



November, 2017

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Blackhawk Technical College makes changes, increases enrollment

Changes at Blackhawk Technical College over the past year have led to increased enrollment and more options for students, officials said Thursday.

By Frank Schultz

Blackhawk Technical College is boasting of an enrollment increase a little over a year since a new president began pushing staff members to change how the college does business.

Fall enrollments had been dropping, as is normal in an improving economy. But President Tracy Pierner last year challenged his staff to make the college more user-friendly and to recruit more students coming directly out of high school.

That has made a difference, said college spokesman Gary Kohn.

“We were recruiting high school students previously, but I think Dr. Pierner asked us to step up our game and pursue that audience with more resources, and we did,” Kohn said.

The college had enrolled 196 recent high school graduates at this time last year, Kohn said. This year, 295 are enrolled.

The college announced Thursday that the for-credit and pre-college student head count increased by 3 percentage points when compared to the start of the 2016-17 school year.

And full-time-equivalent credits increased by 6 percent.

Staff members have spent more time at high schools in Green and Rock counties over the past year, and the school has done more advertising on social media, Kohn said.

Flexible class schedules are also attracting more students, allowing them to complete courses while juggling work and other responsibilities, Kohn said.

Some courses allow students to get their lab work done at any time during the day, not just at a specific time.

Other classes are offered via teleconferencing, so students do not have to travel to the classroom to hear the lecture.

Classroom lectures for some courses also are offered as online videos, so a student could see and hear the lecture at any time of day.

One change allows welding students to enroll at any time, rather than before a semester starts. The result was a 16 percent increase in full-time-equivalent welding credits after two weeks into the semester, the college reported.

The automotive technician program, meanwhile, has begun allowing flexible attendance and keeps its lab open all day. The result was an 86 percent increase in full-time-equivalent credits.

The open lab lets the school handle more students without needing more space because the space and equipment are used over more hours, Kohn said.

Additional students eventually can mean more instructors, however.

Pierner said the automotive technician program went from two instructors last year to three this year. In other cases, instructors will work longer hours to accommodate smaller increases.

BTC has developed a model that calls for an additional hour of instructional time to be provided when approximately 16 credit hours are sold, Pierner said. The model pays for the additional instructor time.

Other programs showing increased enrollment this fall are agribusiness, human resources, emergency medical technician, criminal justice, medical assistant, laboratory technician assistant, physical therapy assistant, medical sonography, pharmacy technician and nursing, the college reported.

Nursing has started offering a part-time program, allowing students to complete the program in three years instead of two, Kohn said.

Pierner is pushing for more “student-centered education,” which means offering classes “where they want it, how they want it and when they want it,” he is quoted as saying in a news release.

BTC also is looking to expand dual-credit programs, in which high school students take courses at their schools while earning both high school and college credit, Kohn said.

“We still think we have much more room to grow,” Kohn said.

“We want to break down a lot of the artificial walls colleges sometimes create with static schedules,” he added.

That means adding more night and weekend classes, more part-time programs and different ways to deliver courses to working adults so they can advance in their professions, he said.

CVTC academy steers students to industrial mechanics careers

CVTC NEWS BUREAU

Aug 18, 2017



Joseph LeDuc of Chippewa Falls, left, listens as CVTC Industrial Mechanic instructor Jeff Johnson explains procedures on an electrical switch system tied into a computer at the Industrial Mechanic Academy at CVTC Aug. 11.

EAU CLAIRE — Joseph LeDuc once had a good career going doing mechanical work in an industrial setting. But that was before an injury, which led to years of struggle.

“Nowadays I hear the words ‘you don’t fit’ a lot. I don’t just want, but I need to find a place where I fit,” said Leduc, 55, of Chippewa Falls.

Meanwhile, employers all over western Wisconsin are desperately looking for more industrial mechanics. Recently, an Industrial Mechanic Academy at

Chippewa Valley Technical College sought to connect people like LeDuc with employers who could use them if they had some training.

“There is a huge shortage of maintenance mechanics in industry, especially in western Wisconsin,” said Doug Olson, who works with employer engagement for CVTC. “I’ve talked to employers who have had vacancies for eight months or more.”

A four-year federal Department of Labor IMPACT grant allowed CVTC to start the Industrial Mechanic Academy in cooperation with Workforce Resource, which identified potential participants.

“Our target was 17-to-29-year-olds not in high school and unemployed or underemployed,” Olson said. “Our secondary targets were veterans, the disabled and adult workers in need of work.”

“We’re showing them positive changes they can make in life so they can make a living in the future,” said program instructor Jeff Johnson.

LeDuc fit the secondary target group. “I’m freshening up on my mechanical experience,” he said. “I’ve dealt with some medical issues in past years that make it harder for me to get a job.”

A veteran, LeDuc worked at W.S. Darley in Chippewa Falls for 22 years before he broke his back in 2003. He’s been in-and-out of work since, landing some work with companies like Premium Waters and PMI. As the years slipped by, industry started to move beyond the skills that served him well before the injury. “I’m learning about computers here,” he said. “I’m slow at it.”

But many of the 18 participants who started at the academy are younger and were learning the basics of industrial machines.

“It’s a multi-skilled field,” Johnson said during the fourth day of the five-day academy. “It entails electrical, mechanical systems, hydraulics, and pneumatics. Today they were setting up installing bearings and doing shaft alignments.”

Students who complete all the classroom and lab work, including an online portion, earned an industry-recognized Maintenance Awareness certificate, which could lead to better employment for some. However, the academy was also seen as a gateway into CVTC’s two-year Industrial Mechanic program.

“This is helping people who might not otherwise consider CVTC,” Johnson said. “We are trying to give them a glimpse of what it would be like to be a student in the program.”

The academy lured Deven Risler, 18, a May graduate of Altoona High School, who starts in the CVTC program at the end of the month.

“The academy helped me decide on Industrial Mechanics,” Risler said. “I wanted to go to CVTC because you learn what you need to do a job. A few programs caught my eye, including Machine Tool and Information Technology.”

