

Fall 2017



# We're Back!



HOUSATONIC COMMUNITY COLLEGE

# Advanced Manufacturing Technology Center

The AMTC Class of 2018 had a kick start at this year's orientation. It began with personal introductions from staff, *rules of the road* for the coming year, team-building exercises and then capped things off as Eric Noack (Orchid Orthopedics) and Chris Dolny (Moore Tool) delivered the goods on what manufacturing is all about and how to make it in the industry. That was enough to make everyone's head spin, get an enthusiasm buzz going and send this group into high gear. As Mike Gugger put it, "this is going to be like having a fire hose turned on you full blast in September...and it doesn't stop until May". And that's pretty much the way it goes, as we compress a ton of experiential learning into a short window of time. Matriculating through the AMTC program is not for the faint-hearted ; it demands hard work from beginning to end. But there is a light at the end of that tunnel, as our proven success rate continues to place graduates into solid jobs ...and that's what we are supposed to do. So I am once again asking that you partner with us in delivering the promise of a bright future as a reward for serious effort. That is how Connecticut must develop it's workforce.



## Let's get started

There is no better motivator or encouragement for a bunch of manufacturing *newbies* than to have direct interaction from the industry. Whether being a guest speaker, offering company tours, sponsoring an intern or just stopping by to visit the operation and talk with our students, you become a key factor in their success. I must say that we are grateful because over the past few years many manufacturers have done exactly that. Those of you who have made a time investment in the AMTC also received the benefit of checking the product before it has been finished. Some proactive folks have even developed relationships with future employees as they make their way through first semester (that's a hint). If you may be willing to partner with us in any capacity, just give me a shout and I'll work it all out. We believe in keeping things simple and direct.

## The word is out

---

Last year thirteen local high schools toured the AMTC and followed that up with a visit to a local company. The idea is to promote manufacturing as a viable career option for kids who are trying to figure what to do with the rest of their lives. Almost everyone these days understands the educational trend has not supported the concept of factory work for a long time. But if you look real close, that is slowly beginning to change...one small step at a time. I have not even begun contacting local educators to deliver presentations at their schools, yet we already have three districts in the pipeline with twice the number of interested students than before. Now that's enough to make me think something good is going on.

What I need from you to move this forward is a willingness to offer groups of 25 or so high school students an opportunity to see your operation up close and personal. I need to give some serious shout-outs to companies like Moore Tool, NE Laser, PeP/Lacey, Edgewell, PDC International, Ashcroft, Straton, Bead, Alinabal Holo-Krome, MPI, and others who have been exceptional sponsors. If you can help, please let me know. I'm thinking there are going to be even more school districts interested this year...and that's how we make things happen.



## Industry Advisory Committee

---

The fall meeting of the Advisory Committee was attended by a sell-out crowd which included manufacturers, educators, state agency representatives and AMTC staff. Among many issues discussed were graduate expectations and training, developing a broader field of interest in the industry, competitive admissions protocol, placement, internships, demographics for the Class of 2018, recruitment efforts, Steam events, mock interviews, community outreach, the Manufacturing Hall of Fame, funding and sustainability, AMTC staffing, advisory functions and curriculum. If that sounds like an ambitious agenda...well, you should have been there. And that's the point. Quarterly meetings help determine direction and action in the Advanced Manufacturing Center, making participation from industry key to the process.

A major concern was succession planning, as a recognized aging workforce along with increased state/national response to manufacturing as an economic driver creates huge gaps in both available workers and substantial training. This can be clearly seen in renewed apprenticeship interest and skill expectations for AMTC graduates. Probably the most important take-away was delivered by Program Director Rich Dupont who explained that manufacturers must understand the degree of training offered through a nine-month is limited. That means we can and do provide advanced entry-level workers, but not experienced machinists. By working with industry partners, in a cycle of continuous improvement, the AMTC will continue to deliver the best possible employees for the manufacturing industry. Together, we can make things better. That's why the AMTC needs your support. *Gene LaPorta*