

# Allied Hospitality Careers Tech Prep



## CURRICULUM

### HOW TO STEP INTO THE FUTURE

*"A new breed of employee is needed for the workplace of the future."*

Business as usual is no longer a practical strategy in the globalized marketplace. Individuals must be prepared to communicate with a richly diverse community of coworkers and publics, and must be prepared to perform their jobs with the regular application of increasingly complex technologies. Industry is intolerant of waste and lost opportunities and seeks workers who will accept empowerment and deliver high standards of customer service. The educational system is being counted upon to develop competent individuals who match future workplace needs. The transition from school to work is a critical juncture that cannot be left to default.

A well-planned course of study, paralleled with career exploration at an early age, and supported by industry and education partnership enables these necessary goals. This improved preparation strategy is for all students and is referred to as tech prep.

The *Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990* established a funding source for tech prep. School divisions and the community colleges in their service areas have formed consortia to plan, develop, and implement the tech prep initiatives funded through the Act. In the metropolitan Richmond area the local consortium is the [Capital Area Partners for Educational Reform \(CAPER\)](#) consortium serving the City of Richmond, and Counties of Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, and Powhatan. Statewide leadership for tech prep is provided at several levels and is guided by the State Tech Prep Advisory Board. The Board has adopted the following definition of tech prep:

*Tech Prep is a secondary/postsecondary career path linked to business, industry, labor, government, and the community that leads to further education and employment.*

**CAPER** unites secondary and postsecondary educators with the private sector. Business and industry advisors serving as CAPER members guide efforts to maintain relevancy between education and workplace needs. CAPER evaluates and prioritizes needs in the local area and collaboratively endorses various tech prep activities. One of the several endorsements made by CAPER was that the hospitality curricula offered in the local area be examined and reformed. Their endorsement enabled the acquisition of a development and implementation grant entitled Allied Hospitality Careers Tech Prep.

The hospitality industry includes businesses that provide lodging accommodations and food and beverage service in commercial and institutional settings. Specific employers include:

Restaurants

Conference Centers

Clubs

Caterers

Attractions  
Retail Food Establishments  
Institutions  
Foodservice Contractors  
Hospitals

Hotels & Resorts  
Public Agencies  
Wellness Centers  
Nursing Homes  
Continuing Care Retirement Communities

Virginia Employment Commission projections indicate that growth in hospitality careers will exceed the average growth of all occupations in the Commonwealth during the next decade.

Current entry-level salaries in the hospitality industry are competitive with other service industry occupations, and employees who demonstrate creativity, leadership and a genuine spirit of hospitality can expect rapid promotion and handsome compensation packages.

ALLIED HOSPITALITY CAREERS TECH PREP is an opportunity for students to acquire the education and experience necessary for successful entry and progression along one or more of the career pathways within the hospitality industry. Through extensive collaboration, employers and educators from both secondary and postsecondary institutions have examined the current and future skills necessary for success in the hospitality industry, and have designed a validated model curriculum that is relevant, engaging, challenging and teachable. The curriculum allows for students to pursue an education with varying levels of academic rigor; as such it is available to *all* students. A key feature of the model curriculum is the designation of multiple entry and exit points along the pathways. Each entry and exit point is paralleled with employment opportunities appropriate to the preparation received thus far. Students may leave school at various junctures and resume in a seamless manner.

Articulation agreements resulting from the collaboration between secondary and postsecondary educators have diffused the lines that previously defined high school and college, so that tech prep students may earn college credit while still in high school. Due to the coordination of curriculum between the area high schools and J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, students can begin satisfying college graduation requirements as early as Grade 11. Considering the spiraling cost of college tuition, the benefits of this arrangement cannot be overstated. Tech prep students have the unique ability of reducing tuition and textbook expenses at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College and earning up to fifteen credits toward an Associate in Applied Science Degree when they choose to follow a tech prep pathway beginning in their high school.

Another key feature of ALLIED HOSPITALITY CAREERS TECH PREP is the blending of technical education into academic classes so that lessons remain engaging to the learner as they are within a context that relates to employment goals. Tech prep acknowledges that unless academic courses are meaningful to the student, the lessons may not become part of the necessary workplace skills, but rather exist as unassimilated knowledge.

