IVCC’s ‘life-changing opportunities’ to open in Ottawa

IVCC is about to become even more accessible and affordable to residents of Ottawa and eastern La Salle County.

This fall, IVCC will open its Ottawa Center at 321 W. Main St. to offer the general education courses university-bound students need for transfer, plus a full-CNA program, continuing education classes, and GED, ESL and citizenship courses.

IVCC believes the downtown campus will attract not only students from Ottawa but also Streator, Seneca, Marseilles, Grand Ridge, Serena, Sheridan and elsewhere. “This is another example of our drive to provide high-quality, low-cost and convenient higher education options for our district,” said IVCC President Jerry Corcoran.

The 11,000-square-foot facility will be renovated in time for the Aug. 18 opening of fall classes.

It’s the first full-service satellite campus in IVCC’s 86-year history and according to Ottawa Mayor Bob Eschbach, the Center will provide “life-changing opportunities” and will make IVCC’s slogan — No place so close can take you so far — “even more meaningful for our residents.”

Honor society membership keeps pace with enrollment

Just as enrollment is on the rise at IVCC, so is membership in the college’s academic honor society. Phi Theta Kappa’s Rho Omega Chapter inducted 62 students last fall and another 71 this spring.

PTK advisors LeeAnn Johnson and Eric Schroeder attribute the highest number of participants in years to an active and engaged group of student leaders on campus the past few years. IVCC President Jerry Corcoran said, “We’ve had exceptional student leadership this year and it is reflected in our PTK membership.”

To qualify for the invitation-only society, students must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.5 in at least 12 credit hours. With over 1,200 chapters in the United States and its territories, Canada and Germany, the international honor society for two-year colleges also promotes community service and leadership opportunities.

Left Photo: Christopher Ellsworth was one of 71 IVCC spring PTK inductees. Right Photo: IVCC President Jerry Corcoran with 2009 SGA President Tiffany Bruch and Vice President Kyle Wineinger.
NIU
President to keynote commencement

Northern Illinois University President John G. Peters, delivered the keynote address at IVCC’s 44th annual commencement May 21.

Peters, lauded for his leadership in the wake of NIU’s tragic 2008 shootings, has been dubbed the “students’ president” for consistently engaging with students during his 10 years in office.

Also at commencement, sophomore accounting major Tyler Swanlund of Peru read his winning Paul Simon Essay "IVCC: A Journey of Growth." About 170 graduates participated in the ceremony.

Kuester earns teaching excellence award

Speech and theatre instructor Dr. David Allan Kuester earned IVCC’s prestigious Stephen Charr Teaching Excellence Award for 2010.

Characterized as an “outstanding instructor” who “inspires students in the classroom and on stage,” Kuester is an accomplished playwright, producer and director now in his twelfth year at the college.

Kuester has received several writing awards, and this year, following a survey of its incoming students, Western Illinois University’s President’s office named Kuester a “Most Inspirational Instructor.”

CEO of machine tool giant is Alumnus of Year

Daniel D. Janka, President of MAG Global, largest machine tool company in the U.S. and third largest in the world, is IVCC’s 2010 Alumnus of the Year.

A native of La Salle, Janka first discovered how to program a Numerical Control machine in the early 1980s at IVCC while working toward his mechanical technology degree. Now, at just 47, he leads a company with about 3,500 employees in 27 facilities around the world; MAG generated $1.65 billion in revenue in 2008.

“My experience at IVCC clearly set the stage for what has been an exciting and rewarding career,” Janka says modestly. The 1982 IVCC graduate lives in Cincinnati with his wife and two daughters.
Over 250 guests attended the third annual IVCC-LPO Hall of Fame induction ceremony April 24 in the Cultural Centre.

The Foundation-sponsored celebration honored Eric Bryant, Dr. Bernard Doyle, Donald Fike, Don Haas, Dr. Jim Mini, Dr. Joe Mini, Don Menne, Lanny Slevin, Dr. Al Wisgoski and the 1979 IVCC football team.

