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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Over 60 employers celebrate high school work experience program

“They are the first ones on our list for job openings, so it is easier for us to hire them.”

Marylou Mejares, Tango Theate Operations Manager, says Tango asks many of their Guam Community College Work Experience Program (WEP) interns to fill out applications upon completion of their internship, because they’ve already had the job training. “It’s a lot of help for us,” she said of the program.

Mejares and 60 other employers attended GCC’s Work Experience Program Workshop/Luncheon November 10th at GCC, to celebrate employer participation and encourage new employers to join the program. The WEP places students from GCC’s Career and Technical Education programs in the island’s six public high schools with companies or government agencies in the student’s corresponding CTE field of study. The students must apply to be in the WEP. They are not paid, but instead earn up to 1.5 credits toward graduation in turn for 90-270 hours of training and guidance under their respective employers. During the 2014-2015 academic year, Gary Hartz, GCC Associate Dean, says the program successfully placed 385 high school students with 92 private sector employer sites and six government agencies.

Brenda Perez Sana, FHP Sr. Manager, said, “We’ve been participating in this program since 2006, and I have actually seen students progress into a full-time career in health care.”

“This program has been phenomenal for us.” Mike Fejeran, Technical Training Manager for Triple J Guam, gave the luncheon keynote speech. “I have better success with my (WEP) interns than I have with UTI (referring to Universal Technical Institute’s Automotive Technician Training), and I’m a UTI grad,” Fejeran said of the training and work ethic he’s seen with his interns.

Fejeran says he encourages his interns to continue with GCC’s postsecondary Automotive Technology program. “My goal is to have our succession plan in place for years to come, because finding talented techs is a challenge,” he said.

“We encourage more employers to participate in the program,” said Hartz. “Our participating employers tell us this is a valuable workforce development tool for them because it creates a pathway for employee success from the ground up.”

Employers also heard from Raquel Maminta, who participated in the WEP as a student at Okkodo High School (her Lodging Management Program team won the national championship in 2011), which led to her earning her associate’s degree from GCC this past May in Hotel Operations Management. She is now, at age 21, the banquet sales coordinator at Lotte Hotel Guam. “In the program we learned operations from housekeeping to security to front desk, and how to deal with people, how to deal with a lot of the issues you would face in a hotel,” Maminta said. “When you started working...it’s not trying to figure out how the hotel works, because I already know, so now it’s applying everything I’ve learned, and not just doing it the way the hotel does it, but also trying to find ways that you can do it better. And GCC, the program, showed that to me.”

A bonus for those attending Tuesday’s workshop was the delicious international buffet served by GCC postsecondary Culinary Arts students and students in the GWHS secondary ProStart program. Many of these students have interned at or work part-time in island hotels and restaurants.

“It was awesome,” said Ted Deleon Guerrero of PC Merge, who signed up to participate at the workshop presentation. “The people I hire, I want them to have a passion to learn,” said Deleon Guerrero. He was impressed with the video of student testimonials where students talked about how much they learned and how valuable the experience was to them. “Education is awesome, but when you apply that with experience and someone who has the passion to succeed, that’s a big plus for the company,” he said.

Employers interested in participating in the Work Experience Workshop can contact Tony San Nicolas, GCC associate professor, at 735-3024.

Suggested photo caption #1:

Raquel Maminta, Lotte Hotel Guam Banquet Sales Coordinator, talks about her participation in GCC’s Work Experience Program as a student at Okkodo High School during the WEP Workshop/Luncheon on November 10 at GCC. Maminta moved from the GCC CTE Lodging Management program at Okkodo to GCC’s postsecondary Hotel Operations Management program, graduating with an associate degree in May 2015.

Suggested photo caption #2

Alice Dejesus, left, an accountant at Tango Theaters, and Marylou Mejares, Tango Theaters Operations Manager, enjoy the delicious lunch buffet prepared by GCC Culinary Arts and ProStart students for Work Experience Program Workshop participants in the GCC MPA on November 10. “It’s a lot of help for us,” Mejares says of the program that pairs high school students in GCC CTE program with employers in their respective CTE fields.

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