

SPRING 2025

Impact

WAUKESHA COUNTY TECHNICAL COLLEGE

INSTRUCTION UNRIVALED

MAKING AN IMPACT
WCTC Faculty

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District Ambassador

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Impact is published twice a year for the communities of Waukesha County Technical College.

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A Message from the WCTC PRESIDENT

The quality of any college can be described by one word – **faculty**. Without exceptional college faculty teaching in the classroom, lecture hall or lab, it is not possible to have quality embedded in the fabric of an institution.

At WCTC, we are fortunate to have the very best faculty in their field or discipline. And for our faculty, their qualifications extend beyond a standard classical education. They must also have actual experience in their field or industry. This is one of the reasons that our graduates are so well prepared when they enter the workforce or transfer to a university.

Whenever you see WCTC in the news, on social media or our logo throughout the region, I want you to know that the cornerstone of the College is our outstanding faculty. We intend to deliver the very best, and to do that, we need the very best. This edition is focused on our faculty, who are... **the best.**

Thank you for your support of WCTC.

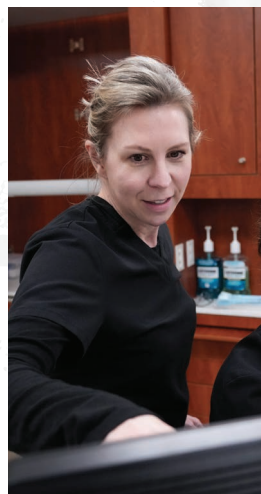
Rich Barnhouse, Ph.D.



Enjoy this spring edition of the Impact

WCTC Impact is designed to showcase stories of how our graduates, students, instructors, and community and business partners strive to make a difference in the world around them, and how WCTC has propelled them to succeed. This publication highlights the latest happenings, changes and improvements at the College, and it shines a light on student and alumni achievement.

INDELIBLE



IMPACT:

WCTC Faculty Shape Student Success

Waukesha County Technical College boasts modern state-of-the-art facilities, sophisticated equipment and technology, and a vibrant, beautiful campus – all of which are essential to the college experience. But Provost Brad Piazza, Ph.D., points out that the soul of the College lies elsewhere: **"Without the faculty, the rest is irrelevant."**

Students and alumni consistently mention instructors as having the biggest impact on their education, underscoring the heart of WCTC.

"They go above and beyond to help students," Piazza said, citing examples of faculty reaching out during a health crisis, responding to late-night assignment questions and offering flexible project deadlines.

WCTC employs about 207 full-time and 500 adjunct instructors whose expertise, passion and enthusiasm elevate the student experience.

Instructors teaching in occupational programs need a minimum of two years' practical experience in their field – but many possess significantly more, Piazza said. Those teaching in general education are required to have a master's degree in the subject they are teaching, or a master's degree in another area, plus 18 graduate credits in the discipline they are teaching.

Also, new full-time instructors are required to participate in a faculty development program called The Journey, which "teaches them how to teach," Piazza said. The goal is to support new faculty – especially those who are transitioning from industry to academia – through community building, collaboration, mentorship and resources for effective instruction.

WCTC's strength lies in its faculty, Piazza stressed, and he praised instructors for their unwavering commitment to student success.

Read on to learn about just a few instructors who make hands-on learning happen at WCTC. ■

MICHELLE GASPAREK

Baking and Pastry instructor

Enthusiastic about ensuring students are ready for real-world kitchens, Michelle Gasperek made the leap from a popular bakery to higher education.

"While working at Simma's Bakery, I noticed that many candidates lacked essential baking and pastry skills," she said. "This inspired me to teach and help future professionals develop those crucial skills."

For 24 years, Gasperek honed her expertise at Simma's as a pastry chef, production manager and wedding cake designer, earning recognition in top bridal magazines. Since 2012, she has shared her extensive knowledge and passion with WCTC's Baking and Pastry students.

In her classes, which cover basic to advanced baking and pastry techniques, Gasperek seamlessly blends practical insights with classroom instruction. She stays on top of current trends and encourages students to learn from mistakes. "When something goes wrong, I draw from my own experience or that of my employees to teach valuable lessons," she said.

