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ASU Mid-South Machining Program Earns NIMS Accreditation

Arkansas State University Mid-South's Machining Technology program has earned accreditation from the National Institute for Metalworking Skills. Many manufacturing industries use NIMS credentials as a basis for recruiting, hiring, placement, and promotion.



"This accreditation is the result of a rigorous examination determining that your program meets the quality standards as established by the National Institute for Metalworking Skills

on behalf of the nation's precision manufacturing industry," wrote James A. Wall, NIMS Executive Director, in a letter to ASU Mid-South Chancellor Dr. Debra West. "I join with the entire NIMS community and greater manufacturing industry in conveying our congratulations."

ASU Mid-South is the only educational institution in Arkansas to earn NIMS accreditation and is one of only a handful in the region. The closest accredited programs are in Hickman, Kentucky; Ellisville, Mississippi; Killen, Alabama; and Hohenwald, Tennessee. Fewer than 175 educational/training programs in the country are accredited by NIMS.

Pete Selden, ASU Mid-South Associate Vice Chancellor for Workforce Education, said the recognition sets the college apart from other institutions in the region that teach machining.

"Being accredited by NIMS shows industry, students, parents, and the community that our program is designed at a standard that is recognized by business and industry," he said. "It also means that our instructors are certified and that we offer our students those same certification opportunities to prepare them for great jobs."

"This designation exhibits our dedication to excellence, resulting in a graduate who is prepared with the technical skills for the modern-day workplace, specifically for contemporary machine shops and manufacturers with machining processes."



Gary Giordano, Lead Faculty for Machining Technology at the college, said the accreditation is a giant step for the college.

“It’s really exciting for our institution and our region,” he said. “Regional employers have called on colleges and technical schools to have their students earn NIMS credentials. Our students can now earn up to seven NIMS certifications which should allow them to be more employable locally as well as nationally. We are the only accredited school within a 150 mile radius of Memphis and are proud of our accomplishment.”

He pointed out the process has been a lengthy one.

“Getting accredited with NIMS has been a long journey for this institution,” Giordano said, noting that planning began in 2006-07, several years before he joined the college. “When I came aboard, I committed to the administration that it would get completed under my tenure, and thanks to Kelly Bearden (instructor), Virginia Gardner (Administrative Specialist), Pete Selden, Dr. Cliff Jones (Senior Vice Chancellor for Learning and Instruction), and Dr. Bob Gunter (Vice President for Workforce Education), it’s now a reality. The process is arduous but well worth it for our students.”

Accreditation involves a three-step process: registration of the program with NIMS, the completion of a self-study analysis, and an on-site audit. There are also credentialing requirements. Instructors must earn NIMS credentials in the modules that they instruct, and students must have earned credentials in the modules for which accreditation is sought.

Giordano and Bearden earned a combined 18 NIMS certifications during the 2013-14 academic year, an important step toward overall program accreditation.

In addition to national recognition, accreditation benefits include discounted testing fees for ASU Mid-South instructors and students at the NIMS online testing center. The accreditation will continue through July 14, 2020.

The purpose of NIMS national accreditation is to improve the quality of training programs as part of the countrywide endeavor to build and maintain a globally competitive workforce while providing career opportunities to employees. Formed in 1995 by the metalworking trade associations, NIMS sets skills standards for the industry, certifies individual skills against the standards, and accredits training programs.

For more information about the NIMS-accredited Machine Technology program or about ASU Mid-South's other high-tech training programs, visit the campus at 2000 West Broadway in West Memphis, call the Admissions Office at (870) 733-6728, email admissions@midsouthcc.edu, or see the website at www.asumidsouth.edu.