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From the President

In a recent survey in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* sixty-two percent of the university Chief Financial Officers who responded, when asked whether the worst of the financial crisis had passed at their institutions, said no. It’s clear in looking at recent State of Minnesota budget projections our crisis is not over. So what can and should we be doing?

One answer would be to hunker down and cease moving forward; however, as this issue of the magazine demonstrates, that is not what we’ve chosen to do at Ridgewater College. Our approach has been to focus on building upon the core strengths of Ridgewater College while engaging our internal and external communities in creating a vision of the future that supports growth and success for the learners we serve.

For example, as our cover story indicates, we have built upon our success in the use of simulation in health care professions (using private dollars raised via a Foundation capital campaign) to create and launch a mobile simulation laboratory. Our feature story details how we have built upon our efforts to offer online courses to now offer fully accredited online degree options. Our carpentry program has worked to secure grant dollars and collaborated with local architects to build a LEED certified model home and thus train our students in new technologies and techniques.

At the same time that we move forward, we continue to recognize and celebrate the quality of our core strengths. You’ll read about award-winning faculty in agriculture, music, chemistry, and securing award-winning national certification for our auto body program. You’ll learn about the breadth of our student life opportunities and the quality and options we offer in our chemistry program.

As often happens in an economic downturn, the college finds itself with growing enrollment and shrinking resources. One of the statements about leadership that I first encountered in the Blandin Foundation’s Community Leadership program goes something like this: Leadership — you have to do it yourself, but you can’t do it alone. Now, more than ever, we need every voice at the table — if Ridgewater College is going to grow and prosper we need your help, your advice, your recommendations, and yes, your resources. In exchange, we pledge that the college will strive to continue to build on our strengths and create a future that meets the needs of the learners who come to us. As always, I hope you enjoy our magazine!

Dr. Douglas W. Allen
President
**10 Questions**

Erika Kellen, Ridgewater’s Director of Student Life, answers 10 questions related to what you can expect living life at “The Ridge.”

**News & Notes**

The Auto Body Collision Repair program earns higher certification, the Carpentry program receives funding to build “green” house, multiple instructors honored by the FFA and MNSCU, three new online degrees offered and with enrollment on the rise — there is a lot going on at Ridgewater College.

**Cover Story:**

**Medical Manikins**

The only thing that limits us is our own imagination — one thing is certain: Ridgewater College will not only be along for the ride, but leading the way.

**Table of Contents**

- Winter 2009
- 10 Questions
- News & Notes
- Cover Story: Medical Manikins
- Practical Advice
- Online Learning
- Great Chemistry
- Alumni Spotlight
- Ridgewater Info
10 Questions

In this issue’s ten questions column, we catch up with Erika Kellen, Ridgewater’s director of student life, as she fills us in.

1. What do you like most about directing Ridgewater student life activities?

My job is incredible. I feel it is important that we are educating our students outside of the classroom in terms of relationship building, cultural learning and leadership development.

2. What is the most challenging part of directing student life?

Being in two places at once! I oversee the Student Life departments on both campuses, and it can be very interesting to make sure events are taking place successfully — sometimes simultaneously.

3. What are some of the most popular entertainment/activities that you’ve set up?

Our Welcome Day and Homecoming events. The past two years we have had a dunk tank at our Welcome Day event with faculty and students volunteering to be dunked; even President Allen has participated to help raise student scholarship dollars. We also have hosted a variety of comedians and speakers such as Chad Crittenden from CBS’s Survivor who shared an inspiring message on overcoming physical and mental challenges in his life after losing a leg to cancer.

4. Why is student life important to a student’s overall college experience?

Student life brings programs that enhance the academic, cultural, and physical well-being of the student body. Creating a well-rounded student is highly regarded in the “real world.” Students leave this campus equipped with skills that set them apart from other graduates when adding student life activities to their résumé.

5. Tell us more about what makes Ridgewater student life so great?

What allows us to offer so much is due to the great support system within our Ridgewater Community. Our faculty, staff and administration have been very supportive of Student Life.

6. How many different clubs are there at Ridgewater?

We have 45 clubs that are active on both the Willmar and Hutchinson campuses. In addition to technical program clubs, there is a wide array of campus-wide clubs, from nationally affiliated Phi Theta Kappa and Post Secondary Agriculture Student Association to our own Multicultural Club and P.R.I.S.M. groups.

