



By Jena Vogtman

Meet **John Will**

WITC's New President

personal and professional life that kept repeating the importance of WITC's role in the community. He says it made the decision to come back to WITC easy.

Will has been active in multiple committees and boards including the WITC Foundation, the Greater Wisconsin Opportunities Fund, Indianhead Community Action Agency, and the Wisconsin Community Development Legacy Fund. Will has a bachelor of business administration degree in accounting and economics from University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and a master of science in education degree from University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. He is enrolled at UW-Stout in pursuit of a doctorate in Career and Technical Education.

part of the equation," Will explains. "We need to offer top-notch support services for individuals prior to stepping into the classroom, and once they are in the classroom, we need to make sure they can continue to be successful. WITC needs to build upon its efforts in these areas and continue to innovate."

Despite the challenges, he believes WITC is poised to help the local workforce make that transition.

"The rate of change in most industries is significant, and I believe this means that the workforce will need retraining or other supplemental education for employers to be competitive. I think technical education will continue to evolve to be a primary solution to this problem," Will says. "Students

John Will, who became Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College's eighth president this September, doesn't exactly describe himself as the most interesting man in the world. Rather, he says he's a "typical Wisconsin guy," a fisherman in all seasons, a hunter, a maple syrup producer (managing two jars last season), a traveler who likes to escape for an occasional week in the winter and if there's Packers game on, he's probably watching from somewhere.

Will met his wife of 17 years, Kim, while attending high school in Ladysmith (she went to Bruce). They have two girls, Anna, 12, Josephine, 9, and a boy, Benjamin, 4. Together they have a busy family life of campfires, swimming, sports and pets, including a cat, a guinea pig and a bearded dragon.

Will, who has previously held various positions at WITC between 2005 and 2011, says when he left the college to work for Springsted, and most recently Impact Seven as chief operating officer, there were constant reminders in his

"Every time I talked to a person seeking a career change, a high school student pondering their options after graduation, or a business or community that needed skilled workers, I found myself wanting to talk to them about WITC," says Will. "I've lived in the area my entire life, and it's clear that WITC has a connection to the continuing vitality of Northwest Wisconsin in many, many ways."

He says he sees WITC's talented and committed employees, as well as the ability to respond to business and industry local workforce needs, as two of the college's greatest strengths. He's been meeting with key stakeholders to maintain strong relationships that he says are the foundation to long-term success. Formal strategic goals for the college will come next summer. While there are great strengths, there are also great challenges, such as closing the skills gap as skilled employees retire and more careers require some education beyond high school.

"It won't be good enough for WITC to offer great programs as we look to the future, even though that will always be

understand that they get a competitive return on their financial and time investment at a school like WITC, and employers know that technical college graduates are employees with the specific skills they need. That should translate into a greater willingness to seek out technical education over time."

When asked about his leadership style, he indicated he feels strong leaders adapt their style of management and leadership to what is needed to make progress.

"Regardless of my perceived style, I want to interact with others how I hope they will interact with me," he says. "Openly and honestly, and with our mutual best interest in mind."