COLLEGE OVERVIEW

Dakota County Technical College (DCTC) operates its main campus in Rosemount, Minn., just 30 minutes from the Twin Cities, with additional educational sites in Apple Valley, Eagan, and Burnsville. The college primarily serves the population geographically situated within 25 miles of the college, though several of its unique programs put DCTC on both the national and international front.

ENROLLMENT PATTERNS, TRENDS, AND DEMOGRAPHICS

- DCTC’s student population is 53.4 percent male and 46.6 percent female. Full-time students average 25 years of age with part-time students averaging 32 years of age. The overall average age of DCTC’s students is 28. Students of color make up about 13 percent of the population.

- DCTC’s location within Dakota County holds excellent potential for the college, as the State of Minnesota Demographer’s Office anticipates Dakota County’s total population growth from 2000 to 2010 to exceed 19 percent. Dakota County’s total growth from 2000 to 2030 is expected to exceed 41 percent with the population going from 355,904 in 2000 to 501,000 in 2030.

- Seeing that the average DCTC student is 28 years old and employed at least part-time, and with national statistics showing an increasing number of adult learners between 25-60 enrolling in college, DCTC elected to conduct a research study of adult learners in Dakota and Scott counties during the summer of 2006. The intent of the study was to gather information to aid the college in planning for the future. The results uncovered a number of potential markets that could benefit the college, including a clear demand for a higher education option in suburbs west of DCTC. Additionally, the study provided a wealth of information regarding program, scheduling, and marketing choices that would be best suited for attracting adult learners.

- Recent enrollment patterns have shown an increase in the number of part-time students enrolled at DCTC. Total headcount from FY07 to FY08 increased by nearly 6 percent while the total FYE declined by 4.5 percent. This can be attributed to the increasing number of adult students enrolling at DCTC, with 80 percent maintaining at least part-time employment. Additionally, a loss of 100 FYE can be attributed to the college’s decision to move its Truck Driver Training program from credit to hour-based programming.

- Current economic conditions have provided DCTC with an opportunity to promote the value of short-term and technical education. About 60 percent of DCTC’s student population report having completed at least some college, and nearly 50 percent state that their primary reason for attending college is to make a career change. As a result, these individuals are looking for specialized training that can quickly and effectively aid them in finding employment. Strong enrollment in programs such as Electrical Lineworker, Biomedical Equipment Technology, Wood Finishing, and Welding reflect this trend.

SCOPE OF EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

- DCTC offers more than 50 different programs that are divided into seven academic departments. The seven departments are Business & Management, Business & Information Systems, Design, General Education, Health & Human Services, Technical Careers & Emerging Technologies, and Transportation. Programs within these areas award certificates, diplomas, Associate in Applied Science degrees, and Associate in Science degrees while also delivering individual classes.
• DCTC has found great success on its main campus in Rosemount in programs relating to the areas of transportation, emerging technologies, and health. Many of the programs related to these fields have waiting lists, and nearly all have excellent employment demand with job placement rates around 95 percent.

• Transportation and emerging technologies have become a particular area of focus for the college, with the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development projecting an average of 10 percent employment growth in careers relating to these areas. The challenge for DCTC will be to maintain the technology, equipment, and space necessary for student success. As a result, the college was granted capital bonding dollars to develop the schematic design to renovate 98,000 square feet of space that will serve DCTC’s Transportation and Emerging Technologies department. The college anticipates requesting additional capital dollars in 2010 and 2012 to complete the renovation, which will improve sustainability, efficiency, space utilization, and eliminate $3.5 million in deferred maintenance projects.

• DCTC supports several curricula to train health care practitioners. The Practical Nursing program is one of our largest, diverse fields of study. The mean student age is 31 with a range from 19-61. Our new articulation with Metropolitan State University will enable program graduates to earn the BSN and practice as RNs.

• The DCTC Nursing Assisting program is one of our most fully subscribed training offerings for positions in long-term care facilities or in pre-nursing. There are 13 separate cohorts of 20 students each during the school year. The newest linkage is with the Somali Success School for training in Nursing Assisting.

