“There’s no place like home; there’s no place like home;…” is a phrase originated long before Dorothy recounted her wish to go home in one of my favorite movies, the 1939 *Wizard of Oz*. At NCC we focus on our communities’ needs through keeping our students and alumni close to home to work, to live, and to play. We build upon people’s hopes and dreams every day, and there truly is no place like home—wherever that may be!

In this edition of our magazine we will look at alumni stories that exemplify this desire for home. **Alissa Jager** chose to stay local and plant her business in Sheldon, fulfilling her dream of running her own boutique, while **Eugene Yeboah** came from afar and hopes to eventually return to his home in Ghana. **Brandon Espey** worked locally, then travelled across the globe, and is now working from home in Northwest Iowa.

There is no better place than home in Iowa, particularly Northwest Iowa for me. Infrastructure, opportunity, education, healthcare, and quality of life led Iowa to be ranked the #1 state in the country in a 2018 study by U.S. News & World Report. **Northwest Iowa Community College has also been ranked #1 in the nation several times—for our electrical programs and most recently for our online programs.**

Dreams really do come true, and education plays a major part in making that happen. NCC serves a diverse group of students from all walks of life and helps to make their hopes and dreams a reality. No matter who you are or where you decide to live—everyone has a chance to succeed at NCC. Our mission of access to lifelong learning builds communities, one person and one family at a time.

In addition to building lives and communities, campus building projects are underway. These improvements are an ongoing necessity to serve our growing number of students. Facilities make a difference in the learning environment. We are excited about our first expansion and remodeling project of Building D, the very first building on our campus built in 1968. This would not have happened without your overwhelming support, and we are grateful. By the time we celebrate the 50th anniversary of our Industrial Commercial Wiring program on October 10, you will see expanded programs and facilities.

We invite you to come home to NCC anytime to see the progressive changes your community college continues to make with your support and that of our employees, businesses, and communities. If you can’t visit, please stay connected through Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, or the Alumni page on our website at nwicc.edu/foundation.

Remember that Dorothy also said, “The dreams that you dare to dream really do come true.” Your success is our story!

Alethea Stubbe, Ph. D.
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Alissa Jager: Planting Her Business at Home
Alissa Jager, alum of NCC’s Clerical Accounting Diploma (2015) and Associate of Arts: Business Degree (2016), is a prime example of an outstanding alum who decided to stay local and plant her business right here in the heart of NCC’s service territory.

Her business, Alissa Ryan Boutique, is located in downtown Sheldon. Its doors opened in August of 2016 (3 months after Alissa’s graduation), and sales have been steady ever since! Speaking with Alissa, you can hear the excitement she has when talking about her business, the plans she has for the future, and the journey of how she got to this point.

Alissa’s story begins in high school where she held a part-time job working retail at Rockman’s Clothing in downtown Sheldon. She loved retail work! Assisting customers in finding clothing they looked and felt great in was one of her favorite parts. Although she loved her part-time job in retail, she never imagined it would benefit her so much down the road. At that point in her life, the idea of a career in retail never even crossed her mind.

Fast-forward a few years, Alissa was attending her first semester of college at South Dakota State University. She wasn’t sure what she wanted to do with the rest of her life, and most days, she wasn’t sure if SDSU was even the right place for her. Alissa was oftentimes overwhelmed by the huge class sizes and the cost of attending college. She decided to stick it out a full semester, but had many thoughts about moving back home.

As the end of her first semester at SDSU neared, Alissa made the decision to move back to Northwest Iowa. She saw many benefits in this, such as saving money on her college tuition bill, having the option to work more, and continuing her education at NCC. Although Alissa was still very unsure about her future plans, she chose to major in Accounting and Business. She saw these skills as very valuable, despite her undecided career aspirations.

Within the first few weeks at NCC, Alissa knew she made the right choice. She was enjoying the small class sizes and the relationships she was building with her instructors and classmates. She also appreciated that she could pay her entire semester bill without having to take out any student loans! “The tuition rates at NCC were very affordable, and I was very thankful as I also received a scholarship!” Alissa had also started a new job at Revolution Consignment in downtown Sheldon.

