Dollars + STEM Education = Job Creation

Society of Manufacturing Engineers

Funding provided by the SME Education Foundation supports Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education programs designed to prepare young people for technically-skilled jobs in sustainable careers.

DEARBORN, Mich., January 31, 2011 — In a recent study, the Kauffman Foundation [1] found that in any given year, the top-performing one percent of firms is generating roughly 40 percent of all new jobs. The SME Education Foundation [2] accelerated its efforts through relationships with this one percent of major companies to deliver its STEM-based programs and expand job growth. Managing an $18 million endowment, Foundation Director, Bart A. Aslin and his five person staff are changing public perception of manufacturing with Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)-based education programs – the result of a series of highly successful collaborations with business and industry over the past 30 years.

As the Bureau of Labor Statistics continues to report U.S. unemployment levels above 9 percent, the SME Education Foundation accelerated its Planned Giving [3] efforts. A direct mail program targets five distinct audience segments ranging from ages 25-40 to those in the 70-plus age group (many of whom have benefited from successful careers in manufacturing). The Planned Giving program encourages support for the Foundation's Gateway Academy [4], Computer Integrated Manufacturing (CIM) [5] Program offering courses in high schools and its critically important SME Education Foundation Scholarship Program [6].

Today, more than ever, companies clearly understand their organization's vitality and long-term sustainability are dependent on being able to hire technically skilled workers. Committed and more knowledgeable, they are making long-term investments in the Foundation's STEM-based programs and encouraging entrepreneurial small business partners to join them.

Working with Bart Aslin, Grant Writer and Fund Developer, Peggy McIntyre, identifies strategically compatible organizations interested in financially supporting the Foundation's many programs. In 2010, funding for scholarships, youth programs and capital equipment for schools included support from the Andersen Foundation, Gene Haas Foundation, Siemens PLM Software and the National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering (NACME).

Students and their parents have benefited of career direction and financial support through the Foundation's Scholarship Program. Program Officer, Kathleen Carter, who has worked with Foundation's Scholarship Committees since 1998, has seen over $4.2 million dollars in financial aid granted through its various scholarship programs. Advancements in technology, enjoyed by consumers today, has

increased awareness and generated excitement, and as the economy improves — about careers in advanced manufacturing.

Last year, a gift of $270,000 established the new Walter E. Panse Scholarship, honoring the memory of a Michigan tool and die executive. "Our scholarship committee represents all levels of manufacturing, "says Carter. "They are very aware of the challenges facing aspiring engineers and in many cases arrived at their own present position because of a scholarship. They consider scholarships an investment in the future of manufacturing and evaluate applications accordingly."

A $150,000 grant from the Gene Haas Foundation is helping qualified students interested in machine operation and maintenance coursework. In addition to supporting the Haas Machining Scholarship, these dollars also funded the introduction of the Computer Integrated Manufacturing (CIM) Centers at 400 Project Lead The Way schools across the country which engage other industry partners and SME Chapters.

In 2010, $382,250 in scholarships was awarded to 140 students in the United States and Canada ranging from a minimum $1,000 to $70,000. These students are now able to take advantage of career opportunities opening in emerging technology and advanced manufacturing. Carter encourages students to visit the website at www.smeef.org [2] where more than 45 different scholarships are available. The deadline for 2011 scholarship applications closes on February 1, 2011.

The SME Education Foundation's Computer Integrated Manufacturing (CIM) course has reached 2,000 students in 25 states where CIM classes are currently taught. Funded states included Alabama, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Washington and Wisconsin. Requests for funding reflect high unemployment rates. With the exception of seven states, each of the remaining 18 states has a current unemployment rate of eight to 12 percent.

Laurie Maxson, director of the Foundation's youth programs, and an award-winning teacher and former Career and Technical Education Director for Project Lead The Way (PLTW), successfully served as a conduit between PLTW and the SME Education Foundation. Her involvement helped secure financial support and in-kind donations from organizations such as 3M, Intel and the Kauffman Foundation, making it possible for the Foundation to offer STEM-based youth programs. Today, she is working to identify PLTW schools interested in offering the CIM program.

Attention to detail in managing the SME Education Foundation's myriad programs is Christine Milantoni, program coordinator, who has worked at the Foundation for nearly ten years, and who brings a parent's eye to the program. Monitoring the Foundation's website, including its Manufacturing is Cool and CareerMe.org web sites; she is available to students seeking information on applying for a scholarship best suited to their background and interest.

The SME Education Foundation is committed to inspiring, supporting and preparing

the next generation of manufacturing engineers and technologists in the advancement of manufacturing education. Created by the Society of Manufacturing Engineers in 1979, the SME Education Foundation has provided more than $31 million since 1980 in grants, scholarships and awards through its partnerships with corporations, organizations, foundations, and individual donors. For more information, visit the SME Education Foundation at www.smeef.org [2]. Also visit www.CareerMe.org [7] for information on advanced manufacturing careers and, our award-winning website for young people, www.ManufacturingisCool.com [8].

Questions or comments may be directed to the SME Education Foundation by phone (313) 425-3300, or email at foundation@sme.org [9]. Note to Editors: jpeg photos available upon request.

SOURCE [10]

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