



How far can you go with a degree from MSC Southeast?

Medical Laboratory Technician delivers a great return on investment



Karissa Kluzik, Med Lab Tech at Saint Elizabeth's in Wabasha

Have you ever had your blood drawn? Or taken a strep test? When you need medical care, 70-80% of the time physicians order some kind of lab test to find out what's going on. They are counting on the test to be accurate — patients' lives depend on it.

"Medical Laboratory Technicians perform the lab work behind the scenes," according to Carol Canton, an instructor in the Med Lab Tech Program at Minnesota State College Southeast.

"They do the detective work that makes it possible for health care providers — nurse practitioners, physician assistants and doctors — to accurately diagnose and treat their patients."

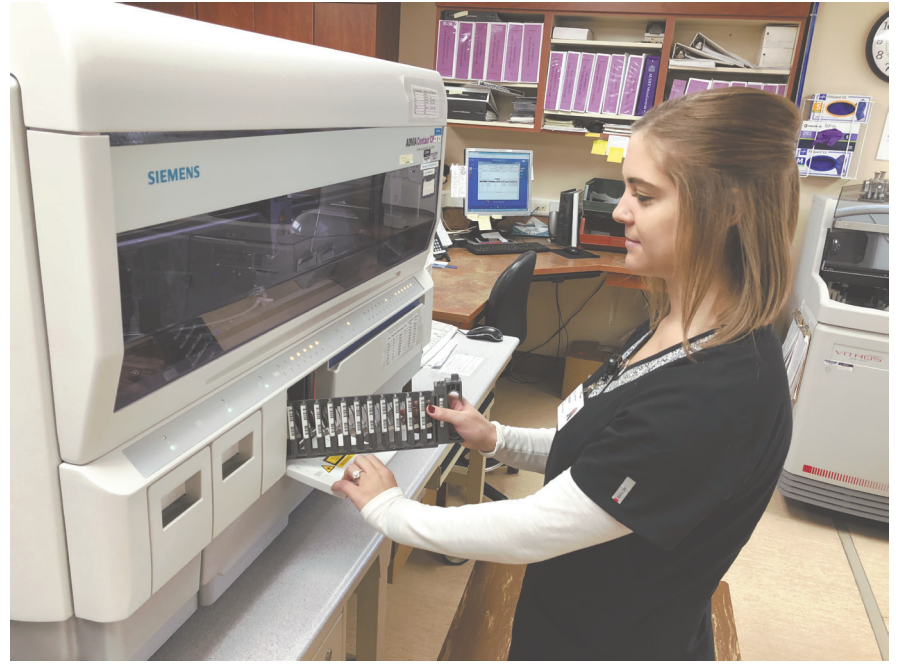
Karissa Kluzik is one of the "detectives" in the lab at Saint Elizabeth's Medical Center in Wabasha. She graduated from the Med Lab Tech program at MSC Southeast in 2015 with a job offer already lined up. Now only 26 years old, she is well established in her profession and even owns a house!

She is seeing a great return on her investment in a degree from MSC Southeast. "When you get a two-year degree, you may not expect much, but I've got an exciting job with a good salary and benefits. Every day is different, and that makes it fun."

She also appreciated that MSC Southeast was affordable and accessible. "I am so thankful that I had the two-year option so close to home! I know some people my age who have four-year degrees and their student loan debt is incredible. I lived at home while I was in college, so I didn't have to pay for college room and board — that saved me money too."

Karissa originally planned to be a nurse but it turned out she really liked lab work instead of direct patient care. "When a lot of people think of a career

see [Med Lab Tech on Page 4](#)



Karissa is responsible for running lab tests, quality control, troubleshooting equipment, and managing the hospital's blood bank.

A career in Guitar Repair & Building: "Working my dream job"

The best thank you note from a graduate is one that lets you know you're training people to succeed in the "real world."

MSC Southeast instructors Brian Boedigheimer, David Vincent, and Steve Rossow recently received such a note from Josh Chapman, who earned his diploma in 2014 from the Guitar Repair & Building program.

"I had no idea that the caliber of education and training I would receive from all three of you would propel me as deep into the guitar industry

as it has today," Josh Chapman wrote. "I wanted to reach out and thank you all for the great program you run."

