

Today's date: [Thursday, February 04](#)

WORKING AT CAROLINA

Literacy council to teach campus GED and skills classes

Chancellor Paul Hardin established the GED/ABE Program within Facilities Services more than 20 years ago.

Over the years, the program, which allows employees to earn their high school diplomas and expand their job skills, has had many homes – from the basement of the Campus Y to the meeting room in Odum Village to the Employee Forum’s office on Franklin Street, before settling into its current location in the Cheek-Clark Building on West Cameron Avenue.

This month, the program saw another change when the Orange County Literacy Council stepped in to provide on-campus instructors after budget constraints forced Durham Technical Community College to stop doing so.

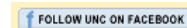
Ray Doyle, the Facilities Services training specialist who has coordinated the program for the past nine years, talked to the Employee Forum in November about the change – and to reassure forum members about a seamless transition.

“We remain committed not to miss a single beat with our program,” Doyle said.

Story continues below photo of Doyle



In recent years, Doyle has seen a gradual shift from employees who need to complete their high school education to quality for better jobs to employees who are interested in taking the less demanding Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes so they can expand their skills for their current jobs.



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NEXT ISSUE: FEBRUARY 10

Another growing demand is for English as a Second Language classes.

Doyle said the program would continue working closely with Durham Tech to identify employees with special educational needs and refer them to the school's Learning Center on Franklin Street.

While the Facilities Services program has had its ups and downs over the years, as measured by enrollment numbers and the number of graduates, Doyle said the success of the program stems from the very fact that it exists.

Classes will continue to be offered three days a week (Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday) from 8:15 to 11:15 a.m., Doyle said. That schedule enables employees who finish working the midnight shift as well as dayshift workers to attend the classes. During regular work hours, full-time employees are allowed to attend two 90-minute sessions each week.

Convenience is a major factor in getting people to participate, equal to the comfort that employees feel once they are there, Doyle said. The combination of those two things gets employees to the classes and keeps them coming back, he said.

One person who stands out for Doyle as a testament to the program's value is a housekeeper whom he befriended and encouraged. The woman started out wanting to get her GED so she could advance to a better, higher-paying job to support her family. In the end, though, her true motivation may have been pride.

The woman struggled mightily, Doyle said. The work did not come easily for her and, in her regular reports to him, she would tell him that she intended to give up. But she never did, at least not for long.

"She was the epitome of determination," Doyle said. "She was in the GED program for 10 years. She went to class most every week while overcoming the difficulties of working and raising a family. It was tough and you could see how she struggled."

Not long before she earned her GED, the woman was promoted to acting zone manager, a job that required supervising some 30 housekeepers who cleaned roughly one-third of all on-campus student housing.

After receiving her GED, she was hired as the permanent zone manager, a position she kept until she retired.

The program is tailor-made, Doyle said, for people like her.