

PC4A YEAR ONE NEWSLETTER

WWW.PC4A.ORG
PC4A-STEM@IUP.EDU



PA Community College Consortium Cooperative Agreement

FALL 2023

ABOUT PC4A

Indiana University of Pennsylvania, in conjunction with six PA community colleges, has been awarded a substantial grant from the US Department of Defense with the increasingly important goal of supporting and strengthening the cybersecurity workforce in our country.

The PC4A Project began in September 2022, and will continue until August 2025, with a possible extension until 2028.

YEAR ONE OBJECTIVE ACHIEVED: INCREASED CERTIFICATION ATTAINMENT RATES

The PC4A Project has the following main objectives:

- Increase certification attainment rates.
- Increase transfer rates.
- Increase interest in DoD/DIB employment.

We are proud to announce that we've achieved our first objective through the diligent efforts of our partner community colleges.

In year one, **nine** certification preparation workshops were offered, and **56** certification exam vouchers were awarded to participants. Currently, **15** students earned certifications, with many more expected in the coming months.

Workshops and exam vouchers were provided for CompTIA A+, CompTIA Network+, CompTIA Linux+, CompTIA Security+, and Cisco CCNA certifications. Additional preparation workshops and vouchers will be offered to students during the next year of this project.

IN THIS ISSUE

- Activities financially supporting students.
- Faculty development workshops offered by IUP.
- Events held by the PC4A Team to aid in reaching objectives.



PARTNERS DISTRIBUTE 89 SCHOLARSHIPS TO STUDENTS

PC4A Partners Butler County Community College and Pennsylvania Highlands Community College offered **89** tuition scholarships to students in targeted programs during the spring 2023 semester. Scholarships ranged from \$200 to \$1,000, depending on need and course load. The offering of scholarships directly supports project objectives, as alleviating financial strain is one of the many ways PC4A Partners are encouraging students to complete their degrees.

Students have been vocal in their appreciation for the provided scholarships, and additional scholarships will be distributed to partner students in year two of the project.

“

I was amazed I had the honor of being chosen. This will allow me to cut back on working over 40 hours a week while doing school full time.

- BC3 Scholarship Recipient

HUNDREDS OF TEXTBOOKS AND LAB SOFTWARE PROVIDED TO STUDENTS

Additional efforts to financially support students were made through the offering of textbook reimbursements, textbook vouchers, and access codes for virtual lab software.

In total, over **400** vouchers, codes, and reimbursements were provided to students during Academic Year 2022-2023.

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS OFFERED FOR FIVE PARTNER SCHOOLS

As part of our commitment to supporting faculty and staff at PC4A Partner institutions, IUP hosted **five** faculty development workshops for Westmoreland County, Penn Highlands, Butler County, Bucks County, and Northampton Community Colleges.

Partners were first surveyed on the topics they would be most interested in, and workshops were tailored to cover these areas.

In total, **25** faculty and staff were trained on topics including network defense, blockchain technology, and cloud security. At the conclusion of the workshops, partners completed a satisfaction survey to assist with improving future workshops. Below is a sample of the survey results (responses of “excellent” or “very good”).

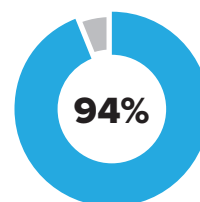
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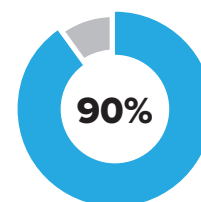
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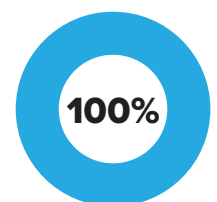
The PC4A Project is proudly funded by the US Department of Defense. Visit dodstem.us to learn more about the work they're doing to inspire, cultivate, and develop exceptional STEM talent.



Overall Workshop



Session Interactivity



Presenter's Knowledge

19 PAID INTERNSHIPS PROVIDED ACROSS FOUR PARTNER INSTITUTIONS, EXPANSION OF NCC INTERNSHIP SITES

To provide valuable hands-on education, Butler County, Northampton, Penn Highlands, and Westmoreland County Community Colleges offered **19** paid internships to students in a variety of project related degree programs. Not only were these internship opportunities highly valued by students (see quotes below), other PC4A Partners saw the positive impact internships had on students, and many more are planning to offer paid internships in year two.

“

The nearly six months that I spent with the Focus Laboratory team was a great experience ... At times it felt like I was drinking from a fire hose of information. I now feel more confident in my ability to learn new information and adapt to unfamiliar situations.

- Bio Sciences Student

“

In summary, this internship was a profound experience that significantly contributed to my personal and professional growth ... The valuable insights and experiences I had throughout this internship will aid in shaping my future career and success as a developer.

- App Development Student

In an effort that has been described as “20 years in the making,” Northampton Community College Co-PIs Dr. Celisa Counterman and Dr. Guy Patra worked diligently to establish an internship program at Tobyhanna Army Depot.

Through their efforts, the internship program launched in fall 2023, with two students beginning their internships in October 2023. It is anticipated that more student interns will be added in future semesters.



GET INVOLVED! SUPPORT PC4A OBJECTIVES BY PARTNERING WITH US IN OFFERING INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES!

Hands-on learning is vital to student career readiness, and more PC4A Partners are offering paid internships to students during the 2023-2024 Academic Year. Please contact us if you're interested in partnering with a PC4A Institution to provide these valuable real-world learning opportunities to students.

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PENN HIGHLANDS HOSTS FIRST ANNUAL COMMUNITY CYBERSECURITY EVENT



On March 25, 2023, Penn Highlands Community College hosted the first annual Cybersecurity Community event. The event, which was open to the public and offered free of charge, included sessions on email security, cyber threats, secure passwords, cybersecurity laws, and online shopping and banking.

The event was a success with 25 participants, and will be offered again in spring 2024.

WESTMORELAND COUNTY OFFERS FREE CODING CAMP FOR MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

On July 11-13, 2023, Westmoreland County Community College offered a coding camp for middle and high school students that covered the use of Arduino Circuit Boards and Integrated Development Environments. Eight students participated in the camp, which was offered to participants for free through scholarships provided by the PC4A Project.



IUP HOSTS FIRST ANNUAL PC4A PARTNER CONFERENCE

For the first time since the beginning of the PC4A Project, all partners came together face-to-face for the first annual PC4A Partner Conference on August 7-8, 2023. To kick-off the collaborative event, partners enjoyed dinner at a local restaurant and an evening tour of the IUP campus. The following day, all partners shared presentations on their progress, activities, and challenges, and participated in discussions on how to improve offerings in the second year of the project. Guest speakers at the event included representatives from the IUP Research Institute and the Director of the IUP Kathleen Jones White Writing Center.



VISIT WWW.PC4A.ORG FOR DETAILS ON ALL PARTNER EVENTS.