

Column: College Community Connection

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New Beginnings

By Dr. Al Roberts

Many people usher in the New Year with a fist full of resolutions and renewed determination to start afresh toward achieving personal goals. Surveys done by various news outlets report that some of the most common resolutions deal with exercising, losing weight, managing money, changing habits, strengthening personal relationships, volunteering, reading more, and engaging in spiritual practices. Some folks prioritize learning new skills, seeking a better job, and even embarking on a new career.

Southside Virginia Community College offers a myriad of resources to support people with resolutions focused on education and workforce training. These people include high school students making decisions about their futures, unemployed and underemployed workers looking for improved opportunities, veterans returning to civilian life, mid-career professionals seeking fresh challenges, and retirees who want to try something new.

If you find yourself plotting a path or adjusting your course, SVCC's counselors can help you discover which career areas are most compatible with your interests, attitudes, and values. They can also teach you how to look for a job, prepare a resume, navigate an interview, and negotiate a salary.

The quickest way to launch a new career may be through one of Virginia's new FastForward credentialing programs. SVCC and more than 20 other workforce training centers around the state offer 145 different programs in areas such as logistics and transportation, healthcare, welding and manufacturing, skilled trades, and information technology. Statistics show that people with workforce credentials are twice as likely to be hired as applicants who lack a credential. Furthermore, credentialed workers typically earn more than their noncredentialed counterparts.

Other career pathways start with a more traditional, academic base. For example, Associate of Applied Sciences (AAS) degrees prepare students for entry into a wide variety of occupations in fields such as agriculture, business, public safety, and health. Just one example is the Administration of Justice program, which prepares graduates for roles in law enforcement agencies or correctional facilities.

Still other career pathways involve educational journeys that culminate with baccalaureate or advanced degrees. After spending their first two years of study at SVCC, graduates with Associate of Arts and Sciences (AA&S) degrees generally transfer to a four-year institution with junior class standing. One popular program is the Education Major. It provides core classes that serve as a solid foundation for students who plan to pursue careers in teaching.

So, if your dreams for 2018 include developing and expanding your skills and knowledge, I invite you to contact SVCC at 434-949-1000. A career counselor can advise you about academic, vocational, and

technical programs and explain the array of support services available to help you stay focused on your goals. Let this be the year your successes begin.

Dr. Al Roberts is president of Southside Virginia Community College, an institution of higher learning that provides a wide variety of education opportunities to a diverse student population within a service area that spans ten counties and the city of Emporia. He can be reached via email at al.roberts@southside.edu.