

History of WITC

The backbone for Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College was set years before the college came into formation. With a vision of providing a learning environment designed to maximize personal success, WITC has become one of the top ranked two-year colleges in the nation. Throughout its rich history, WITC has not forgotten its desire to provide dynamic opportunities for career preparation to Northwestern Wisconsin.

In 1911, the Wisconsin Legislature required that vocational schools be established in cities with populations of 6,000 or more. A year later, Superior became the first city in Northwest Wisconsin and the second overall location in the state where a technical school was founded. Schools were also established in Ashland in 1921 and in Rice Lake in 1941.

The Wisconsin Area District Law, enacted by the Wisconsin Legislature in 1965, required a “master plan” be developed by the Wisconsin Board of Vocational, Technical and Adult Education to create districts in the state by July 1, 1970.

In 1967, District 18 – consisting of Burnett, Polk, St. Croix and Pierce counties – was approved for operation. The following year, District 17 – made up of Ashland, Barron, Bayfield, Douglas, Iron, Rusk, Sawyer and Washburn counties – was formed. These two districts were merged in 1972, creating the Wisconsin Indianhead Vocational, Technical and Adult Education District. This area of 10,500 square miles included a population of 236,200; 286 towns, villages and cities; and 47 school districts.

The District Administrative Office was moved from Superior to Shell Lake in 1973. This location was selected due to its location in the center of the district.

To handle the growing population and the demand for the expansion of technical program offerings, groundbreaking began in 1975 for new campuses in Ashland, New Richmond and Rice Lake. Construction in Superior took place in 1976.

A name change occurred in 1987 when Wisconsin Indianhead Vocational, Technical and Adult Education District became Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College.

Today, WITC employs a staff of more than 1,700 and provides education to 6,000 credit students in more than 50 full-time programs, plus technical certificates and apprenticeship programs and nearly 20,000 residents in continuing education courses.

Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. WITC is a member of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

WITC was recently recognized by “Washington Monthly.” The magazine ranked WITC sixth among two-year colleges across the nation.