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COE President and CEO Dr. Kirk A. Nooks Visits Tennessee College of Applied Technology Dickson During Presidential Leadership in Motion Tour



ATLANTA, GA — [October 26, 2026] — From the precision of robotics to the practical skills developed in technical training programs, Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) Dickson offered a window into the evolving landscape of workforce education as Dr. Kirk A. Nooks, President and CEO of the Council on Occupational Education (COE), visited the institution on Monday, October 26, 2026, as part of his Presidential Leadership in Motion Tour.

The visit brought Dr. Nooks to Dickson, Tennessee, for a closer look at how the college approaches technical instruction, workforce preparation, and the application of emerging technologies. A featured

robotics competition added a dynamic element to the visit, placing technical skills and applied learning at the center of the day's activities.

Dr. Nooks was welcomed by Laura Travis, President of TCAT Dickson and a member of the COE Commission. The visit began with an institutional briefing involving senior leadership, followed by a tour of the college's training facilities and educational programs. Together, these activities provided an opportunity to examine the resources and instructional environments supporting students as they prepare for careers in skilled and technical fields.

The robotics competition offered a particularly relevant perspective on the relationship between classroom instruction and practical application. As technology continues to reshape industries, opportunities for students to demonstrate problem-solving abilities, technical proficiency, and adaptability are increasingly important to workforce readiness.

“Visiting TCAT Dickson was an opportunity to see the many ways technical education continues to evolve alongside the industries it serves,” said Dr. Nooks. “I especially appreciated the opportunity to observe the robotics competition and see students applying their technical knowledge in a practical setting. Experiences like these speak to the breadth of skills being developed within career and technical education and the important role institutions play in preparing individuals for a changing workforce.”

For Laura Travis, the visit provided an opportunity to share the college's accomplishments and the collective efforts behind its workforce training programs.

“Having Dr. Nooks on our campus was both an honor and a meaningful affirmation of the work being accomplished by our faculty, staff, and students. We are proud to showcase our programs that meet workforce demands, create career opportunities, and uphold the highest standards of educational excellence,” said Travis.

As part of COE's Presidential Leadership in Motion Tour, the visit also contributed to an ongoing dialogue between the agency and its member institutions about the realities of delivering high-quality career and technical education. By engaging directly with institutional leadership and observing training activities, Dr. Nooks continues to gain perspectives that inform COE's understanding of the institutions and students it serves.

At TCAT Dickson, the combination of institutional leadership, specialized training facilities, and student engagement in technical activities illustrated the breadth of experiences that contribute to workforce preparation. The visit offered a timely look at how career and technical education is responding to technological advancement while remaining grounded in the practical skills employers and communities depend on.

For more information about the Council on Occupational Education, visit www.council.org.

About the Council on Occupational Education:

The Council on Occupational Education is a leading accreditor for over 500 postsecondary occupational education institutions in over 40 states. With a commitment to quality and continuous improvement, COE works to assure quality and integrity in career and technical education. For more information about the Council on Occupational Education and its mission, please visit www.council.org

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