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NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

EIU BUSINESS CENTER GETS NEW NAME

CHARLESTON -- The Business Development Center at Eastern Illinois University has a new name.

"Business and Technology Institute" better reflects the services this entity provides to regional business and industry.

Institute director Marilyn DeRuiter said the recent merger of Eastern's Lumpkin College of Business with the College of Applied Sciences has created a larger pool of faculty with expertise in technology, enabling the institute to expand its services to manufacturing and service industries.

"Eastern's Business and Technology Institute is a link to business, industry and community agencies, providing resources and expertise in the areas of technology, finance and accounting, computer and operations management, marketing and management and business skills," DeRuiter said.

She added that increased effort has been devoted to meeting with business and industry representatives to respond to their training needs, noting that the number of training programs and participants continues to grow.

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Most training is conducted at the client's site by EIU faculty from the Lumpkin College of Business and Applied Sciences and other university areas, DeRuiter said.

"It's important, particularly with manufacturing companies, to work around the employees' schedules so that training does not interfere with production," she explained.

More and more companies are realizing the importance of having a trained workforce and have made a commitment of time and resources to train their employees, DeRuiter said.

The Business and Technology Institute is using training grant funding to expand its services to manufacturing companies. On-site training covers statistical process control, blueprint reading, computer numerical controls, plant safety and layout, ergonomics, production control and supervision and other areas.

Eastern faculty also conduct workshops and seminars for service industries, such as banks and hospitals, that deal with computers, total quality management, sexual harassment, team building and communications, DeRuiter said.

Eastern's distance learning lab located in Coleman Hall has provided a new means for delivering training sessions to off-campus sites.

Experts from the university are available to consult with business, industry and government on strategic planning, work flow analysis, environmental control and other workforce issues.

DeRuiter and her staff work closely with area chambers, economic development corporations and community groups on a variety of projects. The institute recently assisted the East Central Illinois Development Corporation in developing a resource guide of buildings and sites within a nine-county region.

A unique component of the Business and Technology Institute, DeRuiter said, is the Small Business Institute (SBI), which provides professionally supervised consulting and research services at little or no cost to small businesses, including service, retail, wholesale and manufacturing organizations.

The SBI is a cooperative program between the Lumpkin College of Business and Applied Sciences and the U.S. Small Business Administration that provides confidential consulting and research services using senior or graduate business students under the supervision of faculty.

Aline Arnold, chair of management and marketing at Eastern, supervises the student teams. "It's a win-win situation for students and their clients," she said.

The SBI provides assistance in accounting, computer management, finance, human resource management, management and marketing.

The Business and Technology Institute will host an open house for business and industry representatives from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. on May 4.

For more information about the open house or services available through Eastern's Business and Technology Institute, call (217) 581-2913.