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To: [Scott C Redding](#); [Shelly L Armstrong](#); [Archive](#)
Subject: Welding Engineering Technology Program Expands to Meet Needs
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Attachments: [Welding_Summer_Students.jpg](#)



NEWS SERVICES

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Welding Engineering Technology Program Expands to Meet Needs

BIG RAPIDS – Most students start their college programs in September or January; Ferris State University’s Welding Engineering Technology program has introduced May as another option.

In 2005 the admission standards for Ferris’ Welding programs were increased. In turn, so did the demand for the programs. As the number of Ferris’ Welding Technology associate degree students increased, so has the Welding Engineering Technology admissions – reducing the number of community college and other transfer students allowed into the program.

Welding professor Dave Murray approached the welding faculty in fall 2008 to open a summer session to meet the needs of the transfer students. The department formulated an academic plan and presented it to the College of Engineering Technology leadership in January 2009. Once approved in late March, the new session was filled within two weeks, said Jeff Carney, professor and department chair of Welding Engineering Technology.

“In recent years we have only had one or two transfer students, and they didn’t bond as quickly,” said Murray. “The students we have this summer are a very tight knit group and really feel like they are a part of Ferris.”

Grand Rapids Community College transfer student Jeremiah Blackburn (Grand Rapids) had

been trying for a year and half to get in the program. In that time, from receiving an associate degree, he has been working and does not find the change to be that different – except for the atmosphere. “It is more relaxing than being on the floor for eight hours a day.”

Unlike Blackburn, Pat Rota (Danville, N.H.) recently graduated with his associate degree from Manchester Community College. Due to the timing of the program he did not walk at his graduation ceremony.

Rota’s path to Ferris has also been over a year in the making. He had other choices closer to home in welding or manufacturing engineering programs. With the addition of the summer session, he was able to attend his first choice. “Ferris offers more hands-on coursework, where the others are more theoretical,” said Rota. “Things have worked out, I’ve been lucky so far.”

Although these students will be on-campus all summer, they are not the only ones that the welding faculty will be instructing. This summer also marks the first time that The Great Lakes Maritime Academy will be partnering with Ferris to complete their welding requirements.

The program, open to 15 students, started in May 2009 and will conclude August 2011. A majority of the students transferred from schools within Michigan. The Welding Engineering Technology program, like all CET programs, follows a set track. Not only does starting these students in the summer meet the needs of industry by training future welding engineers, but it allows use of space that is normally dormant during this time of year.

“We were able to accommodate transfer students that would not have been able to attend,” said Carney. “From the time we contacted interested students, the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.”

Ferris is one of only five schools in the U.S. to offer a bachelor’s degree in welding. There is close to 100 percent job placement for the graduates each year. Please visit www.ferris.edu/welding for more information on Ferris’ Welding programs.

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