



Sussex Partners with AmeriCOM Under a 34 Million National Effort Funded by the DoD

The American Center for Optics Manufacturing (AmeriCOM), a nationwide organization working with the Department of Defense (DoD), has embarked on a \$34 million project to help strengthen the domestic precision optics industry, including helping more people get into these high-paying jobs.

With all S.T.E.M. (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) sector industries facing a shortage of skilled workers, the first step AmeriCOM is taking is to partner with community colleges in key areas of the nation to secure educational opportunities for students, making them eligible for employment in the Optics industry.

Sussex is the first community college in the nation to partner with AmeriCOM. AmeriCOM has subcontracted with Sussex to expand educational opportunities in Optics Technology. The College will receive \$2 million to support the Optics Program by creating a state-of-the-art lab, distance learning courses, and dual-credit programs in local high schools.

“The 21st Century is the century of the photon, just as the 20th century was the century of the electron,” said Tom Battley, Vice President of Government & Partnerships at AmeriCOM. “There is not an industry on the face of the planet that is not using optics and photonics in some way.”

“Given the nature of technology today, I cannot think of an industry sector that has not incorporated optics technology into the core of its products,” said President Connolly. “Sensors, detectors, measurement, transmission of light, signaling, photography and video of every type, are present in essentially everything we use today such as automotive, biomedical, aerospace, research, and consumer products. This proliferation of optics applications has not been met with a proliferation of workers to produce these instruments and devices. Without these workers, the industry is crippled. We are thrilled to be able

to partner with AmeriCOM on this all-important sector of the economy and to purchase the necessary equipment to train the current, and next generation, of workers in optics technology.”

Sussex looks to meet the nationwide demand and model the successful program provided by Monroe Community College in Rochester, NY. MCC remains one of the nations’ leading colleges for precision optics. Sussex will also aim to expand their Optics on campus and with new equipment provided by the grant.

Pictured: Students in the Optics Program learn about the equipment that will advance them in the field. Classes are held at Thorlabs in Newton, NJ.

