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VIEWS & VISIONS

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SUMMER 2025

Mountwest - The Workforce Solution Provider



Josh Baker
Mountwest Community & Technical College

Dr. Josh Baker has over eight years of higher education leadership experience. His past roles include the positions of campus/academic dean, assistant academic dean, and faculty. Dr. Baker holds a Ph.D. in Community College Leadership, as well as an M.S. and a B.A. from Brigham Young University. Dr. Baker is currently in his first presidency at Mountwest Community and Technical College, where he is building a culture that is student centered and community focused. Dr. Baker continues to work toward implementing innovative workforce solutions for the Appalachian region.

Mountwest prides itself in being the premier partner for creating workforce solutions. Our close relationship with employers helps us develop dynamic pathways between our students and careers. Of our 2,500 students per year, more than 80% of them are on a career pathway. These students are served through several high impact relationships, including with Marshall University, Coalfield Development, County Career Centers, St. Mary's Education Center, Marshall Advanced Manufacturing Center, and more. We strive to create dynamic pathways for these students. Instead of a broad explanation of our offerings, let's deep dive on a few of my favorite workforce solutions.

WV Invests Makes it Free!

The majority of West Virginia residents will qualify for WV Invests, which covers the tuition for most certificate and AAS programs!



have been fast-tracked to promotion that pays in the mid-\$20's/hour. Certificate completers can complete the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree, which qualifies graduates for advanced roles in the industry.

Cyber Security

We have a beautiful new Cyber Security Center, featuring an observation room and two instructional rooms. The center complements our Network and Cloud Systems Administration program, which has recently been recognized as a National Center of

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CJ Hughes - Utility Construction

After 8 weeks of safety training, students begin paid work-based learning, where they earn \$15/hour for 20+ hours/week. Through this program, students learn on the job, applying concepts and skills in real-time, and gaining practical and valuable work experience. In less than a year, they complete a certificate and qualify for permanent employment. Graduates

Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense. The CAE-CD designation demonstrates our commitment to excellence in curriculum design, faculty expertise, and a commitment to preparing students for careers in the critical and growing field of cyber defense. Mountwest is one of only two community and technical colleges in West Virginia to receive this esteemed designation.



NTIVA

Information Technology students have the opportunity for a paid internship with NTIVA, a national IT Solutions and Support company for growth-minded businesses. NTIVA co-locates on our campus, allowing students to go straight to their internships right down the hall from their classrooms. Graduates can apply for permanent remote work with NTIVA after completing the program.

Physical Therapy Assistant Apprenticeship

Physical Therapy Aide is a relatively new position in PT clinics, and in response to requests from our local workforce, we now offer this training, which can be completed in one semester. Once students receive qualifications to become Aides or PT Techs, they can be hired for paid employment at PT Clinics and continue to work as they pursue the Physical Therapy Assistant AAS. This is a demanding degree, and when taught apprenticeship style, allows the students to work as they advance within the field. But wait, there's more! They can progress all the way from PT Aide to a Doctor of PT, all while maintaining employment. In this economy, this is what students need.

Service-Learning

Students in programs such as Business, Marketing, Culinary, American Sign Language, and Early Childhood Education conduct annual service-learning projects as part of their programs. These annual projects enhance skills in the areas of marketing, promotion, event organization, public relations, social media, and more. Service-learning projects are community based, teaching students the value of community service while applying classroom concepts in real-time. Some past service-learning projects include organizing community clean-up days and restoration projects at Bethel Cemetery, Deaf Santa, and Chili Fest.

Patient Care Tech at the Hospital

After meeting with our local hospital, we identified a need for training more patient care technicians, and a need to provide advancement opportunities for current employees within the hospital. As a result, we partnered to ensure hospital employees are able to receive FREE training to become Patient Care Assistants, the entry level bedside care position. This program supports the hospital's commitment to invest in employee development, as students are often currently employed in areas such as housekeeping or food services. Additionally, if students want to continue on this path, LPN training is their likely next step.

Apprenticeship Readiness

This semester, we just started our first cohort of pre-apprenticeship training. Through a partnership with Lowe's, our students receive a stipend while exploring apprenticeship opportunities. Students earn OSHA 30, First-Aid/CPR, forklift certificates, and prepare for the apprenticeship test. The Mobile Lab allows us to take this training on the road!

Deckhand and Steersman

In just a week, our Maritime program can get a student trained and ready to work in the riverboat industry. With a series of additional short-term trainings, deckhands can advance to be pilots. Deckhand starting pay is nearly \$40,000 and advances quickly. Steersman? Their starting pay now exceeds \$120,000. That's a great career path that never requires a student to stop earning a paycheck.

Nucor/SMART

In partnership with Marshall Advanced Manufacturing Center and Nucor, students can participate in the new Systems Maintenance, Automation, and Robotics Technology program. This program was built in response to Nucor announcing they were locating in Mason County. Nucor is providing scholarships for two recent high school graduates and paying them a salary while they are in the program!

JumpStart

High school students can complete up to 24 credits their senior year by coming to the college. The cost? IT IS ENTIRELY FREE. We scholarship the tuition, books, fees—all of it. Students can complete their pre-reqs for many degrees before they graduate. With this dual credit program, students could be nurses and rad techs before they are 21, and coders and cyber security experts before they are 20.

There has never been a better time to be a college student. Programs are more tailored for work than ever before. Many paid internship programs exist, and tuition is often covered by a variety of funding sources. 