



Courtesy of Waukesha County Technical College

Cosmetology student Olivia Perugini styles the hair of Yaritza Ascenio in the new salon space at WCTC. The salon features 16 state-of-the-art stations for cutting, coloring, and styling hair.

WCTC unveils new salon space

College now offering more spots in cosmetology program

By Isabella Kostolni
 ikostolni@conley.net.com
 262-513-2651

PEWAUKEE — The first floor of Building S on Waukesha County Technical College's main campus has undergone some massive changes over the last six months. In February, the old fitness center was dismantled to allow the expansion of WCTC's cosmetology program — a field of study that has seen significant growth in the past few years.

Associate Dean of Community & Professional Services Timothy Holloway says that prior to the expansion, WCTC accepted a total of 48 students into the program each year. But with the number of applicants soaring, the college had to do something to accommodate the growing interest in cosmetology.

"We were seeing as many as 120 to 130 students apply for the program," Holloway explained. "I worked with the [Institutional Research and Effectiveness unit] internally at our school and determined that there's some longevity here. So we began looking at funding sources and were able to find an expanding industry grant."

WCTC received a \$300,000 grant from the Wisconsin Technical College System. With that money they were able to purchase additional iPads and supplies for students and hire four more faculty members for the cosmetology program. To help build up the program even more,

WCTC constructed a state-of-the-art salon space, along with a new classroom and laundry facility with four washers and five dryers. The new facilities were unveiled this month, at the start of the fall term.

The new salon is outfitted with 16 stations for cutting, coloring, and styling hair. Holloway says WCTC did ample research to ensure that the college's salon aligns with industry standards.

"We were very intentional about making sure the salon reflected the modern day salon," he said. "So we looked at a number of different salons throughout the area [and] different technical schools' setups, where we determined what is best practice."

Holloway reports that students and staff are already putting the salon and classroom to good use. "Our semester started last week and we are currently in the new space six days a week, utilizing both of our areas," he said.

Because of this expansion, WCTC was able to double its number of cosmetology cohorts. Now, 96 students can be accepted into the program each year.

Though there are far more admitted than year's past, Holloway notes that the quality of education is just as good, if not even better, thanks to the additional faculty members.

"With more students we needed more instructors," he said. "Not only teaching, but the guiding and coordination of the many activities that we do in our program."

Thanks to that grant, the college hired three full-time instructors and one instructional support technician to help facilitate learning.

These new instructors will help teach cosmetology students about the latest practices and techniques in the industry. They'll also utilize the iPads purchased with the grant money to streamline student-client interactions.

"With the new salon we have an opportunity to really focus on being as digital as we can," Holloway said. "Our plan is to move all of our in-salon [documentation] to electronic. The hope is our checkout form, our customer feedback form will all be put on these iPads so that it can be easily accessed, easily stored by the student and instructor. That's something that I have been wanting to do for years, and it's just come to fruition."

Looking ahead, Holloway is confident that this expansion of the cosmetology department will only bolster WCTC's reputation as leaders in higher education.

"There's a lot of organizations, a lot of educational areas that are not actively looking at new ways to bring students in," he said. "This shows that we are making bold moves, moving toward the modern college, and trying to look at new ways to attract students, retain students, and educate students."

To learn more about or apply for WCTC's cosmetology program, visit wctc.edu/academics/programs/cosmetology/.