Dr. Meyer named new president

The Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College Board of Trustees has selected Dr. Robert M. Meyer, special assistant to the chancellor for state and federal relations; director, UW-Stout Technology Transfer Institute to become the next president of WITC. Meyer was named to a two-year term and is expected to begin his duties at WITC July 1, 2008.

“I am extremely pleased and honored to have the opportunity to serve as Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College’s next president,” Meyer said. “After serving UW-Stout for more than two decades, I see this as a natural and comfortable move since UW-Stout and WITC have similar goals in preparing students for careers in professions that are becoming more sophisticated and more technology driven.”

As assistant to the chancellor for state and federal relations, Meyer coordinates the development of UW-Stout’s federal and state funding priorities and advocates for funding initiatives that serve the mission of the university. As director of the Stout Technology Transfer Institute (STTI) and its 13 outreach centers, clients reported impacts resulting from STTI assistance exceeding $90 million and these services also created more than 200 jobs.

WITC Board Chair Hal Helwig described Dr. Meyer as “Bringing the right skills at the right time to our college. He is deeply committed to expanding the college’s dynamic and supportive learning environment. On behalf of the Board, I want to welcome him as the new president of Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College.”

New course catalog, CD make debut

Students will soon have the option of flipping through the pages of WITC’s new course catalog or spinning a CD to access information about the college’s curriculum.

“This year a catalog committee was formed to review the catalog and determine what needed to be added or what could be deleted,” said Betty Tschernach, curriculum specialist. “The committee had representation from all campuses and Shell Lake.”

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Previously, Meyer served as dean of the College of Technology, Engineering, and Management (CTEM). Prior to assuming his role as CTEM dean, Meyer has served UW-Stout as the CTEM associate dean of Outreach and as the Director of UW-Stout’s Manufacturing Engineering program. He has also served as the director of the Northwest Manufacturing Outreach Center (NWMOC), and director of UW-Stout’s Advanced Design and Manufacturing Simulation Center (ADMSC).
Meyer has taught a variety of manufacturing-related courses during his 25 years as a professor at UW-Stout, and has provided consulting services to industry relating to strategic planning, lean manufacturing, and quick changeover techniques.
“I like the fact that WITC is very student focused and very close to the employers that hire its graduates,” Meyer said. “During my career, I’ve had the good fortune of working with many of the faculty, staff, and leaders at WITC and regard them to be top shelf. Without a doubt, WITC is well managed, forward looking, and attains a level of excellence. I consider WITC to be the crown jewel of Wisconsin’s Technical College System and I feel very privileged and honored to join WITC’s leadership team.”

In the future, Meyer looks to keep WITC in pace with changing technology.
“With the world changing so rapidly, I also see one of our major challenges as keeping up with change and advances in technology,” he said. “These changes provide extremely exciting opportunities with respect to what students need to learn and how they will learn. Planning is already underway at WITC to adapt to these changes and new technologies and I will do all that I can to encourage development along these lines.”
Away from work, Meyer enjoys spending time in the outdoors with his wife, Debbie, and daughters Erica and Melly.
“We love to hike, fish, and canoe,” he said. “I enjoy hunting when I can find the time to do it. Our family has spent a lot of time in Northwest Wisconsin enjoying the outdoors, whether it is camping in the Chequamegon Forest or canoeing the Brule River. We absolutely love it here and sincerely believe this is the best part of Wisconsin. We also love canoeing in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, and spend at least a week in the BWCA every summer.”

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This input led to multiple changes and helped committee members institute changes which improved the overall usability of the catalog.
“The committee looked at the catalog from a student perspective and made several changes to the order of the catalog,” Tschernach said. “One of the most noticeable changes are that the course descriptions are now located on the page adjacent to the program or certificate they are in. Some of the other changes, to mention just a few, are: notations were made on programs that are financial aid eligible, certificate numbers were added to certificate pages, a frequently asked questions page was added regarding certificates, and an overall different look for layout of the catalog and cover has been made for this year.”
As the committee examined the catalog process, it was decided that a CD version would also be useful.
“The idea for the CD came about as an alternative for having so many print catalogs,” Tschernach said. “The CDs are easier to store, carry and more economical to mail.”
There proved to be many benefits for a CD.
“The catalog CD provides prospective students with an interactive experience and information not included in the catalog,” said Kathy Maas, director of marketing and recruitment. “They can access program videos, a college video tour, career information and testimonials, in addition to pdf pages of the catalog.”
ReBAR helps business remain strong

Expertise, equipment, facilities, and training will now be easier for regional businesses to locate and use through the Regional Business Assistance Resource (ReBAR) directory.