Combining his training from MSC Southeast with a Business Management degree, Josh moved to California in 2014 to join the Guitar Center repairs team at their national headquarters. Over the next three years, he went from filing guitar warranty claims to becoming the subject matter expert in instrument repair for the entire corporation.

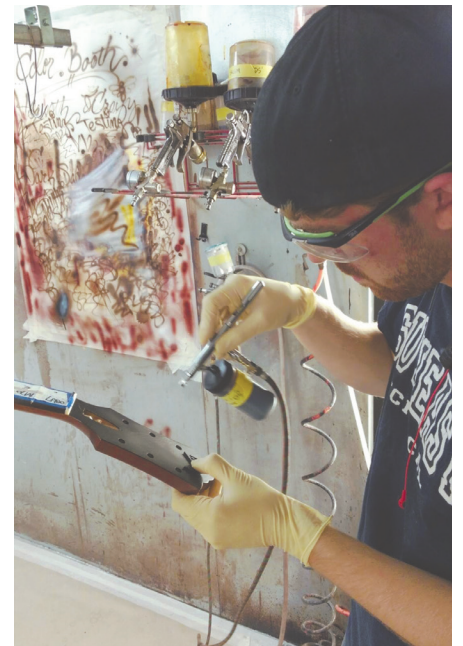
In 2017, Josh left Guitar Center to look for a job at one of the many guitar building companies in California. Shortly after, he was hired on as a Finishing Technician at the Guild factory in Oxnard, CA.

"Even though I had worked three years in an office job after I graduated, the hands-on training you passed on still held strong and I was able to step into production without missing a beat. I went from level sanding, to touch up and spraying, to ending my time in the factory as one of their main Finish Repair Techs," Josh said.

Now in the role of Product Manager at Cordoba Music Group, he is one of the key influences in instrument design and direction for both Cordoba and Guild Guitars, combining his intimate knowledge of instruments with his passion for leadership and innovation.

"I have already had the opportunity to use my drafting training, revamp wiring diagrams, and make improvements to our production instruments. I can honestly say that at such an early point in my career, I am already working my dream job," Josh wrote.

"Thank you for passing on a unique craft and skill to so many students. And most of all, thank you for helping students embark on a career path of passion and music."



Josh Chapman airbrushes the headstock of a Guild guitar.

One-year welding diploma results in a great job offer — before graduation

At only 22 years old, Cody Narhgang is already an experienced welder at Mid-City Steele in La Crosse. Between his schedule and income, he says welding is a great career option.

"I work three 12-hour days, and I'm paid as full-time," he said. "I've been out of college for about 18 months now, and I had a job set up before I even graduated."



Cody Narhgang and his instructor, Casey Mann. Cody graduated from the Welding program and now works at Mid-City Steel in La Crosse, WI.

Cody's work is interesting and complex. Mid-City Steel makes large structural components for construction projects, such as beams and plate work, which are fabricated at their plant and then delivered to work sites all over the world.

"Some of these beams weigh thousands of pounds," he said. "My job is to read the blueprints, assemble the parts, and weld them up. It's like putting a great big puzzle together."

He gets the satisfaction of building things every day, but said that, "Cutting things with a torch is fun too!"

"When he was a student, I sent Cody down to Mid-City and he was able to take and pass their bend test right away," noted his instructor, Casey Mann. "He was certified to work for Mid-City two months before school was out."

The "bend test" involves welding two metal plates together to make a long bar. If it can be bent into a U-shape without damaging the weld, the test is considered a success.

"Casey's a good instructor. He's strict but fair," Cody confided. "If you do the homework, read and follow directions, and really listen, you'll get to be good at welding. The classes are long, but they got me ready for the work day out in the shop."

At an age where some of his peers are graduating from a four-year school with as much as \$100,000 in debt, Cody is set to pay off his minimal student loans in short order. He's supporting himself, managing a car loan, and living with friends.

Where does he expect to be in five years? "I'll probably own a house in the Winona area by then," he said. "Or maybe I'll continue my training and learn how to do underwater welding. That would be an adventure!"

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Career, technical, and transfer education: gateways to good paying jobs and lifelong learning

By Dr. Larry Lundblad, Interim President, Minnesota State College Southeast



In this issue of Campus Connect, we meet three young alumni who have found satisfying employment. One had a job in hand before he graduated and will pay off his student loans in short order. One is a medical professional and a homeowner at age 26. And another simply says, "It's my dream job!"