7. What are some other ways students at Ridgewater can be active outside the classroom?

Ridgewater Student Life has an array of options, including athletics, arts, choir, theatre, and student government. We strive to create a balance of opportunities for our students to get involved with on each campus.

8. Are athletics considered part of student life?

Yes, they are. We are very lucky to have a large variety of college athletics at Ridgewater. Varsity athletics include men’s football, basketball, baseball, and wrestling, with soccer included at a club level. Women’s teams include volleyball, basketball and softball. Co-ed golf is also available for students.

9. What about intramural athletic opportunities?

Some of the options students can choose from are basketball, flag football, volleyball, disc golf, and golf. All students can participate, and they are offered at various times of the year.

10. Does student life play a role in the decision-making process of high school students considering a college?

Although programs of study and affordability will always be in the top tier of how students choose their college, student life does influence students who have interests in athletics, fine arts, and many other student life areas.

About Erika

Erika graduated with a BS in Mass Communications from St. Cloud State University where she got her start working with college students as a work study employee in the Admissions Office. She has gone on to earn a Master’s degree in Higher Education Administration. Armed with 11 years of experience and a passion for helping students make the most of their college years, Erika is working to make life outside the classroom at Ridgewater both educational and entertaining.
Auto Body Collision Repair Program Receives National Certification

The Auto Body Collision Repair Program at Ridgewater College has received certification by NATEF and the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE).

To achieve this important recognition, the college’s auto body program and faculty underwent rigorous evaluation by the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF). Nationally accepted standards of excellence were used in areas such as instruction, facilities, and equipment.

“This is great news for automotive-minded young people and their parents,” said Donald Seyfer, NATEF Chair. “Because this program increases cooperation between local education and industry leaders, it gives added assurance that Ridgewater College’s graduates will be employable entry-level technicians. As a result of the quality education provided by Ridgewater, the motoring public will benefit since better repair technicians will join the workforce.” Upon completion of the evaluation, NATEF recommended that Ridgewater be certified by the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE). ASE is a national non-profit organization that tests and certifies repair technicians, in addition to certifying automotive training programs.

Joe Wambeke, Auto Body department chair added, “During the past few months, we have worked closely with NATEF to ensure that our program would meet the strict industry standards. We are very excited about this certification. Students will be assured of quality training and shop owners will be assured of getting quality applicants and employees.”

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Ridgewater Carpenters partner with Green Lyfe, receive grant to build “green” house.

Thanks to a WIRED grant awarded through the Minnesota Renewable Energy Marketplace (MNREM), the college will be partnering with Green Lyfe, LLC to develop and build a LEED certified home in Willmar. The Carpentry program at Ridgewater College will coordinate the home construction, and the Electrician program will be involved with the wiring of the home. Green Lyfe, LLC is a collaborative effort of Genesis Architects and Cities Edge Architects, involving the architectural design team of Phil Anderson, Julie Alsum, and Jeff Nagel.

LEED is an internationally recognized green building certification system, providing third-party verification that a building or community was designed and built using strategies aimed at improving performance across all the metrics that matter most: energy savings, water efficiency, CO2 emissions reduction, improved indoor environmental quality, and stewardship of resources and sensitivity to their impacts.

Ridgewater and Green Lyfe will be constructing this as a “demonstration house” which will be used to educate regional students, construction workers, and community members in the use and installation of renewable energy resources and sustainable materials. One major project outcome is to generate additional interest in newly emerging technologies that will improve the environmental sustainability of future housing projects in the area.

College administration and carpentry instructors Jake Pulsifer and Chris Beckman are excited about the project and what it means for the students. The curriculum in the carpentry program is being completely revamped to accommodate construction of a LEED certified home and future green housing projects. Students will be utilizing recycled materials, energy efficient components, and new methods, materials, and decision-making processes. Graduates of the program will see tremendous benefit by having hands-on experience in this quickly growing segment of the construction industry.

Ridgewater Ag Instructor Honored by FFA

Kim Lippert, Ridgewater College agriculture instructor, was recently selected to receive the Honorary American FFA Degree-Other. The award is given to those who advance agricultural education and FFA through outstanding personal commitment.

The National FFA Organization works to enhance the lives of youth through agricultural education. Without the efforts of highly dedicated individuals, thousands of young people would not be able to achieve success that, in turn, contributes directly to the overall well-being of the nation. The Honorary American FFA Degree is an opportunity to recognize those who have gone beyond the valuable daily contributions to make an extraordinary long-term difference in the lives of students; inspiring confidence in a new generation of agriculturists.

