

# COMMUNITY

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MCC Nursing grad overcomes  
monumental obstacles on path  
to degree, award

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# A LETTER FROM THE MCC FOUNDATION



Dear friends and supporters,

It is my privilege to be writing to you as the Metropolitan Community College Foundation executive director. For the past four years, I worked with my predecessor, Dr. Jackie Almquist in the MCC Foundation, and I look forward to this opportunity to serve the College in my new role.

Every year, your generosity helps students accomplish their educational goals. But this year, as impacts from the global pandemic continue, your investments enable students to continue their education despite the odds. With your help, the MCC Foundation was able to provide technology for students to adapt to virtual learning, along with wraparound support to help them address barriers and achieve success.

The College has an array of education options for the four-county service area and beyond. The MCC Foundation supports the College by providing resources for scholarships to keep students engaged in their education during challenging circumstances, such as the pandemic. With use of these scholarships, students earn valuable short-term training credentials that could have them return to work, making more than they were prior to financial hardships.

In this issue, you will learn about the challenges of one MCC nursing student, Patty Sieler. Sieler was a recipient of the DAISY Foundation Award for Extraordinary Nursing Students this year. She overcame significant personal barriers but never lost sight of her graduation goal.

I hope you also enjoy reading about the successful completion of the Center for Advanced Manufacturing – the first phase of the South Omaha Campus renovation and expansion project. We achieved this milestone through the collaborative work from faculty, staff, industry and strong community partnerships.

Your partnership is important to developing the resources for students to learn, excel and grow. I look forward to the opportunity to connect with you and am grateful for your investment in our programs and students.

Sincerely,

Amy

Amy Recker  
Executive director, MCC Foundation



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**CREDITS**

Lead editor and contributor: Derek Rayment

Assistant editors and contributors: Katherine Leszczynski and Jenny Milligan

Lead art direction: Trevor Pikop

Art contributors: Jade Dyer and Susana Ruiz-Morales



**Metropolitan  
Community College  
FOUNDATION**





# Online degrees make learning flexible

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, online offerings are becoming more prominent. Allowing students to learn from anywhere, online courses feature flexibility, but still include deadlines and milestones to reach.

Metropolitan Community College has decades of experience with online courses, making it the perfect option for those wanting to take classes virtually.

“MCC has more than 20 years of experience in online education and our faculty have done a wonderful job finding innovative ways to engage students from a distance,” says vice president of Academic Affairs Tom McDonnell. “The main thing is just being disciplined to set aside the time to access your courses on a regular basis.”

MCC offers many programs entirely online, including

Business Management, Cybersecurity, Health Information Technology and many more.

Some may think because a course is remote or online, it means less work. That is not the case, says McDonnell.

“There’s no difference in terms of the rigor of the course when comparing online, hybrid and face-to-face,” he explains. “There’s a misconception that online is somehow easier than other modes. That’s simply not true. Regardless of the learning mode, college courses are challenging and our faculty set high expectations for their students.”

The wide variety of online courses at MCC offers students the flexibility they may need. And students enrolled in online courses still have access to tutoring, learning support and other resources the College has to offer.

## Here are some of the programs offering online degrees, certifications and courses:

### WORKFORCE INNOVATION DIVISION

Learn how to advance an established career and strengthen leadership skills. WID offers online and hybrid courses for certifications such as MCC Code School, Project Management Academy, the Facebook Digital Marketing Certificate and more.

“These professional noncredit programs utilize online platforms such as Canvas and Zoom, and students engage with interactive learning activities, projects and assessments, which lead to industry recognized credentials,” says Robert Caldwell, workforce training manager. “A hybrid course may include many different learning methods, whether live instruction or independent activities.”

Caldwell says that COVID-19 has caused businesses to change and adapt.

“How we work and interact with others looks considerably different than it did just six months ago, and there is some indication that the work environment in many industries may never be the same. This leaves our workforce no choice but to adapt,” he says. “Pursuing online or hybrid education is a great way to increase exposure to the necessary skills, tools and techniques to be successful in a virtual work environment.”

### BUSINESS

Whether its management, legal studies or accounting, MCC Business degrees and certifications can be obtained online, says dean of Business Lori Lothringer, Ph.D.

“In Business at MCC, there are a number of degrees, certificates and course specializations available online. These include Accounting, Tax, Economics, Entrepreneurship, Investments, Marketing, Immigration Law and Paralegal,” she explains. “Many of these programs prepare students for professional certifications and/or licensure including our programs in Financial Planning, Financial Counseling, Human Resources, Insurance and Real Estate.”

Many standard face-to-face Business courses have adapted to be offered remotely, Lothringer says.

“These are similar in that students participate online with faculty and peers synchronously in real time. These are different in that remote classes do not involve campus time whereas blended classes do have an on-campus element,” she says. “Our goal in Business is to customize the learning experience as much as possible, thereby giving a diverse population of learners the greatest chance of success.”

