THE CONNECTION

A publication for Alumni and Friends of Northwest Iowa Community College

Spring 2020

"rapidly responding to the global needs of our changing community"

NORTHWEST IOWA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Your success is our story.
Dear Friends of the College,

At the time I am writing this, the College is entering the second week of transitioning our campus face-to-face classes to online instruction because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The College’s physical campus has also been temporarily closed to the public, but I assure you that the College is open for business electronically. We take the responsibility of providing a safe and protected environment for our students, employees, and communities very seriously, and we are striving to make the best decisions for the well-being of everyone involved.

To say this is a challenging and uncertain time for us all both professionally and personally might be a bit of an understatement, but we are up to the challenge. NCC is guided by our core mission of “...rapidly responding to the changing needs of our global community.” Serving all of our students with the best quality education we can provide remains our top priority. NCC is a national leader within the online learning environment, and we have quickly responded to offer the resources our students and employees may need.

Needless to say, change, even in the best of circumstances, is difficult. I acknowledge that our students are being stretched, in many cases, to use online learning platforms for typically hands-on learning classes. Our faculty, especially in the Applied Technology Department, were asked to transition to teaching online in a matter of days and to learn best methods of online teaching practices for the smoothest transition possible. Our staff members are doing everything they can to keep things running efficiently with the least amount of disruption in services to students and the community. While we are in uncharted territory, we have remained agile so we can continue to meet student needs and provide the quality education that our students and community have become accustomed to and deserve.

I mention all of this because I am happy to report that we are meeting, and in some cases, exceeding the challenge. I am extremely proud of all of our students and employees for being flexible in order to meet the new demands we are faced with in these unprecedented and historic times. I am confident and grateful that this challenge will NOT change our mission to our students, to each other, and to our communities. Out of crisis comes opportunity. We have the opportunity to spread kindness, compassion, patience, understanding, and knowledge in new ways.

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Dear Friends of the College,

We did think about pushing this publication of the Connections magazine back into mid-summer, or just cancelling this edition altogether out of sensitivity for these uncertain times. Upon reflection, we concluded that stories of student success, achievement, and people overcoming challenges might be exactly what we all need. With that in mind, we decided to go ahead with this publication at the regularly scheduled time (mid-May).

Indeed, there are many uplifting stories in the pages of this magazine. Stories of success, such as Jennifer Randolph’s journey to becoming an attorney. Or the Bohle family’s story of multiple generations attending the Heavy Equipment & Maintenance program and running a successful family business. Stories of volunteerism in which our Powerline alumni work together to bring electricity for the first time to a small village in Guatemala. Stories of celebration as NCC commemorated 50 years of educating electricians and the grand opening for the Advanced Manufacturing Center. Another new online program, Virtual Administration Management, will be offered in the fall, and there are additional scholarship opportunities for our students.

We also have much to look forward to as a College and community. In the upcoming months we will have graduations, the grand reopening of Building D which includes Diesel Technology and Automotive & Light Duty Diesel areas and the educational partnership with Snap-on Tools, new Workforce training opportunities, and the start of a new school year.

While no one can predict the future, I do know NCC will be here delivering on our mission of education. We wish everyone the very best through these challenging times. Thank you for your understanding and patience as we make transitions to serve and protect you. Enjoy reading the uplifting stories in this magazine and know that it is only a fraction of the good NCC has done for our students, our community, and, indeed, the world. #NCCstrong

Be safe.

Regards,

Alethea Stubbe, Ph.D.
President, Northwest Iowa Community College
what’s inside...

FAMILY TRADITION
Heavy Equipment graduate completes program to continue in family business

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NEW PROGRAM
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PROGRAM UPDATE
The latest news from NCC’s Arts & Science, Business, Health & Applied Technology programs
Family traditions can come in a variety of forms. Types of entertainment, holiday festivities, vacation destinations and even colleges can become family traditions. Through the years, Northwest Iowa Community College has become a tradition for many families, one being the Bohles.

Scott Bohle was surrounded by the construction industry long before he could even walk. His parents, Dean and Elaine, began their involvement in the industry in the early ’60s and established their family business, Bohle Construction, in 1972. This happened to be the same era in which Northwest Iowa Community College established a Heavy Equipment program. Being an area business owner, Dean was asked to serve as a member of the NCC Heavy Equipment Program Advisory Board.

As Scott neared his high school graduation, his parents encouraged him to look into NCC’s Heavy Equipment program. He enjoyed working for the family business and could see himself involved for the long-term, so he made the decision to enroll at NCC. Scott graduated from the Heavy Equipment program in 1992 and immediately went to work for Bohle Construction.

As Mitchell neared his high school graduation, he briefly contemplated a career in Architectural Engineering and began taking various engineering related courses while in high school. Although he was performing very well, he lost interest in many of the engineering related courses he was taking and decided this was not his career path.

Because one of his favorite things to do was operate heavy equipment, Mitchell decided to look into the Heavy Equipment Operation & Maintenance program at NCC. After a visit to campus, he followed in his father’s footsteps and enrolled in the program.

