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News Release

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NMCC Foundation Awards Instructional Technology Endowment Grants

Aroostook County - A digital microscope, a high-tech wireless measurement and data collection system, and an iPad...all new equipment that has been purchased for Northern Maine Community College students thanks to a fund earmarked to finance innovative projects.

Since 2008, the Investing in Innovation Fund technology endowment has purchased equipment that would not otherwise be funded through College department budgets. This year the endowment, established through the NMCC Foundation, is financing three projects worth more than \$3600 dollars.

The Life Sciences Lab has been awarded \$1800 for the purchase of a new digital microscope that is allowing students to see actual cells and tissues.

“This digital microscope has far superior resolution than the old scope,” explains instructor Greg Thompson. “I am very grateful for this addition to the classroom which is facilitating even better usage of slides that were purchased through this Foundation endowment three years ago.”

Another \$1,160 award will finance equipment for the Precision Metals Manufacturing (PMM) program. A wireless measurement and data collection system will support a teaching method called Statistical Process Control (SPC). Using SPC, the production process of an article is continually monitored in order to reduce the quantity of defective products manufactured.

“In the lab, students learn that as much time and material are spent producing defective products as making a good ones. Rather than relying on end-product inspection to weed out defective products, it makes more sense to monitor and ensure that the process and tolerances remain consistent throughout production,” according to Dean Duplessis, PMM instructor. “This new equipment will provide our students with additional knowledge to become valuable, creative participants in technologically-advancing industries.”

Finally, the fund provided \$700 to buy a 64 GB iPad for use in speech, technical communications and business communications classes. The iPad is being used to teach students how to utilize apps to improve learning, to show students the impact of their verbal and non-verbal communications style, and to familiarize students with video conferencing. Dr. Lynne Nelson Manion is an English instructor in the Department of Arts and Sciences:

“The iPad is being used to film students making a speech or doing a mock interview; then we can work one on one or in small groups to discuss strengths and weaknesses. The iPad will also allow students to become comfortable with video conferencing which is commonplace in the 21st century workplace.”

The endowment was established in part to expand and improve the skill set of graduates to meet the needs of employers. Area business and community leaders consistently confer with NMCC officials regarding current technological needs in the workplace. This helps shape the educational and training opportunities provided by the College.

Since 2008, the NMCC Foundation has awarded \$10,420 through the Investing in Innovation Fund.

Applications for the awards are submitted to a committee of NMCC Foundation board members, as well as representatives of College faculty and staff for consideration.

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Northern Maine Community College faculty display new equipment purchased through the NMCC Foundation's Investing in Innovation Fund. From left: Bruce Sandstrom, NMCC Foundation Board; Dr. Dottie Martin and Shawn Lahey, Foundation Investing in Innovation Committee members; Dean Duplessis, Precision Metal Manufacturing Instructor; Greg Thompson, Life Sciences Instructor; and Dr. Lynne Nelson Manion, English Instructor.