



**Wharton County
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A HANDLE ON TECHNOLOGY

WCJC electronics instructor Kucera inspires students and staff alike

WHARTON, TEXAS – When it comes to providing opportunities for his students, Wharton County Junior College instructor David Kucera believes in going the extra mile.

An instructor of electronics with 17 years of experience under his belt, Kucera makes it his personal mission to help his students find a rewarding career after they leave his classroom.

“We as faculty are open to review students’ resumes and help assist them in any way we can,” Kucera said. “We keep in contact with area industries and a lot of these companies want to hire WCJC graduates. They tell me that they know they can put our graduates to work.”

As chair of WCJC’s Technology and Business division, Kucera stays abreast of the ever changing landscape of electronics-based careers as well as more traditional business-related jobs. Programs offered in his division include everything from office administration to electronics engineering to computer simulation/game development.

Kucera said many companies will send job applicants to WCJC to obtain a specific skill set prior to employment. When those students graduate, they have a job waiting for them.

“We have a lot of different programs and a lot of different areas of study and companies stay in touch with us,” Kucera said. “There are plenty of really good, high paying jobs out there with great companies.”

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, annual median salaries for computer programmers and computer animators – both of which fall under WCJC’s computer simulation/game development associate degree program – are around \$71,000 and \$58,000, respectively.

Dr. Amy LaPan, WCJC’s Dean of Vocational Instruction, credits Kucera with fostering a highly-regarded program.

“The electronics program he helped to build prepares students for competitive wage jobs with firms that require a high command of electronics engineering knowledge,” LaPan said.

Kucera said many of the graduates from his two-year programs command more lucrative salaries than graduates with bachelor’s degrees. And that fact transcends gender boundaries.

“We have more women in the technical programs now,” he said. “It pays just as well for women as it does for men.”

It’s not uncommon for Kucera to see several members of the same family come through the program.

“We get a lot of generational return students,” he said. “They had other people in their family that were successful and that recommended they come here for a degree.”

Kucera comes from a long line of WCJC graduates himself. His mother, Suzanne, graduated from WCJC and worked in the college library. His father, David Kucera Sr., attended WCJC for mechanics and his brother, Jason, graduated from WCJC before obtaining a computer science degree from Texas A&M. His wife, Inez, also worked for WCJC until just recently.

As for Kucera, after graduating from Boling High School he obtained an associate’s degree from the WCJC electronics program before earning his bachelor’s degree from the University of Houston-Victoria. After co-owning an electronics repair shop in El Campo for more than 10 years, Kucera was hired as part-time faculty at WCJC. The rest, they say, is history.

“I came back here with the intention of filling in for one year,” he said. “I’ve been here ever since.”

LaPan said Kucera is an inspiration to both his students and his co-workers.

“David is a practitioner of a high level with an uncanny aptitude for knowing how to capture and maintain the attention of his students,” LaPan said. “His strength to the college is his ability to mentor novice instructors, permitting them to learn effective teaching practices to better reach students.”

Kucera remains modest in the face of such praise. To him, teaching is simply something he enjoys doing.

“I feel like I’m really lucky because I fell into this by accident,” he said. “I love it. I can’t think of a better place to be than here at WCJC.”

For more information on WCJC’s Technology and Business programs, visit the college’s website at www.wcjc.edu