The fact is that there are many, many high-demand, high-paying job opportunities that require two years of college or less. Locally, employers tell us that many of these jobs are going unfilled — they just can't find enough people with the training they need. That's where Minnesota State College Southeast steps in. Our programs reflect the needs of the region and prepare graduates for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

We are working hard to make sure that prospective students understand that there are excellent middle-level career paths available in the trade and technical areas. Because Southeast Minnesota is a manufacturing powerhouse, a number of our programs prepare students for careers in this area. The advanced manufacturing jobs of today take place in well-lit, well-designed, clean, and safe environments. These positions are exciting, challenging, and require a high level of skills.

They can also be very rewarding financially. Graduates in advanced manufacturing, electronics, biomedical equipment repair, and mechatronics can expect to advance from beginning salaries of \$50,000 to \$80,000 and up to \$100,000+ with experience. Certified welders can expect to start at \$40,000 and often advance to \$60,000+ annually — experienced, specialized welders that travel can earn more than \$100,000.

The health care sector, which has the largest number of employees in Southeastern Minnesota, is rapidly expanding due to an aging population, advances in treatment options, and the demand for a variety of treatments and services. With the expansion of many of the regional clinics and hospitals and Rochester's Destination Medical Center initiative, the need for skilled workers is increasing. Many of these jobs require

a two-year degree or less. Practical Nurses, Medical Laboratory Techs, and Radiography Techs are in very high demand and can expect to start at an above-average salary and progress rapidly in their careers.

The broad field of transportation offers many opportunities for students who are interested in being service technicians or working in the trucking industry as drivers and dispatchers. At Minnesota State College Southeast, we offer several programs in this area. Potential annual earnings for certified auto and diesel mechanics and experienced auto body technicians can exceed \$100,000 per year. Truck drivers can expect starting salaries of \$50,000 to \$60,000 and can earn up to \$100,000 based on experience, distance, and type of freight.

We have more programs in Business & Management; Education & Human Services; Engineering, Manufacturing & Trades; Health Sciences; Information Technologies; Musical Instrument Repair & Building; and Transportation that we could possibly list here! But all are designed to help students succeed in their careers and employers find the kind of skilled employees they need.

One additional area is important to consider: Liberal Arts & Transfer Studies. Two-year associate degrees are also an option at MSC Southeast. Graduates can enter the workforce directly or go on to earn a baccalaureate degree, saving thousands of dollars over the cost of attending a university for all four years. Transfer Pathway Degrees that guarantee transfer of credits to Minnesota State universities are available for students majoring in Accounting, Business, Exercise Science, History, Pre-Social Work, and Psychology.

Like many colleges, we are looking at ways in which we can prepare graduates in an even shorter time period using high technology systems, competency-based instruction, and credit for prior learning. We are building enhanced pathways that allow high school students the opportunity to begin their college careers during the sophomore, junior, and senior years.

Please connect with Minnesota State College Southeast to learn about the many career opportunities that are available in the region and our certificate, diploma, and degree options. We are here to help you reach your goals!

In brief...

Newly published: Lead Like a Nurse



As the Interim Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Services and the Dean of Health Sciences, Jennifer Eccles wears many hats at MSC Southeast. But in between all of those responsibilities, she's recently been published in a book released by the American Nurses Association, *Lead Like a Nurse: Leadership in Every Healthcare Setting*. Her contribution, titled "Influence of Leadership on Patient Outcomes,"

describes how positive patient outcomes are influenced by the whole system of care, including leadership and the work environment. Jennifer writes, "I feel quite honored to be among the group of authors who contributed, which includes many nationally renowned nursing leaders."

Grants support college readiness, concurrent enrollment

MSC Southeast recently received a \$15,000 grant from the Minnesota State system to pilot and evaluate programs that enable high school students to meet college readiness requirements before they graduate from high school. In addition, MSC Southeast was one of eight colleges that were awarded grant dollars from the Office of Higher Education (OHE). The grant of \$16,200 will be used to expand Concurrent Enrollment with REACH students at Winona High School, specifically in Biology. Congratulations to Dean of Academics Jo Poncelet and the college's Liberal Arts & Science faculty for obtaining these significant grants!

