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## Vincennes University Playing a Role in Indiana's Economic Future

**Organization:** Vincennes University  
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**Leadership:** Richard Helton, president; Ronald Davis, Ph.D., provost and vice president for instructional services/dean of faculty; Phillip Rath, CPA MBA, vice president for financial services and government relations

### History:

Indiana's first college (founded in 1801) and one of the oldest in America. It is one of just two United States colleges founded by a U.S. president (William Henry Harrison). The other is Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia.

### Extensive reach:

Vincennes University's 8,000 full-time equivalent students statewide come from all 92 Indiana counties, 27 states and 37 countries. In addition to the 120-acre campus, classes are also offered in Jasper, at the Indianapolis International Airport's Aviation Technology Center, the Indiana School for the Deaf (program in sign language interpretation) and at military bases around the country.

### Economic mission:

While recognizing its history as a two-year transfer institution (there are 1,300 transfer agreements in place), Helton says, "That's been our mission for a long, long time, but one of the things Vincennes University has always done has been moved with the times. We believe we're an integral player in Gov. Daniels' quest to bring more jobs to Indiana." Davis adds, "Our focus is on what's the future, what's next. We're always looking weeks, months, even years ahead."

The school is in the process of adding seven four-year programs in areas of high state need (nursing, homeland security and more). A new two-year mining course of study was implemented to meet anticipated needs as two mines are scheduled to reopen in the area.

**Next step:**

The immediate future includes the construction of the State Center for Applied Technology. The mission is to meet state workforce development needs in the areas of advanced manufacturing, information technology, biomedical technology and homeland security.

The new addition, first approved by the state Legislature in 2002 and funded earlier this year, will be adjacent to the university's state-of-the-art student facility. It will, in Helton's words, "allow business and industry to come to Vincennes University. It's a statewide business and industry training center."

Rath says it would not be possible to duplicate these training opportunities in Indiana businesses. Davis points out that the open shell design will promote flexibility, allowing the facility to be customized to meet business and industry needs.

**Providing talent:**

Helton says businesses today are looking at students who are adept at more than one skill. They also want young people who are teachable. When Georgetown, Kentucky's Toyota plant was recently hiring 21 technical students, all 17 that applied from Vincennes were accepted.

"The jobs that are not going overseas," Rath states, "are the kind of students we graduate."

In addition to the technical expertise, Vincennes students have a 100% pass rate on the exam required for further pharmacy studies. All seven students who recently applied to Purdue's pharmacy school were accepted. In these and other transfer areas, the campus leaders note the extensive work done by faculty in building the relationships with other institutions.

Davis says that more than 95% of Vincennes graduates remain in Indiana.

**Seeing Red:**

Vincennes – the city and the university – has a bond with one of America's great entertainers of the 20th century in Red Skelton. The Vincennes native was a successful performer in vaudeville,



Dick Helton, right, discusses positive developments for the university. At left is provost Ronald Davis.

The Red Skelton Performing Arts Center is already drawing interest from a variety of musical artists, while the hallways in the facility honor the legendary entertainer.





**A new indoor athletic facility is expected to draw Amateur Athletic Union basketball tournaments and other events to campus.**

radio, movies and television prior to his death in 1997 at the age of 84. "The Red Skelton Show" was a 20-year TV success from 1951 to 1971.

The \$16.8 million Red Skelton Performing Arts Center was dedicated in February of this year. In addition to an 800-seat theatre with all the amenities for performers and guests, the 63,000-square-foot facility contains classrooms, rehearsal halls and labs for students in theatre, theatrical production, music and dance. A gala celebration in June brought state and national attention to Vincennes.

In August, it was announced that the Red Skelton Museum and Exhibition Gallery will also be located on campus. The building will allow for display of some of the memorabilia donated to the university by Skelton's widow, Lothian Skelton.

"Vincennes has recognized Red Skelton as its favorite son," Helton reminisces. "He always had such good, strong family values. It was a labor of love for him, and he helped put Vincennes University and Vincennes on the map. We're very pleased to have this center on our campus."

**Selling points:**

Vincennes operates under an open door policy, accepting any student who graduates from high school. But as Davis declares, "We don't build our reputation on who comes in the door. We build our reputation on who we graduate. Our graduates go on to schools that wouldn't have looked at those students (coming out of high school). Our students have to meet high standards. Our goal is to help them achieve those standards."

Helton: "Students coming to Vincennes University get the full college experience. We have all the activities any school has, and we're the least expensive residential school in this state. It's a wonderful place to come if a student is not sure what he or she wants to do."

# CHOICES Technology

Whether you're seeking state-of-the-art technical training for staff or looking to hire trained and qualified personnel in a technical field — Vincennes University's TOPS Center is the resource for you. The TOPS Center offers technical training programs that lead to increased productivity and profit for your business.

**PARTNERSHIPS**

By creating and maintaining partnerships with leaders in business and industry, VU stays abreast of the current technologies and methodologies used in industry today. One such partnership is with Haas Automation, which positions VU's Advanced Manufacturing Training program at the cutting edge of CAD/CAM/CNC training.

**INTERNSHIPS**

Working cooperatively with business and industry, VU has developed a strong intern program. Internships provide unique opportunities for students to gain relevant and meaningful work experience through hands-on training in the field. Companies benefit with the addition of energetic, ready-to-learn potential employees.

**TRAINING**

Retain valued employees through critical training at Vincennes University. Training in the latest programs and procedures is offered in our state-of-the-art labs and modern facilities by experienced, qualified instructors. Meals and housing are available at minimal expense. Trainees enjoy access to VU's recreational facilities, including a pool, weight room, bowling, sauna, indoor track, and more.



**For more information on the TOPS Center, contact Mike Richards at 812.888.4297 or mrichards@vinu.edu.**