

Project SEARCH graduates first class

Robeson Community College held its spring curriculum graduation, Basic Law Enforcement graduation and Early College High School graduation during May. The Adult High School program graduation ceremony is scheduled for 10 a.m. in the A.D. Lewis Auditorium on Thursday.



Dennis Watts
 Contributing Columnist

We're proud of these students and congratulations are in order for each.

The college celebrated another graduation ceremony last week that was a new event for us that did not take place on our campus. This ceremony was just as important, however, in that it celebrated accomplishments of students for work completed that will have a meaningful effect on their lives.

On Thursday, nine students in the college's inaugural Project SEARCH program were awarded certificates in a ceremony held at Southeastern Regional Medical Center, the college's training partner for the program. The program, which is funded by the N.C. Council on Developmental Disabilities and The Department of Health and Human Services' Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, seeks to teach job skills to students



Courtesy photo

Francis Lowery, bottom left, Elena Hunt, Taylor Ann Warren, Lydia Blue, Justin White, top left, Martin Chavis, Austina Dykes, Keenan Lee Moser and Savan Amin graduated from the Project SEARCH program last week.

who have developmental disabilities with the goal of enabling them to become productively employed.

According to the Project SEARCH website, "The sole definition of a successful outcome is competitive employment in an integrated setting for each Project SEARCH intern." On a national level, according to the Project SEARCH organization, about one quarter of those who complete internships are hired by the host organization where they have done their training. The expectation is that other program completers will be able to find employment in other community organizations where they can utilize the skills they have learned.

The program emphasizes a "total immersion" experience where the interns are at the job site for the full day. Students typically spent one to two hours each day working on employable skills

with Robeson Community College instructor Banessa Williams-McCormick. Each intern then spent four to five hours each day working at various positions in the organization hosting the program — Southeastern Health.

Participants in the program worked in the Education Department, food services, pre-registration, guest services, same-day surgery, laboratories and other areas on the hospital's main campus and at the Community Health and Education Center inside Biggs Park Mall. They learned various skills such as greeting visitors and assisting them in finding their way around the hospital, packing food containers, collecting specimens, data entry, filling orders and stocking medicines.

Program graduates were Savan Amin, Lydia Blue, Martin Chavis, Austina Dykes, Elena Hunt, Francis Lowery, Keenan Lee Moser,

Taylor Ann Warren and Justin White.

If you would like to learn more about Project SEARCH at Robeson Community College, call 910-272-3607.

If you or someone you know is interested in earning a degree from Robeson Community College, now is the time to prepare for our fall semester. Returning students can register at any time by contacting the department chairperson for their major. Phone 910-272-3338 if you don't know who your department chairperson is. New students and students who have not attended in the past year need to complete an application and attend a new student orientation session. To learn more new students can visit Robeson.edu/Admissions or phone 910-272-3342.

Dennis Watts is the public information officer for Robeson Community College.



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