Part of an ongoing effort by the West Central Wisconsin Regional Education Consortium to promote regional growth in business and industry, ReBAR provides seamless access to all the outreach capabilities of UW-Barron County, Chippewa Valley Technical College, UW-Eau Claire, UW-River Falls, UW-Stout, and Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College. Made possible through an EDvantage Grant from UW-Extension, the ReBAR directory contains more than 1,000 listings from all partner institutions in the following categories:

• Expertise
• Specialized Equipment
• Meeting Rooms and Labs
• Programs and Services

The directory is searchable by information category, subject area, and institution. It can be accessed at www.rebardirectory.com.

"The ReBAR directory provides an excellent portal to information on programs, services and facilities available to the public at area universities and technical colleges," said Linda Clark, Xcel Energy manager for economic development and community services. "What used to be a lengthy and difficult search process involving many phone calls, e-mails and Web site visits will now take just minutes.

Representatives from the six partner institutions began work on the development of the directory in September 2006. As WITC’s representative, Susan Yohnk-Lockwood conducted an extensive inventory of outreach programs and services available through WITC.

"The ReBAR directory represents a continuously expanding strategic tool for regional business to access and benefit", said grant author and UW-Eau Claire continuing education director George Kroeninger. "The resources and supports showcased within the directory will enhance business development in our region and help create a strong foundation for future economic growth."

Survey shows graduates have numbers in their favor

With a focus on continuous improvement, WITC conducts research studies and implements other strategies to measure our success and effectiveness as an institution of higher learning. Our recent longitudinal (5-year) follow-up survey of 2001-2002 graduates showed some impressive results.

• 97% of 2001-2002 WITC graduates are employed five years after graduation.
• 73% are employed in a career related to their WITC degree.
• 83% feel their WITC training was very important or important in beginning their career and 72% feel that WITC was very important/important in their career advancement.

• Average yearly salary of 2001-2002 graduates five years later and working in a career related to their WITC training is $38,916.
• Graduate salaries increased 42% in five years, while the Consumer Price Index increase for the same time frame was 15%.

For more information about the Executive Summary, visit www.witc.edu/witc/longitudinal/
Career Clusters help prepare workforce

You will begin to notice WITC information organized by career clusters and pathways. The catalog and cluster brochures will be the first documents to incorporate this format. Using Career Clusters and Pathways creates a similar organizing structure for secondary, postsecondary, state government, and employers to facilitate transition between educational organizations and into employment. The Wisconsin Technical College System has identified a cluster and pathway for each program in the 16 technical colleges.

Career Clusters is a national initiative intended to help organize programs and guidance activities around clusters of similar occupations. The 16 cluster format used by the U.S. Department of Education encompasses more than 970 occupations identified by O*NET and the SOC codes. Each cluster is divided into two to seven pathways that further defines career areas. By adopting this cluster philosophy, schools expand their content and offerings to better prepare learners for their futures.

Career Clusters has three major objectives. The first is to increase learner awareness of career options so that they may make better informed decisions. It is also the goal to increase learner understanding of the structure and function of businesses so they can be more productive, value-added employees. The third desire is to increase learner achievement by setting high standards of expectations and by teaching academics in a context that interests the learners. Details, examples, and resources are available on the Web at www.careerclusters.org.

Career Clusters provide for curriculum integration and contextual learning opportunities that reflect the career goals and interests of all learners. This relevancy creates the motivation for many learners to stay in school longer and enroll in more challenging courses. Career Clusters identify the knowledge and skills, both academic and technical, for a broad career cluster that will allow all learners to pursue a wide range of career opportunities from entry level through management and professional levels.

