

## PUMPING UP THE TALENT PIPELINE

Education and employment go hand in hand. From K-12 to voc-tech and higher ed, Pierce County's educational institutions continue to grow programs and facilities to prepare students to take their spot in the regional workforce.

The \$52.4 billion biennial Washington State budget signed into law in May brought historic education funding increases that will help take Pierce County schools to an even higher level. Here are some examples of how regional educational institutions are bolstering the South Sound workforce pipeline.

### **K-12: The next generation**

As the workforce ages, employers are looking to the younger generation to fill the retirement gap in manufacturing, construction and maritime trades. Washington State's **Core Plus** program aims to ensure there are enough high school students in the pipeline to fill those good, family-wage jobs.

The statewide manufacturing curriculum for high school industrial arts instructors prepares students for high-demand jobs through hands-on learning. The **Manufacturing Industrial Council for the South Sound** will join the Seattle **Manufacturing Industrial Council** to oversee statewide Core Plus legislative issues; the Core Plus steering committee; employer-engagement programs; teacher, company and student surveying; and curriculum implementation.

In 2014, the **Boeing Company** wrote and donated the first round of curriculum, Core Plus Aerospace. The first-year core was approved for math, science and language arts credit by the **Washington State Board of Education** and **Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)**. The highly replicable curriculum paved the way to develop curriculum for Core Plus maritime and construction programs.

The Manufacturing Industrial Council will receive \$100,000 per year over the next two years for maritime program development in Tacoma. To date, about 1,000 hours of curriculum has been developed and approved through OSPI, some of which is already being used at **Lincoln High School**. Once curriculum is finalized, **Tacoma Public Schools** will be one of the first districts in the state to offer the full program, which includes three components: seafaring, manufacturing and maintenance. The Core Plus construction program is in development.

"This is an industry-created and industry-informed program," said Meredith Neal, director of the Manufacturing Industrial Council for the South Sound. "That's what makes it unique and ensures the program provides the skills students need to get them into good jobs, and learn to be positive, productive members of our communities."

Another high school program is designed to build a pipeline for Tacoma students to fill entry-level jobs within the network of business and industries on the Tacoma Tidelands. The **Tacoma Tidelands Certification Program** through Tacoma Public Schools is an intensive six-week summer program that offers students stackable certificates, real-work experience and training in three career pathways: transportation, automated warehousing and logistics; merchant marine; and environmental services.

### **Legislature moves the dial on higher education programs, facilities**

Budget decisions set in motion the next stage of transformation for the **University of Washington Tacoma**:

- More than \$1.3 million is being used to hire mechanical and civil engineering faculty within the School of Engineering and Technology, providing greater access to classes and degrees to South Sound students.
- To expand access for low-income students, the legislature created and established a dedicated funding source for the **Washington College Grant**, formerly known as the State Need Grant. Beginning in 2021, all Washington State students living in households that earn up to 100 percent of the annual median income will receive benefits.