ALLIED HOSPITALITY CAREERS TECH PREP is designed to confer multiple credentials. All students will earn a 21, 23 or 24 credit diploma from their high school. Students are encouraged to continue their education at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College and earn an Associate in Applied Science Degree. Articulation with senior institutions enables students to apply certain of these college credits toward a bachelors degree in several universities. Some students may elect to earn industry credentials through apprenticeship or coordinated internship.

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## CURRICULUM

The ALLIED HOSPITALITY CAREERS TECH PREP curriculum is a combined secondary and postsecondary educational program that provides technical preparation in business careers. As such it is intended to lead to employment in the hospitality industry.

The curriculum bears several characteristics that distinguish it from existing educational programs.

Integration of academics and technical studies create lessons within context, giving greater meaning to topics that may previously have been difficult for students to apply outside of the conceptual realm of the classroom. Historically, there have been certain bodies of knowledge that the student has been able to "absorb," yet not assimilate in a meaningful manner. For example, an accounting lesson illustrating the time value of money related to economic risk factors might initially be daunting and of limited interest to a typical high school student. When presented within the context of "their own dream restaurant" that was conceptualized as a class project, the student might more readily engage, and ultimately learn the economics of entrepreneurship. Several other academic content areas including business communications, algebra, cultural geography, chemistry, physics and biology have all been engineered into a meaningful delivery system whereby the tech prep student can see the application of principles within an occupational context. Tech prep teaches the student how knowledge can be used. The curriculum has been designed by a team of secondary and postsecondary educators in partnership with professionals representing the hospitality industry.

The curriculum is user-friendly in that the student may enter and exit the educational pathway to best suit his or her current circumstances. There are clearly defined entry and exit points, so that the student can resume studies anywhere along the educational pathway, as career goals change or advancement opportunities present themselves. By design, the curriculum leads to an Associate in Applied Science Degree at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College. Also by design, the curriculum articulates with selected baccalaureate degree programs at several universities in Virginia.

A three-year planning and development effort has yielded an exciting and rigorous curriculum that combines the most current resources in the local consortium of school divisions. The student who completes any or all circuits of the educational pathway will be competent in mathematics, science and communication and will be ready for meaningful employment.

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## HOW TO STEP INTO THE FUTURE

### **STEP ONE - *Application***

Any interested student is required to meet with a guidance counselor at their high school. The student will be asked a few directed questions regarding career awareness, aptitude, and scholastic ability and will have the opportunity to ask questions of their own. Also at this time the student will receive an *Plan of Studies Guide* which is to be completed by the student and parents with guidance from the student's counselor.

### **STEP TWO - *Admission and Orientation***

The completed documents will be reviewed by the applicant's guidance counselor, at which point the student passes from *applicant* status to *hospitality student* status. Soon thereafter the tech prep student will receive a *Letter of Welcome* inviting him/her to the next scheduled consortium-wide orientation session. At this orientation session the student's *Career Passport* will begin to be compiled. The *Career Passport* will serve as a portfolio of credentials that will enable the student to pass from one point to another along the tech prep pathway. While the *Career Passport* will initially be used to convey student achievements among the consortium educational team, it will eventually serve as a job acquisition resource, providing documentation of the tech prep student's preparedness for responsibility and meaningful employment.

### **STEP THREE - *Commencement of the Tech Prep Education***

On the basis of the *Plan of Studies* prepared in Step One and accepted in Step Two, the student will begin the prescribed classes. Ongoing support by mentors and consortium professionals will be made available, and periodic

progress reviews will be conducted to ensure that the tech prep student is benefiting as intended.

**STEP FOUR - *Transition***

As the tech prep student approaches various entry/exit points a transition plan will be prepared so that the student's entry into J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, selected universities and/or hospitality employment will be facilitated. The support system continues even after college graduation. J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College will conduct *Graduate Follow Up Surveys* and *Employer Surveys* to ensure the integrity of the entire process, enabling a total quality assessment approach to the student's career preparation and entry into the hospitality workforce.

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