Antwon Pruitt, who is originally from Racine, moved to Eau Claire to be near his son and was looking to get into a construction trade. But the academy opened up new opportunities for him, and he also plans to enroll in Industrial Mechanics, with an October start.

“I would like to get into construction, building homes and stuff, but this will help me doing that kind of work,” Pruitt said.

Brandon Bintz, 18, a May graduate of Cornell High School, is also heading for CVTC – but in the Auto Collision Repair and Refinishing program. Still, he recognizes benefits he received from the academy.

“Knowing about wiring, motors and alignments will help in other fields too,” Bintz said.

Credit transfer program announced for FVTC and UW-Green Bay

Posted: 9:02 PM, Oct 12, 2017

Updated: 9:02 PM, Oct 12, 2017



APPLETON, Wis. - Two Northeast Wisconsin schools are joining together to offer more opportunities for their business students.

Fox Valley Technical College and UW-Green Bay have come to the region's first ever credit transfer agreement.

Sixty credits from FVTC's successful and fast-growing Business Management Associate of Applied Science degree will transfer toward a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay.

"If they were just leaving with their associates degree there are opportunities out there, but once a student has a bachelor's degree that's sort of the floor. That four-year-degree makes a statement about their application of their talents it makes a statement about their persistence towards a goal," said Doug Hensler, Dean Of School Of Business At UW-Green Bay.

Applications up at Fox Valley Tech amid demand for skilled labor

By Jason Zimmerman |

Posted: Tue 8:27 PM, Oct 03, 2017 |

Updated: Wed 11:27 AM, Oct 04, 2017

GRAND CHUTE, Wis. (WBAY) - The number of students applying to attend Fox Valley Technical College is once again expected to rise.

On Tuesday night the school held an open house to encourage those interested in a technology career to pursue an education.

With about two to three thousand students seeking information about programs offered at Fox Valley Tech, about a third are expected to fill out an application.

School officials say it's no surprise considering the demand for skilled labor among companies hiring right now in Wisconsin.

Barb Dreger is the Director of Marketing at Fox Valley Technical College. She said, "We are actually really excited to see the big crowds that we have this year you know people are understanding that a two year college education is very flexible and can be expanded into a four year education. However, there's a lot of middle skill jobs that earn very high salaries."

To push those who might be on the fence the school for one night, waived the 30 dollar application fee.

That was part of the enticement for Priscilla Crook of Fond du Lac.

"I think a lot of people realize how much money normal colleges are, and I think a lot of people want to go closer to school too so this is pretty close to where I live so I can drive back and forth everyday," said Crook.

School officials say more people are considering a two year degree because of the rising cost of higher education, and also out of a desire to get into the workforce faster.

Dreger said, "We have all ages. There's a wide variety of people here. We have a lot of people that are high school seniors. We have younger high school students. We also have a lot of returning adults."

'Team of partners' spur business growth

By JAMES LAWSON jlawson@kenoshanews.com

Jul 23, 2017



Gateway Technical College instructor Randy Reusser looks over as Kenall employees go through assembly line cross-training in this 2015 file photo.

KENOSHA NEWS FILE PHOTO KEVIN POIRIER

It takes a team to grow the business community.

Gateway Technical College, the Kenosha Area Business Alliance, the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, the Kenosha County Job Center and private industry have formed a partnership that not only has brought more jobs and a bevy of companies across the Illinois border, but has helped to ensure companies have a properly prepared workforce.

Since 2013, more than 8,000 jobs, \$1.2 billion in capital investment and more 10 million square feet of development have been absorbed by companies that have either expanded operations or relocated to Kenosha County, according to statistics released by KABA.

While financial incentives and support services have been an attraction for some companies, the training of workers to fill some of the more specialized skilled and technical jobs has been another key attraction.

Heather Wessling, KABA's vice president of economic development, calls the marketing effort a "team of partners" working for a cause. She said the WEDC provides business development tax credits and training grants, while the Job Center works with the companies to develop grant and training opportunities.

"We're like an extension of their human resource team," said Wessling of the partnership.

The Kenall experience

In 2013, Kenall Manufacturing, a specialty lighting company, had outgrown its Gurnee, Ill., headquarters. Officials considered several locations, but the company was wooed to Kenosha County more than three years ago because the marketing team that included KABA and Gateway, provided the right incentive — workforce training.

Randell Hernandez, the company's executive vice president of operations, said the deciding factor was the partnership that had Gateway actively involved in the training.

"There was a lot of proactive movement on their part," Hernandez said Thursday during an editorial board session with the Kenosha News. Referring to Gateway's involvement, he noted that the college has developed programs to meet its special workforce needs.

“If the college doesn’t have one, we customize one to provide the training a company needs,” explained Debbie Davidson, Gateway’s vice president for business and workforce solutions.

When Kenall developed Indigo-Clean, a special bacteria-killing lighting system for the healthcare industry, it needed electronic assembly employees. Gateway developed a program and packaged the instructors to accommodate the need.

The relationship is mutually beneficial as Gateway has received state-of-the-art lighting for the Kenall Protective Services Training Center and Indigo-Clean lighting for its surgical training rooms.

Filling a need

Since 2011, Gateway has provided training for more than 50 companies. It has trained more than 1,500 employees since the 2013-14 academic year administering more than \$900,000 in Workforce Advancement Training grants. Training areas include robotics, die cast, computer numeric control operation and much more.

The college provides on-site training for existing employees and offers training for students who become an employee pipeline for companies.

“We provide whatever a company needs,” said Davidson.

Ag Education Center to team with Lakeshore Technical College

Patti Zarling, USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin

Published 6:31 p.m. CT July 7, 2017

MANITOWOC - Lakeshore Technical College will bring its ag programming to the Wisconsin Agricultural Education Center, opening soon in Manitowoc County.

The community college is partnering with the center to provide new space for students in the school's Dairy Herd Management and Agribusiness and Technology programs.