"I love sharing my knowledge and skills with students."

Gasperek's educational background includes a diploma from Milwaukee Area Technical College along with pastry technique training from Kendall College, Le Cordon Bleu and the French Pastry School.

Since joining WCTC, she has made significant contributions, chief among them is getting students involved in service-learning. This bridges classroom learning and addresses community needs, while providing invaluable experience.

"These projects allow students to practice advanced pastry techniques, product costing, high-volume production and planning, while also increasing the visibility of the WCTC Baking and Pastry program in the community," she said. Projects have included baking pies and crisps for the Retzer Nature Center Apple Harvest Fest, creating hundreds of cookies for the Ronald McDonald Christmas Fantasy House, among others.

Additionally, Gasperek was recognized by the Wisconsin Bakers Association with the Baking and Pastry Instructor of the Year award for Excellence in Teaching in 2019.

Gasperek said it is rewarding to watch students master techniques that will set them up for a successful and rewarding career. "I love sharing my knowledge and skills with students." ■





DARLENE ROSE

Master Aesthetician instructor

Darlène Rose, a seasoned aesthetician with more than 14 years in the beauty and wellness industry, guides aspiring skincare professionals through WCTC's rigorous Master Aesthetician program.

Rose's career encompasses clinical skincare, spa management, massage therapy and advanced aesthetic procedures. Her professional journey provides students with practical insights.

She earned certification in massage therapy in 2010 from the Lakeside School of Massage, became a licensed aesthetician in 2016, and completed aesthetic instructor training in 2020. She holds various certificates in different skin care modalities – from laser tattoo removal to HydraFacial and others.

Rose, who operated a private suite day spa before becoming a full-time instructor, said her industry experience shapes her approach to education. "Teaching has always been a path I saw as a way to step out of the treatment room while still staying connected to the field I love."

Rose's transition to teaching stemmed from a recognized gap in instructors' familiarity with a greater range of skin types.

"I saw a need in the industry for educators with experience working with clients who have higher Fitzpatrick skin types (a skin classification system), as they are often underrepresented in aesthetic education."

"I wanted to share my knowledge with aspiring aestheticians to help them feel confident in treating diverse skin tones safely and effectively," she said.

Rose encourages her students through a supportive and reflective learning environment, but her students also motivate her.

"Working with students who have different learning styles challenges me to think in new ways. Every day, they teach me patience, inspire my creativity and remind me to trust both myself and the learning process," she said. ■

"Every day, they teach me patience, inspire my creativity, and remind me to trust both myself and the learning process."

Longtime IT-Cybersecurity Specialist instructor Mark Krzyszkowski has, for many years, been helping students navigate the complex cybersecurity landscape, aiming to deepen their understanding of protecting organizations and individuals from cyber threats.

Krzyszkowski brings extensive IT experience through 25-plus years of teaching, along with practical experience from a cross-section of IT roles, including working as a team lead, server administrator, email administrator and systems administrator at Electronic Data Systems (EDS) and as a network engineer at ProHealth Care. He holds a bachelor's degree in Advanced Technical Studies from Southern Illinois University and a master's degree in Post-Secondary Education from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

Sharing knowledge is what propelled him into teaching. "I enjoyed helping train my coworkers and customers at previous jobs and wanted to continue that," he said. As an IT instructor, Krzyszkowski teaches a host of cybersecurity classes, among them Security I and II, Intrusion Detection Systems, Digital Forensics and others.

"I really enjoy teaching students hands-on methods and troubleshooting skills," he said. "It's the most important skill to learn in the field of IT cybersecurity, which comes from my own troubleshooting background." His industry experience is reflected in the curriculum, focusing on critical thinking, practical applications and problem-solving.

MARK KRZYSZKOWSKI

IT-Cybersecurity Specialist instructor

Outside of required courses, Krzyszkowski is a proponent of keeping students engaged in opportunities that reinforce their learning.

"I think the hands-on, real-world activities help motivate (students), as well as tying in classroom content with extra-curricular activities such as cybersecurity competitions and events," he said.

Another of those activities is weekly Friday cybersecurity meetings, a casual exchange for students to ask questions, problem-solve and prep for competitions.



