



▼ **OUR JOURNEY:**

Tri-County Technical College (TCTC) is committed to transforming the lives of students and building strong communities. TCTC has established a number of programs and initiatives to support rural Appalachian, under-resourced, and under-represented students including: student support and engagement resources and staff, college-wide initiatives, student clubs and organizations, etc. The second cohort of Rural Educators Academy (REA) team members focused on the opportunity to build on the foundation that exists at TCTC. Through the capstone process, REA team members wrestled with the idea of intensive training with a small number of employees versus breadth of training with a larger subset of employees. Ultimately, the team built a game-based experience that highlighted student support resources students need to persist through graduation. Throughout the spring semester the experience was delivered to a representative sample of employees. Future plans include delivering the capstone project at fall and spring professional development days to continue to increase the working knowledge of student support resources across the college.

TCTC

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GOALS:

- Increase support to improve educational outcomes
 - Increase employee knowledge of services and resources that support rural and under-resourced students.
 - Develop game-based experience highlighting student support resources.
- Deepening understanding of the student experience
 - Continue commitment to expanding the comprehension of challenges and needs of rural Appalachia students.
 - Host United Way Poverty Simulation to increase understanding of rural students and students navigating poverty.

PROCESS:

Topic Identification:

TCTC Cohort I explored how to promote awareness and comprehension of student struggles and the TCTC employee's role in helping students access institutional and community resources. Building on Cohort I's work, Cohort II delivered the Poverty Simulation Workshop for a second year and developed a game-based learning program highlighting student support services and resources. The capstone project goal is to increase working knowledge of resources and services available to TCTC students so that all employees have more tools to support student persistence and resilience.

- Wins along the way
 - Strengthened interdepartmental partnerships and employee engagement.
 - Harnessed educational technologies to create a sustainable knowledge framework to deliver gamified professional development learning experiences.
 - Increased employees working knowledge of student support resources.
 - Highlighted multiple resources that will benefit from increased awareness.
- Milestones
 - Hosted the second Poverty Simulation Workshop in partnership with the United Way of Anderson County.
 - Brainstormed and identified student support services and resources vital to student success.
 - Developed gamified learning experience, "Building a Success Network".
 - Resource leaders established priority highlights and evaluated the program prior to implementation.
 - Key stakeholders evaluated program and provided feedback informing program development.
 - Delivered gamified experience to diverse internal stakeholders.
 - Deployed brief assessment to gauge impact of experience and participants willingness to recommend the program to their colleagues.
 - Produced virtual deliverable highlighting student support resources and services, service area profile, and REA context as follow-up to experience.
- Ongoing work
 - Collect and evaluate participant responses to identify knowledge strengths and gaps.
 - Advocate for professional development opportunities highlighting student support resources with an emphasis on identified knowledge gaps.
 - Develop new programs to highlight different support resources and scenarios.