Josiah Litant named Dean of Students



MSC Southeast is delighted to welcome Josiah Litant to the staff as the college's new Dean of Students. With more than 15 years of leadership experience creating change in education and nonprofit environments, he has a solid record of building highly successful new organizations, programs, and services.

Josiah earned a Master of Arts in Education from Goddard College in 2008 and a Bachelor of Arts in Education from Hampshire College in 2004. Prior to moving to Minnesota to be closer to family, Josiah co-founded LightHouse Holyoke, an independent school for middle and high school students. Previously, Josiah worked in a variety of roles serving student needs at his alma mater in Amherst, Massachusetts.

'Tis the season... to be truck driving



Special accolades go out this time of year to Truck Driving instructor Tom Gierok for contributing his time and talent to bring holiday gifts to the Winona area and beyond. In November, an MSC Southeast trailer was parked at Pleasant Valley Church for Operation Christmas Child. Gifts packed in shoeboxes were collected there, then trucked to La Crosse for processing before being distributed around the world. Locally, the Truck Driving department helped with picking up toys collected throughout the Winona area on behalf of Hiawatha Valley Marines Toys for Tots. The toys were brought to Tandeski Center at MSC Southeast for distribution to families in need.

New Program in Sustainable Food and Farming Agriculture that feeds your pocketbook, your planet, and your soul

MSC Southeast is excited to launch a new degree program! The two-year Associate of Applied Science in Sustainable Food

and Farming will prepare students to enter the evolving and growing field of specialty agriculture, particularly those students interested in small-scale, diversified production.

All aspects of the Sustainable Food and Farming

MSC Southeast Biology Instructor Liz Micheel has been an integral part of developing the Sustainable Food and Farming program

ing program are infused with the values of sustainability where economic prosperity, social responsibility, and environmental stewardship are valued equally. Graduates will be prepared to meet the needs of the recent cultural shift toward whole foods, natural and organic agricultural products, farm-to-table

marketing, and local products.

Biology instructor Liz Micheel has worked very hard over the last two years to develop the program. "It's designed to teach students how to implement integrated farming practices that promote healthy soil, ecologically sound nutrient management, and sustainability," she said, adding that the program has a very

practical side as well. "Students will learn the safe and effective use of a variety of agricultural equipment and will develop a sound business plan for a family farm or small-scale agricultural operation."

"Instructors from many different areas of the college will be involved — biology, business, truck driving, construction technology, electronics — even welding!"

said Jo Poncelet, Dean of Academics. "This is a unique program teaching practical, hands-on skills and business know-how."

Students can enroll in the program beginning in Spring Semester, 2019. For more information, contact Admissions Representative Chris Cook, at 507-453-2410 (Christopher.Cook@southeastmn.edu).





MSC Southeast named #20 in national list of Most Affordable Online Associate Degrees

Why take college classes online? Even if you live close to a Minnesota State College Southeast campus, online classes are convenient and fit in with your busy schedule. Plus, taking college coursework online is an affordable option. You can live at home while you attend, and you don't have the expense of commuting to college.



But how affordable? SR Education Group, a leading education research publisher founded in 2004, has just unveiled their 2019 rankings on GuidetoOnlineSchools.com. Ranked at #20, Minnesota State College Southeast made their list of the top 25 Most Affordable Online Associate Degrees.

"Every year, we manually research the tuition rates of every accredited college offering fully online degrees in order to determine and rank the most affordable options," according to Nicole Hopler, SR Education Group. "The 2019 Most Affordable Online Colleges rankings represent online schools across the nation that are committed to providing affordable, economical options for students."

Online Associate of Applied Science (AAS) and Associate of Science (AS) degrees are available at MSC Southeast in several programs areas: Accounting, Administrative Assistant, CAD Drafting, Cyber Security, Early Childhood, Medical Administrative Assistant, IT Support, and Software and Web Development.

"At Minnesota State College Southeast, we truly value keeping education affordable while maintaining our high standards," said Larry Lundblad, MSC Southeast Interim President. "We are proud to have distance learning students from the Southeast region, all across America, and indeed, from around the world."

New Bicycle Design and Fabrication program in Red Wing is catching on worldwide

Since Minnesota State College Southeast announced its new associate of applied science degree in Bicycle Design and Fabrication this fall, word has been spreading like wildfire.