Alissa graduated with her Clerical Accounting Diploma in 2015. She continued for one more year to broaden her knowledge in the business realm and graduated in 2016 with her Associate Degree in Business. At this time, Alissa had no idea what life after graduation had in store for her. She pictured herself in an office setting, possibly in bookkeeping, finance, or insurance. On the day of her graduation ceremony, Alissa remembers her mom asking her what she was going to do now?

Continued on page 19

What are you going to do now?

This question led Alissa to begin considering all of the possibilities. Alissa thought briefly about opening her own boutique, but it always seemed more of a fantasy. Her parents encouraged her to go after this dream and began assisting Alissa in looking for business properties. After much searching, they found the perfect property. Alissa knew she would need to act fast and decided to purchase the location. At this point she had no idea where to begin. If you ask Alissa, the entire period from graduation to opening day was a blur!

After taking possession of the building, Alissa left for her first market experience in Dallas, TX. The Dallas Apparel and Accessories Market is where she would purchase the first products for her inventory. She explains this entire experience as being exciting but extremely overwhelming. “There were a lot of things to think about before arriving at market. I had to set my budget, think about my audience and consumer profile, and have a basic idea of the style and options I wanted to have available. On top of all of this, I also had to consider what would sell in small town Northwest Iowa. My goal was to have a large range of items for individuals of all ages. I wanted people to come to my store to find something different and find new things, not the items that could be found everywhere else.”

While Alissa was off absorbing this first market experience, her dad and sister were hard at work gutting the inside of her new property. Prior to Alissa taking ownership the location was a hair salon, and Alissa still receives reminders of this. “To this day, people still stop in for haircuts!” With that being said, it wasn’t exactly set up for a boutique to move into the space. A LOT had to be done before opening day! Luckily for Alissa, her dad knew a lot about renovations, and they were able to do almost everything themselves.

Alissa returned from market excited, motivated, and ready for opening day! Between June and August of 2016, Alissa and her family worked day and night to complete the renovation. Alissa remembers the Sheldon Chamber & Development Corporation stopping by about a week prior to opening day. She recalls very vividly their state of shock when they visited and nothing was set up, no inventory was in the store, and her grand opening was only a few days away. Due to the fact that Alissa had so many resources and people to help her, everything came together just in time.
A majority of NCC’s student population is made up of local, traditionally aged, Iowa residents. Many individuals are surprised to hear that students also travel from across the world to attend programs offered in our corner of Iowa. They are also surprised to hear that a fair percentage of students are outside of the traditional college age (18–22). The healthcare programs at NCC are very diverse in regards to students’ place of origin, ethnicity, and age.

Each student’s journey to their degree is very different, but all have a common destination: success.

Eugene Yeboah’s journey begins with a trip from the other side of the world.

Eugene is a 2019 alumnus of the Associate Degree Nursing program. His journey to NCC was not a smooth, paved road. Instead, it resembled a winding trail in which the destination was uncertain. It all began in Ghana, Africa, during high school, when the idea of studying abroad in the United States popped into Eugene’s head.

Eugene was on track to graduate from high school in May of 2013. All five of his older siblings had continued their education at local colleges in Ghana. Eugene wanted something more and had the desire to learn about a different part of the world. He discussed the possibilities with his high school counselor and ended up submitting an international student application to various colleges in Illinois, New Hampshire, New York, and Iowa.

The international student admission process is very time consuming and expensive. Because of the various fees, interviews, extra tests, and plethora of paperwork, Eugene was almost ready to give up and pursue a degree at a local college. However, he decided to push through, took his SAT, and waited for responses. Eugene remembers how long the entire process took and how strenuous it was. “It took me almost three years to get to college. Many of my high school classmates were already sophomores or juniors. Back home, if you didn’t go to school it was either because your parents didn’t have money or you didn’t pass admission tests. The process to come to the U.S. is so hard many people think it’s a joke or you won’t make it. Several people doubted me and assumed I would give up.”

Eugene finally began to receive acceptance letters from various U.S. colleges. He made the decision to attend Wartburg College in Waverly, IA, because a Ghanaian from his high school had attended there, the class sizes were small, and Waverly had the small town atmosphere he was looking for. He was excited to be a Business student in the United States after many years of waiting.