"This allows for more hands-on learning for our students," said Patrick Staszak, dean of agriculture, energy and transportation. "They will work with local farmers and will see the latest in farm technology. And the partnership will help promote both programs."

The tech school expects to move into the new facility, north of LTC off Interstate 43, in January. The center will include a discovery center featuring hands-on learning opportunities through displays about agriculture and a chance to tour Grotegut Dairy Farm, which focuses on sustainability and best farming practices, milking more than 2,000 cows three times a day.

A highlight for visitors likely will be a chance to view the birth of calves from Grotegut Farm in the center's Land O' Lakes Birthing Barn.

The tech school will have a building adjacent to the agriculture center.

"Having our facility located there will provide new opportunities for our students to work with dairy cattle as well as develop professional relationships in the industry," Staszak said.

The school was approached by the center's board of directors about the partnership, he said.

“We thought it was a good idea and think it will work out well,” Staszak said. Many tech school students hail from family farms, while others are new to the industry.

Like other businesses, farms increasingly rely on technology, including robotic milkers, meaning farmers benefit from higher education.

The ag center is expected to cost about \$13 million and open in spring 2018.

Plans call for the facility to have a 300-person conference center and 29,000 square feet of space for displays and hands-on learning opportunities, including an interactive globe to showcase population density and the importance of feeding the world.

The dairy industry contributes \$43.4 billion to Wisconsin’s economy each year, according to state officials. Manitowoc County is said to have more cows than people, and each dairy cow in the state typically generates about \$34,000 in economic activity.

Advocates hope the center will help raise awareness of the importance of the dairy industry.

“We are excited for this partnership,” said Melissa Bender, director of education and programming for the new ag center. “We cannot wait to see LTC students and visitors of every generation take their education journey through WAEC.”

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Manitowoc Lincoln High School offers hands-on career training | State of Opportunity

Patti Zarling, USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin

Published 6:35 a.m. CT Sept. 13, 2017

MANITOWOC - Like many Wisconsin schools, Manitowoc Lincoln High School no longer leaves career or college preparation to chance.

Decades ago, students interested in job experience or training or college sought help from a guidance counselor. These days, high schools are taking an active part in helping kids envision life after graduation.

Ashley Armstrong began working for the Manitowoc Public School District about a year ago as the school-to-work coordinator and teaches a work experience class to help students learn about career opportunities throughout the community. She has an insider's approach to college, coming from Lakeshore Technical College as a high school career coach for Manitowoc County.

She said Lincoln provides many ways for students to prepare for the future.

The school offers Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate classes for those college bound students, and the school's Youth Apprenticeship programs provide work experience for about 50 students each year.

The school also partners with LTC to provide classes students can later transfer to college, including general education courses such as public speaking and written communications. Other course credit won't transfer directly to the school, but may count toward elective credits in areas of manufacturing, health care, science and marketing.

“Even 10 years ago, we didn’t have many of these AP or IB classes,” said Armstrong, a Lincoln graduate. “A lot of partnerships with colleges didn’t exist, and the talk was around attending a four-year University of Wisconsin campus. Those approaches have really shifted. Four-year college isn’t for every student, and we want to give them experience in what is right for them.”

In the past, the school worked with The Chamber of Manitowoc County to run the mini-chopper program, in which students worked in shop to remake a motorcycle and enter the project in a local contest. Two Rivers High School also was part of the program, in which students learned about engineering, teamwork, mechanics and business.

That program worked well for Lincoln student Tim McDougal, who participated as a junior last year.

“I’ve always been interested in motorcycles,” he said. “I always liked building and working with my hands, and I thought I would have fun working on bikes.”

His work on the project led to a part-time job at Harbor Town, where he’s working this year as part of the Youth Apprenticeship program.

That’s the goal of these and future programs, said Karen Nichols, executive director of the Manitowoc Chamber.

“The need for qualified workers is great,” she said. “A large number of area manufacturers are looking for skilled workers. The goal of programs like this is to give students hands-on, real-life experience and an opportunity to learn about possible future careers.”

To that end, Lincoln administrators plan to launch a construction course next year for students interested in careers in building. Working within the Partners in Education arm of The Chamber of Manitowoc County and the Home Builders Association of

Manitowoc County, Lincoln plans to provide a carpentry class next year that will bring in local experts in various aspects of home building, such as plumbers, electricians or heating and cooling workers. They organized a bus tour in June for educators to tour some building and manufacturing areas in person, and plan a similar tour for students this school year.

“We keep hearing from home builders that they need workers,” Armstrong said. “There’s a strong need for workers with good math skills and construction skills.”

Jim Anderson, right, watches Orion Energy's presentation during the Chamber Young Professional's group tour of Orion Energy Tuesday, Apr. 25, 2017, in Manitowoc, Wis. Josh Clark/USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin *(Photo: Josh Clark/USA TODAY NETWORK-Wis)*

This year, the school plans to bring in an expert, for example, to teach students ways to build a door frame, or learn to plumb a sink, about once a month.

“It’s a way to spark interest in the new class,” Armstrong said. “Ultimately, we want students to be ready to be contributing residents of Manitowoc. Programs like this help them be more aware of options.”

Eric Lipinsky and Adrian LeClair listen to Kelly Reif during the Chamber Young Professional's tour of Orion Energy Tuesday, Apr. 25, 2017, in Manitowoc, Wis. Josh Clark/USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin *(Photo: Josh Clark/USA TODAY NETWORK-Wis)*

The goal is for each student to leave high school with a plan. That includes teaching them to write résumés and cover letters, as well as touring college campuses or jobs that interest them.

“We create a strong community by making sure all students are served,” she said. “Not just those who are college-bound.”