"We also keep a strong focus on the reason we need cybersecurity professionals—to protect our data, which is a pretty good motivator."

Like many instructors, Krzyszkowski enjoys the "a-ha" moment and when students find success after they graduate. "I love watching former students excel in their careers and helping them 'give back' by coming in for class talks, judging competitions and more." ■

If you ask Jaime Manuel Flores why effective communication is essential, he'll tell you it's not just a question he asks his students; it's also at the core of his teaching.

A faculty member in the General Studies and Liberal Arts programs – teaching communication, English and composition courses at WCTC for more than seven years – Flores is focused on helping students understand the "why" behind the lessons.



"Once students grasp these deeper connections, learning becomes meaningful and relevant," he said.

Flores studied communication and earned a bachelor's degree from the University of the Philippines in 1998, followed by a stint as a creative assistant at a film studio – but he didn't like the work culture. He realized teaching was his true passion, and a university mentor invited him to serve as a research assistant; he began teaching later that same year. He continued his education and earned a master's degree in Communication from Ateneo de Manila University in 2004.

JAIME MANUEL FLORES

General Studies and Liberal Arts instructor

"Higher education is my industry, and what makes it unique is its constant evolution," Flores said. "Conversations in academia are always shifting, which, in turn, influences our teaching methods and curriculum development in real time."

Beyond the college setting, Flores has also served in other training roles. This includes working as a communication skills trainer for corporations and nonprofits, and as a field researcher for international agencies like Oxfam and the United Nations. Additionally, Flores has facilitated journalism and ethics training programs in other countries, including Indonesia and Singapore.

"My professional experiences outside of the classroom have given me practical insights that I integrate into my teaching," he said.

Flores strives to make the learning experience positive and relevant for every one of his students. Adapting and changing his methods over time has kept his work dynamic and exciting.

"It just gives me a sense of fulfillment that no other job can offer," he said. "There's something special about knowing you're exactly where you want to be, and for that, I feel incredibly fortunate." ■

There's something special about knowing you're exactly where you want to be, and for that, I feel incredibly fortunate."

BRENDA KUJAWSKI

Leadership Development and Quality Management instructor

Brenda Kujawski had long desired to teach. She was initially steered toward engineering, on recommendation from a high school calculus teacher, but now has dedicated 25 years to WCTC as a faculty member – primarily within the Leadership Development and Quality Management programs.

Her journey to the classroom began unconventionally. After earning a bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering and a master's degree in Business Administration from Marquette University, she began working in industry. She later found her way to WCTC as a manufacturing specialist assigned to the Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership. This gave her a first taste of instruction through corporate training workshops and evening adjunct courses.

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NOOSHIN NEKOOEI

Electrical Engineering Technology and Electronic Systems Technology instructor



Since joining WCTC in January 2020, Nooshin Nekooei has brought her passion for electrical engineering and power electronics to the classroom, shaping the next generation of professionals in the Electrical Engineering Technology and Electronic Systems Technology programs.

"I've always had a strong desire to stay within the academic environment, which is what led me to pursue teaching," Nekooei said. Upon completing her bachelor's degree from Garmsa University in Iran and her master's degree in Power Electronics from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Nekooei decided to start teaching at technical colleges.

"I've always valued practical learning, and technical colleges focus on providing just that," she said. "I wanted to be part of an environment where students are gaining hands-on experience, rather than just theoretical knowledge, preparing them directly for the workforce."

While her background is primarily academic, she recognizes the importance of practical experience in preparing students for the workforce. "Although I didn't have prior industrial experience before joining WCTC, I took full advantage of the opportunities available to instructors at the College to stay connected with industry partners and ensure our curriculum aligns with current industry trends."

She participated in the Instructor Occupancy Competency Program, which allowed her to work directly with a local company and gain valuable industry insights. It was an experience, she says, that directly translates into more relevant and impactful lessons for her students.

"I've always valued practical learning, and technical colleges focus on providing just that."

She also credits The Journey for shaping her into becoming a better instructor.

