

NYSERDA – Hudson Valley Community College

Interview: Joseph Sarubbi, Department Chair – Building Systems Technology HVCC

Hudson Valley got involved with renewable energy training by starting with a photovoltaic installers program that was supported by NYSERDA who have grants out there for colleges, technical schools like ourselves to be able to get a program like this off the ground. What you're seeing behind me is a mock roof setup with a 3KW system install. That's part of the hands-on training. The students get an opportunity to actually disassemble the current photovoltaic panels that are on there and then reinstall them in the way that they would normally do on a real legitimate roof setup out there in industry. That's the type of hands-on training that employers are seeking, and we want to make sure that we mirrored that as much as we possibly could.

We are looking to do biofuels, geothermal, wind energy training and, currently because of a great relationship with NYSERDA and a large funding grant from them again, we are now doing energy efficiency training with Building Performance Institute so much so that Hudson Valley is now the model for the type of training program that we are looking to do for energy efficiency. We are collaborating with nine other community colleges across NYS to be able to do the exact same type of training and be able to meet the demands of the workforce by having more schools do the same type of training throughout the state.

In 2006, Hudson Valley sponsored, along with NYSERDA, a workforce education conference for energy and energy efficiency. We had representatives from 30 different states and I think six different countries. The majority of the people who came to this conference were educators looking to figure out how can I start the types of renewable energy training programs that I see in other institutions at my own school. Hudson Valley hosted that conference and now they are hosting the 2008 conference in March. And with our desire to improve our carbon blueprint here at Hudson Valley, we are trying to take advantage of those solar panels while they are sitting there not actually being used as part of training where we are actually generating solar power that's feeding the lights inside one of our labs. In addition to that, Hudson Valley is no longer on the grid. We are actually generating our own power utilizing methane gas from a local landfill and in combination with natural gas we are generating our own power here at Hudson Valley again, hoping to improve our carbon blueprint.

Our success has been recognized throughout the nation. People are calling us looking for our knowledge and our expertise to get things off the ground and we're certainly excited to be able to share whatever knowledge we have. It's a great feeling to know that when we worked so hard to pull this all together, you know that good things happen and we are actually very successful. We made this work here.