"We've had calls from the national press about it — articles have been published all over the world," said MSC Southeast Communications Director Katryn Conlin. "Once a story runs online, it goes viral and gets picked up by more and more news outlets, social media, and blogs. The interest has been incredible!"

That's probably because the 2-year degree is the first of its kind to teach applied engineering through the medium of bikes. Travis Thul, Dean of Trade and Technology, had been trying to figure out a way to interest the next generation of students in manufacturing. But it's tough to get high school students excited about making nuts and bolts. So he proposed a new approach: The nation's first two-year program in bicycle design and fabrication.

He told the Red Wing Republican-Eagle that he was inspired by the success of the college's musical instrument repair programs, which have wait lists. He was looking for an idea that had "tangible, emotional appeal while also encompassing the core competencies of mass manufacturing. We got to thinking, and the bicycle is this unique concept that holds people's heartstrings."

And just as musicians are passionate about the instruments they repair and build, Travis expects the same level of intensity when it comes to bikes. "I'm an engineer,



The Bicycle Design and fabrication program offered in Red Wing is the first of its kind, and has received interest world wide. Photo Credit: Red Wing Bicycle Co. & Outfitter

and I've got friends who are engineers that have spent more money on bicycles than probably on their home or their car. It's clear there's an emotional attachment to the bicycle."

Travis considers bicycle manufacturing to be a perfect example of fine engineering skills. In addition to welding and machining, those skills include metallurgy, working with composites, mechanical design, CAD drafting, rapid prototyping, and thermodynamics.

Bicycling.com reported that every cyclist should know some basic bike repairs they can do at home, but "Even the most passionate gear-heads don't often get the chance to parlay their skills into a full-time career... [this will be] a place where aspiring mechanics and engineers can learn to work with bikes all day, every day."

The new bike program will have a ready market for

graduates. "Between Madison, Wisconsin, and Minneapolis, I think there's \$2 billion if not more in industry that's bicycle centric," Thul told the Minneapolis Star-Tribune, citing Trek Bicycle, HED Cycling Products, Park Tool, Quality Bicycle Products and Erik's Bike Shops as examples. "And that doesn't count all of the small employers that are building custom bike frames."

Luke Strauss, QBP's engineering manager, said that having a degree in this area would be a benefit to potential employees at his company or in the bike industry generally. "As we continue to build and grow our design and prototyping capabilities, it will be great to have a growing pool of students to hire from for internships and

careers," he said. "I'm super stoked to get the first applicants for openings at QBP from your program!" "Developing design and fabrication skills through a medium like the bicycle is such a cool idea! You'll never look at a bike the same way again once you know how it's made," said Greg Alexander, Director of Composite Engineering at HED Cycling.

The college has heard from prospective students from as far afield as Singapore, Hong Kong, and Columbia. Students can start with general education classes this Spring semester. The Bicycle Labs on the Red Wing campus will open in Fall 2019, with the first cohort of graduates expected in May of 2021.

To learn more about the program, go to southeastmn.edu/bike. To apply, go to southeastmn.edu/apply. For more information, contact Laura Thomas, Admissions Representative/Recruiter at 651-385-6330 or Laura.Thomas@southeastmn.edu.

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Musicians from China perform in Red Wing, tour college music labs

Manhu, a traditional acoustic group from the Stone Forest region of China, came to the Red Wing campus for a concert/lecture-demonstration in October. They sang, danced, and played instruments and songs that are well known in their homeland but rarely seen on an international stage. After the concert, they toured the musical instrument repair program labs. Thanks to Arts Midwest and Sheldon Theatre of Performing Arts for bringing them to the college campus.



Minnesota State Chancellor visits MSC Southeast twice this fall

It's rare to see Minnesota State Chancellor Devinder Malhotra on campus — after all, he is charged with the oversight of 30 colleges and seven universities, totaling 54 campuses scattered all across the state. But MSC Southeast was honored to welcome Chancellor Malhotra twice this fall!

On October 17, the Chancellor and the Minnesota State Board of Trustees visited the Winona campus. They met with college students at a reception in Tandeski Center and via Skype from the Red Wing campus, then toured the Auto Body Collision Technology program with instructor Tom Brandt. Business leader Jerry Pappenfuss and Dean of Trade and Technology

Travis Thul talked with the Board of Trustees about new developments in programing, including Bicycle Design and Fabrication, Mechatronics, and Robotics.