Mitchell knew early on that he would be solely responsible for the cost of his college education. His plan was to take out loans as he could not afford to pay for the cost of tuition, fees, books and all of the required tools out of pocket. It had always been a goal of his to graduate from college with minimal debt.

Mitchell heard about the variety of scholarship opportunities during a meeting with his NCC Admissions representative. He remembers his expectations as he completed the application, “I thought it was a shot in the dark that I would actually receive the President’s or Foundation Scholarship, but I figured I would give it a try and apply, and I am so thankful I did!” During his final semester of high school, he received a letter that he had been selected as a Foundation Scholar and would receive a half-tuition scholarship for the entire length of his education at NCC.

With the help of the Foundation Scholarship, Mitchell achieved his goal of graduating from college with minimal debt. He graduated in February of 2020 and has since begun work as a heavy equipment operator for the family business, Bohle Construction.

Scott always had a feeling Mitchell would follow in his footsteps and shared, “Mitchell was very smart. He could have easily gone on to do anything he wanted. He showed interest in the heavy equipment field from a very young age, and I think he always knew he wanted to attend NCC.”

Although Dean Bohle passed away in 2003, Mitchell, along with Scott, Elaine and other members of the Bohle family keep the business running strong. Bohle Construction stays actively involved with NCC and the Heavy Equipment program. Scott took over his father’s position on the NCC Heavy Equipment Program Advisory Board and has been a member since 2003. They also stay connected by employing a number of students part-time and working alongside the program on live job sites from time to time.

Northwest Iowa Community College is proud that the Bohles remain connected to the Heavy Equipment program and hope to remain a family tradition for years to come.
In the current world of higher education there are countless majors, colleges and careers to choose from. A simple web search could lead today’s aspiring college student into a black hole of information regarding the best colleges and in-demand careers. While numerous high school seniors have a concrete plan laid out for their future, a majority are undecided or end up making changes to their plan multiple times. Some students know from a young age that they are going to be a doctor, lawyer or teacher, and they grow up to achieve just that. On the other hand, there are a large number of students who need time, inspiration and life experiences to give them direction.

Jennifer Randolph was one of those high school seniors that had a concrete plan laid out for her future...or so she thought. As a high school senior, her plan was to pursue Psychology, and eventually, Pre-Med, at the University of Iowa with a long-term goal of becoming a Psychiatrist. Growing up in Northwest Iowa, Jennifer didn’t see herself staying in the region and had a desire to leave the small-town atmosphere behind.

Following her high school graduation, Jennifer began as a Psychology student at the University of Iowa. It didn’t take long for the large class sizes, lack of access to her instructors, pace of city life and the overall culture-shock of Iowa City to take effect. School had always come easily to her, but she found herself struggling in her courses, despite her best efforts.

A situation then occurred that would have unforeseen influences on Jennifer’s future. She was involved in a car accident where she was deemed at-fault, and to make things worse, she was being sued by the other individuals involved. This situation led Jennifer to her first experience working with a lawyer, and it also amplified her desire to move back to Northwest Iowa.
Attending Northwest Iowa Community College hadn’t been part of her original plan, but looking back, she wished it had been. Upon moving back to the area, Jennifer enrolled as an Associate of Arts student at NCC. She was now undecided about her future path, but she remembers being pleasantly surprised by the assortment and flexibility of the courses she had access to. “I was honestly shocked at the variety of classes I was able to take while getting my generals, especially the variety of psychology courses.”

There were several other positive factors that stood out to her as well. She was able to take many of her classes alongside friends from high school, her instructors proved to be experienced in their fields, tuition was affordable (even more so with the help of receiving scholarships) and she could easily access her instructors outside of class.

During her first semester at NCC, Jennifer continued to research her accident and took a considerable interest in all of the legalities surrounding it. It was then that she realized how much interest she had in the legal field and how engaged she was in learning more. She began to contemplate Law as a career.

After graduating with honors from NCC, Jennifer transferred to The University Center in Sioux Falls, SD, (what is now known as The Community College of Sioux Falls). Enrolling at the University Center allowed her to take courses from various universities, such as the University of South Dakota and South Dakota State University. Jennifer decided to pursue a Bachelor’s Degree in Criminal Justice and began taking courses through USD and online through SDSU. Her vast interest in the subject matter of the Criminal Law coursework verified that Law was the right path for her. In 2016 she graduated with her Bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice from USD, with a minor in Psychology from SDSU. She credits NCC in preparing her for transferring and continuing her education.

"NCC definitely prepared me for the four-year college experience. I continued to excel in my classes throughout my time at USD.”

Prior to finishing her Bachelor’s degree, Jennifer continued to ponder the possibility of going to Law School, and it was her Criminal Law Professors that inspired her to take the LSAT and apply. Without much studying, Jennifer took the LSAT and began the grueling law school application process. During a meeting with her assigned Pre-Law advisor, Jennifer was told to give up and that she would not be successful. Hearing this pushed her to try even harder, and she continued on her path to becoming a lawyer.

Jennifer’s NCC experience continued to assist her through the law school application process. One component of the application requires submission of letters of recommendation and character references. One of her NCC instructors, Holly DeGrote, had such an impact on her and took so much time to get to know her during her time as a student that she did not think twice before asking Holly to serve as a character reference. “Holly was the first person I thought to ask. It was comforting to know I had one person like her in my life. I did not have the same connection with my instructors from USD.”