Project Mini-Chopper unveils this year's mini-choppers built by Lincoln High School, Two Rivers High School and Mishicot High

school at Manitowoc County Ice Center on Friday, April 22. This year is the project's eighth year of collaboration between high schools in Manitowoc County and sponsored area companies. *(Photo: Yi-Chin Lee/USA TODAY NETWORK-Wi)*

Manitowoc career training

Strengths:

- Schools have strong connections with Manitowoc business organizations, including The Chamber of Manitowoc County and the Home Builders Association
- Schools have strong relationships with local colleges, including Lakeshore Technical College

Weaknesses:

- Programs require enough student and business buy-in
- Launching programs such as the mini-chopper event means time and funding schools may not have

Opportunities:

- School officials have made college and career prep a top priority
- Officials are working closely with students to meet the needs of opportunities they are interested in
- Local businesses in need of workers can partner with schools to provide needed experts to train students and future employees

Madison School District and Madison College partner for S.T.E.M. academy

By Amber C. Walker

Sep 13, 2017

A partnership between the Madison Metropolitan School District and Madison College seeks to increase the number of girls and students of color who pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and math.

The Early College S.T.E.M. Academy is set to start next fall. The initial pilot will recruit a total of 25 juniors and seniors from Madison East and La Follette high schools.

The program will expand to up to 200 students across MMSD and find its home at the new MATC south campus by the 2019-2020 school year. The program will be free for MMSD students.

Students accepted into the program for the 2018-2019 school year will take classes at MATC's Truax campus. Although the program targets girls and students of color, all MMSD students are eligible to apply.

Participating students will earn college credit and have the opportunity to receive their associate's degree by the end of their senior year. MMSD will start recruiting for the academy this fall. The district said it would release applications for the academy this fall, with a December deadline. MMSD will interview students in January and inform students of their admission status in February 2018.

At Monday's Madison School Board meeting, some board members feared that the current admission requirements — a minimum 2.5 GPA, 90 percent attendance rate and meeting all course requirements in ninth and 10th grade — would turn away many of the students the program aims to serve.

“What happens if you have a student who is brilliant in S.T.E.M. but happens to be homeless or caring for a sick relative and does not have a 90 percent attendance rate?” board member Nicki Vander Meulen said. “I don't want to necessarily leave them out solely based on that.”

Said Madison School Board vice president Anna Moffitt: “Our district continues to create programs that are meeting the needs of our middle and above students, and we are really not designing stuff for students who are at risk.

“The goal of this partnership is to ensure that more females and youth of color are on a path to enter into more S.T.E.M. opportunities,” she said. “We are early in the process of defining that set of (admissions) criteria.... We are going to take that feedback and refine them with an eye toward making sure that we are serving (girls, students of color and first generation college students).”

Madison College is one of MMSD's anchor partners for Personalized Pathways, the district's new approach to the high school experience that began with its first cohorts of freshmen students last week. One of the goals of Personalized Pathways is to assist students in developing a clear path to college or a career after graduation. Although the upcoming academy includes a science focus, like the inaugural health sciences pathway, it is not a part of the Personalized Pathways initiative.

“This work, while certainly related to all of our thinking and exploration around college and career readiness, is a separate partnership,” Cheatham said. “It certainly enhances the work around Pathways across our four comprehensive high schools. (The academy) is crafted and planned based on the many lessons we’ve learned about what school districts and communities are doing across the country.”

Madison College executive vice president and chief student services officer Keith Cornille said the academy is another opportunity for MMSD and MATC to think creatively about post-secondary options for Madison’s students.

“The college is really excited to have this relationship with Madison Metropolitan School District where we are reimagining junior and senior year for students,” he said.

With new programs, Mid-State Technical College seeks to connect students to jobs

Nathan Vine, USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin Published 9:53 a.m. CT Sept. 20, 2017 | Updated 4:18 p.m. CT Sept. 28, 2017

STEVENS POINT - Brandon Howley did hospital laundry for a decade before he decided he needed a change.

"I have two kids, and I just decided that I needed something," said Howley, 32, of Stevens Point.

Howley is making that change through Mid-State Technical College, where he's a first-year information technology student at the Stevens Point campus. He said he chose the field because of its potential for more profitable work in a growing field.

"You look around and technology is everywhere, from your smartphone to new programs we use on our computers," said Howley.

Mid-State officials say they are constantly looking at trends in the workforce to find the right mix of courses to offer students like Howley to supply businesses in growing fields the workforce they require.

Sandy Kiddo, Mid-State's vice president for academics, said the college is in the first of a three-year plan where new programs are being rolled out. This year, the college has added agribusiness and science technology; business analyst; emergency services management; IT computer support specialist; and heating, ventilation and air conditioning to a roster of over 50 programs offered by Mid-State, which has campuses in Stevens Point, Adams, Marshfield and Wisconsin Rapids.

With employers in search of a new workforce as baby boomers continue to move towards retirement, and a skills gap leaving employers without qualified candidates for jobs, colleges like Mid-State are working to get students up to speed. But they appear to be doing so against the backdrop of declining enrollment. According to a report from the Wisconsin Technical College System — which includes 15 colleges

and their 54 campus locations throughout the state — enrollment for students in short and one and two-year programs decreased from over 407,000 in 2006-07 to 326,153 in 2015-16.

“We look at things like labor market research along with getting feedback businesses so we can identify the programs that are going to be the most effective,” Kiddo said.

Kiddo said the business analyst program is a response to feedback from companies looking for more employees to work with data, and is designed to prepare people to help identify business needs and offer improvements in areas like workflow or systems. The agribusiness and science technology program will help prepare students to be owners or employees of a farm business, or a business that supports the agriculture industry. The HVAC program will provide hands-on training for students to become entry-level employees in those fields.

The emergency services management program offers local law enforcement, fire and medical professionals the training they need in order to move into management positions, which Kiddo said an important opportunity for those working in local communities.

“We want to keep those people in our communities keeping us safe,” Kiddo said.

Mid-State reports that 93 percent of its responding graduates from 2016 are employed. Average monthly salary was just over \$3,000 for an associate degree graduate, just over \$2,250 for a one-year diploma, and just over \$2,500 for a two-year diploma.