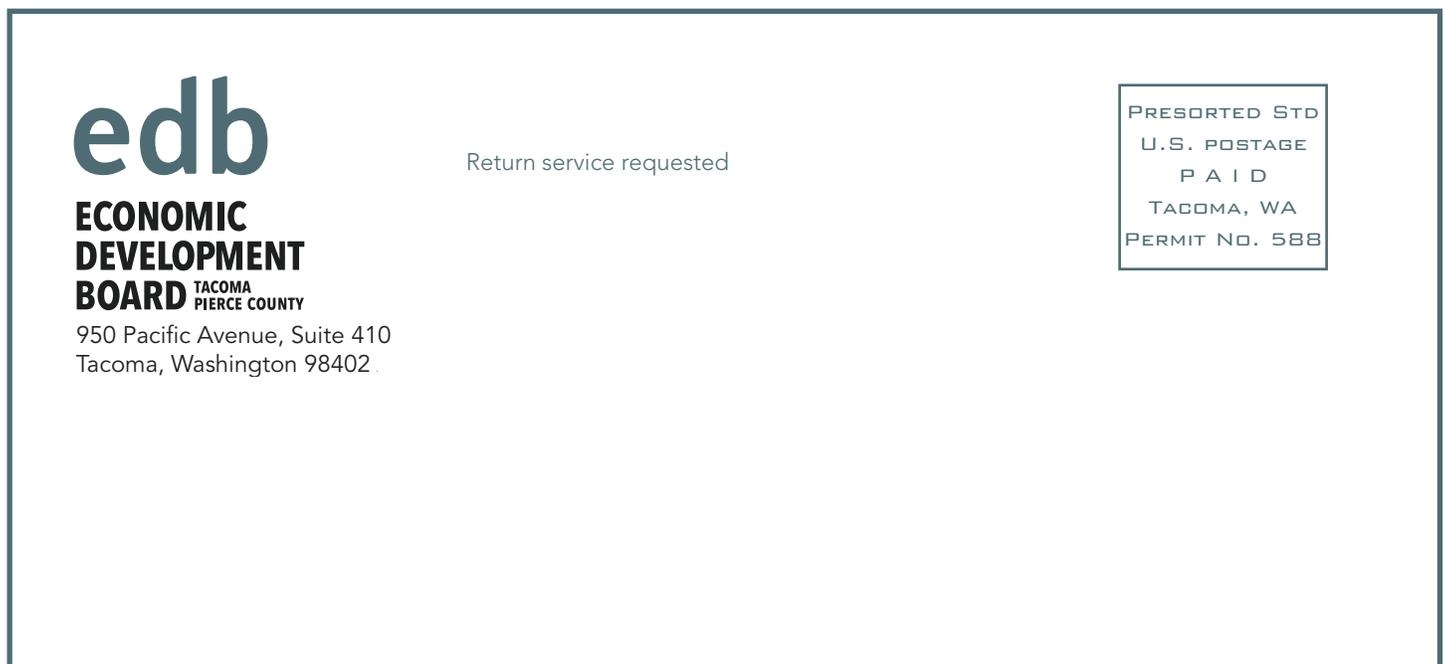
- The state Capital Budget designated \$4 million to design the Academic Innovation Building, which will include a new home for the **Milgard School of Business** and mechanical and civil engineering labs. Following the design phase, UW Tacoma plans to seek additional construction funding. The building will house the **Global Innovation and Design Lab**, a collaborative hub for all academic programs where innovation and design thinking will be taught and implemented, and applied to real-world problems and challenges ranging from launching new businesses to addressing chronic social problems. The building will also be home to the **Center for Business Analytics, Center for Leadership & Social Responsibility** and **Center for Data Science**.

## Community colleges and vocational-technology schools growing strong

Pierce County community colleges and voc-tech schools are answering the call for more programs and facilities to help students fill jobs in high-demand fields.

**Bates Technical College** is offering new cybersecurity and health care programs:

- The Associate of Applied Science degree and Associate of Applied Science-Transfer degree are designed to deliver a deep technical foundation in cybersecurity and general education coursework.
- The Medical Simulation Operations Specialist program allows students to learn about careers in a growing health care specialty. Students use a hybrid of medical and technical skills on human simulators.



In September, **Clover Park Technical College** opened the **John W. Walstrum Center for Advanced Manufacturing Technology**. Students earn college credentials and industry-recognized certifications that apply to growing industries such as automation, robotics, manufacturing, instrumentation and process control, and supply chain logistics equipment. The center offers a Bachelor of Applied Science in Operations Management, along with programs in manufacturing technologies, mechatronics (a multidisciplinary branch of engineering that focuses on the engineering of electrical and mechanical systems) and nondestructive testing, a process used in construction, manufacturing, civil engineering and transportation.

**Pierce College** will use around \$3.3 million for the pre-design and design of a new science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) building on the college's Puyallup campus.

**Tacoma Community College** now offers a Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Management degree. The two-year hybrid program, the first of its kind in Pierce County, is designed to enhance students' technical skills to advance their careers. The program offers specializations in project management and human resource management. An entrepreneurial leadership specialization will be added to the mix in 2021.

*Teamwork is a service of the EDB, a non-profit corporation focused on recruitment and retention of primary businesses in Tacoma and Pierce County, Washington, USA.*

950 Pacific Avenue, Suite 410 / Tacoma, Washington 98402 / 253.383.4726