Eugene began at Wartburg in the spring of 2016. Becoming more accustomed to English, learning the names of American foods, missing his family back home, and realizing he chose one of the states with the coldest winter climates were initial difficulties for Eugene. A larger obstacle became apparent when Eugene realized Business was not his passion.

Recognizing that he had a passion to bring a useful skill back to his community, Eugene began researching a career in nursing. Northwest Iowa Community College came up in an online search for having a step-by-step Nursing program. Eugene saw a huge benefit in completing his nursing education one step at a time, so he applied to NCC.

The Admissions staff at NCC were very responsive, and by August 2016, Eugene was beginning a new journey as a Nursing student at NCC. Eugene remembers how supportive everyone was during his transition from Wartburg to NCC. “The staff and faculty were so helpful with everything, from assisting me with admission steps to helping me find an apartment.” The tuition rates also played a role in Eugene’s choice. As an international student, he did not qualify for federal financial aid or scholarships, so affordable tuition rates were very important to him.
As Eugene progressed through his nursing studies, he realized this was the right career path for him. The more content he learned, the more confident he felt with his decision. Eugene credits one of his nursing instructors, Debra Kleinwolterink, for being his motivation to keep pushing through his coursework.

"At other colleges, you don’t always get that personal connection where you feel comfortable stopping in to ask a question or talk to someone, but at NCC you do." A few of Eugene’s favorite parts about the Nursing program were the ability to complete clinical and preceptorship rotations at local hospitals and nursing homes and working in the simulation lab on campus.

Eugene’s journey with NCC ends with him graduating with his Associate Degree in Nursing, but his overall journey is far from over. He plans to get a job as a Registered Nurse and continue his education towards a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, although he hopes to do that outside of Iowa (not only to escape the cold winters, but also to gain further exposure to other regions of the U.S.). Eugene’s long-term goal is to become a Nurse Practitioner or Medical Doctor.

Ultimately, Eugene would like to end up right back where he started this journey—home in Ghana, Africa, to help those in remote areas with sparse access to healthcare.

Continued on next page
Although Jenna Stover didn’t travel from the other side of the world to get to NCC, she also took a non-traditional path to her degree. Jenna, a 2016 alum of the Radiologic Technology program, is no stranger to hard work, determination, or multi-tasking, and her story showcases this.

Jenna’s story begins during her freshman year at Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa. Jenna, a 2003 graduate of Western Christian High School, always pictured herself going to a four-year college. Although she was right where she had always wanted to be, she was extremely undecided about her future career plans. She finished that first year at Northwestern, but then she decided to move back home to Sheldon, get a full-time job, and take courses at Northwest Iowa Community College.

Fast-forward a few months; Jenna was working two full-time jobs and taking general courses at NCC. She enjoyed the work she was doing and didn’t see a need for getting a degree, so she made the decision to quit taking classes and focus on her jobs at Village Northwest Unlimited and Children’s World. The stress of working two full-time jobs did not bother Jenna until she got engaged. It was then that she realized she had been working two full-time jobs for almost ten years! She began to think of how she could cut back to one full-time job and still provide enough financial support for her family.

It was August of 2013. Jenna’s wedding was just around the corner, and fall courses at NCC were beginning in a few short weeks. Jenna and her fiancé had many discussions about Jenna enrolling in the Radiologic Technology program at NCC. Since Jenna still needed to complete some of the pre-requisite courses in order to be accepted into the Radiologic Technology program, she decided to jump right in and begin those courses. Jenna started at NCC for the second time at the age of 28 as a Pre-Radiologic Technology student.

The Introduction to Radiology course she took as part of the admission process fed her excitement toward this career. This course was the turning point for Jenna and helped her realize she was heading in the right direction. She would still be working 40-plus hours while going back to school, but this beat the alternative of working two full-time jobs for the rest of her career.

Jenna successfully navigated through the first semester of the Radiologic Technology program, balancing both work and college. She knew the next couple of semesters would be a challenge, but for a great reason; she and her husband were expecting their first child! Jenna’s instructors allowed her to work ahead in clinical hours and complete some of her coursework as “self-study” so that she was able to stay on track in the program. Jenna remembers how helpful her instructors were during this time. “One of my instructors, Kelsey Van Beek, was in her first year of teaching. She went above and beyond to work ahead in the course content so she could teach me and help me through.”

