

Vondrenna Smithers' job is cool because, in her own words, "I help potential students, both traditional and non-traditional, connect to the best training for their career goals at SVCC." As Southside Virginia Community College's (SVCC) Advanced Manufacturing Career Coach and Recruiter, she also gets to talk with high school students about Advanced Manufacturing jobs that they may not have considered.

Smithers became familiar with the great opportunities at SVCC during high school. As a native of Southside Virginia, Smithers attended Brunswick County Public Schools. There, she took college credit while still in high school through the SVCC Dual Enrollment Program. By completing dual enrollment classes, Smithers was able to attend SVCC and to obtain her Associate's degree in General Studies in just one year on campus before transferring to the University of Virginia to complete her Bachelor's degree in Psychology.

She came back to SVCC as an employee in 2009 and worked in various roles including Adjunct Instructor, Academic Advisor, Student Activities Coordinator and currently as the Advanced Manufacturing Career Coach and Recruiter. As the recruiter, she is able to use her personal experiences to help prospective students begin their path to success at SVCC. Working closely with students from six area high schools, she also helps them explore advanced manufacturing careers as well as academic and training opportunities.

"I have the chance to meet one-on-one with students, provide classroom presentations, and expose students to various career possibilities through holding special events such as the Dream It Do It Advanced Manufacturing Camp we had this summer in Emporia," she said. Through this 4-day summer camp, local middle and high school students participated in tours and guest lectures from local industry and learned about blueprint reading, 3D design, programming for CNC machines, and use of manual mill and lathe machines.

A career highlight for Smithers at SVCC has been becoming the co-creator/advisor of the Student Ambassadors program. This group of students are tasked with representing the student body of the college at events and conferences, serving on various college committees and taking an active role in recruiting for the college.

Besides working diligently at the college, Smithers has been back to school herself. She completes her Masters in Professional Counseling from Liberty University this month. Her husband, Quentin, has been busy with school as well and will complete his Master's in Christian Leadership from Liberty University.

Having had the opportunity to experience dual enrollment and attending SVCC as a student, Smithers has the experience and expertise to guide others to success...and a Cool Job like hers.