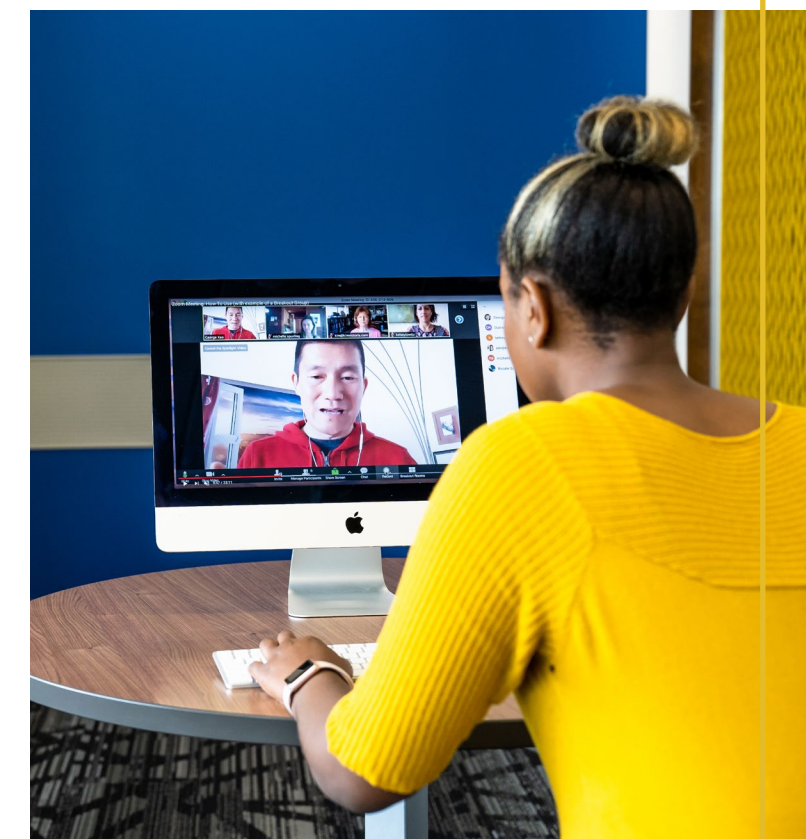
### TRANSFER DEGREES

MCC is a place where students can start and move to a college or university for a four-year degree. McDonnell says Liberal Arts and Business Transfer degrees are some of the most popular online options.

“The courses students can take to transfer to a four-year college or university are still very popular,” he says. “In fact, many of our students take courses online from MCC while they are also attending a four-year institution.”

In addition, classes that aren’t normally online have adapted.

“We offer some hybrid courses in career programs like Utility Line Technician and in Automotive Technology, and those are popular, too,” McDonnell says.



TO SEE A FULL LIST OF ONLINE DEGREES AND CERTIFICATES AND HOW TO GET STARTED, VISIT [MCCNEB.EDU/ELEARNING](https://mccneb.edu/elearning).



# Students focus on optimism AMIDST THE PANDEMIC

Nearly every facet of daily life has been impacted by COVID-19, including how education is delivered. As a result of the pandemic, the nation saw educational institutions move quickly to remote learning options, Metropolitan Community College included. Students shared how they adjusted to remote learning with the help of instructors and advisors.



“The pandemic brought some of my plans to a halt, but with the support of my wife and family, I did not give up my dreams of finishing college and traveling the world. Since the start of the pandemic, I learned that I am dedicated and I can achieve my goals with the support of the people that surround me. Metropolitan Community College has helped me achieve my dream of completing my studies by quickly adapting to deliver remote learning options. My instructors have been helpful and have provided support when I need assistance with school projects. The College has helped me navigate my classes, as well as my life.”

**Federico**  
Information Technology



“I was three weeks into the Programmable Logic Controllers Applications class when the pandemic shut down in-person classes. My instructor worked with me over the phone, through email and on Zoom meetings to keep me going through the class. I am also thankful for academic advisor Karen Rogers for helping me get through my internship class, providing the information I needed for registration and helping me register for the classes. I also need to thank student accessibility specialist Brittany Pintor for helping me get through some of the most difficult classes, keeping me focused on the tasks that I needed to get done each week and on track to graduate with academic honors for the first time ever.”

**Christopher**  
Electrical Technology



“MCC has helped me stay grounded through this pandemic. The MCC 180 Re-Entry Assistance Program has helped me strive for better. The program has helped me recognize that continuing my education through this pandemic can result in positivity for my life as well as helping my community. The knowledge I am gaining is bringing me opportunities to make a difference through these challenging times. Not only has the College helped me with my education, they have assisted me with employment and other services while I was struggling. This pandemic has been difficult but the support of MCC has helped me through it from the very beginning—they have been there every step of the way.”

**Noelle**  
General Human Services



“For me, 2020 is a year for new journeys; I applied to MCC to continue my associate degree and further my education and career opportunities. To my surprise, and everyone else in the world, COVID-19 flooded the country, impacting everyone. This unfortunate event led to online classes, which was very convenient for my busy healthcare work schedule, not to mention when I tested positive for the virus and was home for two weeks. I was able to complete a lot of schoolwork during this time and avoid exposing anyone. This year has tested me emotionally, financially and academically, but I persevered, and am thriving and succeeding.”

**Emily**  
Liberal Arts/Academic  
Transfer-Associate  
in Science



“I haven’t always been the most organized person, then the pandemic struck. Journaling everything that has taken place really helped me keep my head together. If I’m not doing something creative it’s hard for me to have interest, so I made organizing really fun by making the pages cute with a theme or just a doodle! Bullet journaling has helped me find some reality when I was not feeling it while I was stuck inside at home for months.”

**Josephine**  
Business Management



“Thanks to the remote learning options offered at MCC during the pandemic, I have been able to remain on the path to success and continue working toward becoming an electrician.”

**Miguel**  
Electrical Technology



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# REMONT CAREER ACADEMIES OFFER OPPORTUNITIES TO DODGE COUNTY STUDENTS

One out of every dozen students at MCC enters their first quarter at the College as an undecided student. Others have a clear idea of what they want to do for a career, while many may want to explore what is right for them.