With her hard work, determination and support system on her side, Jennifer went on to excel in Law School, obtaining her Doctor of Jurisprudence from Drake Law School in 2019, where she graduated with honors. Jennifer also received certificates in Criminal Prosecution and Defense and Mediation. She took the three-day Bar Exam in July of 2019, and two months later received the news that she had passed! Jennifer had soared over her final hurdle and could officially call herself an Attorney at Law.

In 2019, Jennifer joined De Koster & De Koster in Hull, IA. Her law practice areas include criminal, family, real estate, estate planning, and assisted reproductive technology. She is also on the court-appointed list for the State Public Defenders Office of Iowa. Jennifer finds her work very fulfilling and looks forward to her future as a Lawyer in small-town Northwest Iowa.

Jennifer continues to advocate for community colleges, especially with her clients and aspiring lawyers that ask her advice. “I always encourage individuals to start local, to start with an Associate’s degree and work up, especially if they are undecided.” Jennifer recognizes the silver lining from her accident long ago. “Looking back, I wish I would have started at NCC, but I truly believe that everything happens for a reason. I don’t know where I would be if I hadn’t learned I was bad at math, been sued, or met my NCC instructor, Holly DeGrote.”

Jennifer’s story is the epitome of why the Associate of Arts program is a great choice for so many students.
When an individual makes the decision to become an Electric Lineman, it is typically due to a passion for the outdoors, a lack of desire to sit in an office for forty hours each week, or a need for variety in their work. Linemen are constantly working hard to keep electricity functioning in a safe and effective manner. When the weather is so severe that the power goes out, they brave the storm and put in the extra hours to quickly restore it. One could say that linemen are servants of their communities—the National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association International and State Electric Cooperatives give linemen the opportunity to be servants of the globe.

Since 1967, the Powerline program at Northwest Iowa Community College has educated over 2,000 alumni and over the years, many have been involved in projects within the United States through the National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association, or NRECA. In 2019, three NCC Powerline Alumni were presented with the opportunity of a lifetime—to participate in the first NRECA International project for Iowa’s Electric Cooperatives. This global service project was designed to extend electric service for the first time to the village of Salina 7 Cerros in north central Guatemala. When the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives reached out to all eleven of the state’s electric cooperatives for volunteers, three linemen, Mike Berkenpas, Quentin Fischer and Bob Ruby, quickly agreed to be involved.

Mike Berkenpas, a 2006 graduate of the Powerline program, is employed as the Lead Lineman for Northwest Rural Electric Cooperative in Le Mars, IA. When Mike decided to follow in a family member’s footsteps and become a lineman, he never imagined opportunities like this one would arise. A fellow lineman on his crew had previously participated in a NRECA hurricane relief project, and Mike had been longing for an opportunity like this ever since. Once Mike had the chance to volunteer, he signed on without hesitation.

The Electric Cooperatives of Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin joined forces with NRECA International to formulate Partners for a Brighter Tomorrow, which included the team of twelve electric co-op linemen from Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin, that would complete the international project and the funding to make it possible. Each state assigned a lead lineman to be in charge of planning the project, and Mike happily agreed to represent Iowa.
In June of 2019, Mike and the lead linemen from Illinois and Wisconsin traveled to Guatemala for the first time to formulate plans for the project. This trip was planned to be one week in length, and due to the extremely poor road conditions in Guatemala, it took two days alone to simply drive to the village. Upon finally arriving in the village of Salina 7 Cerros, Mike was shocked by the living conditions. Immediately he noticed the creek running through the village and observed that it was where the citizens bathed, did laundry and gathered their drinking water. The homes consisted of dirt floors and straw roofs, and a few pieces of wood served as a bed. These people had virtually nothing. Seeing the living conditions on this initial trip gave Mike a deeper desire to help the people in the village. He traveled back to the United States humbled and ready to return to Guatemala with the team of linemen and get the project started in the coming months.

Quentin Fischer is the second alumnus that participated in the project. Quentin, a 2009 graduate of NCC’s Powerline program, is employed as a Journeyman Lineman for Linn County REC in North Liberty, IA. Becoming a lineman was an easy choice for Quentin as he loves the outdoors and he also has a family history in electrical work. He has a passion for service work, including a mission trip to Juarez, Mexico, and a national hurricane relief project in Georgia. Quentin stated,

“Being able to have a positive impact during hard times is life-changing. Now every opportunity I get to help others, I am on board!”

He volunteered for the project in a heartbeat.

In October of 2019, the team of twelve linemen traveled to Guatemala to begin the venture, many of them meeting for the first time. Despite three of the four Iowa linemen being NCC Alumni and working for Iowa Cooperatives, Mike, Quentin and Bob had never met. After experiencing delayed flights and intense culture shock, the team arrived at their hotel in Playa Grande, Ixcan, the closest city to the village of Salina 7 Cerros.

