

Mountwest Community and Technical College

A.A.S. Degree Program in Transportation Technology, Specialization in Transit

Overview

The purpose of this program is to provide a pathway to an accredited degree for incumbent and incoming workers in transit. The Mountwest Community and Technical College (MCTC) A.A.S degree has several key elements that make it accessible to full-time working people in transit.

- The program is online and self-paced, based on an individual student's schedule each semester.
- The program has an established mechanism for assessment of academic credit for training and workplace experience. Once assessed, this credit can be used to fulfill almost one-half of the program's 60 credits required for a degree. Credit can also be awarded for a CDL and transcribed learning through military service training.
- Students can take their required general education classes through MCTC online, but the program will award transfer credit for appropriate general education courses (Communication/English, Math, Science, Computers) taken at other colleges.
- The program is affordable: \$420 for every three credit-hours. (Tuition can change at the start of each academic year, but no increases are currently scheduled.)

How The Program Would Get Started and Work: Steps and Segments

1. The potential agency and union partners, in consultation with MCTC and the Transportation Learning Center, would identify one or more job categories at the transit agency that have training and on-the-job experience that could be appropriately evaluated for academic credit.
 - a. MCTC and the Center would work with the partners to ensure that the appropriate documentation of training curriculum and field work is provided to MCTC for a credit evaluation.
 - b. Up to 15 credits can be awarded for workforce training, with the possibility of additional credit for workers with a CDL and/or documented learning through military service.
 - c. The maximum cumulative credit that can be awarded for all prior documented and assessed learning is 21.
 - d. In addition, up to 12 credits can be awarded for actual work in the industry.
2. After outreach to interested workers, students can begin the program in the Fall of 2014.

3. Once admitted, each student can begin to take his/her general education courses online, or submit an official transcript from another academic institution to receive credit for comparable general education courses at another appropriate college-level institution.
4. The final set of requirements for the A.A.S. is the 18 credits of transportation-specific courses: Introduction to Transportation Systems, Transportation Law and Policy, Transportation Economics, Transportation Security, Transportation Geography and Transportation Information Systems.

How the Workers Get Academic Credit for Workplace Training and Field Work

MCTC has a history of working with the transportation industry to assess and then award academic credit for workers in specifically identified job classifications and/or to workers who have gone through training related to those classification and have had experience that has required them to learn and use those same skills. Ideally the specific classification is related to a job and training that is tied to a state or national registered apprenticeship program. The most promising classifications to start with might be Bus Mechanic and Railcar Mechanic or related job categories tied to registered apprenticeships. However, MCTC is also willing to look at other large categories of workers who go through specific standards-based training, such as bus operators.

To assess the training and work of workers in these areas, MCTC would review the training curriculum as well as the competencies developed by workers who are in these jobs and have gone through the required training. The Center would work with the partners to gather and package the materials in a manner that helps MCTC to do this assessment of prior learning for academic credit.

Once the amount of credit to be awarded is established, all workers who have gone through the assessed training and have worked or currently work in the identified set of job classifications will be entitled to receive that credit from MCTC. The credit will appear on their transcript and will be applied toward the A.A.S. degree at MCTC; it is these credits that create the specialization in Transit. The remainder of their credits would come from the required general education courses and Transportation Technology courses discussed earlier.