At Fremont High School, counselor Mark Williams says he and the other counselors always discuss next steps with their students.

“We meet with our students to talk about postsecondary education and class registration for the next school year. We also talk to students about possible career paths,” Williams says.

In these one-on-one meetings, Williams says he introduces many students to Metropolitan Community College Career Academies.

Career Academies are a specific set of classes designed to introduce high school juniors and seniors to various job fields while helping them get a head start on their postsecondary education. Fremont career academy students get to take classes either in their chosen field or on-site at a location relating to their academy.

“Students in high school should have the opportunities to explore possible careers and interests,” says Todd Hansen, executive director of Student Affairs at the Fremont Area Center. “It gives them opportunities to see what they want to pursue as a career.”

In Dodge County, MCC offers academies in trades such as Diesel Technology and Welding, as well as Criminal



**“STUDENTS IN HIGH SCHOOL SHOULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPLORE POSSIBLE CAREERS AND INTERESTS.”**

Justice, Information Technology and Healthcare. Students split their time between a classroom setting and practicing hands-on skills.

The trades academies are some of the most popular, Hansen says, especially the Welding Academy.

“Students tell their friends to take it,” Hansen says. “Rob Hocking, MCC instructor and FHS instructor, Brad Ryun, build great relationships with students.”

Having those strong relationships with students is a perk of the job, Hocking says. He serves as a role model for many of them.

“I work very closely with the academy students every day for nine months. I become a mentor to them,” Hocking says. “I am not only teaching them the skills of welding but also life skills that will help them in their adult life, too. Some students start to look up to me and this drives them to constantly try to improve.”

The students have just as much of an impact on him as he does on them, Hocking says.

“They really help me to stay young at heart. I enjoy their enthusiasm and energy. It keeps me energized. Sometimes I feel like a kid again just being around them,” he says.



The Fremont Welding Career Academy began in 2014 to help area industry, which had plenty of open jobs and not enough skilled workers available.

“There is an existing, largely unmet need for skilled entry-level welders,” says Hansen. “The aging workforce and slow trickle of new welders entering the field means employees and their employer are unable to keep up with production demands. The goal was to increase the numbers of skilled welders entering the workforce, allow students to earn high school and college credit at the same time, and develop industry-recognized credentials.”

Students who complete the Welding Career Academy receive a certificate and can oftentimes enter the workforce right away, Hansen explains. Welding Career Academy students have gone on to work at Valmont Industries, Smeal Fire in Snyder, Rebellion in Wahoo and Gnus Manufacturing in Arlington.

“Students know if they successfully complete all five classes, they are employable right away and could make a good starting wage,” he explains. “Students also want to earn the Local Industry Certificate we award them if they are successful. It gives them something to work for and I encourage them to take it to their interviews.”

Hocking says he has seen many former students go on to have fulfilling careers in the welding world.

“I am always very proud and happy for a student when I run into them years after the academy and they tell me where they work or what they have built or been a part of a project,” he says. “That alone proves that the Fremont Welding Academy is a success and a very important part of their high school experience.”

Students in the Diesel Academy can also leave the program ready to enter the workforce or continue their education in the field, says instructor Kevin Ingalls.

“When you leave, you’re on the verge of a certificate or can go on to get an associate degree,” Ingalls says. “These students can be very employable right off the bat. Many shops will often pay for tuition reimbursement.”

Fremont High School student Lane Cech came from a family of car lovers. He found out about the Diesel Academy from his high school counselor and decided to enroll.

“I grew up in an auto body shop. That’s where my love of cars came from,” Cech says. “This has helped me get a head start.”

Students are able to learn at Fremont Contract Carriers, a diesel truck transportation company. FCC allows Career Academy students to work on their trucks and learn in their garage, giving students plenty of real-world experience.

“FCC has been very good to us,” says Ingalls.

Much like the welding field, Ingalls says there are many jobs for diesel mechanics. The Diesel Academy is helping to fill in those gaps.

“The only unemployed diesel mechanic is the one not looking for a job,” he says with a laugh.

If students don’t leave high school and enter the workforce, many continue what they learned in their Career Academy at MCC as college students. Hansen says he sees many Career Academy students continue their education, whether it be at MCC or elsewhere.

Williams says this can be a huge accomplishment for many of the students.

“This can be life changing for some of our students,” he explains. “We have many first-generation students, the first in their family to go on to college. So many parents want a better life for their children, but don’t know how to start. The Career Academy programs help students navigate the college process and get them in the system. This will hopefully lead to a lifelong career and let the students live a productive life.”

The benefits of the Career Academy are evident to all students, Hocking says. No one leaves regretting enrolling.

“I have never had a student complete the academy and say ‘It wasn’t worth the hard work I had to put in.’ Or that they wish they hadn’t taken it,” Hocking says. “All the students realize after completing the academy that with hard work and good attendance they can succeed in life after high school.”