Beyond her classroom responsibilities, Nekooei participates in the ANEW (Advancing Nontraditional Employment for Women) club, which is a student organization designed to encourage women who are preparing to work in nontraditional occupations – or careers that employ 25 percent or less of one gender.

For Nekooei, the rewards of teaching are multifaceted. "Being an instructor allows me to constantly engage with new ideas and challenge myself while helping others grow," she said. "What I like best is the opportunity to make a real impact on students' lives—whether it's guiding them to grasp complex concepts or watching them develop the skills that will shape their future careers." ■

Continued from page 7.

A full-time position opened in the Supervisory Management/Leadership Development program, and Kujawski was able to fully embrace her calling.

For the past 12 years, she has focused on leading courses that support WCTC management programs, such as Organizational Development, Applications in Leadership, Managing People, the Excellence in Leadership certificate series and others.

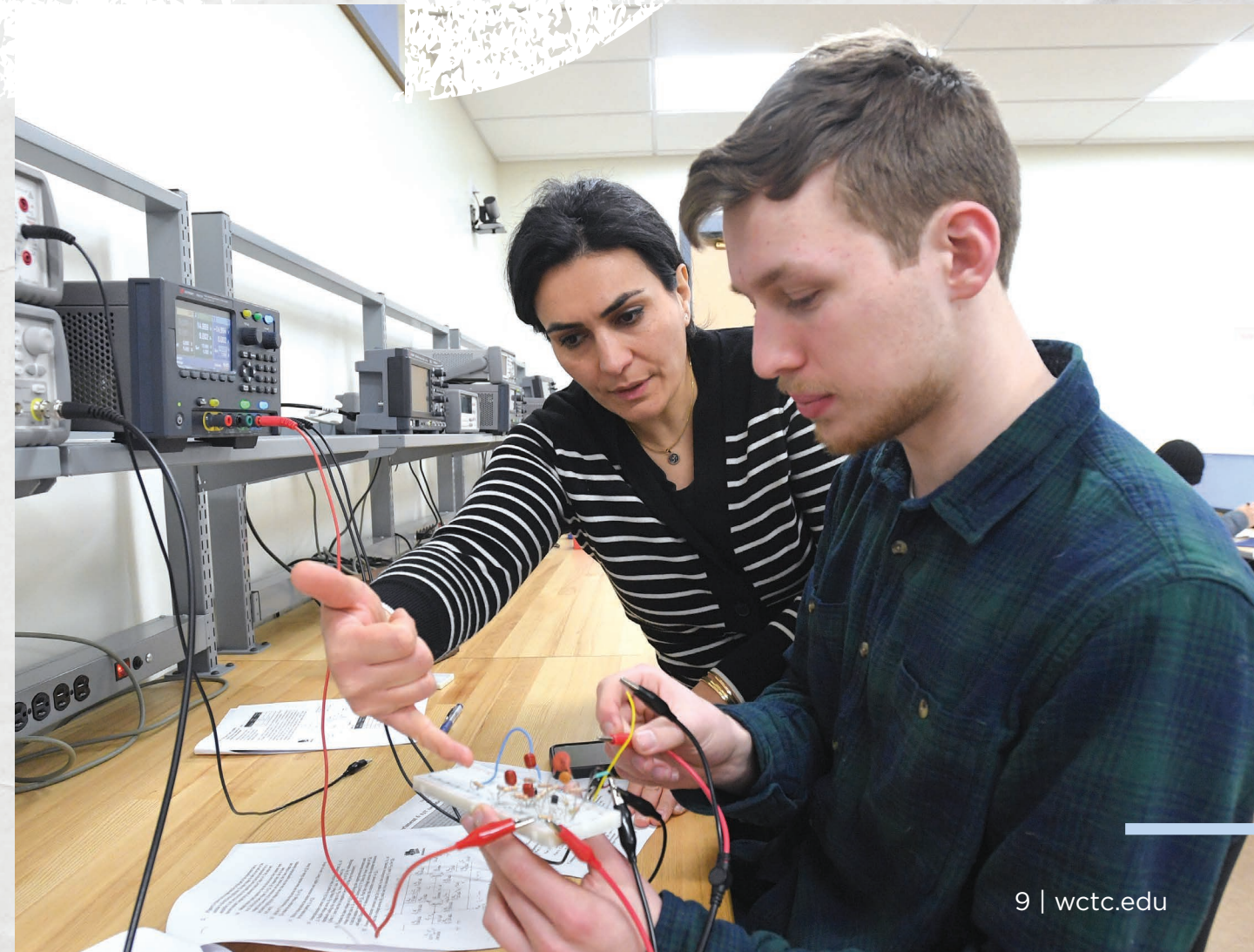
Prior to teaching, Kujawski's diverse roles in industry included buyer of engineered components and various operations management positions, which have profoundly influenced her teaching and curriculum development.