One technician is needed for every 12-15 turbines, said Isermann. Entry-level wages are $24 to $25 an hour with experienced technicians earning $28 to $30.

But the work's not for everyone. In addition to regularly climbing 262 feet to the top of the towers, technicians must be skilled in electronics, electricity, Programmable Logic Controllers, hydraulics and mechanical maintenance, Isermann said.

IVCC worked with representatives of local wind farms and parks to develop the 35.5-hour certificate. Fall semester courses include equipment maintenance, AC/DC theory and circuit analysis, prototype design and fabrication, industrial first aid, OSHA, wind energy safety, and wind energy concepts.

With the unemployment rates for La Salle, Bureau and Putnam counties hovering between 16 and 17 percent, IVCC continues to look for educational programs that lead to high paying jobs.

Moving quickly, this fall IVCC will launch a two-semester Basic Renewable Wind Energy Technician certificate program to prepare individuals for entry level positions as wind turbine technicians. IVCC is buying over $40,000 in equipment for the initial program startup.

With over 500 turbines already in the district and 300 more planned or under construction, demand for technicians is strong, said Sue Isermann, Associate Vice President for Career and Technical Education.

Providing opportunity with green technology training

IVCC has two Gold Scholars for first time

IVCC sophomores Run Jin You of Princeton and Aseret Gonzalez of Earlville have been recognized among the top community college students in the nation.

The pair represented IVCC on the All-USA Community College Academic Team, a distinction bestowed by Phi Theta Kappa, the honorary society for two-year colleges.

As Coca-Cola Gold Scholars, You and Gonzalez are among the top 50 community college students in the country and will receive $1,500 each; their names appeared in the April 19 edition of USA Today.

“Having two Gold winners in the same year is rare,” said IVCC President Jerry Corcoran. “It speaks volumes about Run Jin and Aseret and the high-quality instruction they received from our faculty.”

Enrollment remains Strong

IVCC’s enrollment continues to surge following a record year in 2008-09 when the college served nearly 12,000 individuals.

This spring’s midterm headcount was up over 5 percent and credit hours up nearly 17 percent. In 2008-09, IVCC served a record 8,131 credit students and 4,156 noncredit students. The unduplicated headcount was 11,806 individuals served.

“Our district is taking advantage of IVCC’s high-quality instruction, affordable tuition and convenient locations and class times,” said President Jerry Corcoran.
Design work proceeds on Community Technology Center

IVCC’s proposed $30 million Community Technology Center project has advanced to the “design development” stage and is on schedule for its 2013 opening.

IVCC’s board has approved the schematic design and budget for the 76,000-square-foot facility, future home of manufacturing and high-tech career programs as well as student services such as admissions, financial aid and counseling.

“We’ve had a number of individuals working very hard on this and I am thrilled with the results,” said IVCC President Jerry Corcoran. “This is another example of good people coming together for a common cause and great things happening.”

At the end of design development, architects Paul Basalay and Dominick Demonica will take final drawings to the Capital Development Board for approval. The CDB is overseeing the project.

With the state providing $23 million for the project through a capital development bill, Corcoran described the CTC as “a once-in-a lifetime opportunity.”

He credits State Rep. Frank Mautino (D-Spring Valley) and State Sen. Gary Dahl (R-Granville) for leading the funding effort in Springfield. The college will raise $7.6 million in matching funds.

Specifically, the building will house career programs such as electronics, drafting, computer-aided design (CAD), computer networking, process operations, industrial electricity, adult education, manufacturing (machinist tool & die), HVAC, CNC, renewable wind energy maintenance, and industrial maintenance programs such as pneumatics, hydraulics and pipefitting.

The project will also lead to demolition of 40-year-old east campus ‘temporary buildings.’ Corcoran, who completed his second year as president in April, said the CTC will significantly bolster IVCC’s ability to serve the district.

“This project will enhance economic development, employment opportunity and alternative energy careers,” said Corcoran.