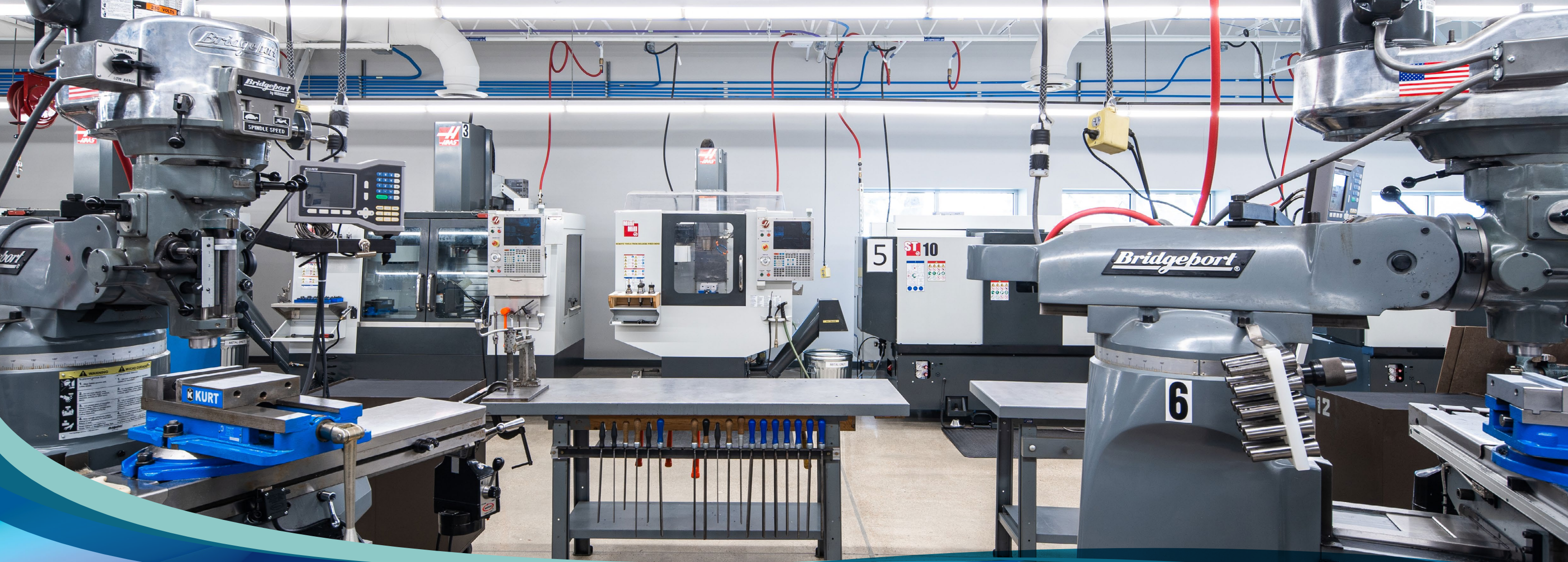
**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT ALL AVAILABLE CAREER ACADEMY PROGRAMS AT MCC, VISIT [MCCNEB.EDU/CAREERACADEMY](https://mccneb.edu/careeracademy) OR CALL 531-MCC-2213.**



**“THESE STUDENTS CAN BE VERY EMPLOYABLE RIGHT OFF THE BAT.”**

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# A reason for celebration

## Renovation to help meet workforce demands

Over the past decade, Metropolitan Community College has seen its fair share of growth, both from a program standpoint and from a square footage standpoint. Those expansions usually come with a celebration, a time when MCC students, faculty and staff can celebrate the completion of a game-changing addition. Unfortunately, with the COVID-19 pandemic, such a celebration was not possible with the completion of the Center for Advanced Manufacturing.

But the real celebration is taking place behind closed doors, in the classrooms. Students are learning the skills they need to complete their education and earn a job in a high-demand career, in part thanks to generous donors, industry partners and community members who played a role in the renovation project.

The new Center for Advanced Manufacturing is the result of a \$10.5 million dollar renovation of the old Industrial Training Center on the South Omaha Campus. The nearly 30,000-square-foot facility includes new space for programs such as Drafting and Design, Industrial and Commercial Trades, Precision Machine Technology, Process Operations Technology and Welding Technology, while creating new degree options in the manufacturing field.

The decision to renovate the Industrial Training Center wasn't made just because the paint was getting old. Much of the current manufacturing workforce is reaching retirement age, leaving jobs unfilled, but opportunities created. MCC wanted to meet the needs of the local workforce by creating more space for prospective employees to learn the newest skills.





**“It’s a nice ‘thank you’ from the school, acknowledging that we are a significant subset of the student body,” explains Littleman.**

“The Center for Advanced Manufacturing is the College’s response to Nebraska’s growing manufacturing workforce needs,” says Randy Schmailzl, MCC president. “The Nebraska Department of Economic Development expects the number of manufacturing jobs to grow in the coming years. Local businesses are going to need skilled prospects to fill those positions. The curriculum at MCC will prepare students for fulfilling careers in advanced manufacturing, while helping local businesses compete.”

There’s a high demand for trades professionals with a two-year degree or certification. These skilled workers will be the ones to fill those gaps left by retirees. The Nebraska Department of Economic Development anticipates a 7.1 percent increase in manufacturing jobs by 2025. MCC is meeting with industry partners in advisory council settings, learning what local businesses are looking for. The College is also engaging with industry partners by providing certification training for currently employed individuals who may need to upskill in certain areas.

“Industry partners love the ease with which they can send employees to MCC for training. Having multiple programs that are related to each other in the same building allows for collaboration between programs and gives industry partners opportunities,” says Jim Champion, MCC Pathway facilitator. “From entry level employees that are just starting out, to experienced technicians that are looking to go to the

next level, the College is a great choice for businesses in an ever-changing technical training world.”

Champion says that students in trades classes will quickly discover that there is a connection between all of the different programs at the Center for Advanced Manufacturing.

“Having experienced instructors, new labs and student support all located in the same academic building will enhance the student’s overall experience and give them the best chance at retention and success,” explains Champion.

Also included in the redevelopment is a brand new Veterans and Military Resource Center, located near the entrance of the Center for Advanced Manufacturing. Previously located in the Connector Building at the South Omaha Campus, the new center provides more personal touch in a quieter environment.