The National FFA Organization, formerly known as the Future Farmers of America, is a national youth organization of 507,763 student members — all preparing for leadership and careers in the science, business, and technology of agriculture — as part of 7,439 local FFA chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The National FFA Organization changed to its present name in 1988, in recognition of the growth and diversity of agriculture and agricultural education. The FFA mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education.

Wired is...

a federal initiative designed to energize the nation’s economy through regional economic development partnerships and workforce education and training. The Renewable Energy Marketplace of southern and western Minnesota is one of 39 areas across the United States participating in the WIRED initiative. To find out more about MNREM-WIRED, visit the MNREM website at www.mnrem.org.
Enrollment on the Rise

Enrollment is up at Ridgewater College for fall semester, with 178 more students enrolled this fall versus one year ago, an increase of 4.69%. Full Term Equivalent (FTE) enrollment is up 5.73% college-wide, with a huge 14.37% increase on the Hutchinson campus alone.

The official breakdown by campus shown at right.

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Outstanding Educators

Ridgewater Instructors Honored by the Minnesota State Colleges & Universities System

Two Ridgewater College instructors have been recognized as Outstanding Educators by the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System Board of Trustees, Darcy Lease-Gubrud, music instructor on the Willmar campus, and Ron Haraldson, chemistry instructor on the Willmar campus, are two of only 29 instructors system-wide to have this honor bestowed upon them.

Nominations were made by students, faculty peers, or staff, and were evaluated by a campus review committee before being submitted to the senior vice chancellor as Outstanding Educators by the institution’s president. At the System level, a committee used detailed criteria in assessing Outstanding Educator portfolios and made final recommendations of four Educator of the Year recipients, who were reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees.

Dr. Linda Baer, MnSCU vice chancellor for academic affairs expressed to recipients, “these awards reflect the exceptional skill and commitment that you have demonstrated in teaching, your continuous professional development, and your service to students, college, profession, and the system. Thorough dedication to student learning, adherence to the highest academic standards, and continued achievement are also reflected in your being accorded this honor. Your portfolio, reviewed by a system-wide committee in a rigorous two-day process, further confirmed your excellence in teaching.”

The Outstanding Educators were honored at a ceremony on May 20. At this ceremony, four of the 29 Outstanding Educators were presented with the Educator of the Year Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Considerations

The Board of Trustees Educator of the Year Award for Excellence in Teaching program evaluates each nominee in the following areas:

- Teaching strategies and materials
- Content expertise and professional growth
- Service to students, profession, institution, and system
- Assessment of student learning and performance
Ridgewater has made it easy for you to see what’s available online and to discover whether online courses might be for you, visit www.ridgewater.edu.

"(We’re) continually looking for ways to offer quality programming to our students in ways that increase accessibility. Through online degree offerings, Ridgewater is meeting the needs of students by removing the barriers of location and time of day within which students engage in their academic pursuits," said Betty Strehlow, vice president of academic affairs and student services.

“(We’re) continually looking for ways to offer quality programming to our students...”

"The faculty in each of these program areas has shown leadership in designing online curriculum, and it is due to their enthusiasm for meeting student needs and their willingness to embrace innovative teaching and learning methods that these degrees are now being offered to students through Ridgewater College," Strehlow added.

Demand for online courses at Ridgewater has been strong and growing throughout the decade. The college began offering online classes in 2002, when two courses were offered online and has continued to grow those offerings, with a high of 133 in 2008.

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Ridgewater paves the way in health care simulation training through the state-of-the-art mobile simulation training facility—SimLab L1.

Much has changed in the world of health care simulation training since the days of Resuscitation Annie. What began in 1960 with a head-and-torso dummy used for CPR training has evolved to robotic manikins that breathe, bleed, cough, vomit and talk. These simulation manikins are now used to develop and deliver countless medical training scenarios.

Ridgewater College is on the cutting edge of simulation medical training in terms of both using manikin technology and employing a delivery system that allows for multiple applications of those manikins and multiple audiences to benefit. With its SimLab L1, Ridgewater can provide health care training with a level of quality and outreach like never before. “It is hard for people to understand just how amazing this is,” says Kathy Schwantes, dean of customized training and continuing education. “This is an incredible technological ability,” agrees Ron Flannigan, critical care instructor and mobile simulation coordinator. “These are a world apart from the Annie we all relate to.”
SimLab L1 Comes to Life

When the idea for a mobile simulation lab originated a few years ago, Ridgewater was already recognized as a leader in sophisticated health care training utilizing simulation technology. The demand from not only nursing students, but from the healthcare industry for continuing education, made simulation training an attractive investment for meeting student and workforce needs and maintaining the college’s position as an educational leader.

