

Beaumont Case Study

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CHRIS COXON: The southeast corner of Texas has a high demand for people with skills and training in petroleum and refining. As one of the innovative academies, the Austin Innovation Center Petroleum and Refining Academy at the Beaumont Early College High School, provides students these opportunities. In collaboration with Lamar Institute of Technology and Exxon Mobil, students train on simulated labs, utilizing the same equipment that they will use out in the field.

GARY SENIOR: I can tell you that my instrumentation staff, 100% of them cross through Lamar. My operations staff is probably about 90%. And for this program, with the early college high school and the industry partnerships, it's going to allow these kids who are in this community to get involved with these programs.

MELANIE PHARIS: In 2016-2017 school year, we received the designation to become the Petroleum and Refining Academy. And with that came a lot of anticipation for setting up our own lab on our campus. We had the spot laid out, everything was ready to go. And as soon as we're getting ready to start school, that's when we start seeing the weather forecasts.

With 50 inches of rain, that had a severe delay not only the start of the school, but essentially the start of our program. When we had to move from our campus, LIT allowed us to be housed here. Even though we were looking to set up our own lab, it was interesting that we now had access to the very place that was responsible for training our students.

MELISSA ARMENTOR: We have the unique opportunity to bring these under served kids that never thought they would go to college into our early college high school, give them an education in a field that will sustain them and their families for the rest of their lives.

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