“The new veterans center provides a place to meet like-minded veterans at MCC since we don’t normally blurt out that we’re veterans during class,” says Kevin Littleman, retired senior master sergeant and current MCC Nursing student. “A place like this is going to make it easier to connect with other veterans and active duty.”

Littleman also says the creation of the Veterans and Military Resource Center is a very welcomed gesture by the College.

“It’s a nice ‘thank you’ from the school, acknowledging that we are a significant subset of the student body,” explains Littleman. “It gives us a place to meet, decompress, study and re-energize. The College is helping us transition from a totally different subculture of military service by allowing us to come in between classes to a place where the energy is a little different, letting us swap stories, commiserate a little even, then jump back into the day refreshed for the next class.”

Unfortunately, that in-person part will have to wait a little while. Currently, the center is closed for in-person activities due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. But Military and Veterans Services staff is offering online counseling and other remote services.

“The center serves as the first point of contact to advocate and guide our veterans, service members and their families along their educational journey. We achieve this, in part, by providing information about various courses, military and community resources and by offering assistance where we can,” says Daniel Mohr, director of the Veterans and Military Resource Center. “To keep the focus on veterans, the center has partnered with various state and local resources allowing outside representatives to meet with students, either in-person when conditions allow for it, or remotely.”

Many Omaha area veterans and active duty members choose MCC because of its affordability, flexibility, transferability and credit given for military service. This is evident through Littleman’s story. Littleman, who aspires to join the nursing profession and work in emergency care, also recommended the College to his son Christian, a U.S. Air Force veteran like his father. Littleman also had experience in the military that he felt would not transfer to civilian life. His experience, however, did transfer to MCC to use as credit toward a degree.

“I was a scientific applications specialist in the Air Force, meaning we were the guys using satellites, hydro acoustics, planes and seismometers to detect potential nuclear explosions on Earth. Obviously, there is not a need for nuke hunters in civilian life,” quips Littleman. “My post-graduation goal is to work in emergency care or an ICU, where the pace is brisk and stakes can be high. I like to meet people when they are in need. I want to make a significant impact in their life so they can recover and be ready to continue on with their life.”

The Center for Advanced Manufacturing is just one phase of the South Omaha Campus project. The other phase includes the creation of the Automotive Training Center, a two-story academic building that will bring Automotive Technology and Auto Collision Technology together under one roof. The building, located on Edward Babe Gomez Avenue, is scheduled to be completed in 2021.





# LinkedIn Series

Get the most out of your LinkedIn profile with three noncredit classes.

- Leverage your LinkedIn profile: Jan. 13
- Optimize your LinkedIn network: Jan. 20
- Maximize career opportunities using LinkedIn: Jan. 27

All classes are offered via Zoom.

For more information or to register, visit [mccneb.edu/ce](https://mccneb.edu/ce).



Metropolitan Community College  
**CONTINUING  
EDUCATION**



## A black-belt résumé the Six Sigma way



### New training academy gives professionals a ‘proving ground’

Company A is hiring for a new operations manager. You want the job and have the experience. When Company A doesn’t call you for an interview, you’re left wondering “why?”

“There are certain things on résumés that companies look for. Often, it’s things such as continuing education classes or extra credentials someone has obtained over their career that sets them apart,” says Robert Caldwell, Metropolitan Community College workforce training manager. In this case, Company A might just be looking for a Lean Six Sigma credential.”

MCC launched the Lean Six Sigma Academy earlier this fall, giving area professionals another option to develop those needed skills in a part-time training format. Lean Six Sigma is a methodology designed to improve efficiency, eliminate waste, mitigate quality issues and improve working conditions to provide a better response to customers’ needs.

“This academy is a great way to boost your résumé quickly without going through years of extra schooling,” says Caldwell. “Though it’s offered in a convenient format, Lean Six Sigma is no walk in the park. It gives students valuable training in a setting outside of their traditional job. A proving ground of sorts. When companies see Lean Six Sigma training on your résumé, they’re going to be impressed.”

Offered through the College’s Workforce Innovation Division, the noncredit Lean Six Sigma Academy uses

a blended-learning format, a mix of in-person instruction and online coursework. The combination of Lean Six Sigma tools, methods and principles creates a methodology for improving an organization’s operations, mindset and culture. The academy courses emphasize interactive simulations, small group interaction and real-world projects. Upon completion of the capstone project, participants can earn a MCC Lean Six Sigma certificate and an American Society of Quality (ASQ®) certificate that are recognized and sought after in business and industries such as manufacturing, healthcare, transportation and more.

“A Lean Six Sigma credential validates that an individual understands how to apply a set a tools and techniques to help improve processes within an organization,” explains Caldwell. “This is a valuable skill-set to many employers as it demonstrates a job candidate has the ability to identify errors, identify opportunities for improvement and eliminate waste.”

At MCC, the yellow belt certification takes approximately six weeks to complete. To achieve a green belt certification, candidates must have earned a yellow belt, plus an additional three months of training to complete. A black belt certification could take six months or longer to complete, in addition to earning green and yellow belt certifications.

**For more information or to register,  
visit [mccneb.edu/lss](https://mccneb.edu/lss) or call 531-MCC-4771.  
You can also email [corporatetraining@mccneb.edu](mailto:corporatetraining@mccneb.edu).**





# A LESSON IN CARE

MCC Nursing  
grad overcomes  
monumental  
obstacles  
on path to  
degree, award

**W**hen she was a high school student, Patty Sieler always knew she wanted to work in the healthcare world.

“In high school, when I was 15, a friend invited me to go to St. Margaret’s Hospital in Kansas City to be a candy striper,” Sieler says. “I followed a nurse each day. I helped them with getting water for patients and I watched them. I was in awe in what they did and knew that was what I wanted to do.”