• Through a partnership with Inver Hills Community College, the City of Apple Valley, and Saint Mary’s University of Minnesota, Dakota County Technical College maintains an educational site in Apple Valley. This site houses the college’s Business & Management department and served more than 500 students during FY08 and specifically caters to the needs of adult learners. Most courses are offered in the evening, on weekends, or online; have scattered start dates; offer accelerated formats; and are taught by instructors who have industry experience and understand how to facilitate classroom discussion with adult learners. The three partners also provide students with the means to seamlessly transfer between the three institutions if they wish to pursue a more advanced degree.

• The business emphasis at DCTC’s Apple Valley site has allowed the site’s Business & Management programs to flourish. The site is home to the Institute for Business, Innovation & Entrepreneurship, a business incubator, a small business development center, and regularly provides speakers on business-related topics. Additionally, hundreds of students have enrolled in classes to further their business knowledge, and alumni of the DCTC Business & Management programs have started more than 100 new businesses during the past six years. The DCTC Business & Management site was rewarded for its success in January 2008 with three national awards – the National Association of Community College Entrepreneurship (NACCE) Faculty Member of the Year, the NACCE/New York Times Student Essay Award, and a Coleman and Hughes Foundation grant for the college to start a new speaker series and networking group for entrepreneurs. The site is also home to the Institute for Business, Innovation & Entrepreneurship, a business incubator, a small business development center, and regular business-related speakers.

**INSTITUTIONAL DISTINCTION**

• As one of five stand-alone public technical colleges in Minnesota, DCTC provides the specialized training that many students value; however, the cost of maintaining equipment and space for classrooms, labs, and shops for this type of programming causes DCTC’s tuition rates to be among the highest in state and presents challenges to the college in maintaining its valuable technical programs.

• Current economic conditions have increased the number of students leaving white-collar occupations in pursuit of education and employment in blue- and green-collar occupations. As a technical college, DCTC has been working diligently to develop and maintain the types of short-term and technical training needed to be successful in business and industry.
• Our most innovative health care curriculum is Medical Assisting. We offer a traditional (on-site, face to face) curriculum as well as a new hybrid-online schedule beginning January 2009. Students will study with their instructors in their own homes, then report to DCTC once a week for laboratory competency exercises. For the first time our Limited Practice Radiography component will be online with clinic on-site competency demonstration and documentation. Our site will likely become a center for limited practice radiography, training our students as well as practitioners from across the region.

• Through a partnership with the University of Minnesota, DCTC is home to one of the only two-year nanoscience technology programs in the United States. Recently, the college was awarded a $3 million grant to develop the Midwest Regional Center for Nanotechnology Education, or Nano-Link, which will provide resources and support to colleges throughout a five-state Midwest region from North Dakota to Michigan. Six two-year colleges in North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Michigan have partnered to develop this center, along with the University of Minnesota and Northwestern University.

• The Railroad Conductor Technology program is the only one of its kind among MnSCU institutions, complete with a quarter-mile rail track on DCTC’s Rosemount campus. The program is seven weeks in length and draws people from across the United States because of its unique, short-term nature.

• DCTC’s National Institute for Wood Finishing is home to the only certified Wood Finishing Technology program in the United States. It is a nationally recognized, nine-month program taught by a Smithsonian certified instructor, and its short-term, specialized nature draws students from around the world.

• DCTC was among the first 300 colleges and universities to sign on to the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment in July 2007.

• The college has a national reputation for providing training for emergency response driving, with police departments coming from as far away as Alaska to train on the college’s 2.5 mile decision driving track.

• The headcount for students enrolled in online courses during FY08 was more than 1,700.

• DCTC is one of the only technical colleges in the nation to offer full varsity athletics programs, including baseball, fastpitch softball, men’s soccer, and women’s soccer. After only seven years, the programs already boast several All-American athletes, regional titles, academic awards, and healthy recruiting classes.

INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE

Student Success

• The overall job placement rate for students graduating from DCTC in 2007 was 90.4 percent.

• The most recent licensure/certification pass rates in DCTC’s health-related programs were 94 percent for Medical Assisting, 96 percent for Practical Nursing, 97 percent for Nursing Assisting, and 100 percent for Dental Assisting.

• Fall 2006 incoming, full-time students had a 67.5 percent success rate, which is the combined percentage of students who were retained, transferred, or graduated.

