

## **Another Great Pathway: Workforce Education**

[Photo: Dr. Farmer.jpg] **1/22/19** — Every spring and fall, Weatherford College welcomes thousands of new starry-eyed students to our campuses for the very first time. They come from all walks of life in every size, shape, and gender. Some want to become movie stars, rocket scientists, or famous novelists. Others are convinced that they are merely months away from becoming filthy rich. And of course, there is always the new crop of aspiring doctors and lawyers. However, most of these enthusiastic young adults just have the simple goal of earning an education, getting a job that pays a living wage, and realizing the American Dream.

For many of our new students, coursework leading to a four-year degree or possibly even a graduate degree makes sense. For many others, a workforce education is the appropriate path. Adult learners on a path to a living wage and a sustainable career also value such local learning opportunities. Workforce education programs provide a pathway which enables any hard working student to realize the American Dream.

What we once knew as vocational education is now referred to as career and technical education (CTE) at the high school level, and as workforce education at the community college level. Workforce education programs provide great choices for students who, for whatever reason, choose not to pursue a four-year degree. Such programs provide the education and training to prepare students for immediate employment in professional and technical fields. Workforce education students benefit from these programs by gaining employable skill sets that lead to jobs that pay family-sustaining wages. Area employers benefit by having a deep pool of qualified workers from which to employ and grow their businesses. Strong workforce programs also help to attract new businesses to the area. And of course, the community benefits by having low unemployment and a thriving business community. The taxes paid by the wage earners and thriving business community help to build new roads, ensure strong school systems, and provide economic health to the growing community that we call home.

Weatherford College currently offers certification in 32 workforce programs, with additional programs in the approval process. Students have more choices than ever before in Weatherford College's distinguished 150-year history. Through collaborative efforts with the Texas Workforce Commission and the City of Weatherford, we hope to further expand educational opportunities for our students in the near future.

Texas is a great place to live. There is no more dynamic place within our great state than the Weatherford College service area to live, work, and raise a family. We have great churches, great schools, and the type of business-friendly environment that grows our economy. A vibrant workforce education program is an important facet of our holistic society. Weatherford College will be a leader in that effort.

**Tod Allen Farmer**  
**President, Weatherford College**