UW OKs Early Childhood program

UW-River Falls will accept credits earned from Wisconsin Technical College System associate’s degree in early childhood education and apply them toward requirements for a Bachelor’s Degree in Early Childhood Education.

In August, the University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction approved a new UW-River Falls degree completion program in early childhood that allows students with an associate’s degree to complete their bachelor’s degree via online and interactive television courses and face-to-face workshops.

UW-River Falls will accept credits earned from Wisconsin Technical College System associate’s degree in early childhood education and apply them toward the requirement for a Bachelor’s Degree in Early Childhood Education. The credits will also apply to Wisconsin Early Childhood Teaching Certification (Birth-8). Turn to CHILDHOOD, page 5

Upcoming Events

November
Nov. 5 .........................  Preview Day, Rice Lake
Nov. 5 .........................  Career Day, Ashland
Nov. 11 ........................  Career Day, Superior
Nov. 11 ........................  Campus Exploration Day, New Richmond
Nov. 20 .........................  Open House, WITC-Hayward branch campus
Nov. 24-28 .....................  No Classes (Fall Recess), All Campuses

December
Dec. 3 .........................  Winter Open House, New Richmond
Dec. 11 ........................  Campus Exploration Day, New Richmond

January
Jan. 26 ........................  College Night, Rice Lake and New Richmond

February
Feb. 10 ........................  Campus Exploration Day, New Richmond

April
April 16 ........................  Spring Open House, New Richmond
April 24 .........................  Spring Counselor Workshop, Hayward
Forward thinking

Completing admissions requirements now ensures a student’s place for ‘09

While many high school seniors have just gotten into the flow of the school year, now is the time to consider future options.

At Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College, this is the perfect time to complete admissions requirements to ensure a place for fall 2009, as many programs fill quickly.

High School Students can call WITC Admission Advisors to explore program choices. Shadowing opportunities and campus tours are also available.

WITC has a one-stop process for admissions, which allows students to complete the application process in one visit.

First, the student will schedule an appointment to take an assessment.

Following the assessment, the student will meet with a counselor to review program choices and assessment scores.

For this visit, students should bring the printed application and $30 non-refundable admission fee to the WITC campus. Payment may be made by by check, money order, or credit card (Visa, MasterCard, or Discover). Cash is accepted when applying in person.

Students are encouraged to bring high school transcripts. WITC uses the outcomes to measure the student’s skill level and to help place the student in courses and programs.

Some programs will have additional entrance requirements. Those requirements will be discussed with a counselor during the student’s scheduled interview time.

A printable form may be downloaded from www.witc.edu/admissions/pdfs/WTCSapp.pdf and is available at the WITC campus. High school counselors may also obtain printed copies for distribution.

For more information about the admissions process, please call 800.243.9482 to contact a campus admissions advisor.

Career Impact online

The latest issue of Career Impact magazine is available online. Follow this link to find out what career options await WITC graduates.
Doyle announces effort to grow Northwest Wisconsin

Governor Jim Doyle recently announced three state awards to boost the economy of Northwestern Wisconsin and grow local jobs. Gov. Doyle presented workforce training grants to Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College, and tax credits to support growth at Great Northern Corporation and Air Motion Systems. Gov. Doyle was joined by new Commerce Secretary Dick Leinenkugel for the announcements.

“To ensure Wisconsin succeeds in the future, we must continue to invest in the skills of our workers and our world-class manufacturers in all corners of the state,” Gov. Doyle said. “I am pleased the state is partnering with Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College, Great Northern Corporation and Air Motion Systems to create jobs, boost workforce training, and grow the economy of Northwestern Wisconsin.”

Gov. Doyle awarded three Workforce Advancement Training Grants to WITC to work with manufacturers in Northeast Wisconsin. These grants, totaling nearly $212,000, will allow WITC to build Northwest Wisconsin’s local manufacturing workforce by providing critical training to update worker skills, improve quality and productivity, boost communication and performance skills, and provide resources for career advancement.

