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WHAT’S INSIDE:
Welding Program Creates New Opportunities for Success
Alumni Thinking Globally
Cinema Program in the Spotlight
Air Traffic Control Program: Top-Notch Training
It’s been a busy, dynamic and demanding year at Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC). In the last 12 months alone, the College has opened new buildings, launched innovative programs and continued to work closely with the local community. At the same time, it’s also dealt with the challenges of cutting costs without compromising its trademark high-quality education and keeping tuition affordable in the face of dwindling appropriations from the state of Minnesota.

We sat down with MCTC President Phillip Davis for his take on changes and future plans at MCTC.

What challenges have you faced in the last year?
The biggest one is the decreasing amount of funding available from the state. State spending on higher education in this current two-year biennium is down significantly from the previous period, with additional cuts a near certainty. In response, we’ve cut our operating budget by more than $2 million. We’re also looking for ways to be more efficient, both in terms of technology and our staff resources. Our staff is also working hard to provide the same level of services but with fewer resources.

What makes MCTC a unique educational value?
There are many things I could mention, but one element stands out: the diversity of our student population. Our students come from all over the world, and more than 40 percent are people of color. Attending MCTC gives you an experience of the world without leaving the confines of our campus. That can only help make you more ready for today’s global marketplace. It also enriches the educational experience in ways that you might not find elsewhere.

What other achievements can you point to at MCTC?
We’ve made significant improvements to our physical facilities and learning resources for students. For example, our new Science Center has greatly expanded our science capabilities, offering courses in biotechnology, anatomy, physiology and more. We also replaced a leaky roof on the lower level of our T Building, which allowed us to create a new outdoor plaza opening onto Loring Park.

We’re also excited about our new student health clinic—Boynton Health Service. This service makes sense—nearly one-third of our students lack health insurance, and if left untreated, even minor health care issues can derail a student’s educational progress.

MCTC President Q&A
Phil Davis

Women’s Studies Alumna:
Making a Difference Working Abroad
Since September 2008, Andrea Gohl, a Ham Lake native and Women’s Studies program alumna, has been serving as a U.S. Peace Corps volunteer in Cameroon. In the last year and a half, she’s grappled with culture shock, long work hours, and the pain of being away from her family and friends. But she’s also found satisfying rewards: new friendships and a profound sense of making a difference in people’s lives.

In short, Gohl’s tenure in Cameroon has been a life-changing adventure, and she credits MCTC with helping her take the first steps on the path.

Women’s Studies Alumna:
Andrea Gohl

Graduation News!
MCTC is expected to award 1,700 degrees, diplomas and certificates on May 18 during its graduation ceremony at the Minneapolis Convention Center. Congratulations to this year’s MCTC graduates and new alumni!

At MCTC I was encouraged to take a variety of classes and explore different disciplines,” she says. “That was really the beginning of my joy for education.”—Andrea Gohl

New Directions
Gohl started at MCTC in the fall of 2002. At the time, she didn’t have a strong sense of what to do with her life. That changed quickly, however. “At MCTC I was encouraged to take a variety of classes and explore different disciplines,” she says. “That was really the beginning of my joy for education.” After graduating from MCTC in 2005, she earned a bachelor’s degree in geology from Smith College in Massachusetts. At Smith, she participated in an environmental education program in Belize, which sparked a new interest in working abroad. “I loved living in another culture and doing something important for the local community,” she says, adding that the Peace Corps was a logical next step.

Because she’d taken a year of French at MCTC, Gohl received a Peace Corps assignment in primarily French-speaking Cameroon. Her official job responsibility: to work in agroforestry, a farming system that incorporates planting trees into agricultural fields to combat erosion and improve soil fertility. Gohl also works with women’s and youth groups on such issues as water sanitation, nutrition, and HIV/AIDS prevention.

It’s a potentially overwhelming job, but she’s enjoyed all of it. “There have been many obstacles in integrating into my new community,” she says. “I’ve learned to be patient and humble, and to often use humor to deal with cultural differences. The difficulties also have been overshadowed by the new experiences and the sense that I am making a difference.”