My instructors were so helpful, and this was one of the huge benefits of attending NCC.

Jenna’s favorite part of the program was the required clinical rotations. She even credits the clinical rotations for assisting her in obtaining her current job. “Every clinical experience was a job interview. Without the clinical experiences, I would never have made those connections with my current employer.”

After two years of balancing work, school, and family, Jenna’s graduation day finally arrived, and it was a tremendously exciting milestone for Jenna and her family! May of 2016 may have marked the end of Jenna’s time at NCC, but her success continues today.
Jenna, now a mom of two, is currently a Radiologic Technologist at Sanford Sheldon. Since leaving NCC, she passed her Radiologic Technology boards and has completed additional modalities in Mammography and CT (Computerized Tomography). A small hospital is where Jenna pictures herself for the remainder of her career. She loves the variety of modalities she is able to do each day and the fact that she is always learning something new. “We are all lifetime students. In the Radiology field, we are constantly learning new ways to do things and new technology is coming out every day.”

Jenna has considered continuing her education to earn a Bachelor’s Degree. For now, she is excited to continue learning new modalities. You can tell in speaking with her that Jenna truly loves the work she is able to do every day. She often reminisces on how great it would have been to know about the program sooner, although she jokes that she wasn’t even sure she made the right decision until that first semester taking her pre-requisite courses!

Jenna will never forget all the years she spent working two full-time jobs and balancing work, education and her family. Remembering those times helps her appreciate having only one job and reminds her of how glad she is to have made the decision to attend the Radiologic Technology program at NCC.

Jenna is clearly no stranger to hard work. It was her hard work and a strong support system that got her to where she is today and will continue to pave her road to success.

Many of our alumni take a non-traditional path to success. Neither Eugene nor Jenna took a traditional route to earning their degrees. The end result, however, is the same. Each of these alumni have successful, evolving careers in the rapidly growing healthcare industry.
One of the perks of being an NCC alumnus is you are able to hear NCC news first through the Connections Magazine! With the 74% passage of our General Obligation Bond in April of 2018, NCC officials are now in the process of implementing plans to enhance and expand programs in order to serve students well into the future. We have the scoop for you — a 2019 Bond construction update. Some very exciting things are about to begin on the campus of Northwest Iowa Community College!
Part of the mission of Northwest Iowa Community College, and a real concern for college officials, is meeting the educational needs for more skilled workers in Northwest Iowa. After listening to current and potential students along with industry leaders, one area of need identified was to create a modern educational space for the Diesel Technology and Automotive & Light Duty Diesel Programs.

Building D was built in 1968 and has been maintained very well, but because of industry changes, the labs are not conducive to today’s educational needs for those programs. Trucks and farming equipment were smaller during the 1960’s, and the current lab spaces are not big enough for today’s vehicles. Steve Waldstein, Dean—Applied Technology, stated, “The new construction will have garage door openings that are high and wide enough to drive the big modern tractor trailers and agricultural equipment directly into the labs. There will now be longer trailer bays that will let the instructors close the overhead doors while the equipment is in the lab.”

Continued on next page
The need to expand Building D’s programs is a necessity for the college. Waldstein explained, “In 1968, having space for 18 students was a great enrollment number to imagine. In 2019, with the current industry demand for more skilled technicians, we need more room to educate students effectively and efficiently.” For example, in the fall of 2018 NCC had 105 inquiries in the Diesel Technology Program, and only 18 could be admitted due to the size of the labs and how many students they were built to educate. Waldstein continued, “Unfortunately, that meant the local students who wanted training needed to look at other learning opportunities out of the local area.”

When the addition/remodel is complete, NCC officials predict they will be able to admit a total of 22 first year students (44 total first and second year students) into the program. By year three, NCC officials expect to have 26 admitted first year students (52 total first and second year students) in the program. “With that many students in the program, we also foresee the need to hire a Lab Teaching Assistant within the first two years,” stated Waldstein.