Perkins IV legislation is a motivator for high schools to develop Career Cluster Programs of Study. Programs of Study are tools that help educators and students build the connections from secondary to postsecondary to work. The development of includes reviewing potential availability of careers, potential earning power, and the development of a series of courses to acquire various careers. The benefits for students to be able to see how their high school courses connect to a specific career is a valuable tool. Giving students the skills and knowledge to access available resources to alter their plan as their career goals change is even more valuable.

WITC has created Program of Study templates for all associate degree and technical diploma programs to help facilitate the process for high schools. The templates are available at www.witc.edu/counselors/pathways. As articulation agreements are developed with individual high schools, WITC will highlight the courses in the Programs of Study and post them to the Web site www.witc.edu/highschool/advanced.htm to be used as a resource.
Rep. Ron Kind tours WITC-New Richmond

Among the venues on Rep. Ron Kind’s March 28 visit to Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College-New Richmond was a tour of the college’s latest in technology: a live fire burn simulator, a computer-controlled tractor and the power equipment lab.

Kind watched carefully as the smoke gradually filled the burn simulator and flames grew at the opposite end of the trailer then burst across the ceiling. All in the group were safe as the entire demonstration was controlled by Fire Training Coordinator Jack Running and the remote controls.

“We can simulate a variety of fire conditions in this vehicle,” Running says. “Including second-story rescues, flashovers, search and rescue and all with varying degrees of flame and smoke. It’s an excellent training tool that gives firefighters an experience as close to real life as you can get. The instructor can shut everything down in an instant, if necessary.”

In the Agricultural Power and Equipment Technician lab, Kind climbed up into the cab of a monster tractor to view the computer diagnostics a student was using, and he visited WITC’s Motorcycle, Marine and Outdoor Power Products Technician lab and talked with students Jeremy Friel, Forest Lake, Minn., and Mitch Booth, Boyceville.

Kind also met with Student Senate Association representatives and other students in the Learning Resource Center before leaving for his next appointment. Kind fielded questions about college financing and the financial support needed for workers caught in an industry’s downsizing.

WITC Fire Training Coordinator Jack Running, left, demonstrates to Rep. Ron Kind the live fire training unit. Using a remote control, Running filled the room with smoke and built a growing fire with flashover. He extinguished the demo with the touch of a button. Instructors can simulate a variety of fire and rescue situations to train firefighters in close to real-life conditions.

Rep. Ron Kind, left, visited with Mitch Booth, center, Boyceville, and Jeremy Friel, Forest Lake, Minn., who are students in the Motorcycle, Marine and Outdoor Power Products Technician program at WITC- New Richmond. In the background is a $21,000 Victory motorcycle donated by Polaris Inc. Students use a special diagnostics computer program similar to what they will use on the job to determine what the instructor has programmed as wrong with the motorcycle.
Program offerings planned for 2008 - 2009

New programs and more programs in more places are just a few of the changes for WITC in academic year 2009. A Professional Credential for Child Care Administrators course is one of the additions. This course will provide in-depth training for effective leadership in early childhood settings. Also added to the offerings will be Professional Credential for Preschool Teachers. This course is designed for individuals working with children ages three to five. Both of these courses will be available at Ashland, New Richmond, Rice Lake and Superior campuses. T.E.A.C.H. scholarships may be available for those currently working in a qualified child care center.

In addition to the previously announced Customer Service, Legal Office, and Cabling Technology certificates, other program additions include offering Marketing and Welding in Ashland. In Superior, the Information Technology - Computer Support Specialist program will be available.

The Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Machining certificate will now be offered in Rice Lake and Superior.

Upcoming Events

April

April 9......................... Spring open house, Rice Lake
April 16......................... Summer term enrollment for new and continuing program students, all campuses
April 22......................... Spring career day, Superior
April 25......................... Spring counselor workshop, Hayward
April 25-26..................... Assistive technology conference, Superior
April 30......................... Bridges to success, Rice Lake
April 30......................... Fall term enrollment for continuing program and new core Associate Degree Nursing students, all campuses

May

May 1......................... Summer term open enrollment, all campuses
May 1......................... Campus exploration day, New Richmond
May 13......................... Scholarship reception, Ashland
May 14......................... Fall term enrollment for new program students
May 15......................... Scholarship reception, Superior
May 16......................... Graduation, all campuses

College Connect is published monthly for the students, faculty and staff, and friends of Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College.