Gohl’s 27-month Peace Corps assignment will end in December. “I see this experience as a beginning and not an end to my work abroad,” she notes. “I hope to continue this type of work in the future.”

Groove [grüv] – to appreciate and enjoy

Groove [grüv] – to interact well
In 15 weeks, Nancy learned current welding processes in MCTC’s hands-on labs. She also took AutoCAD courses to brush up on her skills (she had previously earned her associate’s degree in computer-aided drafting).

Her fascination with the building process was reinforced. “Welding helped connect me with the creative process, to re-establish some old habits and to reinforce working with a team,” Nancy explained. “I developed a new respect, almost empathy for the individuals who worked from my drawings. It helped me see another area of the process.”

During the program, Nancy participated in the American Welding Society Northwest Section’s “Behind the Mask Welding Competition” at MCTC in February, winning the virtual welding portion of the competition.

She received certificates in welding basics and advanced structural welding. Now she’s learning with confidence, working with the WorkForce Center to get a new job. “I’m excited. This is just another part of the journey. I’m glad that MCTC was a part of that process.”

The golf course has long been known as an ideal place to relax and do business. For Julie Chavez and David Basi, however, a recent visit to the local links also offered an opportunity to support MCTC and help aspiring college students.

Last year, Chavez and Basi, a married couple who are both Twin Cities-area oral surgeons, played golf with MCTC Foundation Board Director Harry Davis, Jr. At the time, Chavez and Basi were mulling over the idea of starting a scholarship fund at a local college or university. When they mentioned the idea to Davis, he quickly brought up the Power of YOU, a program that provides the first two years of college tuition free at MCTC. As Davis explained, the program, which is open to Minneapolis and St. Paul public high school graduates, is designed to eliminate financial barriers that often prevent low-income students from pursuing a college education. “We were both intrigued,” says Chavez. “We wanted to start a scholarship for first-time college-goers, and the Power of YOU met all of our criteria. David and I have both worked at inner-city hospitals and clinics, and have seen people in need. Both of us feel strongly that a college education is a powerful way for someone to get ahead in life.”

The more Chavez and Basi learned about the Power of YOU, the better it sounded to them. In addition to free tuition, the program offers a wide range of services, including one-on-one academic advising, peer support programs, a parent support network, and social and cultural activities. Since its inception in 2006, it has paved the way for more than 1,000 students to attend college. “It’s a highly structured program—MCTC has done a great job of providing all of the elements that students need to find success,” says Chavez. “We were very impressed with the Power of YOU, and decided that it would be an ideal program for us to support.”

In fact, Chavez was so impressed with the program and with MCTC in general, that she later joined the MCTC Foundation’s Board of Directors. “I enjoy my work with the foundation,” she notes. “I’m happy to give back to MCTC and the local community.”

To find out more about the Power of YOU, go to www.cafac.org.
MCTC's Cinema Program Directs the Next Generation of Filmmakers

When you watch the credits whiz by at the end of a movie, do you ever wonder what the crew members do behind the scenes and where they learn how to do it? For nearly a decade, faculty members at MCTC's Cinema program have provided emerging filmmakers with the answers to these questions as well as the hands-on training needed to work in the industry. Not only have the program and its alumni earned the respect and recognition of filmmaking peers, but recent curriculum changes have strengthened the impact of an already excellent program.

The revamped curriculum provides students with a foundation in cinema production, as well as the opportunity to specialize in one of four areas: directing and producing, screenwriting, cinematography, and editing and postproduction. During their first year, all students earn a certificate in cinema production, which provides a comprehensive introduction to the movie-making process. After earning their certificates, students can pursue a specialization and earn an associate’s degree during their second year. In the fall 2010, the program will offer three new areas of study: animation, visual special effects and sound for cinema.

"Our goal is to re-create the Hollywood film world on a smaller scale," says Hafed Bouassida, faculty coordinator of MCTC's Cinema Production. "The enhanced program gives every student the same knowledge about how films are produced, as well as the chance to master a specialized area. No matter what roles students play in the future, they will intimately understand how films are put together and what specialists and other elements are needed to produce them."