Casey Trader is an information technology instructor for Mid-State who teaches a variety of courses including hardware essentials, customer support and information security among others. Trader, along with other staff, worked with an advisory board to push for the new IT computer support specialist program. The focus of the program is to prepare graduates for help desk positions that can provide technical support, assistance, troubleshooting and training among other services.

“It was an area of need that we continued to hear about,” Trader said. “A lot of our classes work across multiple programs, so it’s easier to be able to provide those new programs.”

Moving forward, Kiddo said the college plans to offer programs in hospitality, medical lab technician, and an IT software developer apprenticeship program among others.

“We’re constantly evaluating our plan and looking for ways to continue to offer students the skills for careers that are most in demand,” Kiddo said.

MATC, Cardinal Stritch sign agreement to speed path for nursing students

Concurrent enrollment option provides 30 month path to BSN

by Arthur Thomas

October 16, 2017, 12:17 PM

Nursing students will have the ability to be enrolled in programs at Milwaukee Area Technical College and Cardinal Stritch University at the same time and be able to earn a bachelor of science in nursing in as little as 2.5 years under an agreement signed by officials at the two schools Monday.



The collaboration will admit its first students in the spring. Students begin by taking classes at MATC but are also admitted to Stritch's program and earn Stritch credits at the same time. Once students complete their associate degree and receive their registered nurse license they are able to complete their bachelors by taking Stritch classes online.

"We are pleased to have this innovative articulation agreement with Cardinal Stritch University," said Vicki Martin, MATC president. "Quickly preparing nurses with these credentials is critical to meet the workforce demands and to provide students an affordable educational path."

Kelly Dries, Stritch Ruth S. Coleman College of Nursing and Health Sciences dean, said Stritch is the only four-year school in the state to offer the concurrent enrollment approach.

“This concurrent enrollment agreement not only enhances an already strong relationship between Stritch and MATC, it also reflects the type of timely, agile and innovative approach to nursing education in the 21st century that is necessary to prepare leaders in the field,” said Kathleen Rinehart, Stritch interim president.

Stritch also has concurrent enrollment agreements with Gateway Technical College and Madison College. Beyond the new agreement, MATC and Stritch also have traditional transfer agreements in place for business, criminal justice, hospitality management, respiratory therapy and teacher education programs.

Wisconsin prison dairy farms turn out 1st class of inmate graduates

Michelle Liu, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Published 11:46 a.m. CT Aug. 7, 2017 | Updated 8:41 a.m. CT Aug. 9, 2017

WAUPUN - When Cody first started working at the Waupun State Farm, he was in the office, managing the payroll. Then he set foot in the milking parlor, where he learned that dealing with cows wasn't quite the same thing as dealing with numbers.

"Patience is a big thing for cows," said Cody, who like other inmates in this story is being identified by his first name only in accordance with Department of Corrections protocol.

The 24-year-old CNC machinist, originally from West Bend, had never worked on a dairy farm, but he was soon adjusting to the long hours, helping feed the calves and even chasing down loose heifers.

Cody is one of about 60 Wisconsin inmates who manage the 1,093 cows that produce milk for Wisconsin and Minnesota prisons — a self-sustaining program that corrections officials say allows inmates not only to make money but to develop good work habits and gain post-release skills.

This year, the Department of Corrections partnered with Moraine Park Technical College to develop a dairy worker training program for inmates at the Waupun State Farm.

1st class of graduates

Last month, the Department of Corrections graduated its first class of eight graduates, who are now certified in milking and caring for cows and farm maintenance skills.

The program has the potential to be a source of greatly needed labor for dairy farmers across the state.

Certificate aside, inmates have been working on the farm for years. After all, Waupun is part of Wisconsin's long history of inmate labor, given that the first state prison was built here in the 1850s, said Wes Ray, director of the Bureau of Correctional Enterprises, which oversees the farms.

Along with a dairy in Waupun, the state Department of Corrections operates three dairy farms in Waupun, Fox Lake and Oregon. A fourth, in Green Bay, is dormant, according to Ray.

Wisconsin is one of seven states with prison dairy operations. The others are California, Colorado, Georgia, Montana, Nevada and Tennessee, said Wil Heslop, National Correctional Industries Association director of operations. The federal prison system also runs dairy operations.

“We’re proving grounds for work release,” Ray said. Inmates from the nearby John C. Burke Correctional Center who do well on the farm go on to work-release programs, where they work for local private employers at a higher wage.

Only inmates who have not exhibited violent behavior for at least 12 months can work on the farm or in the dairy.

In addition to cows, the Waupun farm also has some 1,700 acres for feed crops. Workers on the farm don’t just milk cows — they work in all aspects of operations, learning to use and repair equipment. Some, like a professional mechanic who once saved the farm thousands of dollars in repairs, bring other bodies of knowledge to the job, Ray said.

Milk and ice cream

Just a short drive away from the Waupun farm, about 20 inmates log hours at the dairy, where the milk is pasteurized and packaged and where ice cream is made.

The mesmerizing nature of the job — milk cartons or ice cream cups making their way down a conveyor belt — can also make it monotonous. Sometimes, workers come up with little games to play, competing to see who can pack the most boxes in a set amount of time.

Constant worker turnover due to people moving to other facilities or being released means Leon, an inmate from Milwaukee, now trains new workers at the dairy, too.

Inmates start out earning 50 cents per hour and work their way up to \$1.50.

Though that money can help pay off restitution or buy hygiene supplies or snacks at the prison canteen, the work itself is valuable. It breaks the monotony of life behind bars, workers interviewed said.

The farms and dairy do not rely on taxpayer money, officials said.

Last year, Wisconsin's prison dairy operations produced more than 2.6 million gallons of milk, 1 million cups of ice cream and 400,000 cups of sherbet for consumption, selling another 322,840 pounds of milk and 526,915 pounds of cream.

The market value of these products totals some \$5.1 million, a mere drop in the bucket of Wisconsin's dairy industry, according to the DOC.