Then on November 27, the Chancellor returned to MSC Southeast in Red Wing for a listening tour focusing on workforce development. Business leaders expressed their need for employees who are trained and ready to work; several noted that they have openings they cannot fill. Participants shared plans in place to connect high school students with employment through partnerships with the college. An example is Learn and Earn, a partnership with Red Wing Ignite, seven area high schools, and MSC Southeast that connects high school students with training at the college and employment in advanced manufacturing.



Auto Body Collision Tech instructor Tom Brandt and Chancellor Malhotra. The Board of Trustees and the Chancellor took a walk-through tour of the Auto Body lab in October.



The Minnesota State College Southeast Red Wing campus hosted a roundtable discussion on Workforce Development with Red Wing business leaders.

Chancellor Malhotra concluded, "It's very clear to me how special the community is here. Several themes have emerged: The importance

of getting to students early, providing them with information about their options, partnerships between the college and K12 education, and partnerships the between college and business/industry. This listening session has been very, very helpful and will inform our work as I go forward."



At \$80.3 million per year, MSC Southeast contributes to region's economy

When it comes to making an impact, Minnesota State College Southeast doesn't just offer a better quality of life to its students and graduates. A study released in November estimates the annual contribution of Minnesota State College Southeast to the state and regional economy to be \$80.3 million. It's also estimated that the college supports and sustains almost 700 jobs!

"Our top priority is the success of our students, but it's important to note that the college also plays a vital role in the economy as a whole," said Larry Lundblad, Interim President, MSC Southeast. "The college's operations and the economic activity generated by our faculty, staff, and students touch virtually every corner of our regional economy including education, hospitality, childcare, and retail."

The study was commissioned by Minnesota State and was conducted by Parker Philips, a nationally recognized consulting firm specializing in economic impact analysis. The study reflects information from fiscal year 2017.

In the analysis, the study considered direct spending on operations, pay, benefits, and capital projects by Minnesota State College Southeast and the estimated increase in demand for goods and services in industry sectors that supply or

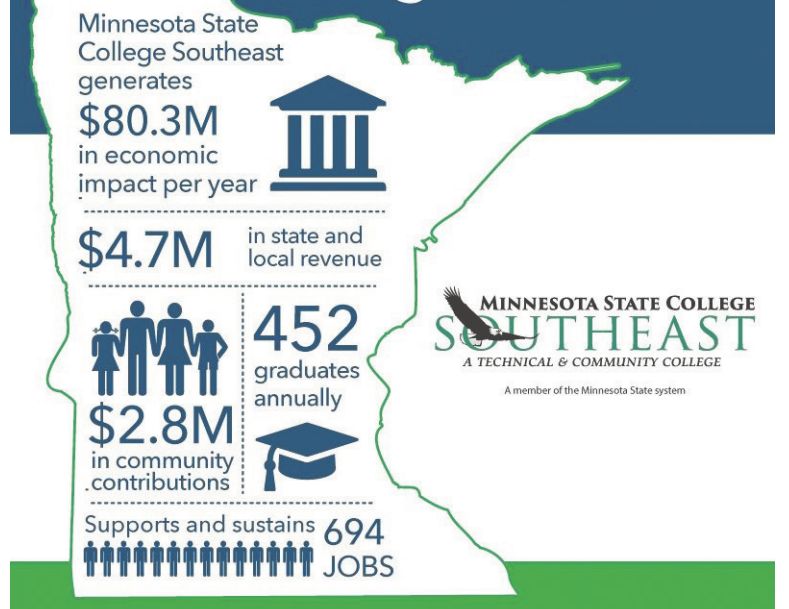
support the college. The study also measured the effect of student spending and the induced effect of increased household income.

According to the study, a key result of this activity is that Minnesota State College Southeast supports and sustains 694 jobs, including 183 in direct employment by the college. Another 434 indirect and jobs are created by supply and equipment vendors; contractors and laborers for the construction and renovation of facilities; and employment in hotels, restaurants, and retail stores supporting the college's faculty, staff, students, and visitors.

In addition, the study concluded that Minnesota State College Southeast generates about \$4.7 million in sales, property, personal income, and corporate income taxes.