Research shows that 81% of community college students stay in Iowa, and we know about 40% of NCC alumni stay right in our 4 ½ counties, becoming productive citizens in our community. “Strategically this is a really good thing for our local communities. This will keep NCC graduates living and raising families in Northwest Iowa,” said Waldstein.

Planning started in earnest for this addition/remodel right after the passage of the General Obligation Bond in April 2018. Mark Brown, Vice President—College Operations & Finance, said, “Planning for the addition and renovation of Building D has been a complicated challenge. Logistically there are a lot of people and physical spaces involved that needed to be accounted for.” Brown continued, “The college was committed to not pausing our Building D programs for a year while the construction took place, and it takes a lot of creative thinking to make that happen. We are committed to our students and the local industry that needs a skilled workforce in order to operate and expand in the area.”

Input from many different perspectives has been a very intentional process in determining what is needed for Building D programs for the next 50 years. There have been a lot of discussions with instructors, alumni, program advisory boards, and students. “Input from instructors has been instrumental in the design of the new areas,” stated Brown. “The alumni and program advisory boards have contributed ideas to make the space equal to or better than industry standards. The students that were surveyed said they needed more student common/social areas, and we have listened to them.” The new building will have a patio and a student lounge with access to computers, TV’s, and seating.

Waldstein explained, “One of the new features that we are excited to have for use by both the Diesel Technology and Automotive & Light Duty Diesel Programs is an Engine Simulation Lab.” The Engine Lab will be a space dedicated to Engine Trainers, Hydraulic Trainers, and Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) trainers. “These are real engines that our instructors can program with a specific problem and then let the students identify and fix it.”

There are other important features for the new Building D. It will now provide access to an elevator which will bring the building into compliance for ADA concerns and make the space accessible for more students. It will feature large windows with a second story walkway so visitors can have a bird’s eye view of the Diesel Technology lab. This not only provides natural light in the lab space, but also allows for uninterrupted classes as prospective students visit the college to decide if the program is right for continuing their education. It will also give the prospective student a better perspective and overview of the program and everything that goes on in the labs. The building design will allow for more collaborative and educational spaces for the students and room for large projects. Improved visual sightlines will provide the instructors a non-disrupted view of the labs and better oversight with increased safety for students.

Dr. Alethea Stubbe said, “Thank you to our alumni and community members for your vision and long range planning for our community. We look forward to continuing to build our communities through quality, accessible, and affordable education.”

We are thankful to contribute to the strength and vitality of Northwest Iowa and the communities we serve.

Has it been a while since you have been on campus? If you would like to visit campus please contact Morgan Granstra, Coordinator—Foundation & Alumni Relations, for a tour! (712) 324-5066 x230 Email: mgranstra@nwicc.edu. She would be happy to show you all the great things our students and programs are doing at NCC!
Phase 1

Starting in May 2019 (after spring graduation), construction will begin for the Automotive & Light Duty Diesel and Diesel Technology program spaces that are located in Building D.

- **Welding Program** will permanently move to Building C. Program reopening in the new location fall semester of 2019.
- **Automotive & Light Duty Diesel Program** is relocating to the Applied Technology building sharing space with the Heavy Equipment & Maintenance Program from the summer of 2019–January 1, 2020. Program reopening in the new location spring semester of 2020.
- **Diesel Technology Program** is being relocated to a building in Rock Valley, Iowa (the former Coop building) for the 2019–2020 academic year. Program reopening in the new location on campus fall semester of 2020.

Phase 2

- Planning will start for the **new Health Facilities** this summer (2019). Ground-breaking planned for the spring of 2020.

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**Square Footage**

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*For comparison, the new Applied Technology Building, which opened in the fall of 2017, is 22,000 square feet.*
It’s funny how the little habits our parents ingrain in us can turn out to be what leads us to our dream career. This is the case for Scott Hansmann.

Scott is a 2016 alumnus of the Automotive Service Technology program (now known as Automotive & Light Duty Diesel). Not only did Scott graduate in 2016, but this is also the year he became the owner of his own repair shop, Scott’s Auto Repair!