The state sells these products to prisons in Wisconsin and Minnesota. It also sells some cream to the University of Wisconsin-Madison for the university's famous ice cream at Babcock Hall.

For some workers, being around so much milk has its downsides.

"I don't drink a lot of milk anymore," Leon said, "now that I finally see how it's made."

But the ice cream? With classic flavors like chocolate and vanilla, and lemon and orange sherbet, that's harder to resist, he said.

Nicolet College adds bachelor's degree option in culinary arts

July 28, 2017

Transfer agreement signed recently with Northern Michigan University

STAR JOURNAL REPORT

Nicolet College culinary arts graduates now have another path to a bachelor's degree thanks to a new credit transfer agreement recently inked with Northern Michigan University in Marquette.

Under the arrangement, Nicolet students who complete the 66-credit Culinary Arts Associate degree can transfer those credits to Northern Michigan and enter the university with junior status.

“Along with providing students with a high quality college education, we also feel it's important to create opportunity for them to further their education after Nicolet,” said Jeff Labs, dean of the college's culinary arts program. “This agreement accomplishes exactly that and adds to the long list of credit transfer agreements Nicolet has in place with four-year campuses.”

Northern Michigan's Bachelor of Science degree in hospitality and tourism management prepares graduates for careers managing and owning restaurants, hotels and catering services, serving as executive chefs, and management of food service positions at schools, hospitals and other institutions, including government agencies.

“We are excited to partner with Nicolet College to provide its students this opportunity to further their education at NMU,” said Robert Eslinger, interim dean of NMU's College of Technology and Occupational Sciences. “The NMU bachelor's degree track in culinary and food service covers advanced management topics and responsibilities. Students also gain practical experience in all aspects of quantity food production by running the on-campus Culinary Café and a high-end restaurant, Chez Nous.”

In all, Nicolet now has 115 credit transfer agreements that lead to bachelor degrees at 38 different four-year colleges and universities, including every campus in the University of Wisconsin System.

“One of the greatest benefits to starting a bachelor’s degree at Nicolet is the cost savings,” Labs explained. “Not only are credits less expensive – commonly only half as much or even less – but local students can also live at home which also saves on room and board. Combined, the savings can amount to many thousands of dollars.”

Nicolet also has credit transfer agreements for nearly every one of its academic programs, including accounting, architecture, business management, criminal justice, industrial and electromechanical technology, information technology, nursing and others.

Some of these agreements allow students to complete bachelor degrees online without having to leave the Northwoods.

The college also features the University Transfer Liberal Arts program, its largest academic program. University transfer students can take advantage of numerous credit transfer agreements, including one with UW-Madison, which guarantees admission to Nicolet students who meet certain academic requirements.

For more information about Nicolet’s academic programs and transfer opportunities, visit nicoletcollege.edu or call the Welcome Center at (715) 365-4493, 1-800-544-3039; TTY 1-800-947-3529 or 711.

Church Mutual extends 100 percent paid tuition at NTC through IT Scholars Program

Posted by: [Foto News](#) , September 18, 2017

Church Mutual Insurance Company will extend a program that offers 100 percent paid college tuition to qualified students at Northcentral Technical College, Church Mutual announced Monday.

The IT Scholars Program is designed to support the educational goals of graduating high school seniors aspiring to a career in IT and enrolling in either the IT-Software Developer or IT-Network Specialist programs at NTC during the fall 2018 semester. In exchange for free tuition, participants work part-time in Church Mutual's IT department while attending college at NTC.

"Church Mutual helped me get a plan ready for my schedule to ensure I can focus on school first," said Zachary McCarthy, IT Scholar and IT-Network Specialist student at NTC. "I also get the opportunity to take what I am learning in class and use that knowledge in a work environment."

McCarthy is one of three students selected as an IT Scholar during the 2017-18 academic year. Alexander Johnson and Hunter Reiff are also part of this year's cohort, studying at NTC and working at Church Mutual. After earning an associate degree, IT Scholars have the opportunity to transfer to a four-year partner college to complete a bachelor's degree in an IT program and, upon graduation, receive full-time employment with Church Mutual.

"We thank Church Mutual for providing this opportunity to IT students at NTC," said Chris Severson, Dean of Business and Community Services at NTC. "The IT Scholars Program not only gives financial support to our local talent, it keeps our skilled workforce employed in the area."

The IT Scholars Program application will be available until April 13, 2018, and can be found online at www.churchmutual.com/scholarsprogram. For more information, visit www.ntc.edu.

Groups aim to 'Turbocharge' next steps for high school students

Kathy Lockard, for USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin Published 5:58 p.m. CT
Sept. 18, 2017

(Photo: Kyle Bursaw/Press-Gazette Media/@kbursaw)

Not too long ago in Green Bay, a high school diploma provided a reliable pathway to a job that paid well enough to think about starting a family, buying a home, and enjoying the good life in northeast Wisconsin. Today, high school graduates are not so fortunate, and worries about college costs and student loans prevent many families from even thinking about encouraging their children to go on to further education.

But in Green Bay, students like Dalton Kohlbeck, a 2017 graduate of West High School, are finding a smoother and less costly pathway out of high school because of new opportunities to earn college credits while in high school. By participating in two career-oriented programs at West High — the BRIDGES Construction program and the Bay Link Manufacturing program — Dalton earned 20 credits through concurrent enrollment with NWTC.

Those programs at West High School are only two examples of the new partnership between the Green Bay Area school district, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, and the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. Called “Turbocharge with College Credit,” the partnership aims to enable every Green Bay Area Public School student to graduate with a minimum of 15 credits toward a certificate, credential, apprenticeship, or progress toward a college degree, or to enter the military with a greater level of readiness.

The vision behind Turbocharge and how it is being implemented will be the subject of a program sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Greater Green Bay on Sept. 26 at the Brown County Central Library.