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For over five decades, the Electrical programs at Northwest Iowa Community College have continued to grow and change alongside the highly technical electrical industry. NCC’s Electrical programs have been rated among the best in the State, and Nation, earning the ranking of #1 Electrical Programs in the Nation in 2018 from Schools.com. Just as impressive is the longevity of these successful programs, as they have now been offered in Northwest Iowa for over 50 years. This long-standing success deserved recognition. And so, in October of 2019, NCC held a celebration commemorating 50 successful years of the Industrial & Commercial Wiring and Electrical Technology programs.

On the rainy evening of Thursday, October 10, approximately 200 alumni, Industry supporters, College retirees and friends traveled to the campus of Northwest Iowa Community College to join in celebration of this milestone. The festivities, which included a catered meal, program memorabilia display, tours of campus and an Electrical history slideshow, carried on, despite the cold and rainy weather.

Alumni traveled from near and far to attend the evening’s events. Among these alumni were an array of gentlemen from the early years of these longstanding programs. Marvin Still, alum of 1972, had not been on campus in decades. He and his wife, Bette, were pleasantly surprised at the advancements the program had made and were shocked to see the vast changes on campus. Marvin and two of his classmates, Orville Van Roekel and Ronald Vander Ploeg, enjoyed reminiscing throughout the evening.

The program memorabilia display shared during the celebration was a popular conversation piece. Michael Doering, alum of 1971, was unable to attend the celebration, but he mailed memorabilia to share with his fellow alumni. Michael still had in his possession the first copy of the Northwest Iowa Vocational School Student Handbook. It was small and made to fit in a jeans pocket and was a total of 15 pages in length. In contrast, today’s student handbook measures 8” x 11” and is 170 pages, just one example of the many changes on campus over the past five decades.
Other items on display included past commencement programs, jacket patches worn by the Electro-Specialist students, Vocational Industrial Clubs of America (now known as SkillsUSA) student competition medals and class photographs dating back to the 1970s. Ray Delp, alum of 1981, was proud to show his NCC diploma as well as his class photo to NCC President, Dr. Alethea Stubbe.

The current NCC Electrical instructors, Mark Bohnet, Troy Klein, Byron Krull, and Philip Louters are a significant factor in the program’s success and were instrumental in spearheading the formation of this event. The pride and passion that each of them have for the Electrical Industry is apparent through their instruction, but also through the demonstrated effort put into events outside of the classroom.

What makes the Electrical programs so successful? Troy Klein said, “We are not focused on one type of wiring. Our students complete the program with a well-rounded education that allows them to go several directions within the Electrical industry.” Louters added, “We have outstanding alumni who encourage others to pursue careers in the Electrical industry and get their education from NCC. As a program, we not only teach what is in the curriculum, but we also teach students the importance of professionalism, showing up, being engaged in their learning and college experience.

Most importantly, we teach students how to be problem-solvers so they are ready for any project or challenge that is thrown their way.”

The Electrical instructors should know as they are all proud graduates of NCC’s Electrical programs.

Electrical Instructor Mark Bohnet has his own long-standing success within the Electrical department, having been a faculty member at the College since 1990. Bohnet has been witness to vast changes throughout the years, being involved in a field that is dictated by constantly evolving technology. He predicts that the biggest change within the next 10 years will come with the continued advancement of automation equipment. Since the Electrical programs at NCC have always focused on teaching foundational material, Bohnet is confident that no matter the changes in industry, the program will continue to produce quality, job-ready graduates.

As if 2019 didn’t bring enough excitement for the Electrical division, NCC learned in late October that Electrical Instructor Byron Krull was nominated as one of Klein Tools’ six finalists for “Head of the Class” Electrician of the Year. Klein Tools conducts this search each year to find the finest electricians in the nation based on their commitment to quality, safety and integrity of their work, both on and off the jobsite. This nomination celebrates those who inspire and educate the next generation of skilled professionals and who are dedicated to their community. As a regional winner, Byron was awarded a Klein Tools prize package to be used in the Electrical programs at NCC.

What started as a program run out of the “Old Ford Garage” in downtown Sheldon is now ranked as the best in the nation. With state-of-the-art labs, strong curriculum, advanced technology, dedicated alumni and outstanding faculty who are extremely passionate in and out of the classroom, the Electrical programs at NCC will remain one of the best in the nation for decades to come.
Northwest Iowa Community College celebrated the grand opening and ribbon cutting of the Advanced Manufacturing Center on November 13, 2019. This newly remodeled space is approximately 15,000 square feet that includes the Welding Lab, Idea Lab, Manufacturing Lab, CAD Lab and classrooms.

Steve Waldstein, Dean of Applied Technology, explained, “The Welding Lab, which was originally located in Building D, was moved to its current Building C location to create a more strategic learning space for NCC’s Manufacturing Programs. The programs are all symbiotic, contributing to a great collaborative manufacturing educational workspace.” Waldstein continued, “The Welding, Advanced Welding Technology, Engineering Design, and Design Technology programs all build upon one another, so it makes sense to have them located by each other.”

