

Wisconsin's Technical Colleges Offer Wide Array of Programs to get you into STEM Careers

By: Chrystal Seeley-Schreck, Education Director for Agriculture, Natural Resources, and STEM with the Wisconsin Technical College System

“STEM education is an interdisciplinary approach to learning that removes the traditional barriers separating the four disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics and integrates them into real-world, rigorous and relevant learning experiences for students.”

Basques, Sneider & Comer (2013)



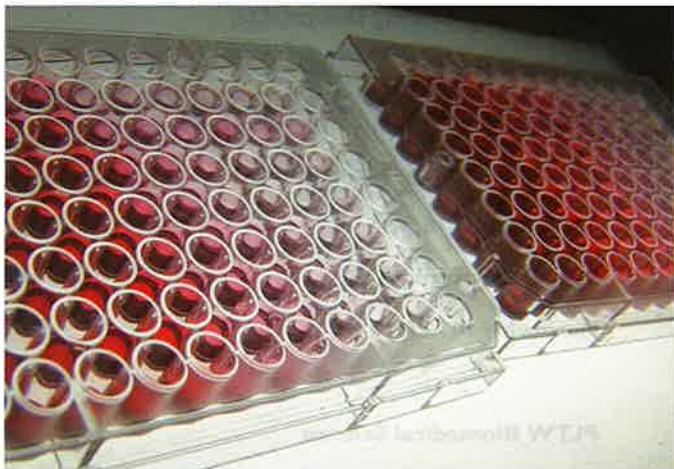
When you consider the broader meaning of STEM – beyond the singular disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and math – you can find STEM education integrated throughout Wisconsin's technical colleges. You'll find automation and robotics courses in manufacturing programs, biotechnology in health sciences, advanced technology in agriculture and science and math courses throughout programs. Just walk into any tech college campus across the state and you are bound to find innovative technology being used by engaged students.

The Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) consists of all 16 technical colleges across the state. WTCS serves every community in Wisconsin with 49 campuses and a number of additional outreach facilities. The tech colleges offer experiential education for students in a diversity of fields. From health sciences and information technology, to agriculture and manufacturing, there are associate degrees and technical diplomas available to fit the needs of today's students and employers.

WTCS divides its program offerings into 16 “career clusters” so students can choose their path knowing the type of career that awaits them. Clusters include: 1) Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources, 2) Architecture & Construction, 3) Arts, Audio/Video Technology & Communications, 4) Business Management & Administration, 5) Education & Training, 6) Finance, 7) Government & Public Administration, 8) Health Science, 9) Hospitality & Tourism, 10) Human Services, 11) Information Technology, 12) Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security, 13) Manufacturing, 14) Marketing, 15) Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM), and 16) Transportation, Distribution & Logistics. WTCS also offers a Liberal Arts program that serves students who wish to earn an associate in arts or associate in science degree and provides students with an excellent foundation for continuing experience in higher education.

While many of the career clusters integrate STEM concepts and styles of learning into their programs, WTCS offers two specific STEM career pathways within the STEM career cluster: Engineering & Technology and Science & Math. Each of these pathways provides students with educational experiences and training that are relevant to today's industries and build the skills students need to succeed in today's emerging STEM careers.

WTCS offers more than 35 different Associates Degrees and Technical Diplomas in the STEM pathways, including Mechanical Design Technology, Mechanical Engineering Technology, Civil Engineering Technology, Electrical Engineering Technology, Electronics, Nano Engineering Technology, and Renewable Energy Technology, just to name a few. You can find a complete listing of STEM programs and see which colleges offer them on page 50 of the WTCS guidebook:



Pathways to STEM careers start at a young age with experiences in elementary school and builds through and beyond the formal school setting to eventual careers. The Wisconsin Technical College System emphasizes these pathways across the state through local youth outreach, high school dual enrollment opportunities, articulation agreements with 4 year institutions, and industry partnerships. Several STEM programs, such as the Electrical Engineering Technology program, have robust articulation agreements set up with four-year institutions so that students can complete their first two years at a technical college and transfer to complete a bachelor's degree. This opportunity allows students to explore the field before committing the resources necessary for a 4 year or longer program.

After finishing their Associate's Degree many students find that they are ready to enter the workforce, while others may decide that they want to continue on to pursue a bachelor's degree. WTCS offers that flexibility and affordability.

WTCS prepares students to succeed in their pathway of choice. STEM graduates have the highest median salary of WTCS programs. In 2015, the median salary for STEM graduates from WTCS Associate Degree and Technical Diploma programs was \$43,864. Whichever path they choose, WTCS offers great opportunities for STEM students. Explore your local technical college today!

All 16 technical colleges can be viewed at <http://www.wtcsystem.edu/colleges>

Statistics from the 2015 Wisconsin Technical College System Graduate Outcomes Report:
<http://www.wtcsystem.edu/wtcsexternal/cmspages/getdocumentfile.aspx?nodeguid=c19e4ffd-d6e9-4326-bcd8-8072685092ba>