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FedEx delivers training to students

BY HOWARD MCEWEN | ENQUIRER CONTRIBUTOR

CRESTVIEW HILLS - Thomas More College and FedEx are celebrating their first year of a partnership. FedEx works with the college to actively recruit students to work at its Mt. Zion Road sorting facility.

"The students receive an excellent wage from FedEx along with tuition reimbursement for their textbooks and many other perks," said Renee Noel, Thomas More's director of career planning. "It allows our students the opportunity to get a foot in the door with a great company, which can lead to possible full-time employment upon graduation."

FedEx's business model requires package handlers to work four-hour shifts beginning at 4 a.m., 2 p.m., 6 p.m. and 11 p.m. Most of the site's 350 package handlers are students.

"Because of their schedules, students are often willing to work the times that we need people," said Adrienne Cramer, FedEx employee relations manager.

According to Cramer, students unload packages from trailers and place them on a series of conveyor belts that travel through the facility. They then load packages onto trucks after they have been sorted and are ready for the next leg of their trip. Individual packages can weigh up to 150 pounds with the vast majority falling in the 15- to 30-pound range.

Thomas More history major Tim Keller worked at FedEx for six months.

"It's a good workout," said Keller. "The benefits are great - medical and dental, discounts to own your own truck if that's what you want, and there's a lot of open positions for leadership, which is nice."

FedEx has recently begun working to place Thomas More graduates in management and supervisory positions.

"When hired on full time after graduating, the typical first job is as a service manager who oversees the package handlers who work the sort shifts," said Cramer.

Thomas More, a small school with enrollment of about 1,500, but with 29 degree programs, appreciates FedEx's hiring flexibility. "The wonderful thing about FedEx is they are literally open to employing all of our majors," said Cramer.

Bill Burgoon, senior manager at the Northern Kentucky hub, worked for FedEx while attending Otterbein College in Westerville, Ohio. After earning a physical and health education degree, he joined the company full-time.

"The company is a great company to work for at the time and continues to be today. The versatility and sorting times worked out for me. It was easier for me to schedule work around my classes."

Working at FedEx also taught Burgoon lessons he may not have learned in college. "The biggest thing that I learned is working hard allowed advancement opportunities to get in with a great company."

Thomas More is expanding its co-op program. Students begin working with Procter & Gamble this fall.

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