

FLORIDA ADVANCED TECHNOLOGICAL EDUCATION
CENTER for MANUFACTURING EDUCATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“New Statewide Community College Degree in support of Modern Manufacturing”

FLATE’s review and reform of the statewide Curriculum Frameworks has redefined manufacturing and related curriculum at the state level. Together with the Florida Department of Education’s Career and Technical Education team, Florida community colleges, and Florida industries, FLATE has created a new 60 credit hour A.S./A.A.S. degree in Engineering Technology (ET) that addresses the skills and knowledge required in today’s high-tech manufacturing workplace. The degree aligns with the Florida Career and Professional Education Act (SB1232), passed recently by the legislature, that focuses on enhancing career and technical education through high school career academies, articulated pathways, industry certifications, and statewide planning partnerships between business and education communities, to expand and retain high-value industry, and sustain a vibrant state economy.

This degree is structured as a one-plus-one curriculum to allow students multiple completion points and curriculum options that meet their needs and those of Florida employers. The basic premise of this one-plus-one approach is a year-one technical core curriculum that aligns with the new national certification for manufacturing, the Manufacturing Skills Standards Council (MSSC) Portable Production Skills certification. Approved by the Florida Department of Education, this 18 credit hour core covers introductory computer aided drafting, electronics, instrumentation and testing, quality, safety, processes and materials. In year-two of the degree, the student chooses a specialization track that meets the needs of their local industries and

provided them advanced competencies in that area. At the present time there are 5 approved specialization tracks each with some required and elective topics. Each community college is free to adopt any or all of the specialization tracts and certificates depending on their local industry needs. The newly-approved specialization tracts are: Advanced Manufacturing, Advanced Technology, Electronics, Mechanical Fabrication & Design, and Quality. Five community colleges, including two 2 community colleges in the greater Tampa Bay area, have begun their institutional processes to adopt the new degree program for student enrollment in the fall of 2007.

This community college Engineering Technology degree is part of a much larger unified curriculum project. It reaches out to the high school technology programs and career academies, incumbent worker training, and bachelor degree programs. Through the MSSC certification, it provides a pathway for both high school student and incumbent workers to gain college credit for the year-1 core curriculum. Thanks to the work of the Employ Florida Banner Center for Manufacturing, the certification exams are available at testing centers across the state. This articulation pathway ensures that career and technology education is no longer a dead-end, and that those students can advance their education as desired.

FLATE (Florida Advanced Technological Education) Regional Center for Manufacturing Education was created in 2004 through a National Science Foundation Advanced Technological Education grant. The center is one of 32 Centers of Excellence in the United States focused on improving science, technological, engineering, and mathematics education to meet the technician workforce needs of the American advanced-technology industries. FLATE is housed in the Brandon Campus of Hillsborough Community College in Tampa, Florida, and serves the entire State's educational programs for manufacturing and related technologies.