The mobile aspect, however, added additional value by providing industry partners access to training in a convenient, efficient manner. “SimLab L1 allows us to pull right up to that clinic or hospital, and rather than train one or two people, we can train a whole team,” says Schwantes. “We can condense down to a couple hours what took a day or multiple days. Professionals can step out of their clinics or hospitals for a few hours, and the expense and burden of covering their absence is minimized.”

With support from the Ridgewater College Foundation, some $1.5 million was acquired from area businesses and medical facilities to obtain, design and build the mobile simulation lab, along with its equipment and three years of operating expenses — necessary to establish and secure the program’s sustainability, Schwantes says. Operational as of July, SimLab L1 is a rare entity. “There are many mobile simulation labs, but there are only five, that I know of, on the continent at this level,” Flannigan says. As one of only a few advanced facilities of its type, its existence is significant; however, even more significant is its presence at a community college. “It’s unheard of that a two-year institution would have a facility like this,” Schwantes says.

Manikins in Action

SimLab L1 contains a fully equipped emergency room, three cameras and microphones, as well as a lounge-like debriefing room. The facility is intended to be as real as possible, from the equipment in each drawer — often photographed and replicated from that of hospitals where students work — to the “doctors’ lounge” debriefing room. The three manikins, 3G, Noelle, and Hal, are controlled by instructors who can work the manikins in three ways: using a program, in real time — “on the fly,” or using goals and data gathered

The male manikin, 3G, can do just about any human function you can think of.”
“There are many mobile simlabs, but there are only five, that I know of, on the continent at this level.”

Noelle, a pregnant female manikin, can give birth in 20 scenarios and is in great demand, Schwantes says. She is highly valuable as a training tool for smaller hospitals that may not see many labors/deliveries, particularly those of a complicated nature. “You can imagine smaller hospitals may have only a handful of births every year,” Schwantes explains. “If you happen to be one and you have some complications... This allows providers to gain experience with various scenarios.” Hal, a baby, can be configured to be a female or male, and offers invaluable pediatrics training.

All of SimLab L1’s manikins are state-of-the-art and continually upgraded to remain so. One innovative aspect of the manikins is the computer-chip identification function. Radio chips placed in containers allow the robot to “know” how strong medication they receive is, how fast it went in, and then respond appropriately (as a human body would). This data is then available during the debriefing session to interpret the manikin’s response and assess the team’s performance. If treatment isn’t applied correctly, the manikins can “die.” “What’s important to remember is that these manikins are not programmed to die,” Flannigan says. “So if we do something wrong, it’s like we really lost them.”

The emotional responses of team members to “losing” a patient — even a robotic one — can be very real as well. “Students can become very emotional when they lose one,” Schwantes says. “When you’ve worked hard to save a life and you lose it... the emotional response is there,” Flannigan adds. “You can’t teach that in the classroom. Fortunately, all we have to do is push the reset button and they come back to life — and we can do it again and again.”

from the client to create customized training scenarios. “When we’re conducting a training exercise, we meet with the team we will be working with and get an idea of what they want to learn,” explains Flannigan. From there, a training plan is determined — writing scenarios specific to objectives if necessary.

Of the manikins, SimMan 3G is the most advanced. “He does just about any human function you can think of,” Schwantes says. A few of 3G’s functions include the ability to sweat, seize, blink, and have his eyes dilate. He can also turn blue and simulate all cardiac and respiratory functions. He even exhales CO2.

Noelle, a pregnant female manikin, can give birth in 20 scenarios and is in great demand, Schwantes says. She is highly valuable as a training tool for smaller hospitals that may not see many labors/deliveries, particularly those of a complicated nature. “You can imagine smaller hospitals may have only a handful of births every year,” Schwantes explains. “If you happen to be one and you have some complications... This allows providers to gain experience with various scenarios.” Hal, a baby, can be configured to be a female or male, and offers invaluable pediatrics training.
Remarkable Results
When simulation gets this real, the results are bigger than ever. When Ridgewater conducted beta testing of the SimLab L1 (applying a code-blue cardiac-arrest event, employing 5-member multi-level provider team with an average of eight years advanced cardiac life support experience), the response effectiveness increased by 300 percent. That increase occurred over scores that were already impressive, based on years of traditional training. “What has happened was is the responses became perfect based on established standards and algorithms,” Flannigan explains. “These teams were already really good, but they became even better.”