Robert Hoting, Welding Instructor, explained some of the benefits to the new lab. “The LED lighting in the shop is phenomenal. There are no areas that are dark and difficult to view. In the old lab we only had 20 welding stations with very little room for projects. This lab has 30 welding stations and a large area for projects and fabrication. The program space went from about 2,800 square feet of work area to over 6,000 square feet; the lab area is very spacious. We now have room to build projects without falling over one another.”

The Idea Lab is a new educational space that is a STEM-based interactive lab. Obvious programs like Engineering Design, Design Technology, Industrial Instrumentation & Control, and the Electrical programs will frequently use the lab. However, all programs of the College plan to utilize the lab, including those in the health field. There is also excitement about integrating even more hands-on learning into the curriculum of the Associate of Arts classes (math/physics). The Idea Lab includes a SIM Lab, CNC laser, CNC router, waterjet, 3D printers, injection molder, plotter, wind tunnel, MAGLEV, structure testing, robots and Virtual Reality.
Other benefits of the enhanced learning environment are the expansion of camps utilizing the Idea Lab for STEM activities and the addition of numerous custom workforce training opportunities for area business and industry partners.

One of the first camps to use the Idea Lab was NCC’s Coding for Kids program. This successful program, which started in 2019 with just over 100 participants, was for elementary through junior high students and focused on STEM activities — specifically computer coding. Megan Dieken, NCC Youth Programming Event Planner, explained, “This year’s camp was for kindergarten–4th grade students and offered expanded STEM programming. Last year the focus of the program was computer coding, but we decided to introduce engineering concepts with hands-on projects like building structures, renewable energy, CO2 dragsters, robotics and automation. The Idea Lab offers enhanced learning opportunities for the kids that are a part of the program.”

NCC’s Workforce & Economic Development division of the college is using the Manufacturing Center for customized training for area business partners. Jason Anderson, Director—Workforce & Economic Development, said, “We are happy to provide contract training in the areas of Machining, Machine Tool Technology and CNC that is designed to meet long-term and short-term training needs of our partners. Courses can be tailored to meet a business’s individual requirements. The intended audience could consist of managers, engineers, office professionals, skilled trades, production operators and maintenance personnel. The new Manufacturing Center opens up a wide variety of possibilities.”

For more information about contract training, contact Jason Anderson at 712-324-5061 ext. 194 or email janderson@nwicc.edu.
The new Future Ready Iowa Last Dollar Scholarship, signed by Gov. Kim Reynolds on June 1, 2019, was available to qualified students at Northwest Iowa Community College for the 2019–20 academic year. In order for a program to be designated as a Future Ready Iowa Scholarship eligible program, it must fit two criteria. First, the program must be in a field of study that has a proven workforce shortage within the state of Iowa. Second, the graduates of the program must make a certain income level upon graduation. To be eligible, new high school graduates must enroll as a full-time student. Adult learners may enroll full- or part-time.

Future Ready Iowa scholarships have helped 260 NCC students with $800,000+ in disbursements for the fall 2019 and spring 2020 terms. We talked to several scholarship recipients. Here are their stories...

**Qualifying Programs at NCC:**
- Accounting/Clerical Accounting
- Advanced Welding Technology/Production Welding
- Associate Degree Nursing/ADN—Extended
- Automotive & Light Duty Diesel Technology
- Diesel Technology
- Electrical Technology
- Engineering Design/Design Technology
- Heavy Equipment Operation & Maintenance
- Industrial & Commercial Wiring
- Industrial Instrumentation & Control
- Information Technology Specialist
- Medical Coding/Health Information Technology
- Powerline/Powerline Technology
- Practical Nursing/Practical Nursing—Extended
- Radiologic Technology
- Web & Graphic Design

For questions, contact NCC’s Financial Aid Office at 712-324-5061 or finaid@nwicc.edu.
David Topete

Home: Hawarden, Iowa
Age: 18
High School: West Sioux High School, Hawarden, Iowa
Major: Heavy Equipment Operation & Maintenance, AAS

Did you attend college prior to NCC? No

Professional Goals: I want my Heavy Equipment degree. I want to work outside and earn a good living. Hopefully I can stay in Iowa where my family is.

How has the Last Dollar Scholarship helped you? It has helped me a lot. My parents are divorced, and my dad isn’t around and doesn’t help out financially. My mom isn’t working right now, so money is tight. I worked all summer, and I still didn’t have enough money for college. I just couldn’t afford all the expenses of college. I wouldn’t be able to go to college if I didn’t have this scholarship.

How did you know about the Last Dollar Scholarship? After I applied for financial aid, one of the people from NCC let me know that I qualified for it.

What do you think of receiving this Scholarship? I was so surprised. I couldn’t be in the program without this help. I appreciate the help, and I am confident that I can finish the program. I am really thankful. I want to stay in Iowa when I am done with school. When I turn 21 I want to work for a company in Sioux Center, Iowa, and travel the United States working for them.

Lindsay’s Story:
I didn’t know what I wanted to do after high school. I started at a 4-year university and floated in between majors for a while. I “tried on” education and social work and finally landed on psychology as my major. After graduating with a psychology degree, I went into the workforce outside my major, but I knew I wanted more. My brother asked me to attend NCC with him to become an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). I started gaining confidence that the medical field was a good fit for me. For several years I served as an EMT in the Sioux Center area. When I would bring a patient to the hospital for care, I would see x-ray technicians working. I discovered that x-ray techs work in many different capacities in hospitals, from clinics to surgery to ER’s, offering a variety of work experiences. I thought this career was a great way to work in the medical field and to interact with and help people, while having a great job outlook. I don’t know where I will be in ten years, but I want to stay in Iowa and think this is a great step in my educational journey.