Kujawski incorporates this wisdom into her classes, sharing both positive and negative experiences from her industry days. Students appreciate these real-world examples, finding them relatable and insightful. This translates into skill-focused curriculum development and resonates with students who value real-world perspectives.

Kujawski's approach to motivating students centers on clear expectations, positive reinforcement and constructive feedback. "I strive to build a supportive learning community," Kujawski said. She finds the greatest reward in seeing students gain confidence and find success, particularly when they initially doubted their abilities.

"It's satisfying to help students develop practical skills," Kujawski said. "Hearing from former students and learning how their WCTC education has impacted their careers is truly fulfilling." ■

I strive to build a supportive learning community."





David Espurvoa has been a fixture in the Graphic Design program at WCTC for more than 20 years. A seasoned instructor, his career path weaves together years of practical industry experience and a passion for nurturing creative talent.

Espurvoa worked in the design field for 15 years before making the switch to teaching. Prior to joining WCTC in 2004, he served as the publishing director at Texas Lutheran University, creating a variety of print materials, and designing and launching the school's first website. He also worked in visual merchandising and packaging at Kohl's.

"The appreciation and encouragement for the hands-on experiences and industry background that WCTC promotes allows me to lend both credibility and relevancy to the classroom," said Espurvoa, who also advises the WCTC Graphics Club.

DAVID ESPURVOA

Graphic Design instructor

"Once they learn that they can contribute in meaningful ways to the development of their craft, the real learning begins."

He strives to adapt his curriculum in tandem with the advancements in technology that affect art and design careers.

"The graphic design industry has changed so much since the early '90s, and designers have had to learn and incorporate new technologies throughout," Espurvoa said. "Creatives must not only be receptive to new technologies but maintain the critical thinking skills that come from traditional disciplines."

Espurvoa's goal through teaching is to encourage students to embrace their own skillsets and perspectives, while tapping into their creativity. "I want them to realize that they are blessed to be interested in a field that allows them to communicate that unique vision to a larger audience," he said.

The biggest reward in teaching, Espurvoa said, is when students discover their own sense of value in the field they have chosen. "Once they learn that they can contribute in meaningful ways to the development of their craft, the real learning begins." ■

Some members of the WCTC faculty, at one time, sat in the very same seats their students do today. These alumni spent time working in their respective fields, and they returned to WCTC in a teaching capacity to share their knowledge with the next generation. Check out how **Sara Taft** and **Brandon Bergner** are helping prepare students for rewarding dental hygiene and fire/EMS careers by reading **bonus content** in our digital edition and online.



BRANDON BERGNER

Fire/EMS instructor and clinical/field coordinator



SARA TAFT

Dental Hygiene instructor

Continue to page 12 to read their full stories.

BRANDON BERGNER

Fire/EMS instructor and clinical/field coordinator

Brandon Bergner, a graduate of WCTC's Paramedic Technician associate degree program (and later, a graduate of the University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh's Fire and Emergency Response Management program), has returned to his roots.

His career in fire and EMS included time at a small volunteer department and expanded into a larger career organization. He served in different roles such as firefighter, EMT, apparatus operator, paramedic, lieutenant and training chief throughout his career. And now, he's back at WCTC sharing his extensive experience with aspiring first responders as an instructor and clinical/field coordinator.

"I have always enjoyed education and training throughout my time in fire and EMS," said Bergner, who, while working in the field, also assisted WCTC students with national registry testing. "This position allows me to be in the role more regularly and continue to develop new providers. I can now mentor at the origin, and we can continue to put great providers in the field."

