



## CISCO COLLEGE

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### **Cisco College Awarded \$280,000 TRUE Grant to Advance Industrial Machinery Mechanics Training**

*Abilene / Cisco, Texas - January 14, 2025* – Cisco College has been awarded \$280,000 by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board through the Texas Reskilling and Upskilling Through Education (TRUE) grant. This funding will significantly enhance the college’s Manufacturing and Skills Standard program, aimed at addressing the growing demand for skilled industrial machinery maintenance professionals and supporting key local employers.

Through this initiative, Cisco College will elevate its Industrial Machinery Mechanics program into a premier training hub for industrial maintenance professionals in the region. The program is designed to equip continuing education, credit-earning, and displaced workers with essential skills to troubleshoot, repair, and program complex machinery systems used in manufacturing environments. Students will benefit from a comprehensive approach that combines hands-on and virtual training modules.

“We are grateful to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for these funding opportunities”, said Heather McClure, Vice President of Instruction at Cisco College. “We are excited to offer these critically needed skills to Abilene and the surrounding area”

To meet the needs of the manufacturing industry, the program will incorporate two portable FANUC robotic units. These versatile robotic systems, secured within mobile carts, will enable on-site continuing education training at both Cisco College locations based on demand. This innovation ensures students gain practical, real-world experience while catering to the diverse requirements of local industries. Additionally, the coursework will include online, instructor-paced modules to provide a flexible and enriched learning experience.

The program's hybrid model, which has been in place since 2019, combines in-person instruction with online coursework to prepare students for the manufacturing industry's evolving demands. The certifications offered are stackable, allowing students to build upon their skills progressively. The standard certification can be completed in approximately six weeks, while the advanced certification takes up to six months.

Rick Marks, Dean of Workforce & Economic Development, will lead the implementation of the grant and oversee the program's growth. "We are excited to have been awarded the TRUE grant that will enable Cisco College to support the current automated robotic manufacturing needs of our industries," said Rick Marks. "Because of this grant award Cisco College will be able to provide mobile on-site Industrial robotics certification training utilizing FANUC robots that will equip individuals with the skills and knowledge to drive innovation, improve productivity, and ensure safety in the rapidly evolving world of industrial automation."

Rick added, "another benefit through this grant is that Cisco College CTE personnel will have the ability to support secondary education. We will be able to bring industrial automation into high schools that will prepare the next generation of innovators, equipping students with hands-on skills and knowledge to thrive in the future workforce of robotics and smart manufacturing."

For more information about the Industrial Machinery Mechanics program and other workforce development initiatives at Cisco College, please visit [www.cisco.edu](http://www.cisco.edu).

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### ***About Cisco College***

Since first admitting students in 1940, Cisco College has offered programs and activities intended to encourage lifelong learning and enhance the quality of life in the communities it serves.

As a member of the Texas state system of publicly supported institutions of higher education, Cisco College maintains an open-door admissions policy and provides an array of learning, skill development and life experiences to motivate and challenge students. Classes are offered at two primary locations, Cisco and Abilene, in addition to several other off-campus sites. The College strives to maintain a student/faculty ratio which facilitates close interaction between faculty and students.

Cisco College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award Associate level degrees.