The program will feature a panel discussion with Green Bay District Superintendent Michelle Langenfeld, NWTC President Jeff Rafn, and UW-GB Chancellor Gary Miller. They will provide an overview of the new credit-earning opportunities available in Green Bay high schools, and the partnerships with area businesses that are helping to make this possible.

Programs like City Stadium Automotive at East High School will help to meet the tremendous demand for skilled workers that exists today throughout Wisconsin.

Students in the program can earn a technical diploma from NWTC during their junior and senior year, and can work toward National Automotive Technician Education Foundation certification. For students looking forward to a four-year college degree, the Turbocharge partnership will begin implementing new high school classes in conjunction with UW-GB through the College Credit in High School) program in 2018.

While some students already earn college credit by passing Advanced Placement exams, Turbocharge is a commitment to ensure that all students understand how to earn post-secondary credentials during high-school.

The Turbocharge vision focuses on removing barriers, especially for students who are the first in their families to go to college. By earning college credit in high school, students will gain greater confidence. The Turbocharge idea aims to instill the belief that “If you can do college in high school, then you know that you can do college beyond high school.”

The Turbocharge vision will avoid pushing students into a specific career pathway.

Beginning in elementary school, students will learn about the variety of career opportunities that exist, and will also learn that in the 21st century, an individual’s career pathway may take many twists and turns. Students will be encouraged to explore many options. Knowing what those options are is the key.

Schools are the economic drivers for our community as well as a foundation for individual growth and success. Parents, business leaders, and interested members of the community are invited to come to the Brown County Library on Sept. 26 to find out more about how the Turbocharge vision will support these goals.

Kathy Lockard is a member of the League of Women Voters of Greater Green Bay.

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Getting to experience both sides of the classroom



Jason Robbins
Southwest Wisconsin Technical College
Instructor
Precision Machining Technology

"When I went through school, I always thought it would be neat to be an instructor," says Jason Robbins, a graduate of Southwest Wisconsin Technical College. So in 2010, he returned to his alma mater as an instructor to see for himself. Six years later, he knows he made the right choice.

Right after high school, Robbins enrolled in SWTC's one-year Engine Machining program. That was followed by a year in the college's Machine Tool program. At the time of his graduation from SWTC, "I wanted to start my own business," says Robbins. "I started buying equipment, but I didn't have much money."

That's when his parents stepped in to help him secure a loan and get a building for the business. Robbins and his younger brother, also a Southwest Tech grad, finally got their machine shop business up and running. After 11 years, "My brother got married and moved to Billings, Montana and it was the exact same time that the [full-time] job opened up at Southwest Tech," says Robbins, who had been substitute teaching there in addition to running his business.

He returned to his alma mater where he is now a [Precision Machining Technology](#) instructor. He gets to experience first-hand his students, much like himself at their age, set out and accomplish their goals. "You get to see a student possibly go out and make \$23 an hour. I had one student make \$30 in overtime," adds Robbins. "It's neat to see somebody that gets out there and is doing well in their life. It lets you know that good is coming out of everything."

Being an instructor isn't without its challenges, especially where advances in the industry are concerned. "The hardest thing is keeping up with everything that's new," he says. "The CNC world is changing so quickly. The technology increases, and every year it's different. Just trying to keep up with that stuff is tough."

To increase enrollment and promote the industry, Robbins has set up dual-credit programs at local high schools. "I've been working with Richland Center, Shullsburg and Platteville," he explains. "I run a one-credit course. I can deliver one credit of my program, and they'll already have it after high school. It also gives them the chance to meet me, talk about what we do at Southwest Tech, and they get to learn the trade."

Through the dual-credit program, Robbins tells his high school students about the success stories at SWTC, including one of his most recent. "I had an 18-year-old student who had just graduated high school and came into my one-semester program in the fall and finished the class in December. He got a job right away making \$21 an hour, almost \$27 an hour in overtime," he says. "He bought a new truck and was looking at buying a house. He's 18 years old!"

When he's not teaching, Robbins is a volunteer for the Benton Fire Department. In the summertime, he spends time Dirt Late Model racing at local dirt tracks throughout Wisconsin and goes fishing when he gets a chance. "I stay pretty busy," concludes Robbins.



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Waukesha Co. students get close look at careers in manufacturing & skilled trades

Pete Zervakis

12:54 PM, Oct 12, 2017

12:57 PM, Oct 12, 2017

Almost 1,000 high school students had the opportunity to get hands-on experience in trade careers like manufacturing, engineering and construction on Thursday morning.

The activities were part of the MADE Career Pathways Expo at Waukesha County Technical College. It was hosted by the Waukesha County Business Alliance.

Organizers said it's important to reinvest in the skilled trades, with more than 1,800 manufacturing jobs currently available in Waukesha County.

"It's an opportunity for us to showcase the great jobs that are available," said Suzanne Kelley, President & CEO of the Waukesha County Business Alliance.

- One dead in triple shooting at Milwaukee bar

The expo allowed students the chance to try operating robots, welding simulators, and painting simulators.

"If you see it, you touch it, you feel it, you have a better understanding of what the industry is all about," Kelley said.

There's also increased interest in robotics and automation, with Foxconn's high-tech plant in Mount Pleasant expected to open in 2020.

"There's a lot of excitement with Foxconn coming in, which is going to create even more opportunities," said Mike Shiels, Dean of Applied Technologies at WCTC.

Students who attended the expo came away impressed.

"I'd like to be an electrician," said Cody Heck, a senior at Waukesha West High School. "Electricity is in pretty much every aspect of our daily lives."

"Right now, I'm looking into either welding or manufacturing," said Julia Sajdowitz, a senior at Arrowhead High School. "It's cool to talk to businesses in the area, because I'm planning on just going to a tech school for now."

The Waukesha County Business Alliance is a county-wide chamber of commerce with more than 1,200 member companies employing more than 75-thousand workers.

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Western Technical College hosts ribbon-cutting ceremony for new Ashley Furniture Industrial Automation Lab

Press Release, October 6, 2017

This press release is submitted and shown here in its original form, unedited by Furniture Today.