“High-risk” kids have been inspired by the success demonstrated in the past half year. “I don’t think we can foresee where this will go,” Schwantes says. “The only thing we can do is to improve it and evaluate it and say, ‘OK, now how can we do it even better?’”

“How can we do it better?” is the key question asked in the debriefing room — where students are often surprised by how they perform “in the moment.” “Participants can see what they really act like, sound like, etc.,” Schwantes says. “It’s a whole different type of learning and self-awareness tool.” By nature, health care is a field where protocols, critical analysis, and performance evaluation are used to improve outcomes. Providers are typically extremely critical of themselves because of the importance and magnitude of how they affect others’ lives. “In advanced-level training, a missing component has long been the ability to step back and look at ourselves, adjust, and then try it again,” Flannigan says.

In addition to training nursing students and healthcare professionals, SimLab L1 will be used for training industry for emergencies and exposing K-12 groups to the technology and health care careers. Just this fall, SimLab L1 has introduced many junior- and senior-high students to health care careers and simulation technology for the first time. “We’ve exposed more than 1,000 high school students to the health care industry,” Schwantes says. Simulations so far have involved training students to work on a cardiac arrest case where they perform real-life roles. The experience gives them an idea of what careers in health care can be like. “‘High-risk’ kids have been inspired to set health care career goals.” Schwantes notes that SimLab L1 serves as not only an example of health care provision, but technology, medical devices, marketing and more. Along with seeing the possibility in medical careers, the simulation also brings home the meaning of being part of a team. “More than anything, it teaches them the meaning of team response, being accountable for your role, following a leader, and so on,” Flannigan says. “It’s been very successful.”

What Lies Ahead
Simulation training has come a long way in the last four decades and is now a driving force in preparing medical providers of today and tomorrow. As technology advances and capabilities expand, increasingly life-like manikins and scenarios will become available to the education and medical industries. “With its advances, simulation is becoming more and more a part of professional training where cognitive thought and skills are required,” Flannigan says. As for Ridgewater’s role, the college intends to maintain its stance as a leader in health care training with simulation at the forefront. “It took hundreds of people to bring this program to where it’s at; there are hundreds of people who believe in this strongly enough to continue to make it happen.” With interest in SimLab L1 being expressed from as far away as California, the central Minnesota community college sees great potential for its program. “Our initial idea was to do regional training,” Schwantes says. “But with the interest expressed, I don’t know where this is taking us. It’s already exceeded our expectations for success.”

Clearly, Ridgewater College’s SimLab L1 is going places. With a dedicated development and operations team, ideologically and financially supportive community, interested and demanding students/clients, there’s little doubt the program will continue the success demonstrated in the past half year. “I don’t think we can foresee where this will go,” Schwantes says. “The only thing that limits us and the experience we offer is our own imagination.” As imagination has met technology, and technology has met demand, the path has led health care education from the “archaic” Annie, to SimMan 3G, Noelle, Hal and SimLab L1. What lies ahead in terms of both simulation technology and delivery is yet to be determined; one thing is certain: Ridgewater College will not only be along for the ride, but leading the way.

NOTE: The word manikin has been used in place of mannequin. Manikin is the proper spelling when referring to an anatomical model of the human body usually with moveable and detachable parts, used in medical schools, art classes and especially simulation labs.
Veterans play a prominent role in the Minnesota higher education landscape, thanks to a solid educational system and some outstanding educational benefits.

Just look at these numbers: in 2006, there were 4,946 student veterans in Minnesota. In 2009, there are an estimated 7,160. Studies show that a very high percentage of veterans plan to enroll in college upon their return, indicating that the number of vets enrolled in Minnesota public schools will continue to grow.

The educational benefits offered to service men and women are a driving force behind this growing interest in a college education. Together, state and federal Veterans Educational Benefit expenditures in 2008 exceeded $60 million in Minnesota. The newest and most commonly used educational benefit available to veterans is the Chapter 33 benefit, or Post 9/11. This program provides up to $750 per credit and 100% of tuition and fees for those meeting full eligibility. Add onto that a housing allowance of up to $900 per month and you can see that the incentive for pursuing a degree is clear.

