



## ATC Spotlight

### Biotech faculty members contribute to national initiative



The Biotechnology Department faculty members at Athens Technical College have added their voices to President Barack Obama's initiative for building America's bioeconomy.

Andreas Heltzel (Ph.D.), Amanda Latimer (M.Sc.), Brent Beall (Ph.D.),

Jeff Rapp (Ph.D.), Margaret Chambers (Ph.D., DVM) and Michael Mouat (Ph.D.) collaborated on a paper entitled: "The Role of Two-Year Colleges in Providing and Developing an Educated and Highly Competitive Bioeconomy Workforce" that is posted on a White House bioeconomy microsite on the web. It can be found on page 865 (or search for Athens Technical College) at the following link:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/ostp-bioeconomy-rfi-responses.pdf>.

The paper was submitted in December in response to a Sept. 16 request by the federal Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) to solicit input on how best to develop the National Bioeconomy Blueprint. The Obama administration is seeking ways to "harness biological research innovations to address national challenges in health, food, energy, and the environment," the OSTP request stated.

The Athens Technical College paper was included in a compilation of material prepared by experts and educators from around the country. The paper essentially emphasizes the importance of education and training, particularly from two-year colleges, in sustaining a workforce capable of filling the jobs of the future, said Andreas Heltzel who led the ATC effort. College like Athens Technical College offer benefits not found in four-year colleges, the paper states.

"Four-year academic programs in the life sciences generally address biotechnology laboratory skills on a more theoretical level. In contrast, two-year colleges offering life sciences programs specializing in understanding, acquiring and actively mastering biotechnology laboratory and related scientific skills provide a very focused approach, training a large number of educated life sciences technicians. Accordingly, two-year biotechnology facilities are more efficient and time- and cost-effective for the students and for the life sciences industry in producing a workforce ready to transition directly into the private-sector bioeconomy," the ATC faculty wrote.

Institutions like Athens Technical College also serve a vital role in stimulating entrepreneurship and in helping during times of lean budgets, Heltzel said.

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