Advice to Others: It’s ok to take your time and figure out what you want to do. Shadow people in potential career fields you think you would like, talk to people in industry, and don’t be afraid to ask questions. Sometimes you need life experiences to figure out where you want to be — and that’s ok.

Lindsay Mulder

Home: Sioux Center, Iowa
Age: 20+
High School: Unity Christian High School, Orange City, Iowa
Major: Radiologic Technician, AAS

Did you attend college prior to NCC? Yes, a 4-year university. I previously earned a Psychology degree.

Professional Goals: Earn a Radiologic Technician degree and pass my state boards.

How has the Last Dollar Scholarship helped you? It takes away a lot of stress about finances. I still have a part-time job, but I don’t have to work as much because of this scholarship. I can just focus on my education.

What do you think of receiving this Scholarship? I was surprised and will be forever thankful, grateful, and appreciative of those who created this scholarship. I think it is really good for the state of Iowa. This scholarship is targeted at careers in which the state has a shortage of workers. I think it is a win-win for everyone in the state. I want to say thank you, and I will work hard and follow through and get a job in my field and in Iowa! I want to stay close to home where my family and friends are.

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How did you know about the Last Dollar Scholarship? After I applied for financial aid, one of the people from NCC let me know that I qualified for it.

What do you think of receiving this Scholarship? I was so surprised. I couldn’t be in the program without this help. I appreciate the help, and I am confident that I can finish the program. I am really thankful. I want to stay in Iowa when I am done with school. When I turn 21 I want to work for a company in Sioux Center, Iowa, and travel the United States working for them.

Lindsay’s Story: I didn’t know what I wanted to do after high school. I started at a 4-year university and floated in between majors for a while. I “tried on” education and social work and finally landed on psychology as my major. After graduating with a psychology degree, I went into the workforce outside my major, but I knew I wanted more. My brother asked me to attend NCC with him to become an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). I started gaining confidence that the medical field was a good fit for me. For several years I served as an EMT in the Sioux Center area. When I would bring a patient to the hospital for care, I would see x-ray technicians working. I discovered that x-ray techs work in many different capacities in hospitals, from clinics to surgery to ER’s, offering a variety of work experiences. I thought this career was a great way to work in the medical field and to interact with and help people, while having a great job outlook. I don’t know where I will be in ten years, but I want to stay in Iowa and think this is a great step in my educational journey.

Advice to Others: It’s ok to take your time and figure out what you want to do. Shadow people in potential career fields you think you would like, talk to people in industry, and don’t be afraid to ask questions. Sometimes you need life experiences to figure out where you want to be — and that’s ok.
A new program will be starting in the Fall of 2020 that represents not only the beginning of a new decade, but also a natural progression in our ever-changing virtual world — Virtual Administration Management. The office of the 21st century requires people to work, communicate and manage business operations at a distance. This innovative program will prepare graduates to organize the virtual business environment, prepare and manage documents in the cloud, communicate effectively in the digital environment, plan virtual meetings and host web-based events.

Students will work towards a diploma during their first year of study, Virtual Office Assistant, and complete their AAS degree in the second year of study, Virtual Administration Management. They will take a variety of courses in document production and management, business, accounting, office procedures, and event planning that will prepare them to work in a 21st century virtual office. Many of the classes will be hands-on and will introduce students to cloud-based technologies and computer applications.

All of the courses in this program can be taken entirely online and allow students the flexibility of completing a degree from home (some are also available on campus).

The program allows individuals to customize a diploma or degree as a full or part-time student. Financial aid is available to students who qualify.

Typically, graduates of this program should expect to be employed in a variety of businesses and offices, or from their own homes. Salaries start at $12 per hour with the potential to earn up to $20 per hour or more.

Gretchen Bartelson, Dean of the Center for Teaching and Learning, explained, “This new program is exciting, because it reflects the changing nature of the way people work today.

In our mobile, technical society there are more and more offices where employees work at a distance.

Someone needs to provide the necessary support to businesses, and our new program trains people to manage that kind of work environment.”

Student Profile

Good communication skills | Basic math skills | Good computer skills | People person | Detail-oriented
For Quentin, the first day of the project was very overwhelming. The living conditions in the village were much worse than he had expected. He noticed things like the outhouses being placed on the top of a hill that drained into the creek, the only source of water. However, despite some of the living conditions, he observed the people were extremely happy. He was saddened by the living conditions, but he couldn’t help but be uplifted by the attitudes of the residents. This drove his motivation to complete the project and help to improve the living conditions for these individuals. When speaking about his encounters with the residents, Quentin stated, “It was a very eye-opening experience and a great reminder that we don’t need material things to be happy in life.”

