

As the First and Only Accredited College Entirely Focused on Careers in Renewable Energy and Sustainability, Ecotech Institute is Leading the Way into the Future as North America seeks to lessen its Dependency on Fossil Fuels

Clean Technology Education

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Mike Seifert
President

BIO:

Michael L. Seifert is president of Ecotech Institute, based in the Denver Metro area. He has more than twenty-five years of education management experience in a variety of capacities with a notable strength in building and maintaining well-performing educational institutions. Michael has a deep understanding of operational metrics and a keen eye for developing and evaluating personnel to create efficient and positive team environments. His broad experience and knowledge allows him to effectively lead a successful educational institution.

Michael received his bachelor's of science in Business Resource Development from Medaille College in Buffalo, New York and served in the U.S. Marine Corps.

About Ecotech Institute:

Ecotech Institute is the first and only college entirely focused on preparing America's workforce for careers in renewable energy and sustainability and is accredited by the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges. Launched in April 2010 in Denver, Colorado, it offers seven highly practical renewable energy degree programs that provide graduates with skills valued by today's alternative renewable energy employers. Classes start once per quarter and applications are always accepted. Financial assistance is available to those who qualify. Ecotech Institute is a division of Education Corporation of America. For more information about Ecotech Institute, visit ecotechinstitute.com or call 877-326-5576.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor CEO CFO Magazine

CEO CFO: Mr. Seifert, would you tell us a little about the concept for Ecotech?

Mr. Seifert: In 2009, Education Corporation of America, which is the parent company of Ecotech, was talking about the need for a school solely focused on training America's workforce in renewable energy and sustainability. They realized that a cleaner, more efficient world is critical and that we cannot rely solely on fossil fuels forever. In their research, they found out there was no other school in

the country solely focused on clean-tech training; they decided to become an industry leader and fill this void by opening Ecotech Institute. This vision became reality in April of 2010 when Ecotech opened a temporary facility in Aurora Colorado, which is just outside of Denver. Ecotech moved to the permanent facility in January 2011 in a LEED certified building and we train more than five hundred students today.

CEO CFO: What were some of the biggest challenges in putting it all together?

Mr. Seifert: We appreciate how much the city of Aurora and the Aurora Economic Development Council welcomed us to the community with their support and assistance. One of the challenges when we first came in was that we were in a temporary facility and our applicants were not able to see the physical plan, nor see the labs or the equipment. During that construction period, they were doing general studies and they had to have the trust and the vision with us to see that the renewable energy in this part of the academic field is prosperous.

CEO CFO: What are some of the topics and degrees that you cover?

Mr. Seifert: We have seven distinct associate degree programs focused on solar energy, wind energy, renewable energy, energy efficiency, electrical energy, power utility, and business administration - sustainability. All of our students get the use of state-of-the-art labs. All programs are hands-on and they gain real-world experience.

CEO CFO: What sets your student body apart?

Mr. Seifert: Our average student age is between 25 and 30 years old but we do have students as young as 18 and up to 55 years. The majority are men although we do have women attending and that is growing. Most of our students want to change in their career and many already have a degree or a college experience. As far as attracting students, we are recruiting on a national basis, so we have students from almost every state.

CEO CFO: Would you tell us about your veterans programs?

Mr. Seifert: We are pleased with our relationships with veterans and have a strong military presence in our student body. Our current degree programs are approved for veterans and Ecotech has a dedicated military student service that assists applicants with processing all their documents so that they may receive their benefits. Ecotech received the 2012 top military-friendly colleges and university recognition award. We have partnered with the Veterans Green Jobs Organization and have built local relationships with military personnel.

CEO CFO: How does the clean-tech community in general participate?

Mr. Seifert: Our national board of advisors is comprised of academic and business leaders from the clean-tech community. They help us develop curriculum that can be applied the first day on the job. We have gotten tremendous feedback from employers and partners that Ecotech is paying attention to the clean-tech sector's needs and it shows.

We are getting feedback from the clean-tech industry as far as how well

our graduates are prepared and the knowledge that they have through their education with us. We work hard to place students and over 90 percent of our first graduating class found employment. We have been receiving positive feedback from both employers in the business community and the clean-tech sector.

CEO CFO: Where do you see the country falling short in the area of clean-tech?

Mr. Seifert: As each year goes by, and especially this year, I think the public is more aware of what clean-tech industry is all about. I think that the understanding, acceptance and growth of this industry will continue. I say that because the feedback that we get is that many of our applicants

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say that they want to be a part of this industry but just didn't know how. The students do a great amount of their own research even before they apply to become a student here. We need to keep educating the workforce in order to fill the jobs that are out there, because there are not a lot of people yet that have that have the skills perform clean-tech jobs.

CEO CFO: Would you tell us about the new equipment you added?

Mr. Seifert: This past year we have added a Lab-Volt Nacelle training system as well as a Hydraulic Pitch Hub Trainer for our Wind Training program. These training systems replicate what our students will be experiencing in commercial wind turbines, getting hands-on experience of what

they will be experiencing out there on the job. We also have solar photovoltaic and solar thermal trainers and we have added hydraulic and fluid equipment as part of the training as well.

CEO CFO: Is it easy to attract personnel?

Mr. Seifert: One of the reasons why we chose to come to Colorado is the number of employers that support the clean-tech industry. The state itself supports this industry. We knew the talent was here in order for us to provide the academic excellence that we need to have for students.

CEO CFO: Why should the business and investment community pay attention to Ecotech Institute?

Mr. Seifert: I think more and more people are realizing and understanding what Ecotech is all about, that we are the only school in the country solely focused on careers in renewable energy and sustainability. The clean-tech industry will only grow as we lesson our de-

pendence on fossil fuels. We are honored to train the people who are setting the stage for our country and the planet's future.

CEO CFO: Is there anything area that you have just added or will be added that will make a difference?

Mr. Seifert: One of the areas that we just announced is a business administration - sustainability associate degree program. All the businesses were saying that it is great what we are all doing as far as the hands-on technical side and technology and maintenance side of all of our programs, but they also needed business leaders who understand sustainability. We are very pleased to go in that direction, as well.