

# TAKING BUSINESS TO SCHOOL:

# UPS

**W**hen a worldwide shipping and logistics company wants to expand its operation, a dedicated workforce and workforce development system are necessities—especially when you are looking to add 6,000 employees. Through a unique public/private workforce, education and economic development partnership, UPS has been able to create a steady and stable workforce not just for itself, but for several key business partners as well.

## The Story

Since 1980, UPS has had an operations hub in Louisville, Kentucky. However, when the company announced in 1997 that it was looking to expand its operations, the most important question was how it would secure and train an additional 6,000 employees. The answer, it turns out, was literally next door.

In December 1997, a summit meeting was held with then-Governor Paul Patton and Louisville Metro Government officials to discuss how the state was going to help support the workforce needs of one of its largest employers. The result was Metropolitan College, a unique partnership that involves UPS, the University of Louisville, Jefferson Community and Technical College, and the Louisville Metro and Commonwealth of Kentucky governments.



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## STUDENT SUCCESS STORY

### How It Works

Metropolitan College is a program that allows employees working the night shift at UPS to complete postsecondary education. The goal of this program is to develop a responsive and educated workforce for the region and the state.

Metropolitan College students receive half of their tuition and book reimbursement from UPS and the other half from the Commonwealth of Kentucky. In addition, UPS provides academic bonuses. While there are no restrictions on what the participants study, each student is required to sign a student agreement that outlines UPS's expectations.

Individuals who are interested in Metropolitan College can enter the program in two ways. The first is through UPS's School-to-Work program, an opportunity open to all high school seniors at UPS partner schools. In this program, students attend their high school in the morning, work at UPS from approximately 11:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and take a Jefferson Community and Technical College course twice a week. The tuition and books for these courses are funded by UPS. Students who wish to participate in the School-to-Work program must go through the UPS interview and hiring process, are required to maintain at least a 2.5 GPA, have good attendance and get a letter of recommendation from their high school counselor.

Students receive high school elective credit, valuable work experience, can earn up to six college credit hours by their high school graduation and then receive automatic transition into Metropolitan College. According to UPS, approximately 40 to 50 percent of students in the School-to-Work program transfer to the night shift so they can take full advantage of Metropolitan College.

The second way to participate in Metropolitan College is through direct enrollment. In essence, there are only two requirements: You must be a UPS employee on the night shift with a start time between 9:00 p.m. and 4:00 a.m.; and you must be enrolled in either the University of Louisville or Jefferson Community and Technical College and sign a student agreement each semester.

Regardless of how individuals enter Metropolitan College, participants receive a number of additional benefits. One is career planning assistance. Each semester, Metropolitan College students are required to meet with a student development counselor to complete requirements of the Career and Academic Planning Program. This program is designed to help students succeed in school and move into a rewarding career by helping them clarify career and life goals and develop an effective and meaningful academic plan.

### David McDaris



David McDaris of Mt. Washington, Kentucky, began his career at UPS in July 2006. He came to UPS for the benefits of the Metropolitan College program. David explained that his parents already had two kids in college, and he did not want to saddle them with the burden of paying for a third.

A Metropolitan College student from the beginning, David did his first semester at the University of Louisville. After that first semester, however, David felt he would do better in a smaller, more personal setting, so he transferred to Jefferson Community and Technical College. This proved to be a great move; in 2010, David completed the aviation maintenance program at JCTC.

Currently, David is enrolled in the aircraft maintenance management program at Embry-Riddle University while he continues to work in the Fleet Operations Group at UPS as an A300 maintenance program analyst.

"Without this unique program through UPS, I don't know if I would be where I am today," said McDaris. "The Metropolitan College program has given me both the technical skills and the employment I needed and now I am taking that to the next level."

### Syerria Roberts



Ashland, Kentucky's Syerria Roberts moved to Louisville in July 1999 to participate in the Metropolitan College program after her father learned about it through a friend. She started at Jefferson Community and Technical College.

While working at UPS and participating in the Metropolitan College program, she earned her associate degree from JCTC and her bachelor's degree from the University of Louisville. She now works for UPS Airlines as a flight crew scheduler.

She says the Metropolitan College program gave her the opportunity to complete her postsecondary education without debt. The benefits of the program have also allowed her to pursue her master's degree.

There are many ways that students can receive technical training and earn postsecondary degrees. For Syerria, UPS's program was the best option. Not only did this program help her achieve her academic goals, but it also provided employment.

Another benefit is CREW (Connecting Resources, Education and Workforce), a collaborative initiative that helps Metropolitan College students in their career exploration, preparation and placement. CREW helps students with resume writing, effective interviewing skills, networking, understanding the job market, and even which major to choose.

## The Business Case

UPS began this project with the goal of securing additional employees for a planned expansion. Due to its unique staffing needs (approximately 53 percent of UPS's Worldport workforce is part-time), UPS knew that the only way to reach its workforce goals was to work with the education community. Creating a unique partnership that aligns secondary education, postsecondary education and the workforce, UPS has certainly succeeded.

Since its inception, this innovative partnership has helped thousands of students receive a free education and on-the-job training while positively impacting the turnover rate. Before UPS began this program, its turnover rate for new hires was more than 70 percent. Now, for those who go through Metropolitan College, the turnover rate is less than 20 percent.

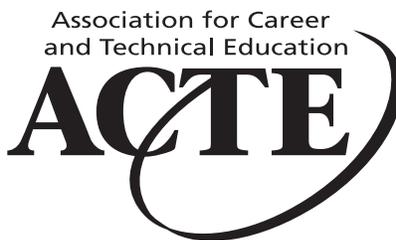
By working with the education community, UPS was able to successfully solve its workforce dilemma. Although not a goal at the outset of the project, UPS has also been able to use this program to help other Kentucky-based businesses.

Since a healthy percentage of UPS employees are part-time, the company knows it will lose them as they seek full-time employment. To help these individuals remain in the state and find work, UPS has launched the Metropolitan College Ambassadors program, by which it works with other local businesses, called the Workforce Advisory Board, to match their needs with UPS employees who might be interested in full-time employment.

"The Workforce Advisory Board and the Metropolitan College Ambassadors initiative can be an economic driver for the Commonwealth of Kentucky by increasing the number of credentials earned by Metropolitan College students and by placing them in high-demand jobs in the community," said Tom Volta, Vice President Human Resources, UPS Airlines.

### LEARN MORE

Metropolitan College: [www.metro-college.com/ups](http://www.metro-college.com/ups)  
UPS: [www.ups.com](http://www.ups.com)



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