The project was anticipated to take the crew 12 working days and consisted of installing transformers, stringing wire, building a distribution system, and finally, wiring 42 homes, a school and the village’s health post. Because no bucket trucks were available on site, all of this work would be done by hand.

As the linemen began, the residents watched with excitement. Many children would sit and watch eagerly and, if the linemen needed an extra hand, the men in the village would quickly drop anything to assist them. While driving into the village each day, they were greeted by children lining the sides of the roads in excitement. They felt as though a parade was being held in celebration of them, so they made it a true parade and bought candy to throw to the children each day.

Bob Ruby was the third alumnus who participated in the project. Bob, a 1994 graduate of NCC’s Powerline program, is employed as a Line Foreman at Access Energy Cooperative in Mount Pleasant, IA. Although Bob spent some of his early career working in coal mines, he always knew he would become a lineman. His favorite part about this career is having the opportunity to help other areas and communities in need, so has always been quick to volunteer for service projects, including this one.

With over twenty years in the industry, Bob has extensive experience working on a crew. He was very impressed with this particular group of volunteer linemen and stated he could not have asked for a better group of guys to work with. As a result, the project was completed ahead of schedule, in just seven days. “After we completed wiring all of the homes, our crews went back through to ensure the light switches were working. In about 90% of the homes we re-entered, the residents were already playing with the light switches. It was a great feeling to see them smile when the lights came on,” stated Bob.

In the final days of the eighteen day venture, an inauguration was held that officially marked the electrification of Salina 7 Cerros. Along with the village residents and the linemen, representatives from NRECA International, the state electric cooperatives, and the local municipal, Empresa Municipal Rural de Electricidad, were also in attendance. A ribbon-cutting and presentation of plaques to the twelve linemen were included in the celebration.

At the conclusion of this celebration the Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin Electric Cooperatives were able to donate backpacks filled with school supplies to each of the 63 school-aged children and an Ecofiltro water filtration bucket to each household, which should supply clean water for two years. Through additional donated funds, they were also able to obtain at least one pair of shoes for each child in the village and a loudspeaker for use at the village’s school.

Although it is going to take a long time for the residents to fully utilize the electricity installed, having lights in the homes, access to refrigeration for the storing of food, and the possibility to dig a well for access to safe water are huge benefits that this community now has available.

Overall, the three NCC graduates agree that their favorite part of this experience was the residents’ reactions to the lights coming on and receiving the donation of supplies. They are extremely thankful to NRECA International and the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives for making these opportunities possible, and are also thankful for the Powerline program at Northwest Iowa Community College for being a starting point in their journeys. They each hope to volunteer for future projects, perhaps some day traveling back to the village of Salina 7 Cerros. The hard work and spirit of these alumni help make the world a little bit brighter.
Associate of Arts/Transfer Majors
Welcome Kaylyn Pick, NCC’s newest General Arts & Sciences Instructor! Kaylyn has previously taught at Mankato State University, Winona State University, University of Wisconsin-River Falls, Inver Hills Community College and Western Iowa Tech Community College. She has also held various administrative positions in the college setting. Kaylyn holds a Master of Arts in Speech Communication from Mankato State University in Mankato, MN. Kaylin replaces Patrick Johnson, who left NCC in May 2019, and currently teaches Public Speaking, Technical Communications and Composition II.

Accounting
The Accounting program is a hybrid program, meaning students can take the accounting classes face-to-face, online or a combination of both. Second year Accounting students, as well as past students, continue to participate in a social service project, the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. This grant program is an IRS initiative designed to support free tax preparation services for the underserved through various partner organizations. This service helps low- to moderate-income individuals, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and limited English speakers file their taxes each year. In 2019, the VITA program at NCC assisted over 300 individuals by helping them complete their taxes. The students and volunteers put in over 1,295 hours of service. This project continues to be a great service to our communities and a great learning experience for the students!

Administrative Office Management
The Administrative Office Assistant and Management students continue to be sought after as they enter today’s highly competitive job market. The program remains a Microsoft Imagine Academy and continues to use GMetrix software, a premier assessment tool and practice test solution for Microsoft Office Specialist certification preparation. Since 2002, NCC has delivered more than 310 Microsoft Office Specialist certifications with outstanding pass rates.

Automotive & Light Duty Diesel
The Automotive students moved into their newly renovated classroom and shop space in November 2019. Along with the newly updated shop and classroom space, students are also utilizing Snap-on Tools. As an official Snap-on Tool partner, NC3 certifications and tools are included in the College’s partnership with Snap-on. Thank you to all alumni and friends that attended the Automotive Labs Open House & Ribbon-Cutting in February!

Diesel Technology
Construction continues to progress for the Diesel Technology classroom and shop spaces. The Diesel Technology program has been utilizing the shop and classroom space of the former Co-op Building in Rock Valley since the summer of 2019. The program is expected to begin classes in its newly constructed space in August 2020. An open house celebration will be held on Tuesday, September 22, 2020 for alumni, friends and community members to see the newly constructed Diesel Technology area.

