Interim vice president named

Mimi Crandall has been named as interim vice president, student affairs and campus administrator. Mary Stenberg will retire on July 4. Crandall’s official start date will be June 16.

“I’m coming home to people I’ve worked closely with in many realms of technical college education,” Crandall says. “My career in post secondary education began at the Ashland Campus more than 26 years ago. It is exciting to come full circle and be part of the campus again in this challenging leadership role.”

“Mimi brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the vice president of Student Affairs and Ashland Campus administrator position,” Stenberg says. “Mimi has served the college in two interim positions as the campus dean of students at Superior and New Richmond. There is no one at WITC better prepared in the area of Student Services than Mimi.”

The decision was made to not fill the vice president, student affairs and campus administrator position until July 1, 2009. By waiting until November or December to start recruitment efforts, the college believes it will gain access to a larger pool of candidates.

“I know that Mimi is looking forward to this new position and all of the challenges and opportunities that go with it,” Stenberg says. “I am confident Mimi will do well and continue to move Student Affairs and the Ashland Campus forward.”

IT - Network Specialist program grows

The IT-Network Specialist program will be implemented at the Ashland campus beginning fall 2008. This associate degree program is already offered at the New Richmond, Rice Lake, and Superior campuses.

With this implementation, WITC will discontinue the Computer Networking Technology (associate degree) and PC Technician (diploma—first year of CNT) programs. Continuing (second year) students in Computer Networking Technology will be able to continue the degree and graduate in the spring of 2009. Beginning immediately, new students (for fall 2008) will be able to apply and be admitted to the IT - Network Specialist program.

This change was proposed by the staff of the Computer Networking program and supported by the advisory committee and the Ashland admissions staff.
Instructor Receives State Recognition

WITC-New Richmond's Tom Pedersen awarded the 2008 Honorary Life Member award

Tom Pedersen, Finance and Accounting instructor at Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College, received the 2008 Honorary Life Member award from Business Professionals of America (BPA) for his 14 years of dedication and service as an advisor for the club at WITC. The recognition, which came as a surprise to Pedersen, was awarded at the state BPA contest held recently in Madison.

“I think it is very important to recognize him as a deserving recipient of this award. He is a great advisor as well as instructor,” says Jennifer Kees, WITC-New Richmond BPA president.

When asked the reason for his longevity as a BPA advisor, Pedersen says, “From the very beginning it seemed like a great opportunity for students to accomplish several worthwhile things related to their vocational training. It’s a social outlet enabling them to make friends and business contacts across the state and nation. It’s a chance to compete and be recognized for accomplishments in their fields. And it’s a chance to earn recognition for community service performed while in the club. All of these are positives for the student, the college and the community.

“I only wish we had 100 students in our chapter. It’s really a lot of fun through the year for a rather minimal amount of time commitment,” Pedersen says.

Under his leadership, this year’s BPA students placed in many statewide events, including interview skills, medical office procedures, medical transcription, and small business management Team event. The group travels to Reno, Nev., in May to compete nationally.

Through involvement in BPA, students build lasting relationships with community business circles and have opportunities for personal and professional growth, travel, and new experiences. Members participate in leadership development, activities, workshops, and conferences.

“I think it is very important to recognize him as a deserving recipient of this award. He is a great advisor as well as instructor.”

— Jennifer Kees, WITC-New Richmond Business Professionals of America president
ITV helps deliver opportunities

With the benefit of ITV, WITC’s first Career Opportunities session was able to reach out to students, saving time and money, as well as reaching a much broader audience.

Through ITV, Steve Page was able to address 31 students at five different sites about the field of criminal justice and the available degree/academy offerings on WITC’s Rice Lake campus.

High school students throughout the state have been participating in a series of Career Opportunities sessions. These 30- to 40-minute meetings have allowed students to learn more about careers that interest them. Industry speakers and instructors provide a look into the “day in the life” of a specific job, average pay, future employment outlook, as well as what high school or college classes are required. A question-and-answer period concludes the event.

Joining the YouTube party

WITC’s library of program videos is now available for viewing at YouTube.

More than 40 videos ranging in topics from Bricklaying and Masonry to Nursing Assistant to Marine Repair can be found by typing in witcollege4you into the search window. These videos provide a look into a variety of programs and feature testimonials from students.

Videos will continue to be added as they become available. Please check back frequently.

WITC adopts prepared learner initiative for general studies

WITC has recently adopted the prepared learner initiative for General Studies courses adopted by the Wisconsin Technical College System. The prepared learner initiative is a course level placement strategy.

Researched assessment score levels are utilized to place students in the level of coursework appropriate to their preparedness. Students may be placed in basic education, general college, or associate degree courses. The goal of this initiative is to prepare students for success.

Specific assessment score standards must be met before students may enroll in Written Communication. Program acceptance is still based on established program assessment scores. Program entry standards may be different than the placement score for General Studies courses.

The effective date for this preparedness standard is June 1 for all new students.

The first general college prepared learner course, Introduction to College Writing, will be offered fall term of 2008 at each campus.
Demand high for employees in manufacturing

The hands of machinists, welders and others involved in the manufacturing industry have built America. While there are those that would claim careers in manufacturing are in decline, experts in the field know otherwise and are adamant that high-technology manufacturing is playing an increasingly important role in the future of our country’s economic growth and ability to compete in a global marketplace.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, a significant number of manufacturing jobs will become available in the future. Manufacturers will continually be seeking to hire more highly skilled workers, especially those with good basic educational skills who, in turn, generally make good candidates for further training in the desired skills for jobs of twenty-first century manufacturing. Workers with these skills are expected to experience excellent job prospects.

