



Deborah Cozart, Performance and Accountability Coordinator, recently attended the North Carolina Employment and Training Association (NCETA) annual NCETA conference which was a Celebration of 50 Years of Excellence. Truly a lot has changed over the past 50 years. And this conference provided her a chance to gain up-to-date knowledge on the ever evolving changes and existing issues in workforce development practices. According to Dr. Robert J. (Bob) Witchger, President of the North Carolina Employment and Training Association, “Workforce development issues have never been more important than they are today”, and as a result, NCETA concentrated their conference planning efforts on “*Focusing on Frontline Workforce Development Professionals*”.

Here are a few of her highlights: During the NCETA conference, I was able to acquire the latest information on workforce development practices and trends, performance, programming, case management, job development, plan implementation, WIOA policies & procedures, and professional & personal development. In addition, I had an opportunity to learn shared experiences through attending workshops and networking with both new and existing colleagues; I even experienced the excitement of reconnecting with an NCSU (Wolf Pack) college classmate who I had not seen since the early eighties. Other highlights are centered on the second day of the conference; Thursday night. This was a time to celebrate award recipients, and to enjoy a fun-filled evening of dinner, dancing, and Karaoke.

And Finally, I especially appreciated the Conference’s closing session during which Dr. Sandra Williams addressed not only professional challenges, but, personal challenges of how to “Step Into Your Greatness”. I am always amazed at how much can be learned from each other through attending these types of professional development conferences. In my opinion, Wilmington, NC was an excellent location for the 2017 NCETA’s Conference & 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of Excellence. The conference provided to all “an exciting opportunity to reflect on our past, celebrate the present, and advance forward to the future with renewed dedication to our workforce community and those we serve.”

The NCETA 2017 conference was absolutely a great time and ideal place to gain knowledge of how programs across the state are succeeding to develop North Carolina's workforce. I sincerely enjoyed this conference and feel privileged to have had the opportunity to invest time into developing professionally. What's more, I am appreciative of all the hard work that went into the conference planning. Much Thanks to NCETA!!

