

COLUMBUS STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

# 2017 Educator Bus Tour

## Summary and Planning Guide

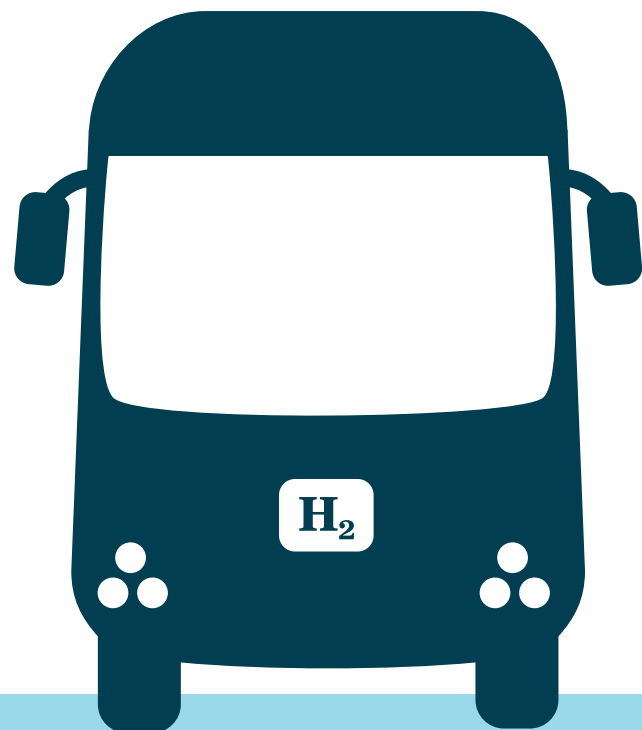
### Event Summary

Columbus State Community College facilitated a full-day interactive bus tour on October 31, 2017. The primary objective was to provide an opportunity for decision-makers and influencers from regional high schools to learn more about the growing fields of advanced manufacturing, cybersecurity, logistics, and alternative energy automotive service/repair.

Participants received tours at Cardinal Health, City of Dublin Fleet Management, and Honda Manufacturing and engaged in discussions with industry representatives at these facilities. In all, 25 individuals including, the Dublin City School District Superintendent, building principals, assistant principals, directors, coordinators, teachers, career specialists and other staff members representing 14 school districts in the central Ohio region participated in the tour.

In addition to hearing directly from employers about workforce needs, participants also learned about Columbus State's grant-funded offerings in high-demand fields, such as cybersecurity, alternative energy automotive, modern manufacturing and logistics engineering. Columbus 2020, the economic development organization for the 11-county Columbus Region, provided an overview of current economic development activity within the region. In feedback after the event, many responded that they were surprised by the large number of job openings in these fields and the demand for workers with a two-year degree.

EVENT AGENDA	
Time	Activity
7:30 a.m.	Registration & Networking
7:45 a.m.	Introduction & Agenda Preview
8:00 a.m.	Columbus Region Workforce Trends
8:30 a.m.	Travel to Cardinal Health
8:45 a.m.	Tour of Cardinal Health and Company Speakers
10:15 a.m.	Travel to City of Dublin Fleet Facility
10:30 a.m.	Tour of City of Dublin Fleet Facility and Company Speakers
11:30 a.m.	Travel to Honda
12:00 p.m.	Lunch and Manufacturing/Logistics Overview
12:50 p.m.	Tour of Honda Marysville Auto Plant
1:45 p.m.	Debrief
2:15 p.m.	Travel to CSCC Dublin Campus



# Planning Your Own Bus Tour

Planning an event that involves 40 participants, four locations and over ten presenters can seem like a daunting task, but with adequate planning, project management and communication, this type of event can be easily replicated. Below are helpful tips and lessons learned from Columbus State Community College's inaugural Educator Bus Tour.