Almost 20,000 alumni live and work in Minnesota. Assuming that a career lasts 40 years, MSC Southeast alumni currently living in the state will have contributed nearly \$4.0 billion over the span of their careers!

Impact of Minnesota State College Southeast



"We contribute to the economy with every graduating class," Larry Lundblad concluded. "We are proud that our alumni help meet the workforce needs of the Southeast region, benefitting themselves, their families, and the entire community."



Medical Support Careers instructor Patty Watson and Admissions Representative/Recruiter Laura Thomas

College faculty share expertise in high school classrooms

It's not always easy for high schools to bring their students to Minnesota State College Southeast. Biology instructor Liz Micheel had an idea this fall. "Why don't we go to them?"

With the encouragement of staff and faculty from departments all across the college, the High School Speaker Series was developed. Now MSC instructors are available to come directly into high schools and teach a class on a variety of subjects.

Medical Support Careers instructors Becky Korder and Patty Watson spoke to a Senior Prep class at Wabasha-Kellogg High School recently. Their topic was "The Importance of Professional Skills and Communication."

Becky Korder started with an icebreaker they use to get students thinking. "We ask them: If you were a cartoon character, who would you be? What qualities about that character represent you? You have to know yourself and your style before you can communicate well with others."

"We shared tips on interviewing for a job, resolving conflict in the workplace, and having empathy and respect for all groups," said Patty Watson. "It was a highly interactive session. We had a great group of kids!"

An outstanding group of MSC Southeast faculty have volunteered to speak in classrooms. Among the topics are "Beyond Kicking the Tires," "Budgeting: The Secret to Staying Out of Your Parents' Basement," and "Stress from a Psychological Perspective."

The presentations are intentionally designed to be of general interest to high school students and their teachers. "It's not about promoting our college program, it's about sharing our expertise with the students," said Becky Korder.

Admissions Advisor Laura Thomas said "It's been remarkable to see the enthusiasm faculty have shown. The high school students enjoy seeing them as well, getting a chance to talk with them before they would see them in classes."

"Having that connection to a college instructor makes going to college less scary. They know they have someone they can talk to at MSC Southeast," said Patty Watson. "The students enjoyed it, had fun, and so did we!"

Employers in the Med Lab Technician field seek MSC Southeast graduates to fill positions

Med Lab Tech continued from Page 1

in health care, they think of nursing," she said. "They don't always realize there are a lot of other possibilities."

"The great thing about lab work is that it's very hands-on — you're using your mind but you're working with your hands and there's always something new to learn," said Carol Cantlon.

The Med Lab Tech program is considered academically challenging. Karissa described the coursework was "tough, but not impossible!" Carol remembered Karissa as a hard-working, focused student who was very interested in the field, very detailed-oriented, and studied hard.

"To do this program, you've got to balance your personal life with your college life, because it really is a challenge and school has to be a priority," Carol said.

Saint Elizabeth's has a relatively small department with only seven Med Lab Techs and three phlebotomists. The lab is bright and clean, with high windows shedding plenty of natural light into the well-organized space. The hospital's connection with Minnesota State College Southeast is strong. Besides Karissa, there are two other MSC Southeast grads working there and a current student doing clinicals.

Karissa says working in a smaller lab is helpful, because she can keep up all of the skills she learned in college by working

in different departments. Besides running tests, she is involved in troubleshooting the analyzer equipment, quality control, and managing the hospital blood bank.

Now a member of the college's Med Lab Tech Advisory Committee, Karissa has the opportunity to give back to the college. Advisory committees give a college program feedback on how its coursework and structure is meeting employer needs. "As a student, I understood how my training worked, but now that I have on-the-job experience, I know what worked and what would be helpful for future students," she explained.

The MSC Southeast Medical Laboratory Technician pass rates for the national boards are 95% over the last three years and 100% of grads looking for employment find work as Med Lab Techs.

"I would highly recommend working in health care!" Karissa exclaimed. "It's always going to be advancing and that makes more room for more jobs. Plus, the older generation is retiring and that's making room for a lot of new graduates."

"We get a lot of emails from potential employers asking if we have anyone graduating that they can hire," said Carol. "Once you have an associate degree, the opportunities for advancement in this field are great. You can go on to a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, or even a Ph.D. The associate degree can be just the beginning of a life-long career."



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