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# News Release

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For immediate use

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## **Durham Tech Receives *Breaking Through* Grant From Gates Foundation to ‘Scale Up’ Success**

(Durham, N.C.) – Durham Technical Community College is one of five community colleges in the nation to share a \$200,000 “scale-up” grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for its *Breaking Through* initiative. The national *Breaking Through* initiative is designed to support the educational and workforce advancement of underserved and under-skilled young adult students by helping them prepare for occupational and technical degree programs. The project is a partnership of Jobs for the Future and the National Council for Workforce Education.

The five community colleges selected for the “scale-up” grants - \$40,000 to each college - demonstrated that their *Breaking Through* strategies improved academic outcomes for students, according to Jobs for the Future officials. The award reflects each college’s success in designing a sustainable model for the *Breaking Through* initiative on their campuses.

“All Americans deserve a chance to gain the skills and knowledge necessary to compete for jobs that can provide family-supporting wages,” said Marlene B. Seltzer, president and CEO of Jobs for the Future. “Colleges that scale up strategies like *Breaking Through* will accelerate President Barack Obama’s goal of graduating 5 million more Americans from community colleges by 2020. The grants from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation help expand the pathways for low-skilled young adults to attain college credentials that will pay off in today’s labor market as well as over the long term.”

Durham Tech serves more than 5,000 students, including a large number of non-traditional students. Approximately 72 percent attend part time. Approximately 61 percent are over age 25. Durham Tech will use its Scale Up grant, to leverage its incentive program - using cash or certificates - to increase student retention and advancement.

*Breaking Through* began as a research initiative in 2004 by identifying barriers that account for the lack of success among low-skilled adult students. To build on those research findings, *Breaking Through* entered a three-year national demonstration phase in 2005 that enabled community colleges to implement pathways to college-level professional/technical programs for low-skilled adults. In 2009, *Breaking Through* entered a new phase that combines documenting best practices at participating community colleges, documenting evidence that those practices make a difference in the lives of students, and scaling up the work in several sites. It is supported by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

Other colleges receiving the *Breaking Through* grants include Lake Michigan College in Benton Harbor, Michigan., Owensboro Community and Technical College in Owensboro, Kentucky, Pamlico Community College in Grantsboro, N.C., and Tacoma Community College in Tacoma, Washington.

### **About Breaking Through**

*Breaking Through*, a multiyear demonstration project, promotes and strengthens the efforts of innovative community colleges across the country to help low-literacy adults prepare for and succeed in occupational and technical degree programs. The goal is to strengthen postsecondary outcomes for low-income adults by focusing on strategies that create more effective pathways through pre-college and degree-level programs. *Breaking Through* is supported by grants from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. For more information, visit [www.breakingthroughcc.org](http://www.breakingthroughcc.org).

### **About Jobs for the Future**

Jobs for the Future identifies, develops, and promotes new education and workforce strategies that help communities, states, and the nation compete in a global economy. In over 200 communities in 41 states, JFF improves the pathways leading from high school to college to family-sustaining careers. For more information, visit [www.jff.org](http://www.jff.org).

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