Sieler started nursing school when her family was stationed in Hawaii, but switched to being a full-time mom, home-schooling her seven children.

A few years ago, Sieler went through a divorce and found herself re-entering the workforce. She decided it was the perfect time to return to school, starting with the Metropolitan Community College Certified Nursing Assistant program and then the Practical Nursing program.

Following the completion of both programs, Sieler continued on to the Nursing associate degree program at MCC so she could become a registered nurse.

Sieler was an exemplary student, says MCC Nursing instructor Kristin Dolezal.

“While in the nursing program, Patty was very focused and driven to succeed,” Dolezal says. “In class, she was a commendable student, always giving her best. In the clinical setting, she was a caring and compassionate nurse to her patients.”

Sieler was caring and compassionate toward her fellow students, as well. She helped organize a spaghetti dinner fundraiser for a classmate who needed help with medical bills.







“Despite the challenges, Patty was dedicated to fulfilling her goal of becoming a nurse ... She never lost sight of that goal and persevered through some really difficult times.”

“I walked into the office one day and some of the students were trying to do a fundraiser for a fellow student. I contacted my old general manager at a restaurant I used to work at, and he said they would donate food,” she says. “I made several trips when we needed more food. We were able to raise a lot of money.”

Everything was going smoothly heading into Sieler’s final quarter at MCC. Then in March, she felt sick. Soon, she was diagnosed with the new novel coronavirus, the infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2.

“I don’t know where I got it,” she says.

It started with a fever, Sieler says, after leaving her job for the night at Methodist Heart Consultants. Then her whole body was achy and tired. The entire sickness and healing took nearly two months.

“It felt like an elephant was sitting on my chest. It felt like I was trying to breathe through a funnel. I had pneumonia,” she explains. “It went on for a long time.”

Despite being exhausted and sick, Sieler never missed any classes. MCC had already shifted to online learning in response to the pandemic, so Sieler was able to attend all her classes virtually.

“I would take a test online and then go back to bed,” she says with a laugh. “Finally, I started getting better. The only focus I had was school. I missed about two months of work from being sick.”

Sieler returned to work for a short while, but then her mother, Elsie, had a stroke.

“I was trying to study and I turned around and my mother was standing behind me but wasn’t speaking,” she says. “My mother knew two things: get to Patty and don’t forget your teeth. She never let anyone see her without her false teeth. She started to cry and then she was just gone. I called 911 because I had learned the signs to look for in nursing school.”

Elsie was taken to Lakeside Hospital and rushed into surgery. Sieler wasn’t allowed to visit yet, after having tested positive for COVID-19. Elsie was initially in the ICU, then moved to a rehab area.

“They knew we couldn’t go in since I had COVID,” she says. “Once she moved over to rehab, we could see her on Mother’s Day through a window. She couldn’t really talk much. She only said a few words. She would mouth ‘go home.’ She just wanted to go home.”

Sieler wanted to be able to care for her mother in her home. Friends from her church helped turn the basement into a “granny cottage,” with its own sidewalk and entrance, bedroom and finished bathroom. As a result, she and her daughter Melissa were able to watch Elsie around the clock.

“One person always sat with her. We wrote down everything she said. We kept a log of things she said like ‘I love you.’ She would just say really sweet things. If she needed anything, we were right there. Every two to four hours, we would switch,” she says.

Ten days later, Elsie passed away. Sieler says there are days it doesn’t feel real.

“You don’t really grasp how much has happened in such a short period of time,” Sieler says. “My mom was an

amazing lady and she just wanted to come home and be home. We were going to do everything we could to do that for her. She had worked hard her whole life through some tough situations. She worked three jobs for us. She used grocery money to buy my first prom dress. So how could I say no to that?”

Through everything that happened to Sieler between March and May, she was able to complete the MCC Nursing program. It shows what kind of nurse Sieler will be, Dolezal says.

“Despite the challenges, Patty was dedicated to fulfilling her goal of becoming a nurse,” she says. “She never lost sight of that goal and persevered through some really difficult times. This speaks volumes to the passion she has in caring for others and becoming a nurse.”

That passion and hard work didn’t go unrecognized. The MCC Nursing faculty decided to nominate Sieler for the DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nursing Students.

“The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nursing Students is a program, new to MCC, which provides an opportunity to recognize a nursing student who goes above and beyond to show commitment, care and compassion in their role as a nursing student,” Dolezal explains. “Patty did just that. She was an outstanding nursing student who shows compassion towards others.”

Dolezal, along with faculty and friends, were able to surprise Sieler with her award.

“Kristin says ‘Let’s meet for coffee.’ I didn’t know anything

about it,” Sieler says. “I was very surprised and honored. I appreciate it and it is so nice. It is a huge honor. I want to be the kind of nurse that brings honor to that [award]. It’s not about me, it’s about the people you take care of and helping them.”

Sieler is already working in the nursing field while she waits for her State Board of Nursing exams. She loves being able to comfort and calm people who are nervous about their medical procedures and recovery.

“Nobody wants to hear what you can’t do. But everybody wants to know what you can do,” she explains. “When you say ‘We can do this and this for you,’ it brings such comfort. Sometimes, it is just walking people through that. They want to know that this is real and what we can do for it.”

