

# Blackhawk Technical College: Increases fall enrollment for the 2017-18 school year

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JANESVILLE, WI - Enrollment is up at Blackhawk Technical College (BTC) for the fall 2017 semester according to Dr. Jon Tysse, Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness at BTC. Dr. Tysse reports unduplicated credit and pre-college student head count increased three percent compared to the start of the 2016-17 school year and the full-time equivalent (FTEs) credits have increased 6%.

“We’re extremely pleased with our enrollment numbers,” said Dr. Tracy Pierner, BTC President. “We feel strongly that the increase is a result of creating more flexible delivery models and schedules and making a stronger commitment to high school recruitment, however it’s also a reflection of the hard work and dedication by our faculty and staff.”

One year ago, Dr. Pierner started his tenure as BTC’s new president and immediately asked faculty to begin working on creating more flexibility in how course work was delivered and how classes were scheduled.

Two programs that made changes and are seeing immediate results are Welding and Automotive Technician. Welding, which adopted a scheduling system that allows students to enroll at almost any time during the semester, showed a 16% FTE increase after two weeks into the semester. The Automotive Technician program embraced a flex lab system, where student attendance times are flexible and the lab is open all day. The aftereffect is an 86% increase in FTEs.

According to Dr. Tysse, the Agribusiness, Human Resources, Emergency Medical Technician, Criminal Justice, Medical Assistant, Laboratory Technician Assistant, Physical Therapy Assistant, Diagnostic Medical Sonography, Pharmacy Technician and Nursing programs also experienced enrollment gains this year.

“Creating more options for our students is going to be an ongoing process improvement,” said Dr. Pierner. “The goal is to constantly improve our student-centered education, meaning we need to deliver it where they want it, how they want it and when they want it.”

In addition to expanding BTCs flexibility, the college also improved its enrollment of recent high school graduates by 50% compared to 2016-17.

“We want 30% of all graduating seniors to attend BTC,” added Dr. Pierner. “That’s the goal we’ve established in our new strategic plan. We believe we should be a first choice option for them.”

Moving forward, Dr. Pierner expects BTC to further grow high school relationships so that dual and transcribed credits options are more widely available at every school in both Rock and Green Counties.

Along with a ramped up high school recruitment plan and curricular flexibility, the development of new, innovative delivery models are also contributing to BTC’s success. In fact, three new delivery styles have been implemented this year including:

FlexLab MyEdChoice - where student lab attendance times are flexible and course content can be delivered either in the classroom, using video conferencing or online.

MyEdChoice — where students can choose from three different ways to attend each week/day either in the classroom, using video conferencing or online.

FlexLab Hybrid — where student attendance times are flexible, but must be done at the specified campus during open lab hours with the non-lab course content delivered online.

Dr. Pierner noted more changes to the college are still in the works. Seven new degree programs and five new apprenticeships were added to the 2017-18 BTC catalog and more additions are coming soon including a part-timer nursing program

scheduled to start in this spring.

“We’ve really just scratched the surface with what we can do here,” said Dr. Pierner.

#### ABOUT BLACKHAWK TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Blackhawk Technical College is a forward-thinking, proactive college that believes in real-world experiences and hands-on training in a diverse atmosphere. Our long-term goal is to redefine what a technical college is, through flexible scheduling and delivery models, a range of program offerings, partnerships with local employers, and world-class facilities with high tech equipment - including some you won't find anywhere else in the state of Wisconsin. BTC has five campus locations in Monroe, Milton, Beloit and Janesville and is a major provider of customized training and technical assistance for the Rock and Green County business community.