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By **Mary Beth Faller**
The Republic | azcentral.com
Tue Feb 19, 2013 12:10 AM

The Maricopa Community Colleges will launch a center dedicated to workforce training that could raise money for the district and meet a need in the business community.

The still-unnamed "corporate college" will be modeled after similar programs in other states and will be based at GateWay Community College in Phoenix, according to Chancellor Rufus Glasper.

GateWay already houses the new Center for Entrepreneurial Innovation, an "incubator" that provides space and support for emerging companies.

The corporate college, to start operating July 1, will be different from the community colleges in that it will not be accredited and the training will not be for credit, Glasper said. The district's 10 colleges will continue to offer vocational degrees and certificates.

"The principal difference is the colleges provide workforce-training solutions with already-designed programs, while the corporate college responds to the employer's immediate needs with custom solutions," said GateWay President Eugene Giovannini, who will be president of the new center.

The goal is to have made-to-order training programs available within three to four days of a company's request, Glasper said.

The colleges now are assessing their current workforce trainers, and 10 to 20 probably will be assigned to the new center, which also will hire trainers on a short-term contract basis.

Barry Broome, president and CEO of the Greater Phoenix Economic Council, said there is a training gap that Maricopa colleges can fill.

"For a lot of this kind of training, companies try to create their own, and it's difficult, and it's difficult for companies to keep up once the training ends," he said.

"Obviously, there's always an appetite for super-sophisticated engineering and software talent, and Ph.D. researchers, and there's a significant appetite for two-year tech talent," he said. "But part of what

gets lost in the equation is that while you're delivering talented people, you have to continue to have a system to develop skills, and Maricopa is paying attention to how you maintain skills development."

The initiative could be a revenue source for the district, which has seen its state funding shrink from \$46million in 2010-11 to \$8.3million this year.

Glasper estimates the community colleges currently provide about 15 percent of the employee training for companies in the Valley, and the district wants to grab a bigger share.

"That's a lot of dollars left on the table," he said.

Multiyear training contracts could potentially be worth millions of dollars, he said.

"We've had some interest from the insurance industry, which has continuing-ed units, and from the property-management industry."

A search is under way for Giovannini's replacement.

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