

For Immediate Release

Contact: Scott Bates, 303.804.4675, sbates@cael.org

First Online Nuclear Degree to Align with the Nuclear Uniform Curriculum Program

February 3, 2011, Denver, CO - The Energy Providers Coalition for Education (EPCE) announced that the Associate's degree in Nuclear Power Technology offered by the Bismarck State College (BSC) National Energy Center for Excellence (NECE) has been approved by the Nuclear Uniform Curriculum Program (NUCP) for the non-licensed operator track - the first ever online program to align with the NUCP.

"The most important benefit of the new NUCP provision is that it allows prospective students and employees greater access to nuclear training," said John Lindsey, director, Fleet Support & Partnerships, Nuclear Training at Exelon Nuclear and member of the NUCP Ad Hoc Committee at the Institute of Nuclear Power Operations. "The online format is beneficial for those who live far from a plant and want to work at one, and also for those who are already busy with their current lives and would like to continue their education; this fits their needs and schedules."

In 2007, the U.S. nuclear industry launched the NUCP, managed by the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI), which is a standardized certificate program designed to ensure the workforce is trained and in place at the right time. By organizing industry partnerships with two-year education programs it leverages resources to provide the next generation of highly skilled workers.

"The resurgence of nuclear energy will lead to increasing demand for [technical skills] of all levels," testified Carol Berrigan, NEI's director of industry infrastructure. "Each new reactor will require between 1,400 and 1,800 workers for construction with peak employment of up to 2,300 workers. Once built, these potential power plants would require between 12,400 and 21,700 permanent, full-time workers to operate the plants and additional supplemental labor for maintenance and outages."

Representing approximately two-thirds of the industry workforce, EPCE, a signature initiative of the Council for Adult & Experiential Learning (CAEL), is a unique coalition of industry organizations that partner with higher-education to develop, sponsor and promote online learning programs to help the energy industry meet its workforce needs. EPCE member Exelon Corporation is the primary utility partner collaborating with BSC's NECE and EPCE to provide the online nuclear classes and programs.

For the past two years Lindsey has been a member of the EPCE NUPT Curriculum Advisory Committee working with other select industry representatives to advance BSC's nuclear-related online educational programs. Those representatives include, American Electric Power, Constellation Energy Nuclear Group, LLCSM, Dominion Nuclear Business Unit, Duke Energy, Exelon Corporation, Palo Verde Nuclear Generation Station, and South Texas Project nuclear power plant.

"EPCE is a quality group with a strategic vision. With the aid of others in the coalition, I was given the unique opportunity to present the benefits of distance learning to the NUCP Ad Hoc Committee and managed to gain their approval," said Lindsey.

"We're excited about this achievement for this high-quality online program," he added.

"The NECE at BSC is honored to tie the Nuclear Uniform Curriculum Program to its Nuclear Power Technology Associate's degree program," said Kevin Holmstrom, programs manager at BSC. "The National Academy for Nuclear Training Certificate is a tremendous opportunity for students to now earn an industry-approved degree and certification to get them on the right path for a career in the nuclear industry."

"Our heartfelt appreciation goes to EPCE and John Lindsey for their dedication to this initiative," he added.

"Online education is on the rise and this program is 'out in front,' meeting the quality standards set by industry as well as by regional accrediting bodies," said Jo Winger de Rondon, vice president at CAEL. "Access is the key for students today. With their work, family and community commitments, online education is the only way many learners can 'go to college' these days."

Through the EPCE online nuclear degree program, students can earn an Associate's degree in Applied Science in Nuclear Power Technology from BSC and a Bachelor of Science degree in Nuclear Engineering Technology from Excelsior College, one of EPCE's other education partners.

About EPCE

The Energy Providers Coalition for Education (www.epceonline.org) is a national alliance delivering solutions to attract and engage the energy industry's workforce through quality online education. These programs offer interested candidates and incumbent workers technical skills as well as academic knowledge needed for industry career paths in electric utilities, nuclear power, and gas distribution. EPCE members, representing over two-thirds of the industry, champion industry needs in their joint efforts to develop and sponsor online curriculum with qualified accredited high schools, colleges, and universities. The EPCE program is a signature initiative of CAEL, the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (www.cael.org), an international non-profit organization with more than 35 years experience in creating and managing effective learning strategies for working adults through partnerships with employers, higher

education, the public sector, and labor.

About Bismarck State College's National Energy Center of Excellence

Bismarck State College's National Energy Center of Excellence offers online and classroom training for the energy industry. Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degrees can be earned, or courses can simply be taken for professional development and training. Classes are available in Electric Power Technology (distribution), Electrical Transmission Systems Technology (system operations), Power Plant, Process (refining, gasification, ethanol, biodiesel), Nuclear Power and Renewable Generation (wind, solar, tidal, hydro, biomass) Technologies. In addition, a Bachelor of Applied Science degree in Energy Management is available entirely online. The classes are offered in a convenient block-style format, giving students the opportunity to complete a class in 3-6 weeks. The National Energy Center of Excellence is also known for their non-credit offerings such as apprenticeship programs, customized training and NERC CEH courses.

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