• DCTC TRiO/Student Support Services served 170 students during FY08 and had a success rate (retain, transfer, graduate) of 74.1 percent.

• This past fall, DCTC implemented an electronic early warning system through information reported by faculty to alert counseling staff about students who may be experiencing academic or personal challenges.
Campus Profile: Dakota County Technical College

January 2009

• **DCTC is in its second year of an effort to provide intrusive advising to students on probation.**

**Fundraising**

• In FY08, the DCTC Foundation received $948,667 in cash donations.

• The DCTC Foundation distributed more than $266,000 to students in need of financial assistance during FY08.

• The college has an outstanding history in being awarded grants and contracts. Currently, the college is managing 14 Minnesota Job Skills Partnership grants with a total value of $3,021,512 that are providing training for Minnesota businesses.

• During 2007, the DCTC Foundation and alumni from the college’s Landscape Horticulture program were able to raise more than $200,000 in private funds to construct a new greenhouse on campus to replace the original structure that was built in the 1970s.

**Collaboration**

• Service learning and volunteerism at DCTC continue to benefit local communities and organizations, with DCTC’s faculty and students logging 7,365.5 service and volunteer hours in FY08 through class projects or individual initiatives.

• A partnership with the City of Rosemount has provided a new, three-field soccer complex on the grounds of DCTC. The City of Rosemount contributed $450,000 in exchange for the use of the land, and Ames Construction of Burnsville provided in-kind services totaling more than $470,000. The soccer complex is expected to bring more than 26,000 visitors to DCTC’s campus each year and will provide the DCTC soccer program with practice and game fields.

• A customized training partnership with Northwest Airlines and the Minnesota Job Skills Partnership is providing DCTC with the opportunity to train more than 1,600 leads and supervisors using a custom-built curriculum that provides 12 hours of intense, interactive leadership and supervisory training.

• DCTC delivers Occupational Spanish to several Twin Cities police departments, school districts, and real estate agencies. The training is designed to teach Spanish to individuals based on the needs of their specific occupation so they can begin using it immediately. The program has experienced a great deal of success and has been featured by Minnesota Public Radio and the Star Tribune because of its short-term, effective nature.

• Companies such as Anderson Windows, Caterpillar, and Goodrich have been working with DCTC as a training and workforce resource for more than a decade. These partnerships have resulted in scholarships, new equipment, and program support such as advisory boards and mentoring programs at the college.

• The Railroad Coalition and DCTC have worked together for the past two years to deliver railroad conductor training, with industry partners from Class I to local, regional, and short lines participating in development, placing graduates, and continuing to work with DCTC to meet future needs.

• The Minnesota State Patrol has partnered with DCTC to offer training to commercial vehicle inspectors, with 308 new inspectors receiving certification and more than 570 inspectors obtaining recertification during FY08.

• More than 400 individuals representing the cities of St. Paul, Bloomington, West St. Paul, and Rosemount, as well as Ramsey and Hennepin counties, were trained through DCTC’s Customized Training Transportation division. Defensive driving skills in snow plows, cars, small trucks, and a variety of other vehicles were taught and applied using the decision driving track and skid pad on DCTC’s campus.

**Innovations and Efficiencies**
• HEAPR dollars funded 14 acres of new roof that will save DCTC $25,000 annually in energy costs.

• The removal of earth berms blocking the view of the college from the road provided 250 yards of black soil to be used for the new soccer complex, saving $300,000 in excavation costs and allowing bioswale ponds to be created for storm water runoff.

• The college’s new, privately funded greenhouse will save $3,000 annually in natural gas costs and operates on a computerized energy management system that reduces energy consumption by 50 percent.

• DCTC’s Rosemount campus was updated with a new energy management system, occupancy sensors, and lighting control in half of the campus’ spaces during FY07, saving thousands of dollars a year in electricity costs.

• The college is building a fuel-efficient motor pool with the addition of a Toyota Prius and a Smart car.

INTEGRATED PLANNING

• The Higher Learning Commission will visit DCTC for its reaffirmation of accreditation in 2010. The college will use the results of that visit, as well as input from stakeholders and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system strategic directions, to guide its strategic planning for 2011-2020.