Scott, a native of Boyden, IA, knew early on in life that a career in the Automotive Industry was his calling. His interest in the Fast and Furious movies, along with the weekly task of keeping his parents’ vehicles extremely clean, steered his interests to engines, oil, and chassis. While attending Boyden-Hull High School, Scott worked for C&K Repair, an automotive repair shop in Hull, IA, and the experiences he gained there drove his interests even further into the automotive industry.

Before Scott knew it, he was graduating! For many students, the excitement of graduation can be paired with nerve-wracking feelings. This time can come with many unknown variables, such as finding a job, but this wasn’t the case for Scott. During his time at C&K Repair, Scott was presented with the opportunity of a lifetime…taking over the business once he earned his degree! It had always been a goal of his to own his own business, but he never expected it to happen so soon. Scott’s choice to attend NCC ultimately led him to being a business owner by the age of 21.

A few short months after graduation, Scott was officially the owner of his own business. It was time to put his knowledge and skills to the test. He learned very quickly that his instructors’ recommendations to keep detailed invoices wasn’t just to earn a passing grade in his courses, but a task he would use in his business. His education not only taught him how to work on vehicles, but also many other aspects of being a good technician, like having respect for vehicles and customer service skills.

As if being a new business owner is not hard enough, Scott endured an extra challenge shortly after his first year of being in business. On a Sunday morning in November 2017, he received a phone call that his building was on fire. The Hull Fire Department got there in time to put out the fire, but Scott’s Auto Repair suffered extensive damage. The entire front entrance and first stall of the shop would need to be renovated. The incident caused inconveniences over the next 6 months, but business carried on, and in May 2018, the newly renovated front entrance and shop were complete!

Since the renovation, business has continued to grow at Scott’s Auto Repair! Scott and his one employee work together on various vehicle repairs, maintenance, and service calls. Although Scott gets to do what he loves...
and work on vehicles all day, his favorite part of owning a business in Northwest Iowa is being an important part of his community. Scott’s motivation comes from the trust his customers have in him to get the job done right.

Scott graduated nearly three years ago, but he is still very connected to NCC. He is the first to admit that if he ever has a vehicle stumping him in the shop, he will still call one of his instructors at NCC for help. Scott also serves on the Advisory Committee for the Automotive & Light Duty Diesel program, working to ensure the curriculum and technology used in the program are relevant to industry. It is amazing to think that Scott’s entire journey began with the chore of cleaning his parents’ vehicles.

Scott is a great example of the impact Northwest Iowa Community College has on our local community!
To have a lucrative and successful career is a goal most of us hope to achieve in our lives. To reach this goal before the age of 30 is something that Industrial Instrumentation & Control Alum, Brandon Espey, never imagined would happen to him. Brandon, who is now an Automation Electrical and Instrumentation Regional Engineer for Cargill, had no idea what instrumentation was in high school. He was even more unaware of the national and global journeys he would soon be immersed in following his graduation from Northwest Iowa Community College.

Brandon, a 2006 graduate of Hartley Melvin Sanborn High School, always had aspirations to pursue a degree in Power Sports or Diesel Mechanics. He loved hands-on work and never had an interest in going to a four-year college. The Industrial Instrumentation & Control program came up during a conversation with his high school guidance counselor. Brandon’s senior year schedule was going to be fairly open as he had completed most of his requirements for graduation, so his guidance counselor suggested he take instrumentation courses at NCC. Brandon had never heard of the field of instrumentation before, so he and his parents decided to go on a college visit to see what it was all about.

Many individuals in Northwest Iowa are unfamiliar with the work Instrumentation and Control technicians do. In short, they solve electrical, electronic, and computer problems using their minds and hands. These technicians install, upgrade, maintain, and repair automated equipment in industries that produce everything from appliances and medical equipment to ethanol and electric power. Brandon was very intrigued after learning about the program during his college visit and enrolled in the afternoon courses. Brandon had half of the first-year courses completed by the time he graduated from high school.

Brandon appreciated the hands-on learning environment his classes provided and found this to be very beneficial once he was working in the field. “When you are at that first job in the industry, and you realize that you are familiar with the equipment, it relaxes you so you can do your job.”

