



News Release

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April 20, 2007
NR07039

NMCC precision metals program earns national accreditation – College to offer scholarship in celebration of milestone

Aroostook County - The only developer of American National Standards for the nation's metalworking industry has given its seal of approval to the precision metals manufacturing program at Northern Maine Community College, a designation which demonstrates that the program meets national industry standards.

After months of preparation and rigorous examination and review, NMCC officials were notified by the National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS) that the College program has met the organization's stringent quality standards and has been awarded accreditation. NMCC is now one of only 125 schools nationwide to earn the prestigious honor which represents industry's mark of approval.

"This is a significant accomplishment for the precision metals manufacturing program and the entire College campus," said NMCC President Timothy Crowley. "Accreditation through NIMS conveys an important message about the quality of the school and program to future students, their parents, state and federal partners, foundations, industry, and the local community."

In celebration of receiving national accreditation through NIMS, Crowley announced the College will award students in the fall 2007 entering class – both in the precision metals manufacturing associate degree program and machine tool technology certificate program – a \$1,000 scholarship applicable toward tuition and fees for any precision metals class.

Students accepted into either the two or one year programs and enrolled full-time will be eligible for the scholarship which will cover the cost of tuition and some fees for up to six credit hours of classes. Scholarships will be distributed in the amount of \$500 per semester and are renewable for up to two years (total of \$2,000) for students maintaining a grade point average of 2.0 or higher. Applicants for fall semester enrollment in both programs are currently being accepted by the College admissions office.

NIMS establishes national industry skill standards in metalworking. NMCC students will be able to take performance examinations following their training to qualify for NIMS credentials. Workers with NIMS credentials are highly desired by manufacturers in the metalworking industry.

As a NIMS accredited training program, NMCC will receive benefits including exam fee discounts, exam fee waivers for trainers, and the ability to use the certified status to advertise and recruit students into the program.

“The accreditation speaks directly to the quality of the program and the support received throughout the campus and business community. This is a significant accomplishment as we are one of the youngest programs of this type within the Maine Community College System. This accreditation reaffirms to prospective students and their parents that the education and training they will receive is top notch,” said Dean Duplessis, NMCC precision metals manufacturing instructor and coordinator of College efforts to gain NIMS accreditation.

Accreditation involved a three-step process, beginning with registration of the program, which NMCC completed in May 2006.

The second phase required the College to complete a thorough self-study, which required the College to rate its program against NIMS quality measures including administrative support, instructional quality and capacity, curriculum, equipment and tooling, advisory council roles, safety, and the integration of the national standards.

The self-study began in September 2006 and was lead by the program’s advisory committee. A thorough evaluation of the program was completed and the self-study was submitted to NIMS for review in January 2007.

The third step in the process, the on-site audit, involved a three-person team comprised of industry and education personnel who visited NMCC on March 20 and 21 to verify the self-study report and documentation. The team interviewed administrative and corporate personnel, instructors, students, advisory council members, and industry leaders. The team also inspected the facility and equipment and analyzed safety practices.

Leading the NMCC audit team was Martin Arsenault, president/CEO of Howard Tool Company in Bangor. Team members included Lynn McNeal, director of the Caribou Applied Technology Center, and Tom Campbell, machine shop supervisor at J.M. Huber’s Easton plant.

In addition to three steps in the review process, instructors in the College program are required to earn NIMS credentials in the modules they instruct. Students must have also earned credentials in the modules for which accreditation is sought. Both requirements must be met prior to accreditation. NMCC precision metals manufacturing 2006 graduates earned NIMS credentials in three different areas.

The NMCC NIMS accreditation is for a five-year period and is renewable subject to further review and audit as part of continuous improvement.

NMCC will officially receive the award from a national officer of NIMS at an accreditation ceremony being planned for next fall when the first students begin in the newly accredited program.

For more information on the NIMS accreditation, the precision metals manufacturing and machine tool technology programs, and the scholarships offered for this coming fall semester, contact the NMCC admissions office at 768-2785.

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