• Each year, all academic, administrative, and student support programs develop goals and work plans that tie into the strategic goals of the college and the strategic directions of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system, helping to assess institutional outcomes and gauge performance.

• Following the lead of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system-wide dashboards, DCTC will be implementing a campus-wide metrics system to improve integrated planning measures and accountability for both academic and non-academic programs.

• Through the proposed renovation of the Transportation and Emerging Technologies area at DCTC, the college will be able to complete a right-sizing process that will improve sustainability and program efficiency efforts.

• All DCTC programs undergo an efficiency review each year that alerts faculty and administration to the need for possible corrections or changes, and faculty and administration agree upon the measures used for the review. The five primary measures used for each program include FYE to FTE ratio, long-term FYE trend, instructional cost, projected employment growth, and average number of credits per faculty member. This wellness check process relies on the involvement of faculty in order to keep program enrollment healthy.

FUTURES PLANNING

• DCTC’s greatest concern in the future will be its facilities condition index (FCI) rating. Currently, DCTC’s facilities rank among the lowest in the MnSCU system, which poses a great threat to the college’s reputation and recruitment efforts. In order to continue to maintain the kind of quality technical programs needed in today’s economy, the college will need to procure the funding necessary to improve these spaces so that they become the kind of learning environments that students need to be successful.

• DCTC consists of 102 acres owned by MnSCU, as well as 105 acres of leased property that houses its decision driving track and electrical lineworker outdoor training facility. This property is leased from the University of Minnesota Outreach, Research, and Education (UMore) Park, which is a 5,000 acre site surrounding the college. The University of Minnesota is considering several proposal concepts to build a community at UMore, which could include an eco-
industrial park, a university-founded research park, or a sustainable community for 30,000 residents. DCTC is working with the University of Minnesota and other partners to further develop these planning concepts.

Dakota County Technical College

- The college has begun to work with local city and county government to discuss possibilities for an Institute of Extended Learning, which would specialize in programming designed for older adults. The college sees potential to extend its educational offerings to the generation that is currently approaching retirement age, recently retired, or considering a late career change and has begun work to develop appropriate programs.

- State and national interest in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) have led DCTC to explore and develop STEM-related programs, as well as programs relating to green occupations. The college is partnering with Hennepin Technical College to develop a Civil Engineering Technology program at Hennepin Technical College scheduled to begin in the fall of 2009. Additionally, several other programs, including Environmental Technology, are being considered for the future.

- Building relationships and responding to the needs of business and industry will continue to be among DCTC’s top priorities in the coming years. Training programs not only serve as a revenue builder for the college, but also aid in building strong credit-based programs at the college by involving outside entities, garnering program support, and providing information for changes or developments in curriculum.

- Through the $3.5 million grant awarded to DCTC by the National Science Foundation (NSF), DCTC will take the lead in developing the Midwest Regional Center for Nanotechnology Education, or NanoLink to serve as a resource and support to colleges in the Midwest. NanoLink will promote competitiveness and future job growth in industries utilizing the skills of nanoscience technicians, as well as provide other education-related resources to colleges with nanoscience programs.

- DCTC continues to be a leader in collaborating with workforce development agencies by participating, communicating, developing joint workshops and training, and leveraging dollars from both organizations to maximize efforts.

**RESOURCE DEPLOYMENT**

- Over the past five years, DCTC has improved its instructional efficiency costs by an average of 10 percent each year.

- DCTC’s instructional cost study compares program spending at DCTC to all similar programs through the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system. From FY03 to FY06, DCTC improved from (-$191,097) to $422,635.

- DCTC has committed to become a carbon-neutral campus through the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment. This is allowing DCTC to explore a number of ways to operate more efficiently through sustainability initiatives such as LEED construction, recycling, and energy management.

- The proposed Transportation & Emerging Technologies project is a major right-sizing initiative for the college that will not only improve space and energy efficiency, but will eliminate more than $3.5 million in deferred maintenance projects.

- Financial efficiency has been improved at DCTC through application of a financial projection model that allows the college to create a precise budget formula for academic and non-academic programs.

- DCTC’s Customized Training division is entirely self-sufficient and maintains enough revenue and resources to support the college by investing in program development.
• DCTC’s outreach sites in Eagan and Apple Valley operate under a business model that requires them to be entirely self-sufficient.