Engineering Design/Design Technology
The Advanced Manufacturing Center and Idea Lab open house and ribbon-cutting took place in November 2019. This 15,000 square-foot space features CNC Mills & Lathes, 3D Printing Technology, a Water Jet Cutter, Injection Molders, Wind-Energy technology and more! The STEM-based interactive Idea Lab is designed for all NCC programs to use, but also to get students at the middle and high school levels excited about careers in manufacturing.

Heavy Equipment
Welcome Andrew Koenen, the newest Heavy Equipment Instructor! Andrew is an alumnus of the Heavy Equipment program. Prior to starting at NCC, Andrew worked at Van Zee Enterprises in Rock Valley and also served in the United States Marine Corps. Andrew is excited to combine his passions of working with heavy equipment and interacting with people! He will predominantly teach the first year Heavy Equipment students. Andrew joined the NCC faculty during fall 2019, replacing longtime faculty member, Roger Solberg.

Industrial & Commercial Wiring/Electrical Technology
The ICW and ET students have experienced a number of field trips this year. Students have toured a variety of companies including Snap-On, CF Industries, and Country Made. The program has also incorporated a new project into its curriculum—faculty have built a “tiny house” in the lab to simulate a residential construction project for the students.

Industrial Instrumentation & Control
The program continues to receive equipment donations from various companies, such as Interstates, Kahler Automation, Miller Mechanical, and Wells Enterprises. CW Services and Wells Enterprises are each sponsoring a current student. In order to keep technology up-to-date in the lab, various equipment has been acquired, including mass measuring instruments, mass flow metering technology equipment, and new AMS Trex technology.
Information Technology Specialist
NCC’s newest online program launched in the fall of 2019! The online Associate of Applied Science degree in Information Technology will prepare graduates to provide technical assistance to computer users in a business setting. Students will gain experience in a variety of IT skills during their first year of study including hardware, software applications, networking and programming, and principles of customer service. In their second year, students have the option to choose an emphasis in either programming, network and security, or database management. This program is offered completely online, making it a great option for those in the workforce. In addition to the AAS degree, students can also earn a one-year diploma or choose from a number of certificate options.

Medical Coding/Health Information Technology
The Health Information Technology program was recently ranked #4 in the nation by Intelligent.com. Intelligent.com provides unbiased research to help students make informed decisions about higher education programs. The program continues to pride itself on being accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM). Because of this accreditation, all graduates are eligible to sit for the Registered Health Information Technician (RHIT) credential.

Nursing
NCC Nursing faculty are passionate about educating safe, competent nurses. While NCC’s Nursing programs continue to be highly successful, the faculty are constantly evaluating the curriculum to best serve NCC Nursing students. The Hybrid Associate Degree Nursing program will undergo some changes in 2020, transitioning to a part-time extended program. This new program is designed for the student who desires to take the program at a slower pace due to work and/or family obligations. The schedule will consist of two days of class per week for the length of the program, plus clinical and preceptor requirements. The program will take five semesters plus one summer term to complete. The Nursing faculty expect this change to allow more students to be successful in obtaining their RN degree.

Pharmacy Technician
In 2019, the Pharmacy Technician program welcomed two new faculty members, Don DeBoer and Neal Jones! Don has spent a majority of his career as a Pharmacist (PharmD) for Shopko Pharmacy and Lewis Drug. Neal Jones is a Certified Pharmacy Technician, CPhT, for Deluxe Animal Health Veterinary Pharmacy. Both faculty members bring a variety of experience and expertise to the Pharmacy Technician program.

Powerline
Welcome to Milet Kracht, NCC’s newest Powerline instructor! Milet replaces Gary Morris who departed from NCC in 2019. Milet is an alumnus of NCC and served as Head Lineman for the city of Hartley prior to joining the Powerline faculty at NCC.

Radiologic Technology
Welcome to Lacey Steffen, NCC’s newest Radiology instructor. Lacey joined the Radiology staff as an adjunct instructor back in 2018 and has been a Radiology staff member on campus since May 2019. Lacey received her Bachelor of Science degree at Briar Cliff University and worked as a Radiologic Technologist at Unity Point St. Luke’s in Sioux City prior to joining the faculty at NCC.

Web & Graphic Design
The Web and Graphic Design program is now in its second year! The program continues to grow with a new class of students completing their first year of study as they explore Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator, the principles of design and layout, and beginning web design. Second year students are studying more advanced techniques, including digital color theory and typography, and will be creating job portfolios that will showcase their design work as they prepare to enter the workforce. The first graduates earned their Associate of Applied Science degree and Web and Graphic Design diplomas in May 2020.

Welding
The new Welding Lab was completed and opened beginning in the summer of 2019. In addition to the new lab space, the Welding program has experienced numerous technology and equipment upgrades this year. The new equipment additions make it possible for all welders to work from any location in the shop and have the luxury of many wireless controls! See pages 12—13 for a story on the new lab facilities.

NEW—Take a Virtual Tour of NCC!
Visit NCC’s campus and see what makes NCC a smart choice in our new virtual tour! New and prospective students can learn about NCC from current students and alumni in a number of video tours or take a trip around campus in our interactive map. Take your virtual tour today! nwicc.college-tour.com
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 242, or the Director of the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, Citigroup Center, 500 W. Madison, Suite 1475, Chicago, IL 60606; 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.