I can now mentor at the origin, and we can continue to put great providers in the field."



In his current role, Bergner is the crucial link between WCTC students and a vast network of healthcare providers. He manages student placements across five major hospital systems along with several fire and EMS agencies throughout Southeast Wisconsin. He arranges diverse clinical experiences, from emergency departments to specialized units, such as the neonatal intensive care (NICU), forging strong partnerships that ensure students receive valuable experience.

Bergner's shared experience with students translates into a unique connection. He's not just an instructor; he's a mentor who understands the challenges they face. He recalls the late nights, the intense study sessions and the pressure of real-world scenarios - because he lived them.

"I remember being in the classes, the struggles of balancing work and school with the rigor of the academic program," he said.

Having experienced those challenges firsthand, Bergner is now dedicated to empowering his students and providing them with the necessary support and guidance to successfully navigate their academic journeys. ■

"Helping them graduate, build successful careers, and provide ethical patient care is incredibly fulfilling."

When Sara Taft graduated from WCTC in 2003 from the Dental Hygienist program, teaching in the program where she once was a student was never a part of her plan.

After working for a few years as a dental hygienist, both in general practice and periodontal specialty settings, she furthered her education, earning a bachelor's degree in Dental Hygiene from St. Petersburg University and had considered a career in research. Upon completing her capstone project - which involved teaching at WCTC - she soon discovered her calling: "I found great fulfillment in working with students in both didactic and clinical settings, and I knew this was the path for me"

She returned to WCTC in 2008 to teach on a part-time basis. In 2015 - the same year she earned her master's degree from East Tennessee State University - she took on a full-time faculty position at the College, and a few years ago, added the role of program coordinator. All the while, she has continued to practice clinically, and it's something that directly impacts her students.

"I incorporate real-life scenarios and practical examples into my teaching," Taft said. "This helps students connect

theoretical knowledge to real-world applications, reinforcing how the concepts they learn will support their future careers. These hands-on applications also promote critical thinking skills, allowing students to apply their knowledge effectively when treating patients."

Additionally, her practical experience deepened her clinical expertise and enhanced her soft skills, all of which shaped her into the instructor she is today. "The diversity of these practice settings provided valuable insights that I now bring into my teaching," she said.

Taft's own experience as a WCTC student has given her a unique perspective, allowing her to empathize with current students, understanding the challenges they face and the anxieties they may feel. As an educator, she is passionate about supporting her students along their academic path.

"The most rewarding part of being an instructor is knowing I'm making a difference in my students' lives," she said. "Helping them graduate, build successful careers, and provide ethical patient care is incredibly fulfilling. It's a privilege to contribute to the dental hygiene profession." ■

SARA TAFT

Dental Hygienist instructor/
program coordinator





MEET THE 2025-26 District Ambassador

International student and 2025-26 WCTC District Ambassador Dr. Karla Dieguez-Gomez says serendipity is what brought her to the United States from Cuba – and ultimately, WCTC.

As an emergency medicine and critical care physician at Calixto Garcia University Hospital in Havana for five years, she had experiences to work alongside medical experts from Froedtert Hospital in Milwaukee via research opportunities and trauma symposiums. After listening to a Froedtert physician at a conference, Dieguez-Gomez found herself wondering what it would be like to receive additional training in the U.S.

“I do enjoy reading and I do enjoy lectures, but **when you’re learning how to do something, you need to do it. That’s the best way to learn.**”

“I already knew that emergency medical services in Wisconsin were highly rated and among the best in the country – as well as their research experience – and I had always dreamed of being a part of it,” said Dieguez-Gomez, who also worked with traumatic brain injury patients and handled organ donation coordination. “I realized I wanted to extend my knowledge to prehospital services.”

Additionally, Dieguez-Gomez had a relative living in Wisconsin who had a connection to a WCTC Nursing student and highly recommended the College. Soon after, Dieguez-Gomez enrolled in the Fire Protection Technician program at WCTC. Since so many fire departments cover emergency medical services in the prehospital setting, Dieguez-Gomez said the skills and knowledge she would gain in the program would benefit her career. Already, in January, she became a nationally registered EMT.

