.

⁷⁴ Interview with Lisa Hibler. March 22, 2016.

⁷⁵ National Science Foundation (n.d). *I/IUCRC: Industry & University Cooperative Research Program*.

⁷⁶ Energy.gov: Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy (n.d.). *Industrial Assessment Centers (IACS)*.

⁷⁷ Quintero, John. (May 2008). *Key Issues Facing NC Community Colleges*.

⁷⁸ Southwestern Community College. (n.d.). *Outdoor Leadership*.

- Siemens Corporation
- Applied Materials Incorporated

Potential non-profit funding sources for either an image-enhancement campaign or the creation of new programming include:

- The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- The Kenan Charitable Trust
- The National Science Foundation
- The American Chemical Society
- The Duke Endowment
- The Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust

Development Hubs

Each regional development hub will require significant amounts of public and private investment. In Southside, Virginia, partners have invested approximately \$1 billion in development projects in and around Danville since 2000.⁷⁹ The majority of Southside’s funding has come from the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Reinvestment Commission, the primary steward of Virginia’s 1998 tobacco settlement that awarded \$4.1 billion over 25 years to the state.⁸⁰

North Carolina received \$4.6 billion in the same settlement, which Governor Hunt and the General Assembly partitioned toward different public trust funds.⁸¹ North Carolina will receive the last portion of this settlement (\$186 million) over the next seven years. A majority of the funding for developing Shelby, Marion, and Rutherfordton could come from grant petitions aimed at the state’s tobacco settlement money. Specifically, the three towns could work together to apply for grants with the Golden LEAF Foundation, which the General Assembly entrusted

⁷⁹ Pierson, Andrew. (September 2013). *Reshaping Rural Development Through Knowledge Clusters: The Case of Danville and Southside, Virginia*, page 23.

⁸⁰ Pierson, Andrew. (September 2013). *Reshaping Rural Development Through Knowledge Clusters: The Case of Danville and Southside, Virginia*, page 26.

⁸¹ North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust Fund. (n.d.). *Brief Overview of the Tobacco Settlement*.

with half the settlement money. A coordinated proposal would offer a compelling and innovative case for funding, and increase the likelihood of earning the capital necessary to successfully transform all three towns into thriving regional hubs.

Along with tobacco settlement-based funding, community leaders in Shelby, Marion, and Rutherfordton could work together to request investment through the North Carolina Main Street Program.⁸² The Main Street Program assists communities with populations under 50,000 in restoring economic vitality to their historic downtowns. Grant funds for specific projects aim at revitalizing downtowns using a process developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.⁸³ They could present a regional petition for funding, which would distinguish it from other applications, boosting the region's competitiveness for grants.

Other sources of potential funding for the development hubs includes:

- Duke Energy
- NC Rural Center
- Council of Government (COG)
- Workforce, Education, and Opportunities Act (discretionary funding)

VII. Conclusion

After thorough research and extensive interviews, we feel that the best approach to reinvigorate Region C's economy is a balance of person-based and place-based initiatives. Expanding the Kenan Fellows by three to four fellows a year in the region's Early College High Schools will develop students' interest in STEM education and develop a highly skilled workforce for future jobs in the region. A manufacturing image campaign to recast the industry in a new light could encourage students to pursue manufacturing careers. Innovative regionally focused curriculum, like fermentation sciences or an outdoor program, could increase enrollment

⁸² North Carolina Department of Commerce. *Main Street*.

⁸³ North Carolina Department of Commerce. *Main Street*.

in the region's three community colleges. Finally, collaboration across county lines to create regional development hubs could make the Region's towns of Shelby, Marion, and Rutherfordton viable alternatives to the expensive lifestyles of nearby urban areas. These strategies could benefit from an in-depth survey of the preferences, opinions, and experiences of ground-level stakeholders within Region C. With a balance of person and place-based development across the region, it is possible to re-shape the economic future of Region C.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Kenan Fellows Interest Teacher Survey



Do you know of the Kenan Fellows Program?

Yes

No

No

If so, what do you know about the program?

NC State's Kenan Fellows' mission is to advance K-12 Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math (STEM) education by placing educators in three week summer internships with companies in the STEM industry within their region. Educators will understand the necessary skills needed in STEM fields and incorporate them into their curriculum with the assistance of Kenan Fellow guidance throughout the academic year. Fellows receive a \$5,200 stipend for their work.

Would you be interested in applying for Kenan Fellows?

Yes

No

Please explain why you are interested or not interested in the Kenan Fellows program currently.

Appendix 2: Recent Community College Graduates

What community college are you attending or did you attend?

What degree will or did you receive?

Describe any challenges you faced in completing your degree.

How supported did you feel by your community college toward completing your degree?

Not at all A little Enough A lot

Are you currently employed?

Yes

No

How did your community college experience prepare you for the work environment?

How did you find your current job?

What aspects of the job were most critical in your decision to take the job?

Are you currently looking for a job?

Yes

No

What actions are you currently taking in order to find a job?

What aspects of a job would be most critical in your decision to apply for or take the job?