Sieler is so grateful for MCC helping her accomplish her career goals. Having faculty that are also cheerleaders, friends and mentors made such a difference, she says.

“They are great. You will have your favorite teacher who you know will go above and beyond and wants to make sure you are learning it. They want to make sure you accomplish your goals. They are a superhighway of knowledge and they care that you get it. I just love that.”

Now that she has earned her associate degree and is working at a job she loves, some might think Sieler is done with school. Not so fast.

“I think I’m going to go for my bachelor’s degree,” she says.





# DIFFERENT LEARNING MODES AT MCC MAKE LEARNING VERSATILE

Since opening in 1974, Metropolitan Community College has delivered education that is relevant and convenient for its students. Over the past four decades, the College has had to adapt and change how it delivers education to a student body that has continued to evolve. From floppy disks to cloud storage, a lot has changed.

In 2020, MCC has continued adapting, offering a variety of learning modes that are convenient, flexible and meaningful to its students during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the College has been offering online courses for more than 20 years already, they have added more online course formats and offerings to accommodate students in more programs.

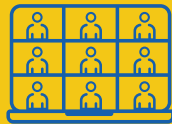
Whether students are returning to class, first-time or first-generation, they will be able to find:

## FACE-TO-FACE:



The most traditional course format, face-to-face classes have the instructor and students meeting in person. The classes meet at the same time in the same physical location every week. (Social distancing and other pandemic safeguards apply.)

## MCC LIVE ONLINE:



This remote learning style is a scheduled online course. Students log in at the same time on the same day every week to meet with their instructor and classmates.

## MCC ANYTIME:



This is a traditional online course. Students enroll and can do the coursework when it works with their weekly schedule. They can log in anytime, anywhere, completing deadlines along the way.

## MCC BLENDED:



Students will have a mix of online coursework and in-person classes in the combined format.

## MCC DUAL CREDIT:



For high school students looking to get a jump start on their college education, they can enroll in college-level programs, experience MCC and earn post secondary credits, all while in high school.

If students aren't sure which class style will suit them best, Student Services and academic advisors are available to help them decide on the right fit. It's important to remember that some classes are only offered in one type of format.

For those looking to take noncredit classes, MCC Continuing Education is offering hundreds of online courses through a partnership with Ed2Go, ProTrain and VisionPoint. The courses are interactive videos held entirely online and taught by expert instructors, making it fun and easy to learn at home. Those interested in enrolling can see the current course catalog at [mccneb.edu/ce](https://mccneb.edu/ce).

To learn more about getting started online, visit [mccneb.edu/elearning](https://mccneb.edu/elearning).



## Support MCC students by giving to:

- Student Food Insecurity Fund
- Scholarships
- Academic Program Growth Funds

Give the gift of education.  
Visit [mccneb.edu/foundation](https://mccneb.edu/foundation) or call 531-MCC-2346.



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# MCC becomes first community college to offer AFCPE certification pathway



**MCC is the first community college approved to provide this curriculum.**

**P**rior to this year, becoming a certified financial counselor or planner meant years of schooling and prep courses. Not anymore. Thanks to forward-thinking leadership at Metropolitan Community College, the College's Financial Counseling program has been approved by the Association for Financial Counseling and Planning Education (AFCPE)<sup>®</sup> as a Registered Education Program. The announcement makes the MCC program the first at the community college level to offer its students a streamlined pathway to the Accredited Financial Counselor<sup>®</sup> (AFC<sup>®</sup>) certification, joining four-year schools across the nation.

The MCC Financial Counseling program can be completed entirely online, giving students the opportunity to earn a degree remotely while earning transferrable college credit. The program is the latest addition to the MCC Applied Finance Institute, which also includes a Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards registered program, a Real Estate program and an Insurance program.

"Given the financial challenges so many households are facing today, this is an important program addition for MCC students and stakeholders. Earning this valued professional credential will provide our students with a career path where they can positively impact the lives of others," says Lori Lothringer, Ph.D., dean of Business at MCC.

MCC students who complete the required curriculum in the Financial Counseling program will now have a chance to sit for a national exam and become an AFC<sup>®</sup>. It is anticipated that the demand for these financial professionals will continue to grow. As indicated on the AFCPE<sup>®</sup> website, the abilities of the AFC<sup>®</sup> include: educating clients about financial principles, assisting clients with overcoming debt, helping identify and modify money management behaviors, guiding clients in developing successful strategies and giving new perspectives on the dynamics of money in relations to family and friends.

"By incorporating the core competencies of the AFC<sup>®</sup> certification program into its curriculum, Metropolitan Community College is preparing students to approach personal finance from a lens of equity and empathy, while also providing them with holistic knowledge across the financial lifecycle," says Rachael DeLeon, director of Communications and Member Services for the AFCPE<sup>®</sup>. "This prepares students to meet people wherever they are in their financial journey and provide them with resources, education and guidance that supports their unique goals."

MCC Financial Planning program director Ashley Peters says she's excited to bring this opportunity to students.

"This will be a nice addition to our Applied Finance Institute and will complement our already existing

CFP-Board registered program. MCC is the first community college approved to provide this curriculum and the only educational institution in the country to provide credit to online students. People who are passionate about helping others now have an affordable program they can access from anywhere," says Peters.