As a result of these grants, more than 400 workers will receive thousands of hours of training to learn project management techniques, and bridge skill gaps vital to success in challenging markets. Companies benefiting from the grants include OEM Fabricators, Federal Foam, Northwire and four Northwestern Wisconsin plastic industry companies. Since Gov. Doyle established the WAT program in the 2005-07 budget, more than 28,000 incumbent workers have been trained, resulting in improved employee skills, cost savings to businesses, and lower turnover rates.

High School Relations Report available soon

A primary emphasis for WITC is to meet the changing needs of its students, employers and communities. One way of accomplishing this important goal is through partnerships with the K - 12 schools in WITC’s region that result in seamless transitions to postsecondary education and career path options. This is highlighted in WITC’s High School Relations Report, which will be mailed out to all the high schools in WITC’s district in the upcoming weeks.

“We’re excited to present this information that highlights the opportunities available to K - 12 staff and students,” said Barb Landstrom, Director of Assessment and Tech Prep at WITC.
Extreme Tool & Engineering donates equipment

WITC-Ashland’s Machine Tool Operation program benefits from a Charmilles D20 Electrical Discharge Machine

At a time when the need for skilled machinists is high, one Wakefield company has stepped in to help train potential employees to enter the workforce prepared. Extreme Tool & Engineering, Inc. has donated a Charmilles D20 Electrical Discharge Machine (EDM) to the Machine Tool Operation (MTO) program at Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College’s Ashland Campus.

"There's a real need for skilled machinists. We're talking about good-paying jobs in the $30,000-plus range. Our graduates often have job offers before they even graduate."

— Paul Kalin

Machine Tool Operation Instructor Paul Kalin is excited about the donation as well. "Our goal is to train students a variety of machines so they are prepared for diverse industries. The EDM will help WITC better prepare our graduates for employment with Extreme Tool & Engineering and similar companies," he said. Meeting the needs of regional companies is important to Kalin as he designs the curriculum for the machine tool program, and the advisory committee plays a large role. Mike Zacharias, president of Extreme Tool, serves on the board and saw a way he could help. In addition to providing input, Zacharias provided a piece of equipment that was not currently part of the MTO lab at WITC-Ashland.

"The EDM is one of the technologies that we use at Extreme Tool that WITC didn’t have," Zacharias says. "When we recently updated a machine with more automated technology, we felt that the students from WITC could benefit.”

Extreme Tool and other mold-making industries will benefit from the donation as well. "EDM is pretty specific to mold-making industry," Zacharias says. “Part of our hope is that by exposing the students to this equipment, they will develop an interest in the industry.”

Although Extreme Tool has no open positions — they recently filled open positions with WITC graduates — many opportunities in the regional manufacturing industry still exist.

“There’s a real need for skilled machinists," Kalin says. "We’re talking about good-paying jobs in the $30,000-plus range. Our graduates often have job offers before they even graduate.”
The newly released State of Working Wisconsin 2008 report documents economic growth in Wisconsin as “soft” resulting from job losses, higher unemployment and declining median incomes, but credits Wisconsin’s Technical Colleges for impacting the state’s workforce.

The Center on Wisconsin Strategy report indicates, “Wisconsin’s associate degrees, especially our occupational associate degrees, offer a very strong pay-off for the workers who hold them.”

According to the report, Wisconsin’s residents who hold occupational associate degrees from Wisconsin’s Technical Colleges have stronger earnings than their national counterparts, with a median income of $18.18 per hour. This is $1 higher than the national median and $2 more than it was two years prior.

“The economic and social contributions the technical colleges make to our state are immense. You can’t overstate the impact the colleges have on both personal earnings and the state’s economy. This is a critical point when considering where to invest our state’s limited dollars to get the best return,” says Brent Smith, president of the Wisconsin Technical College System Board.