What do you believe are the most critical challenges toward getting a job?

What has your job (or job search) taught you that you did not learn in school?

Appendix 3: Community College Instructors

Q1

Your Name (Optional)

Q2

Your Email (Optional)

Q3

With what community college are you affiliated? (Required)

- McDowell Community College
- Isothermal Community College
- Cleveland Community College

Q15

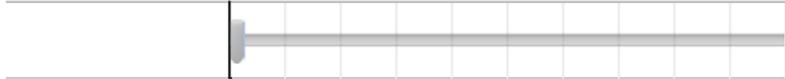
What is your role / job title? (Optional)

Page Break

Q4

On a scale of 1 to 10, to what extent do you feel the community colleges in Rutherford, McDowell, and Polk counties are contributing to regional economic development and the creation of a well-prepared workforce?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



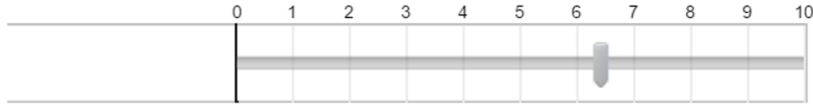
Q5

Please explain the rating you provided.

Q6



On a scale of 1 to 10, to what extent do you feel the course and program offerings at your institution are **aligned to the unique workforce needs and development opportunities** within Region C?



Q7



Please explain the rating you provided..

Page Break

Q8



If possible, please give some specific examples of new course or program offerings that might contribute to a more innovative and skilled workforce within Region C.

Page Break

Q9



We'd love to hear any additional insights you might have on how Region C community colleges could better contribute to an economically vibrant community. All ideas, opinions, and experiences are welcome. Specific examples are always helpful.

Appendix 4: Business Survey



How many people work at this worksite?

	0	1-9	10-49	50-99	100-499	500+	Don't know or prefer not to answer
Full-time employees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Part-time employees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contractors or temp workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What growth or downsizing has your worksite experienced within the last 3 to 5 years?

Over the next two years, do you expect to face declining employment, stable employment, or increasing employment?

Declining

Stable

Increasing

Don't know or can't share

How many employees do you anticipate hiring at this worksite over the next two years?

	0	1-9	10-49	50-99	100-249	250+	Don't know or can't share
Full-time employees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Part-time employees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What types of jobs do your employees hold, and what is required for those jobs?

What is your worksite's #1 workforce need and why? (What keeps you up at night about your workforce?)

Are you able to find the employees you need?

Yes

No

Depends on the position

If "no" or "depends on position," roughly what percent of your jobs are difficult to fill, and what are the titles of the titles of the positions are that are difficult to fill?

Why might you have difficulty filling jobs? Applicants... (check all that apply)

Do not meet minimum education level

Have not attained appropriate industry-recognized certifications

Do not have appropriate technical or job-related skills

Did not have critical thinking/problem-solving skills

Do not possess "soft skills" needed for the job (e.g. worth ethic, interpersonal skills, teamwork)

Do not have required work experience

Have criminal records

Fail drug screening test or credit check

Interview poorly or fail to follow through with application process appropriately

Are unwilling to accept offered pay/compensation

Are unwilling to accept work conditions of job

Are unwilling or unable to accept the commuting distance or travel

There is a low number of applicants (limited selection)

N/A (no trouble filling jobs)

Other (please specify)

In the past two years, has your company used North Carolina workforce resources to meet its current workforce needs or prepare future workers? Mark all that apply.

Community Colleges

Workforce Development Board

NCWorks Career Centers

NC Dept. of Commerce/Division of Workforce Solutions

Public Schools

NCWorks Online

Apprenticeship

Vocational Rehabilitation (Dept. of Health and Human Services)

Did not work with NC workforce services

Other (please specify)

What types of services did your business receive? Mark all that apply.

Education/training

Help setting up work-based learning (apprenticeship, On-the-Job Training, Internship, co-op...)

Recruiting/applicant screening/job matching

Profiling jobs and/or helping workers/applicants obtain credentials

Labor market information/workforce needs

Connection of workforce services to business/industry needs

Outplacement Services (e.g. Rapid Response)

Other (please specify)

What were the end results of the services provided? Mark all that apply.

Improved quality of workers/applicants

Improved productivity of workers/applicants

Enabled company to use new technology

Reduced turnover

Reduced costs to company

Reduced time/aggravation for company/management

Provided HR-related assistance to company

Provided data/information

In general, listened to/met company needs

Other (please specify)

What county is your worksite in?

Cleveland

McDowell

Polk

Rutherford

Which industry group best describes the company or organization?

Manufacturing

Knowledge Creation

Military

Agriculture, Forestry, and Food

Bio Pharma

Business Services

Hospitality, Tourism, and Entertainment

IT/Software

Transportation Logistics

Energy

Other Private Sector Industry

Public Sector

Don't know (if selected, please describe your organization)

What is your title/role in the company?

President/chief executive of organization

CFO or COO/operations director

HR Director

HR - other

Place/facility manager

Supervisor

Other (please specify)