## Securing Institutional Support:

The concept for the Educator Bus Tour was first proposed in April of 2017, over six months before the event date. Originating in the college's Center for the Advancement of Technology Education, the event concept was proposed to executive leadership at the onset of the planning process; support from the top decision-makers at the college was vital to the success of the event. Some tips to help get top leadership from your organization to buy in:

- **Develop a specific and thorough proposal.** Before presenting the event to college leadership, a two-page proposal that concisely addressed alignment with institutional and statewide priorities, potential industry partners, sample agenda, projected costs and funding options was developed. This document helped leadership quickly understand and visualize the event concept and led to full support.
- **Show likelihood of success through examples.** While the Educator Bus Tour was a new type of for Columbus State, the concept was not completely original. The idea was adapted from an event conducted by the United States Army, where influencers of young people were transported to training locations at Army bases, demonstrating different career tracks and specialization available. Researching this event helped inform proposal creation and demonstrated that success was feasible.
- **Inform internal stakeholders and update them regularly.** After obtaining the green light to move forward with the event from the college's president, the planning team quickly brought together representatives from across the organization to develop a workplan. Bringing together members of the Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management divisions helped the planning team utilize all available institutional resources. Keeping these internal stakeholders updated regularly helped the event planning and execution go as smooth as possible.

## Recruiting Employer Partners:

The Educator Bus Tour was designed to connect secondary school educators directly with industry; obtaining support from local employers was vital. Best practices in recruiting employer partners:

- **Leverage existing partnerships.** Through the work of the Central Ohio Compact and President Harrison's Workforce Advisory Council, Columbus State Community College is regularly engaged with employers throughout the Central Ohio region in an effort to collaboratively solve workforce-related issues. Full support from college leadership helped the project team make connections with decision-makers at key industry partners such as Honda, Cardinal Health and the City of Dublin.
- **Communicate mutual benefits.** In initial conversation with potential employer partners, Columbus State clearly communicated that the event was designed to help raise awareness of in-demand jobs and key industries in Central Ohio. By explicitly communicating that the intent of the event was to grow the pipeline of skilled employees, industry partners were quick to support the event by offering their time and resources.
- **Be specific with your ask and use an appropriate communication cadence.** For leaders at large organizations, the most constrained resource is time. Columbus State was specific in providing event details and key messages that the employers should attempt to communicate when the participants are in their facility, eliminating much of the planning work that needed to be completed by the employers. After securing initial support and identifying a planning point of contact at each employer, a monthly group conference call was used to keep the employers updated and engaged, while being respectful of their limited time.
- **Select a diverse set of employers that are close in geographical proximity.** The employers selected for this event represented a diverse set of careers and industries—advanced manufacturing, healthcare, cybersecurity, alternative energy and automotive service and repair. This gave participants a perspective on the quantity of opportunities that exist in technical careers within the local economy. While the employers

▼ Participants pose at Honda's Marysville Auto Plant as part of the Educator Bus Tour.



represented a variety of careers, they were all located in close geographical proximity, in the northwest quadrant of Central Ohio, cutting down on travel time and helping participants get the most out of their day.

### Recruiting Educators:

The target audience for Columbus State's inaugural Educator Bus Tour was secondary school leaders and administrators: superintendents, principals, curriculum directors, head guidance counselors and lead STEM teachers. By encouraging administration to attend the initial event, Columbus State hopes that these leaders will share the value of the event with their staff members and colleagues, encouraging them to attend the professional development opportunity in future iterations. The event attracted 25 educators from all across the Central Ohio region using these guidelines:

- **Design the event so that it is concise and convenient.** Much like the industry partners that participated in the event, time is a very limited resource for secondary educators. The event lasted just over seven hours, but the educators were able to visit three places of employment and learn about multiple career paths that their students could pursue. The time spent on the bus, traveling between employers, was spent learning about Columbus State's complimentary educational options. In addition to using time effectively, the event began before 8 a.m. and ended before 3 p.m., mirroring a high school schedule. This timing allowed most educators in attendance to stick to the normal schedules and routines.
- **Use multiple channels of communication to get the word out.** The project planning team at Columbus State partnered with the college's Admissions and Dual Enrollment Departments to develop a list of contacts that fit the intended audience. Multiple rounds of emails and a physical mailer were sent out to inform educators about the opportunity.
- **Connect the event to larger priorities and initiatives.** Secondary school educators are in the business of improving the lives of their students and setting them up for future success. In communicating the event with potential attendees, Columbus State made it clear that the day was an opportunity to learn about in-demand STEM careers and to hear directly from large employers in the region. Columbus 2020, the region's economic development group, resonated the importance of connecting students to these opportunities by providing a plenary session focused on current and future trends in the Central Ohio workforce.