**For more information, contact Ashley Peters at [adpeters1@mccneb.edu](mailto:adpeters1@mccneb.edu) or call 531-MCC-2400 for more information about this program and other MCC Business programs.**





## AROUND THE COLLEGE

### MCC CREATES NEW SCHOLARSHIP FOR RETRAINING INITIATIVE

Funded by the federal CARES Act, Metropolitan Community College has created the MCC Cares Scholarship, a one-time \$1,100 scholarship to be used for short-term training programs or toward an associate degree. The scholarship is part of the Department of Economic Development and Nebraska Department of Labor's Nebraska Workforce Retraining Initiative, helping those who have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic fallout as a result. MCC received more than \$6.5 million, which will go directly to individuals looking for skills that are in high demand through the scholarship.

Recipients of the MCC Cares Scholarship can expect to have many different options at the College, with both credit and noncredit

offerings. Credit offerings include Automotive Technology, Electrical Technology, Health Careers, IT, Welding Technology and more, all of which will put students on the path to a two-year degree. Short-term noncredit offerings include MCC Code School, Digital Marketing, Fiber Optics training and others. The scholarship covers tuition and fees for credit and noncredit courses.

"The goal of the MCC Cares Scholarship is to train unemployed and underemployed individuals in skillsets that will create pathways to fulfilling careers in various industries," says Tammy Green, MCC Workforce Innovation Division's Director of Workforce and IT Innovation. "Our business partners are one of the key components to this, opening up doorways for people in the Omaha area."

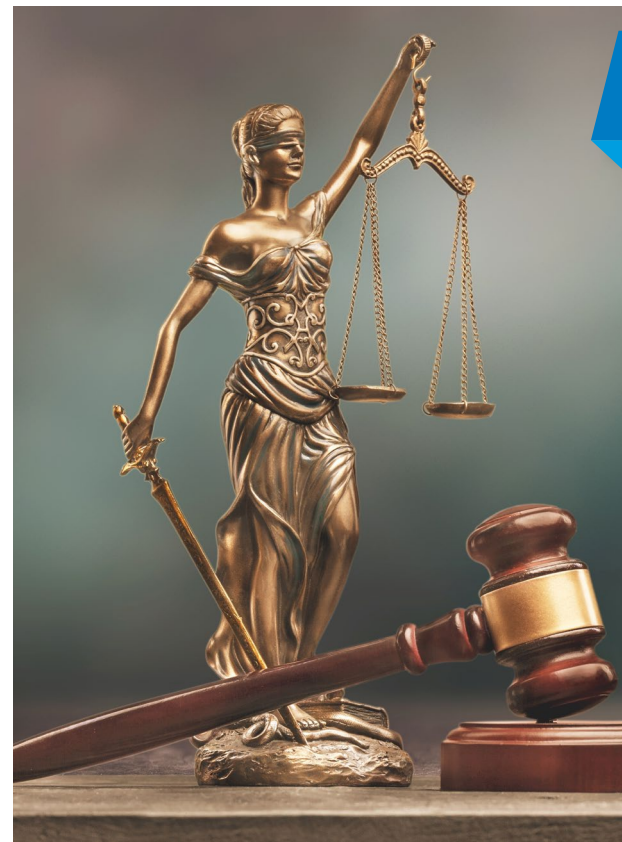
### RE-ENTRY PROGRAM RECEIVES \$175K GRANT FROM GOOGLE

Metropolitan Community College is the recipient of a \$175,000 grant from Google.org Impact Challenge, which will go toward the College's 180 Re-entry Assistance Program.

The MCC 180 Re-entry Assistance Program serves the currently incarcerated and released populations, helping individuals transition and achieve their education and employment goals. The program has both credit and noncredit classes and includes services such as basic skills training, coaching and tutoring, employment support and other vital components to a successful transition.

"Thriving communities are built on second chances. MCC's re-entry program helps participants build their strengths into career success," says Randy Schmailzl, president of MCC.

Steve Fannon, program administrator for the Nebraska Department of Correction Services says, "opportunities through the MCC re-entry program provides a supported pathway to meaningful employment, better lives for individuals returning from incarceration, and helps make a safer community for everyone."



### MCC BECOMES FIRST LEGAL TECHNOLOGY CERTIFICATE PREP PROVIDER IN NEBRASKA

The MCC Paralegal and Legal Studies programs have begun offering the educational requirements leading to the Legal Technology certificate this fall quarter. Students who successfully complete the Laws Office Technology class will simultaneously fulfill the education requirements leading to the Legal Technology certificate.

This valuable professional credential is offered through the National Society for Legal Technology, an organization committed to the education of students and professionals who are learning essential technology that is critical to the legal workplace today.

This course is part of the MCC Paralegal and Legal Studies programs and can be completed entirely online, giving students the opportunity to earn a degree remotely while receiving transferrable college credit and valued work skills. MCC joins a national network of 180 two- and four-year schools across the nation in providing this educational opportunity.

### GATEWAY TO COLLEGE RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD

The Gateway to College program at MCC is a recipient of a Program Excellence Award from Achieving the Dream's Gateway to College national network for academic year 2018-19. This marks the third consecutive year that MCC Gateway to College has received the award, and the first time that the program has met all four benchmarks—graduation rate, persistence, grade point average and first-term classes passed.

In the same academic year, the program had more than 45 students complete, its highest number ever. For academic year 2019-20, that number was just short of 45. Gateway to College is an alternative for high school students who have become disengaged from traditional secondary school or have fallen behind for various reasons.

"Gateway to College supports our community by providing students an opportunity to complete a high school diploma while simultaneously receiving college credit. Students receive staff support every step of their journey. Through this guidance and accountability model, students can achieve personal and educational success, which in turn reflects in our achievement of the Gateway to College National Network benchmarks," says Jordan Pirtle, director of Secondary Partnerships and Gateway to College at MCC.





Metropolitan Community College  
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