

Siemens Representative Provides Encouragement to WNC Mechatronics Certification Recipients

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The presence of a Siemens representative at Western Nevada College's Siemens' Mechatronics Level 1 certification ceremony on Sept. 25 added a rush of excitement and pride for the honorees.

Nolan Grice, the Central Region Consulting Business Developer for Siemens Technical Learning Services, made the trip from Houston to congratulate and interact with WNC's eight certificate recipients before and after they were honored by WNC Electronics and Industrial Technology Professor Emily Howarth.

"With the changes in manufacturing facilities, the timing is perfect for your future," Grice said. "It's not working with your hands any longer; it's a knowledge-based work environment. With your critical thinking, troubleshooting and strategizing skills, you should be a lot more confident going into the workforce. You will add value to your employer, create and bring new technology."

Receiving the internationally recognized Siemens Mechatronics Level 1 credential were William Adamson, Cody Broon, James Horner, Michael Lamendola, Jarod Lyon, Travis McDonald, Christopher Perdue and Luis Rizo-Rodriguez. The certificate recipients included two Tesla technicians from the Gigafactory, a technician from local aerospace giant Click Bond, military veterans, a high school senior and a full-time student.

The students completed an intense and rigorous two-week course during the summer, certifying that they can work as effective team members to operate systems efficiently with minimal downtime and demonstrate an understanding of how industrial components and controls interact. They also were able to effectively localize malfunctions and identify their causes and solutions.

As a result of their Level 1 certification status, the students have become more marketable to Northern Nevada manufacturers, and for those already working for area manufacturers, they have become a greater value to their current employers. Many of

the Level 1 certificate recipients have remained in the program and are taking Level 2 training with Howarth this fall.

“I wanted to expand my knowledge in troubleshooting and make myself more desirable for employers to hire me,” said Christopher Perdue, formerly of Click Bond and now is Howarth’s teaching assistant.

WNC is Siemens’ lone partner school in the Western United States to offer this special set of teaching and learning methods developed over 25 years through Siemens’ technical schools in Germany. The conglomerate company, headquartered in Berlin and Munich, is the largest industrial manufacturer in Europe with international branch offices. Siemens focuses on industry, energy, health care and infrastructure and specializes in automation, electrification and digitalization.

Mechatronics is a vendor-neutral certification program, providing an internationally recognized endorsement for knowledge and skills in the areas of electrical, mechanical, fluid power and PLC control perspectives in complex systems.

“Whatever brand of equipment and software a company is using, Level 1 certification identifies machine operators and production associates who are ready to move to up toward a technician role,” Howarth said. “This program of study for college credit builds a student’s confidence as a technical team member and grows the ability to foresee problems with systems.”

The Mechatronics Level 1 credential also is a great professional feather in the cap of a technician who already works in a support position as he or she progress to Level 2 certification, which is focused on repair and troubleshooting, Howarth said.

“MechTech is our unique ‘bootcamp’-style program where students attend class from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. for two weeks. We are very focused in the lab and are able to give our attention to the course materials, activities and equipment in small team formats as the troubleshooting toolkit and mindset are developed by interacting with a functional system.”

Students must complete preparatory online coursework in advance of the program, ensuring that everyone has the foundation of knowledge they need so that they can build upon it to successfully pass the rigorous certification exam.

“This is not a lecture-based course or entry-level program; students come to class prepared and engage throughout the working lab sessions,” Howarth said. ‘Success in our mechatronics certification courses depends on the combination of open minds and collaborative efforts, fueled by a desire to develop new approaches. “The determination and dedication of the students as we work through long and challenging days is a big part of this prestigious credential, demonstrating the work ethic that our leading Northern Nevada employers are looking for in their technical teams.”

MechTech sessions are being scheduled now, so interested technicians and employers should act soon to reserve a seat in these small group classes.

“Siemens and WNC have partnered to recognize these individuals, and to provide these unique opportunities for professional development,” Howarth said. “Companies who are forward-thinking, leveraging technology to improve efficiency and production, and entering the next generation of Industry 4.0 need these high achievers to implement and support those solutions.”

To learn more about Applied Industrial Technology and Mechatronic programs, contact Howarth at Emily.howarth@wnc.edu.

CAPTION: Western Nevada College honored eight recipients of Siemens Mechatronics Level 1 certification during a ceremony on Tuesday, Sept. 25 in the Reynolds Center.