

BlendFlex puts CGTC up for award

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The Technology Association of Georgia (TAG), the state's leading association dedicated to the promotion and economic advancement of Georgia's technology industry, recently announced that Central Georgia Technical College (CGTC) has been chosen as a finalist for the 2015 Excalibur Awards. Winners will be officially recognized at the 2015 Excalibur Awards ceremony on Friday, Oct. 23, at the Georgia Aquarium in Atlanta.

CGTC was selected from among over 60 applications submitted by companies and organizations from across Georgia. The college is being recognized for innovation in its educational delivery model. During the past year, CGTC implemented the BlendFlex model to aid in delivering healthcare courses to rural communities.

"With the high volume of professional and adult students with pressing needs, such as work schedules, personal responsibilities and lifestyle changes, this makes sense for our students," said Gardner Long, vice president for Information Technology at CGTC. "After presenting our ideas, we were awarded a grant that helped us implement this new technology at our campuses and rural centers."

CGTC's BlendFlex program incorporates a new, integrated course deliver approach and was formulated to break down learning silos by allowing students to pair the right learning method with their academic needs. Students can opt to attend classes in various ways including traditional face-to-face, via video conferencing, or in their own time. Meaning, students can be present while the teacher is giving instruction, or students can review lectures at any convenient time, anywhere, to garner course material.

"We are truly pleased to honor the recipients of the 2015 Excalibur Awards," said Tino Mantella, president and CEO of TAG. "We believe celebrating these tech-enabled companies and organizations strengthens our message of Georgia's emerging position as a national leader in technology."

Since its launch at the college in 2014, Blend Flex has increased student enrollment in distance-learning courses by 45 percent and provided 160 new, simultaneous conferencing sessions. BlendFlex has also allowed CGTC's remote centers to offer a wider array of courses now that the 12 student requirement can be combined with other CGTC locations using the tele-conferencing technology. Since Fall semester 2014, 816 students enrolled in 52 unique classes consisting of 161 sections. Without this new technology, over 400 students would not have been able to attend classes due to not meeting the minimum enrollment number at remote sites.

In 2015 CGTC launched a pilot project to offer tutoring at remote sites in the state. With a goal of serving 10,000 students and connecting graduates to the workforce, CGTC is also using this pilot to address the educational needs of Georgians serving the armed forces. CGTC expect to engage returning service members and their families at the new military training center near Robins Air Force Base, which is currently under construction. Additionally, the college hopes to deliver BlendFlex courses to active service members who are located in other countries.

The Excalibur Awards celebrates Georgia companies and organizations that demonstrate the best use of technology, typically provided by a third-party, to solve complex issues and processes in business and education. Tech-enabled companies that develop their own non-commercial technology solutions to enhance their organization are also considered for the awards, which are presented by TAG in collaboration with the Business and Technology Alliance of TAG.