Brandon also appreciated the strict attendance policy, especially during those first few years on the job. “The company truck left at 6:50 a.m., and if you arrived one minute late, you were out of luck.” He appreciates not only the knowledge, but also the life skills he learned during his time at NCC.

As graduation day approached, Brandon had four companies offer him a job! He contemplated how far away from home he wanted to move. In the end, Brandon decided to start his instrumentation career at Unicco (now CW Services) in Blair, NE. Unicco was a great starting point for his career. The job paid well, required no travel, exposed him to a variety of instrumentation work, and was still close enough that he could travel home if he desired.

Brandon was then presented with an opportunity to travel as an Instrumentation Technician for Interstates. He was at a point in his life where he wanted to travel, so he took it. He bought an RV and lived in various states throughout this time, such as North Dakota, Kansas, Iowa, and Louisiana. Although Brandon enjoyed traveling, his RV days came to an end when given an opportunity to work in embedded maintenance at a Cargill plant in Kansas City, MO.
Little did he know, the connections made and his experiences at this job would have a huge impact on his future. While in Kansas City, he was contacted by an employment recruiter about an opportunity with a combustion controls company, Burner Design & Control. He accepted an offer from them and worked in most of the Midwest states balancing and tuning ethanol plant combustion systems.

In 2013, Brandon was approached about working for RS Stover. Kansas City wasn’t home for him, so he decided to make another move. He worked for RS Stover for 12 months before being presented with the next big opportunity. Cargill was looking to fill electrical positions because of new plant builds. In March 2014, Brandon was officially named an Automation Electrical and Instrumentation Regional Engineer for Cargill North America. Brandon moved to Minneapolis, MN, to begin this next adventure.

Brandon’s first two years at Cargill were spent mainly in new plant construction and consisted of 75%–80% travel time. He worked in direct support at seven of Cargill’s North American facilities, from Ohio to California. He visited each of these locations 3–4 times per year. During those first few years on the job, Brandon also traveled to Mexico, Europe, China, and Africa to complete various start-up projects and attend worldwide team meetings.

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COMING IN FALL 2019
A new Information Technology Specialist program will be starting this fall and can be taken completely online! The program allows you to customize your certificate, diploma, or degree as a full or part-time student. Students will gain experience in a variety of IT skills including hardware, software applications, networking and programming, and principles of customer service. Graduates will be prepared to provide technical assistance to computer users, particularly in a small-business setting. A diploma can be earned during the first year of study and an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree the second year.

NEW SIMULATOR IN THE WELDING PROGRAM
The Welding program recently added a Miller Live Arc Welding Performance Management System to the lab. This simulator tests students on many varieties of welding such as GMAW, PCAW and SMAW. Robert Hoting, Welding instructor, has already witnessed the many benefits this brings to the lab experience. Students are able to practice and be tested on various welds through the simulator, reducing material waste, assisting students in developing muscle memory, and allowing faculty to identify areas for improvement.

NCC PROGRAMS RANKED NATION’S BEST
NCC has been selected as a top automotive school by Trade School Future. The organization looks at five criteria: average cost of tuition, typical debt-load of graduates, average early career salary, average mid-career salary and graduation rate. Based on that data, NCC’s program was ranked #10!

NCC’s Online Associate in Computer Science program was ranked #5 in the Nation by TheBestSchools.org. Degree programs were selected based on the quality of the program, range of courses provided, school awards, ranking, and reputation.

STUDENT LEGISLATIVE SEMINAR
Three students, along with various NCC staff and board members, represented Northwest Iowa Community College on January 23–24, 2019, at the Iowa Association of Community College Trustees Student Legislative Seminar held in Des Moines. This event is in its 31st year and is a great opportunity for community college students from around Iowa to meet with our legislators. This year’s event included presentations on how to effectively advocate for Community Colleges and build working relationships with legislators. Students spent time at the Iowa State Capitol and participated in a one-hour dialogue with our area legislators on topics that were specific to NCC. The students also toured the Capitol. This event has two benefits: community college students learn more about governmental strategies and how they affect education, and the legislators learn more about the students that community colleges serve.

VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE (VITA) SITE
Now in its 16th year, the Sheldon Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Site Program at Northwest Iowa Community College offers FREE tax help to people who make $54,000 or less, persons with disabilities, limited English-speaking taxpayers, and the elderly who need assistance in preparing and filing their 2018 tax returns. Our trained, IRS-certified volunteers provide free basic income tax return preparation with electronic filing to qualified individuals. The individuals who took part in this project consisted of 18 Student/Alumni Volunteers from the Administrative Office Assistant and Accounting Programs and Instructors Sheila Drenkow and Janet Boone, who served as the VITA Site Coordinators. The 2019 group set up appointments for and completed over 200 tax returns for individuals in the NCC service area!
Save the Date

Help celebrate 50 YEARS of success of the Industrial & Commercial Wiring and Electrical Technology programs!

Thursday, October 10, 2019 (evening)

Alums, Instructors, and Retirees will be invited back to campus for tours, a meal, class photos, and more!

Alissa Jager

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Alissa recalls her opening day as being one of the most exhilarating moments in this journey. “Opening day at Alissa Ryan Boutique was awesome!” It was busy, exciting, and an overall success. After her first day in business, she was already worried about running out of inventory! She enjoyed meeting her customers, seeing many familiar faces, and witnessing how much everyone was enjoying the day. There were many times throughout opening day that she had to remind herself that all of this was a reality.

Rewind to that first semester at SDSU. At that time, Alissa never imagined she would be the owner of her very own boutique. It all started with her decision to move back to her hometown and attend Northwest Iowa Community College.

Alissa Ryan Boutique has been in business for over two years now. Although the business has already outgrown its original space, Alissa is making it work and has a lot of ideas for growth. Between the daily grind of in-store sales, online sales, participation at various events throughout the area, and tux sales during prom and wedding seasons, it is pretty clear that Alissa Ryan Boutique is still experiencing success, and according to Alissa, that success is going to stay right here in Northwest Iowa.

Brandon Espey

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As of 2018, Brandon’s current office is his kitchen island in Le Mars, Iowa. He still holds the position of Automation Electrical and Instrumentation Regional Engineer for Cargill North America and is regionally tied to eight plants, however, he completes most of his work via Skype and phone calls and travels less. A normal day for Brandon now consists of anywhere between 2–10 hours on Skype or conference calls. He loves that each day is different, and he is constantly being presented with new projects. Brandon also completes various trainings and even teaches process control classes to Cargill’s Process Engineers.

Looking back at his journey, Brandon appreciates the various opportunities he has been presented with and how successful he has become. “When I look back at that first move after graduation, I realize I have learned so much. Figuring life out with a steady job is a lot easier than figuring life out and not having a steady job.” This year marks five years in his current position, and although he still receives calls regarding other opportunities, Brandon doesn’t see himself making another move any time soon.
Enjoying this publication? Want to know more NCC news? NCC’s Alumni Office offers quarterly e-newsletters. These quick reads will keep you abreast on alumni relevant information. To make sure NCC has your e-mail address so you can get e-newsletters and other alumni relevant information, e-mail alumni@nwicc.edu or call 800-352-4907 ext. 230.

Nondiscrimination in Education

It is the policy of Northwest Iowa Community College not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, creed, religion, and actual or potential parental, family or marital status in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by federal and state civil rights statutes and all other applicable federal and state laws, regulations and orders. The Board of Trustees shall monitor progress on this policy through the President's appointed Affirmative Action/Equity Coordinator(s).

If you have any questions or complaints related to compliance with this policy, please contact one of the Equity Coordinators at Northwest Iowa Community College, 603 West Park Street, Sheldon, Iowa, room D403b or room A101D, email equity@nwicc.edu, phone number 712-324-5061, extension 113 or extension 4138, or the Director of the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, Citigroup Center, 500 W. Madison, Suite 1475, Chicago, IL 60661, phone number 312-730-1560, fax 312-730-1576.

For more information about our graduation rates, the median debt of students who completed the program, and other important information, please visit our website at www.nwicc.edu/compliance.

Summer Camps

View complete listing of camps, dates and times at nwicc.edu/summer-camps

Summer Commencement

1:30PM  |  Friday, July 19

Fall Classes

Get registered!
Classes start August 20, 2019