BLENDING HOSPITAL AND PREHOSPITAL TRAINING

Before coming to the U.S. in March 2024, Dieguez-Gomez took a break from practicing medicine. She spent five months in Trinidad, preparing to interview for her student visa and immersed herself in an English-speaking culture in advance of her time in the U.S.

A native speaker of Spanish and fluent in French, Dieguez-Gomez then spent the spring and summer of 2024 improving her English skills through classes at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee to prepare for the fall 2024 semester at WCTC.

She had already earned her medical degree (2012-18) and completed her residency (2018-22) from the Universidad de Ciencias Medicas de La Habana, plus an additional year of organ donation coordination and trauma life support training, and she spent a total of nine years learning French through the Alliance Française de la Habana, including a medical and technical emphasis.



But despite her extensive medical training, what was missing from the mix was the prehospital component. She could help patients once they got to the hospital but wanted to have the skills to also help them before they arrived.

“It’s not the same – how you treat a patient in the hospital and how you treat a patient in the field,” she said. “While the medical aspects that I learned in the hospital setting largely overlap with my EMS courses, the approach is quite different – in addition to doing it in a whole different language and system.”

A HANDS-ON APPROACH

WCTC’s comprehensive approach to education, Dieguez-Gomez said, is one she has thoroughly embraced. “What I enjoy the most is how practical it is. I am a really hands-on person when it comes to learning medical (material). I do enjoy reading and I do enjoy lectures, but when you’re learning how to do something, you need to do it. That’s the best way to learn.”

She also appreciates the kindness she has received from WCTC faculty and staff. “Having to leave my loved ones back home was heartbreaking, but here at WCTC, I have found a community that has welcomed me with open arms and has become an unexpected second family to me.”

Because of her positive experience at WCTC, Dieguez-Gomez was interested in becoming an ambassador and looking at ways to highlight the advantages of the College and technical education.

“There are such beautiful and unique opportunities here, and sometimes people take that for granted,” said Dieguez-Gomez, who also works part time in Career Connections. “I have a different optic, and I do appreciate the little things. I hope to shine a light on different opportunities (students) might not know that they have.” ■

Leading the P_{aw}ck

FROM WCTC GRADS TO K-9 HANDLERS

AS TWO OF FOUR K-9 handlers with the Waukesha County Sheriff's Office, Anthony Schutte and Patrick Maylen's careers have been on a parallel course since their time at WCTC.

Schutte, who is paired with K-9 Chance, a Belgian Malinois, and Maylen, who is paired with K-9 Jackson, a Dutch Shepherd, share a common background.

Each deputy graduated from both WCTC's Criminal Justice associate degree program and the Law Enforcement Academy: Schutte in 2014; Maylen in 2017 and 2018. And even before earning these credentials, Schutte and Maylen had ties to the College. In high school, Maylen completed the Firefighter/EMT Dual Enrollment Academy and Schutte spent his junior and senior years serving in a manufacturing and machining Youth Apprenticeship.

**"It's a lot of responsibility
- and it's a lot of fun."**

Patrick Maylen, Waukesha Co. Sheriff's Ofc. K-9 Handler

While both initially considered different career paths, their dedication to public service led them to law enforcement. They have been patrol and field training officers,



SWAT team members and snipers, and firearms instructors - along with the added role of K-9 handlers. Maylen has been with the department for seven years - three as a K-9 handler, while Schutte has been with the department for 11 years - five as a K-9 handler.

A REWARDING INVESTMENT

Working with the K-9s requires extra training, but the investment of time and effort (and patience) is rewarding and leads to a special bond. Chance and Jackson live with Schutte and Maylen, respectively, and the handlers take care of the dogs' day-to-day needs - on and off duty.

"It's a lot of responsibility - and it's a lot of fun. Every day is different with him," Maylen said of Jackson.

Schutte, who works the night shift, said it's a benefit to have Chance work alongside him during late hours, since the calls are so varied.



"Third shift is either really busy or it's crickets," Schutte said. "Having the dog, you're generally going to stay really busy. I enjoy going to more of the high-risk calls, so being a handler, you're going - no question."