▲ Cover of a mailer that was sent to local educators to invite them to the Educator Bus Tour.

### Operations & “Day Of” Planning:

The Educator Bus Tour involved coordinating efforts between numerous organizations to transport participants throughout Central Ohio while sticking to a strict timeline. Thorough pre-planning and communicating across organizations are necessary for the day to go smoothly. Practices utilized by Columbus State that helped the event go smoothly:

- **When you think you have enough helping hands for the event, add a couple more.** In addition to the faculty members and administrators who had speaking roles during the event, Columbus State had eight additional employees assisting with the event day. Extra helping hands were beneficial for event check-in, ushering participants in and out of locations and making sure the event kept to the timeline on the agenda.
- **Develop an all-encompassing playbook for the day and share it broadly.** In addition to the agenda distributed to participants, the planning team at Columbus State also developed a more thorough itinerary that was distributed to all employer partners, the bus driver and everyone involved from Columbus State. Information on this document included: cell phone numbers for each key contact, addresses and parking information for each location and directions about when support materials were to be distributed. A centralized playbook allowed everyone to stay on the same page throughout the event day.

- **Sort out the details with employer partners beforehand.** When working with diverse employers from different industries, requirements for bringing guests on location can be quite different. At an advanced manufacturing facility, like Honda's Marysville Auto Plant, guests are required to wear closed-toe shoes and check-in with a photo ID. Columbus State used pre-event planning calls to understand the requirements of each facility and communicate those with participants in advance. Additionally, Columbus State sent final participant rosters to the companies a week in advance to help expedite on-site registration.
- **Send an advance team to each location.** To make the arrival of the bus and tour participants as seamless as possible, Columbus State had a small group of staff members arrive at each location before the bus. Driving in a personal vehicle about five minutes ahead of the bus, staff members shared information with the employer about the bus's location and communicate drop off tips back to staff members riding on the bus via cell phone.
- **Promotional Materials** – Print materials were produced for recruiting educators to attend and sharing program information with tour participants. Approximately \$200 was spent on promotional materials.
- **Food** – Lunch for all participants was generously donated by Honda. Columbus State provided a light continental breakfast, costing \$440.
- **How did Columbus State fund the event?** Columbus State Community College is the nation's leading recipient of the National Science Foundation Advanced Technological Education grant, currently leading eight separate projects that total more than \$5.6 million. Personnel, physical space, transportation and promotional materials were paid for using NSF-ATE grant resources, with costs being split between the featured projects. Costs for the breakfast were supplied by the Division of Business, Engineering & Technology at Columbus State.
- **What other funding options exist?**

For organizations planning this type of event that do not have grant resources available to defray much of the costs, there are multiple other funding options to explore. Once the concept for the event is explained, local employers are quick to see the value in such an event for the future of their workforce and may be willing to commit financial resources. Similarly, groups that bring business leaders together, such as Chambers of Commerce, may be interested in partnering to supply financial resources.

### Funding:

In education, resources are always limited. Before an educational institution, such as Columbus State, makes the decision to plan and implement this type of event, they must consider the financial resources they will need to commit to make it a success. Following is information about the resources committed by Columbus State in executing the event and the sources they used for funding:

- **What were the actual costs?**
  - **Personnel** – By far the largest expense associated with the event, Columbus State utilized two staff members to carry out the majority of event planning; each of these staff members dedicated about 40 hours in advance of event day towards planning. Having developed the concept template, it is estimated that replication would require half of the original personnel resources. In addition to planning time, a number of Columbus State staff and faculty members participated in the event day, causing them to be out of the office.
  - **Space** – Before embarking on the tour, Columbus State hosted an opening session and breakfast for participants at the Ohio University Dublin Campus. Columbus State was able to rent a large event space for \$252.
  - **Transportation** – Partnering with another university, Columbus State rented a charter bus and driver services from The Ohio State University's Center for Automotive Research for \$680.

**For more information on the event or Columbus State's workforce and grant initiatives, please contact John Sherwood at [jsherwood3@csc.edu](mailto:jsherwood3@csc.edu).**

