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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New IT Program Prepares Students for Virtual Networking Careers

The new home to high tech computing is not Silicon Valley; it’s the cloud. Due to security concerns and physical space limitations, businesses large and small are becoming more reliant on virtual networking and cloud computing, creating exciting new career opportunities. To address those needs, WITC has added Information Technology-Computer Administration Specialist (IT-CSAS) to its programming at the Ashland and Rice Lake campuses.

“Cloud computing allows businesses to dynamically expand and contract the size of their computer, network and storage capacity,” explained Paul Gordon, IT-CSAS instructor. “This on-demand self-service and rapid elasticity allows companies to match their IT infrastructure to their business needs much more effectively and inexpensively.”

According to Gordon, virtualization is at the heart of this elasticity. Unlike traditional computers, the resources of a virtual machine can be changed rapidly, which has led to a revolution in how businesses allocate their computer resources.

“Of course there needs to be people behind the scenes making all of this possible. That’s what this program is focused on,” said Gordon.

In addition to a focus on virtualization, the program provides students with a foundation in computer systems along with strong local area network (LAN) skills. Additionally, the program focuses on server administration, virtualization, and cloud computing concepts and learning how to install, configure and manage servers in a virtualized environment.

The program is high tech and hands-on, appealing to those who enjoy customer service and problem-solving, according to Gordon.

“There seems to be this idea that you need to love computers in order to be an IT professional. This is not true; IT professionals are problem solvers,” said Gordon. “What we really do is facilitate and extend the human network -- that system of communication and trade that started 50,000 years ago and which has made our species so successful ever since.”

Computers are simply one tool IT professionals utilize, according to Gordon. “We help other people to great and wonderful things with computers. Computers and computer networks are just a tool for achieving that goal of helping others do their jobs better. We start from the beginning in this program so students are not required to have anything other than basic computer skills in order to do well. It is much more important for students to be enthusiastic and hardworking.”
In addition to earning an associate’s degree, graduates of the program have a few options to continue their education. They can take the second year of the Information Technology-Network Specialist program to earn an additional associate’s degree or they can transfer their credits to UW Stout and earn a bachelor’s degree. Through the curriculum, students will also have the opportunity to obtain several certifications, including Microsoft Certified Technology Specialist (MCTS), Microsoft Certified Solutions Associate (MCSA) and VMware Certified Professional (VCP) certifications.

“The course prerequisite for the VCP professional exam is offered as part of our program,” said Gordon. “Other training sites charge up to $3,500 for that course.”

And thanks to WITC’s partnerships with Cisco, CompTIA, Microsoft, VMware and EMC, students often have access to learn on the industry’s latest software and equipment.

WITC is accepting applications into the IT-CSAS program, which starts this fall. For more information, call 715.682.4591 or online at witc.edu/pgmpages/itcsas.

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