There is no doubt that the Cinema program is preparing students to become successful film industry experts. Read about just a few of these successful alumni.

Behind the Scenes: Jeremy Bandow Scripted for Success

It's more than 6,000 miles from Minnesota to Iraq, but by the time Jeremy Bandow finished his deeply researched script, Hives, a wartime romance story between a soldier and journalist in Baghdad, he felt at home on the city's streets. "One of the things I learned through MCTC's screenwriting program was how to show a story, not tell it," he says. "It's like the Chekhov quote: "Don't tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint of light on broken glass."

The painstaking effort Bandow put into the screenplay paid off big. In late 2008, his script was plucked from a stack of more than 5,000 and honored with a Nicholl Fellowship, the world's most esteemed screenwriting award sponsored by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. He is the first Minnesotan to receive this $30,000 award, and the honor has put him on Hollywood producers' go-to list.

But success didn't come easily. Bandow grew up loving movies, and when he was in his 20s, he spent six months in Los Angeles, toiling as a production assistant on commercials and promos. But he had little patience for the work—his real passion was for screenwriting. He came back home to Minnesota, where he worked on screenplays but soon realized he needed to learn more about the language and structure of screenwriting. When he came across an MCTC catalog that listed a screenwriting course, he signed up immediately. He eventually enrolled in the Cinema Studies program at the College.

"One of the things I learned through MCTC's screenwriting program was how to show a story, not tell it."—Jeremy Bandow

(Continued)
PORTFOLIO SHOW CELEBRATES 32 YEARS WITH “GIAN RED ARROW” PROGRAM, MAY 4 AND 5
This year marks the 32nd anniversary of MCTC’s Portfolio Show, which allows students to present their best work to potential employers. But it’s more than just a show. It’s the culmination of a semester-long course in career planning, professional practices and portfolio creation.

“This is a fun, but very labor-intensive event for students,” says Jake Jacobson, who leads the Portfolio Show and is a faculty member in the Graphic Design and Web Design programs. The former advertising agency executive added that many students get jobs from this event and the connections they build as part of their portfolio coursework.

More than 1,100 guests from design companies, advertising agencies, corporations and printing companies will attend the show, May 4th and 5th of this year at MCTC. Students conceive, manage and execute the entire event. This year’s show theme is “Giant Red Arrow” (GRA2010.com) and encompasses the work of some 44 students, including 36 Web and Graphic Design students, eight Media Production students and 23 Photography and Digital Imaging students (www.2010Exposed.com). The students divide themselves into committees related to fundraising, website development, print production, traffic, art direction, public relations and distribution. They learn job presentation and search strategies, as well as interviewing skills.

In addition to creating visual samples of their work, each student pulls together resumes, business cards, brochures, and other materials and must meet with 25 alumni and industry employers to learn more about their business.

Each year, these three MCTC programs graduate approximately 70 students, who earn A.A.S. degrees. The average age of students in the programs is 27, and many of them enter already having a bachelor’s degree. Jacobson and the late Felix Ampah, who passed away in February 2008 at the age of 53, have been lifelong leaders of this capstone project, which began in 1978. Jacobson and Ampah attended college together and had been business partners.

"Felix was the heart and soul of the program for years and was loved by the students," said Jacobson. In February 2008, the students, college and faculty set up a scholarship in his honor. To donate to other scholarship funds, students visit the websites at www.GRA2010.com or www.2010Exposed.com.


PORTFOLIO SHOW

THE CLASS OF 2010

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS: AIR TRAFFIC

AIR TRAFFIC PROGRAM: TOP FLIGHT

If you’ve recently taken a smooth, uneventful flight, you may have thanked the pilots who stood outside the cockpit door as you disembarked. But you also owe a bit of gratitude to the air traffic controllers who helped ensure that the ride was trouble-free between take-off and landing.