LA CROSSE, Wis. – On Friday, October 6th, Western Technical College and [Ashley Furniture](#) Industries held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the newly completed [Ashley](#) Furniture Industrial Automation Lab.

The lab features six Yakasawa robots along with three simulator units that will be used to train students in Western's Electromechanical Technology program, as well as incumbent workers.

"We have a wonderful, state-of-the-art facility at the Integrated Technology Center," said Western Technical College President Roger Stanford. "Partnerships like the one with [Ashley Furniture](#) help keep our students working with cutting-edge technology, and learn the skills necessary in today's age."

"We are thrilled with the outcome of the [Ashley](#) Furniture Industrial Automation Lab at Western Technical College," said Ron Wanek, Founder and Chairman of Ashley Furniture Industries. "This new space allows students and the local workforce a hands-on training opportunity to increase their skill set and robotics education. Automation skills are an essential piece as we continue to compete in the global economy."

In addition to the donation of the robots, the Ron and Joyce Wanek Foundation has made a donation to Western's Foundation that have allowed Western faculty to become certified on the equipment. Western is the only technical college in this region with both the automation lab and the instructor certification required to fully train all levels of robotic technicians.


In total, Ashley Furniture's contributions exceeds over \$470,000 in form of equipment donations and paid instructor training certifications for Western Technical College.

###

[Ashley Furniture](#) Industries, Inc. (Ashley) feels that every person deserves more value for their money. Established in 1945, Ashley is one of the largest manufacturers of home furnishings in the world. From design through fulfillment, Ashley is committed to delivering the world's best home furnishing values, selection and service, and earning the loyalty and trust of its customers every day. Visit Ashley online at www.ashleyfurniture.com.

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Charlie Neibergall/AP Photo

Filling Wisconsin's Skilled Worker Gap Is Expensive, Hard Work

Tech School President Says Fixing 1 Problem Doesn't Apply To Every Shortage

By John Davis

Thursday, July 13, 2017, 10:00am



Business, education and government are working hard to address a skilled labor shortage that one business executive estimates could involve more than 90 percent of businesses in the La Crosse area.

That's a much higher rate than the entire state. A recent survey by Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce suggests 77 percent of the state's employers are having trouble finding skilled workers.

From raising wages to improving youth apprenticeship programs and convincing young people careers in a trade are worthwhile, a multifaceted approach is being taken, but increasing the skilled workforce is also a daunting challenge.

Western Technical College has been able to end a workers' shortage in welding in southwestern Wisconsin, producing 200 welders in the past four years.

But consider what it took to get there. Expanding the training facility for the welding program was part of an \$80-million campus improvement referendum.

The school also had to secure special grants from the state of Wisconsin to buy special training equipment and hire more instructors.

Western Technical College President Roger Stanford said you can't create a cookie-cutter model based on the success of ending the welder shortage and apply it to other industries.

"All (participating businesses) of the programs that we have want more right now. And it's a flat budget time," Stafford said. "So for me to raise welding, I reduce what? What area? Do I go to the building systems and building science when construction is just booming or do I go to health care? So that's where our struggle is."

Stafford said Western is also working to convince students their lives will be better off if they stick with a program rather than dropping out to work part-time. He said Western's HVAC program, another area of skilled worker need, is only half-full because students don't stick with it.

A growing number of La Crosse companies are recruiting skilled workers from other parts of the country, according to La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce executive director Vicki Markussen. She said the talent recruiting involves careers in architecture, engineering and information technology.

"The strategies that I hear from those businesses are, 'We need to find those people that grew up here, that went away to college, because in a lot of those cases, we don't have those programs locally and we need to recruit them back,'" she said.

Western Technical College and Viterbo University are exploring the possibility of creating a joint engineering program in La Crosse.

Markussen said the state and Coulee Region will continue to see stifled economic growth if the strategies to close the skilled worker gap fail.

http://www.businessnorth.com/press_releases/witc-superior-trade-students-donate-time-to-humanitarian-environmental-efforts/article_8999208c-9fac-11e7-ac98-433089c0efa8.html

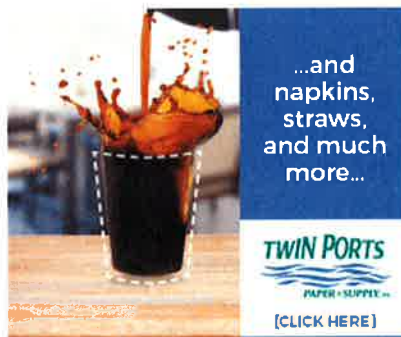
WITC-Superior trade students donate time to humanitarian, environmental efforts

Sep 22, 2017



Students made 100's of boxes for the Nutrition Assistance Program for Seniors (NAPS).

On September 20, 2017 WITC-Superior's Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration (HVAC-R) students took a break from their studies to help the Second Harvest Northern Lakes Food Bank. Students assembled hundreds of boxes for the elderly nutrition program's food distribution, labeled and packaged cereal, and shelved items for the organization's in-house food shelf.



"I incorporated a Community Engagement unit into the Applied Communication course," said Celia Tarnowski, communication instructor. "Students are aware that volunteer work is very important; however, they are juggling school, jobs, and family; time constraints make it difficult for them to volunteer. We are trying to fit in volunteer activities throughout the semester to facilitate that opportunity."

On Wednesday, September 27 at 9:00 a.m., these students will take part in cleanup efforts at Faxon Creek. Faxon Creek is about 3 miles long, draining wetlands near Tower Ave and 39th Street. The creek flows northwest through three campuses, including Northern Lights Elementary School, the University of Wisconsin- Superior, and Superior High School, as well as heavily developed residential areas. Monitoring data show that the stream becomes more polluted the closer it gets to Lake Superior. Faxon Creek is listed on the Wisconsin DNR's Impaired Waters list due to Degraded Biological Communities.