The report also states that 10 percent of Wisconsin’s workforce holds an occupational associate degree, which is twice the national average and third nationally.

“Wisconsin’s reputation continues as having one of the premiere technical college systems in the country,” says Dan Clancy, president of the Wisconsin Technical College System. “Wisconsin’s transition into a high-tech economy extends the demand for occupational associate degrees.”

The report cites a skilled worker shortage for many industries with a high number of individuals on the economic sidelines, neither engaged in education nor adequately skilled to fill these high-wage jobs.

Earning potential can be dramatic in these industries, as occupational associate degree holders in Wisconsin earn 23 percent more than workers who ended their education with high school.

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The program will be useful to teachers seeking to meet the requirements of Head Start reauthorization and preschool teachers who want to teach in 4-year-old kindergarten through third grade classrooms. The courses are also suitable for practicing teachers who desire professional development.

“I am very excited to be involved with this program,” says student Karen Pesik, of River Falls. “I am very grateful for Professor Ward of UWRF and Mary Williams-Greene of WITC for their tireless hours spent on planning and implementing this degree for students who have taken a technical college degree and want to transfer into a university. I have high hopes to graduate from the program this school year.”

Through the program, the students will take classes online and using interactive television and will attend face-to-face workshops at UWRF on some Saturdays. The courses will emphasize connecting children to nature and active exploration. Students who hold an associate degree in early childhood education can apply in the fall to enroll in winter or spring courses. Under a new federal grant, students may be eligible to receive scholarships from TEACH Early Childhood Wisconsin.

“We are very excited to have the early childhood transition to degree program up and running,” says Gay Ward, a professor of teacher education at UWRF. “It is a dream that has been satisfied after years of work and planning with Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College representing the Wisconsin Technical College System.”

“I would strongly recommend this program above any other for students to transfer into,” says Pesik. “The instructors, deans and students are wonderful, helpful and most importantly they treat you as a person and not just a number on the campus.”
Students take part in two-day leadership retreat

There were hula-hoops, an ice cream sundae and plenty of laughter as 50 students from Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College’s four campuses recently took part in a two-day leadership retreat at Hartwood Conference Center in Trego, Wis.

The specially designed retreat provides students involved in Student Senate and other co-curricular clubs at WITC the skills needed to succeed and become better leaders both while in school and on the job.

“I’m going to be an administrative assistant,” says Jessica Ramel, who is enrolled in the Finance, Administrative Assistant and Legal Office programs at WITC’s Superior campus. “I hope to one day to supervise, so hopefully I’ll be able to turn that into better group meetings and better communicate to my employees what needs to be done.”

While discussion on leadership and topics like Robert’s Rules of Order may not sound exciting, Michael Miller led the talk.

Back for his third year, Miller’s enthusiastic and bold approach to the subject of leadership was a welcomed learning style.

“He was amazing,” says Knudt Lien, a student in the Business Management program at WITC’s Rice Lake campus. “They said he was a very good speaker, but he was way above my expectations of what a leadership speaker would be like. I thought it would be pretty boring and just more knowledge passed on, but he definitely made it fun.”

Through open discussion, students were able to voice some of the difficulty they’ve experienced in leadership roles. Miller was careful to address each concern, while addressing topics such as delegation and retention, motivation, parliamentary procedures, and values clarification.

Yet, the retreat also serves to help introduce students to each other.

“I came here just to better myself in leadership, and also get to know some of my fellow classmates,” Lien says. “Since I’m new here, I don’t really know anyone, so I thought it would be a good benefit to better myself with business management leadership and get to know people I might be working with.”

After two days, the results of Miller’s lively discussion and the interaction WITC students had with each other is clear.

“It’s opened me up to new experiences,” Lien says. “I’m able to open up to people better, I have better ideas and new ways of meeting people; how to get closer together. I’ve learned different values – more values of my own that I guess I’d never really sat down and thought about.”