In addition to Waukesha County, Schutte and Maylen are also called to assist other departments that don't have K-9 units. "No two days are ever really the same," Maylen said, noting one day may involve working with the K-9 to detect the presence of drugs in a nearby vehicle, while another day may involve locating a missing person in another part of the region.

BECOMING PART OF THE TEAM

K-9s Chance and Jackson joined the sheriff's office by way of an agency in Dodge County that specializes in law enforcement canines, imported from Europe. Maylen explained that deputies meet multiple dogs and determine which ones would best fit their department's needs, based on temperament, drive, energy level and other factors. Once a K-9 is selected, the dog-handler team participates in five weeks of basic handler school, followed by 24 hours of intensive training per month.

Both dog and handler need to be certified, and the officer can only work with his or her assigned K-9.

The dogs are trained to assist in a variety of scenarios, including search and rescue operations, suspect apprehension, narcotics detection and more. Because of the role they play, K-9 handlers possess a deeper level of knowledge relating to certain crime scenarios.

"K-9 handlers are very well versed in the Fourth Amendment (search and seizure)," Maylen said. "We do go on a lot of searches, and the respective handler needs to know when they can and can't deploy their dog, and when they can and can't search a vehicle."

Schutte said the dogs are brave in the face of unpredictable situations - and loyal protectors of their handlers.

"You have this asset that could minimize a high-risk call or something that might put an officer's life in danger, and we can utilize them as a tool to make us safer," he said. "It's challenging on some days, but it's very rewarding." 🐾

Higher education leader

PHYLLIS KING, PH.D.,

joins WCTC in AI role



Veteran education administrator,

strategist, and community and nonprofit leader Phyllis King, Ph.D., recently joined WCTC as the new chief strategist for AI advancement. King will lead the growth and development of the College's artificial intelligence programs, strengthening collaborations and cultivating strategic partnerships in the community, statewide, nationally and beyond.

"Phyllis has an unbelievable ability to connect people and abstract ideas and synthesize them," said WCTC President Rich Barnhouse, Ph.D. "She works to create new partnerships and new academic opportunities that we wouldn't have considered or thought of because they seem too disparate."

Additionally, Barnhouse said, King is admired, respected and revered in many professional, academic, business and community circles, and her poise, grace and intelligence undoubtedly draw people in.

"She is unbelievably well known regionally and nationally," Barnhouse said. "Phyllis is going to amplify what we're doing in AI, connect us to critical parts of the economy related to artificial intelligence and really advance our mission as it relates to AI."

King's career spans leadership, research and strategic planning across higher education, healthcare and business development, and she is eager to be involved with the College's AI efforts.

"I really think (the College) is on the forefront of AI education and innovation," she said. "I attribute that to the leadership and the faculty WCTC has."

King's nearly 30-year tenure at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee included serving as associate vice chancellor/vice provost for Partnerships and Initiatives, where she led efforts to enhance student success through academic and technological collaborations. She served on the steering committee for the Northwestern Mutual Data Science Institute, worked with the MKE Tech Hub and Higher Education Regional Alliance, served on the steering committee of UWM's Connected Systems Institute and many others.

King will divide her time between the Applied AI Lab and community engagement, working closely with faculty, staff and industry professionals. "Building curriculum, building programs, building partnerships, launching new initiatives and innovation - that's been my space," she said. ■

SUMMARY OF **WCTC** PROGRAMS

Architecture and Construction

Building Trades - Carpentry
Refrigeration, Air Conditioning
and Heating Service
Technician
Concrete Finishing (ABC)
Electrician (ABC)
Plumbing (ABC)

Business, Management and Finance

Accounting
Human Resources
Marketing
Real Estate

Education

Cosmetology

Master Aesthetician

Interior Design

Graphic Communications

Health

Nursing
Dental Hygiene
Phlebotomy
Surgical Technology

Hospitality, Culinary, and Baking and Pastry

Information Technology

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Manufacturing

Welding
Robotics
Tool and Die

Protective Services

Criminal Justice
Emergency Medical Technician
Fire Protection Technician

Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)

Biomedical Electronics
Electrical Engineering
Manufacturing Engineering
Mechanical Engineering

Transportation

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