# Supporting Gwinnett's diversity

## Gwinnett Tech opens International Education Center

by Joel Farfari

**Gwinnett County has perhaps** the most diverse business community in the Atlanta region, if not the entire Southeast. There are now hundreds of international companies based here, as well as vibrant immigrant populations that are producing more and more homegrown businesses.

Gwinnett Technical College has opened its International Education Center at Gwinnett Place Mall to help residents and businesses alike thrive in this increasingly international environment.

The Center will host everything from English as a Second Language (ESL) classes to translator training to courses that teach American businesspeople how to best interact with foreign colleagues and customers.

"There are so many good reasons for doing this – we're taking needed courses into the community, providing residents and businesses the educational tools they need to succeed, and contributing to the economic growth of the Gwinnett Place community" says GTC President Sharon Bartels.

"The International Education Center is a great example of the mission of a technical college – supporting lifelong learning and workforce development with progressive course offerings tailored to the unique communities we serve," Bartels adds.

The International Education Center held its grand opening Sept. 29

The college held a grand opening for the International Education Center on Sept. 29, introducing the facility to leaders from the business, civic and international communities.

A full slate of English as a Second Language (ESL) classes will begin at the Center on Oct. 6, with several computer, construction and business training courses also scheduled to start early this fall. Long-term, the Center's offerings will evolve to meet community interests and needs.

The International Education Center occupies just over 32,600 square feet on two levels, with 23 classrooms. The Center includes testing facilities to support language classes and a Recruitment and Information Center for Gwinnett Tech.

Bartels says the college provided its ESL courses on campus until recently when the increasing demand for such classes, coupled with steady enrolled growth, necessitated additional space.

"We said we wanted to do this and wanted to get it into one of the Community Improvement Districts," she says. "Looking at the community's growing international population and business training needs, we decided this was the way to go."

The college has seen double-digit enrollment growth for the last five quarters.

Gwinnett Tech also operates one of the state's largest Continuing Education Divisions, offering hundreds of courses and seminars. Many of these classes will soon be offered at the International Education Center.

To learn more about course offerings at the International Education Center, visit online at www.GwinnettTech.edu/ce or call 770-995-9697. GBJ