For nearly two decades, MCTC has been training controllers through its highly regarded Air Traffic Control Training program. Started in 1991, as one of the five original programs approved by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the program has become a powerhouse, specializing in route air traffic control coursework, says Tom Buzzard, program manager. “Most of the air traffic controllers under the federal government were terminal controllers, who worked in control towers,” he says.

When air traffic control specialist George Zurales arrives at Chicago’s En Route Traffic Control Center on any given day, he knows he holds the lives of thousands of people in his hands. From the ground, he tracks dozens of flights as they wing their way across the country. If a passenger has a seizure while a plane is in the air, he helps guide the aircraft as quickly as possible to the nearest landing strip. And if there’s a mechanical problem, he’ll divert other planes in the area to help the pilot make a safe landing. “Because your whole plan can change in an instant, your top priority is making sure that a plane gets to wherever it needs to go as quickly and safely as it possibly can,” he says.

Zurales’ interest in aviation started when he was a kid, in part because his father was a pilot. But he was even more intrigued by the quick pace and spatial thinking required to be an air traffic controller. “I was intrigued by the real-time problem solving,” he says. “The problem doesn’t stop so you can sit and think about it; you need to be able to react quickly and creatively.”

When he learned that MCTC offered an Air Traffic Control program, he was eager to learn more. He was especially impressed by the program’s strong reputation and concentrated coursework. Add that to the sophisticated lab technology that’s identical to the equipment found out in the field, and he was sold.

“MCTC gave me all the tools I needed to start a fantastic career.” —George Zurales

During his coursework, he learned about aircraft technology, how to communicate effectively with pilots, and basic air traffic control skills and techniques. As he got further into his studies, he ran increasingly complex simulations that taught him to deal with a range of challenging scenarios. But while he appreciated the classes, he was even more impressed by his instructors and classmates. “Each session had just 32 students, so it was kind of like a family,” he recalls. “And all the instructors were so passionate about their work. They enjoyed talking about it, doing it and teaching it. They made it really engaging.”

Working in air traffic control can be demanding but Zurales says he’s grateful that his education helped him land a job that is engaging, stable and well-paying. “MCTC gave me all the tools I needed to start a fantastic career,” he says.
Students Inspire a Gift: Judy and Ed Schuck Leave Their Legacy

Judy and Ed Schuck are inspired by the students at MCTC. Judy experienced this inspiration day in and day out in her more than 15 years of work at the College. "I grew up in a middle-class family, and it was always assumed that I would go to college," says Judy. "I could have easily gone through life without knowing the incredible access that MCTC provides and the extraordinary resilience of our students."

It was this access and resilience that led Judy and Ed Schuck to make a planned gift to the MCTC Foundation. "We hope our gift will help students who need it most—adults who enroll part-time, work full-time and often are trying to raise a family at the same time," says Judy.

Dear Friends:

Over the last year, we have been astounded by the outpouring of support from our friends and alumni. We have many new donors, with alumni giving alone more than tripling. In these tough economic times, it is especially heartwarming to see this kind of generosity for our students.

Last year, we hosted our very first Power of Giving Fundraising Luncheon. More than 300 people attended and we raised $200,000. It was a great event and guests really enjoyed themselves. More importantly, we were incredibly successful in raising money for scholarships and obtaining funding for deserving students.

We’re hosting this event again on May 20th, noon–1 p.m. and would like to invite you to attend. To RSVP, call Marni Harper at 612-659-6311 or email marni.harper@minneapolis.edu.

Thanks again to all of our supporters. Your generosity has helped to open the door to college for many individuals.

Sincerely,

Reede Webster, executive director

Join Us on Thursday, May 20, Noon–1 p.m.

The MCTC Foundation will be hosting its 2nd Annual Power of Giving Fundraising Luncheon. This is a free fundraising event, with no obligation to give. At this event, you will hear firsthand how MCTC has been impacting lives and the community in a positive way.

Special thanks to all of the sponsors for this event.

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If you would like to attend, you can register online at www.mctcfoundation.org and click on “Events.” You can also register by calling 612-659-6311.