“Recent myths that manufacturing is dying or moving off shore are simply untrue,” says Dr. Bob Meyer, special assistant to the chancellor for state and federal relations; director, Stout Technology Transfer Institute, Wisconsin.

“By busting these myths, we hope to attract more people into the wonderful careers that are available in manufacturing. A stable, well-educated workforce is exactly what will help our manufacturers thrive and become more innovative and competitive in the future.”

In fact, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, manufacturing careers average more than $44,000, not including benefits – the highest paying career in the private sector. Manufacturers are responsible for almost two-thirds of all private sector research and development. Every dollar spent in manufacturing goods generates an additional $1.43 of additional economic activity – more than any other economic sector. The number of exported manufactured goods has doubled over the past 10 years to 63 percent. These impressive accomplishments are credit to the hard work of people in the trade.

Manufacturing is an industry full of bright and dynamic individuals who understand and embrace the latest innovations in control systems, micro-machining, computer-aided design and other technologies that push the limits of the manufacturing industry. These workers are creative thinkers with applied/hands-on abilities to solve problems and get things done.

In an effort to promote career paths in the manufacturing industry, the group has taken its message to malls, movie theaters and placed articles in local newspaper. Gold Collar Careers also works with middle and high schools sharing information about manufacturing related careers, and providing presentations at other community and professional events. This information promotes an understanding of the impact manufacturing has on Wisconsin.

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“Gold Collar Careers is a grass-roots organization with membership from both the manufacturing community and the public sector,” says Meyer. “We are working together to let people know that manufacturing is alive and well in Wisconsin, is growing in sophistication, offers many challenging high technology careers, and is an exciting part of the economy to work in.”

Gold Collar Careers took shape following the Sept. 11 tragedy and the economic downturn that followed. While the manufacturing industry experienced a slowdown, which resulted in the loss of some low skill jobs, dynamic growth in high tech, sophisticated manufacturing jobs was taking place. Unfortunately, the job gains in highly skilled manufacturing was overshadowed by the losses of the low-tech, low-wage manufacturing jobs.

“Contrary to what the general public thought, manufacturing was growing rather than contracting,” Meyer says. “But the incorrect perception that manufacturing was in decline convinced many people to avoid career paths in manufacturing.”

Enrollments in manufacturing-related programs at Chippewa Valley Technical College, the University of Wisconsin-Stout and Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College suffered as a result. Soon manufacturers had great difficulty finding graduates that possessed the high tech skills they were looking for.

“Gold Collar Careers set its focus on this problem and began touting the strength of the manufacturing sector and the great career paths that are available in manufacturing,” Meyer says. “We are working very hard to change the incorrect perceptions of manufacturing that are out there and have had some great success with these efforts. Many of the manufacturing-related educational programs at our technical colleges and universities in the region have rebounded nicely. This rebound will help grow the type of skilled workforce that is so critical to area manufacturers.”

Gold Collar Careers is not the only organization in Wisconsin dedicated to promoting the manufacturing industry. The Northwest Wisconsin Manufacturing Outreach Center is a partnership between five technical colleges in Northwest Wisconsin.

“Another outstanding group that I’ve been proud to work with is the Northwest Wisconsin Manufacturing Outreach Center,” Meyer says. “The NWMOC provides strategic planning, new product development, and Lean Manufacturing services to manufacturers in the region. They also provide training and technical assistance to help our manufacturers implement strategies that allow them to operate more efficiently, grow their bottom line, and compete in the global marketplace.”

The NWMOC has already proved to be a strong asset for manufacturers in Northwest Wisconsin. Last year, NWMOC clients reported impacts exceeding $90 million for the transformational training and implementation services that they received from the center.

In Wisconsin, the manufacturing industry contributes significantly to the state’s financial stability, comprising almost half of Wisconsin’s economy. Nearly 1 in 5 workers in Wisconsin are directly employed in some form of manufacturing.

“The manufacturing industry in Wisconsin is very strong and vibrant,” Meyer says. “By several measures, including number of employees and gross state product, manufacturing accounts for about 25 percent of Wisconsin’s economy and is the source of many of our highest paying jobs in the state. Therefore, it is especially important that we do what we can to maintain its strength.”
Staff attend NCMPR conference in Georgia

Kathy Maas, Shawnda Schelinder and Wendy Loy attended sessions highlighting the latest trends in higher education marketing

Wendy Loy, program development manager, Continuing Education, was a featured presenter at the National Conference for Marketing and Public Relations (NCMPR) annual conference held in Savannah, Ga., in March.

Loy’s presentation “Parent Involvement in the College Decision-Making Process” was one of 20 poster sessions that allowed conference attendees to discuss topics in more detail with the presenter.

“It was fun, because it wasn’t a formal presentation,” Loy says. “I talked with people from colleges across the country who were interested in what we have learned about the parents of our WITC students and their involvement in the college decision-making process.”

Also attending the conference were Kathy Maas, director, marketing and recruitment, and Shawnda Schelinder, marketing and public relations associate for the Ashland campus. Schelinder represents Wisconsin at the NCMPR district level and participated in district planning sessions.

Maas, Schelinder, and Loy attended sessions highlighting the latest trends in higher education marketing, such as market research, crisis communications, variable data publishing, and several topics related to e-marketing.

NCMPR is the only organization of its kind that exclusively represents marketing and public relations professionals at community and technical colleges.

“This is a great conference, because it is geared specifically for two-year community and technical colleges,” Loy says. “Besides the relevant and timely information presented, it’s a great way to network with counterparts and share best practices.”

Upcoming Events

May

May 13 ........................ Scholarship reception, Ashland
May 14 ........................ Fall term enrollment for new program students
May 15 ........................ Scholarship reception, Superior
May 16 ........................ Graduation, all campuses