There are other benefit packages, though, and the ins and outs of them all can get to be somewhat complex. For that reason, veterans interested in going to college are encouraged to get in touch with their local Higher Education Veterans Program Coordinator. The coordinator for Ridgewater College is Charles Egerstrom.

“I do find that most veterans do not fully understand what is available to them and often get confused,” says Egerstrom. “It is important to understand fully how your benefits work, and that can be accomplished by visiting a Veterans Resource Center on campus.”

Egerstrom is available to help veterans on the Willmar campus on Tuesdays and Fridays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and at the Hutchinson campus every other Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. He can be reached via e-mail at veteranscenter@ridgewater.edu or by phone at 320-222-5634 or 320-491-2734.

Simple Steps
If you are a veteran considering enrolling in college, here’s some advice that Egerstrom offers:

- Make sure that the time is right for you, i.e. have your life in order to ensure that you give your education the attention necessary for you to be successful.
- Figure out what you want to learn and where you want to go to school.
- Determine your educational goals and create YOUR own plan from there.
- Understand what benefits you are entitled to and choose the one that best fits your educational goals.
- Go to the Veterans Resource Center on your campus for assistance with education benefit questions.
- Be sure to inform the Veteran’s Certifying Official on your campus of your status as a veteran.
There’s no doubt online courses are convenient. Demand has pushed growth in Ridgewater online classes from just two in 2002 to more than 135 in 2009. Online programs, however, can really link flexibility and accessibility for students working toward their next career.

That’s exactly what Ridgewater College has done by making three popular degree programs available online as well as on campus. Choose between two-year degrees in Liberal Arts, Computer Aided Drafting and Design, and Law Enforcement/Professional Peace Officer. All have been approved by the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System and the Higher Learning Commission.

Mathew Stanley of Dassel has chosen the online Liberal Arts Associate in Arts degree. “I decided to return to school after 18 years,” he explained. His previous college was not accredited at that time so his diploma didn’t transfer. He’s starting from scratch with Ridgewater’s accredited online program.

“I decided on the online degree option, because I was working shifts when I first made the decision to return to college,” Stanley said. “I also have two kids under 3 years old, and I figured it would be much easier to work around my schedule with an online program.” And so at any time of day or night, Stanley submits his homework or takes a test for algebra, financial accounting, macroeconomics, or natural disasters. “It is convenient and

“With two kids under 3 years old, it’s much easier to work around my schedule with an online program.”

More people than ever are logging on to further their education in the convenience of their homes. With just clicks on the keyboard and pushes of a mouse, people are getting smarter!
portable, with many ways to get interaction from the instructors. It actually helps improve my computer skills, while I’m working towards my degree. With my schedule and family, I knew it would be the only way to reach my goals.”

Stanley is exactly the kind of student Ridgewater is reaching out to through online programs.

“Ridgewater College is continually looking for ways to offer quality programming to our students in ways that increase accessibility,” said Betty Strehlow, Ridgewater vice president of academic affairs and student services. “Through online degrees, Ridgewater is meeting student needs by removing the barriers of location and time of day within which students engage in their academic pursuits.”

“There’s a great interest in taking online general education courses,” explained Kathy Brock, one of Ridgewater’s deans of instruction. “A lot of students want to take them.” That’s one reason the online Liberal Arts degree is leading the way for Ridgewater. Students of all ages enjoy learning about everything from communication and economics to history and digital photography in the comfort of their homes. Most liberal arts courses in the degree are also logical because they don’t require specialty equipment to perform hands-on work or labs, Brock explained.

Although Computer Aided Drafting and Design (CADD) uses specialty design software, it makes sense for it to go online. The computer is the designer’s best friend in today’s industry as most drafting is done on computer software such as AutoCAD, Pro-Engineer, Inventor, and SolidWorks.

“As far as we know, we’re the only ones in the state offering an online CADD degree,” said Stacey Nass, one of two Ridgewater CADD instructors. “We’re happy to offer alternative delivery methods for students. We have one student in the military and stationed in Iraq. There are a couple of students working full time and living far enough away that it’s not convenient for them to come to campus very often.” The current economic challenges many people face make commuting less affordable.

“The progression from face-to-face to online delivery has taken several years,” CADD instructor Dave Moen explained. “Although online learning is not a learning style for all students, we are excited to offer this option.” Feedback from students, the program’s advisory committee, administration, and the state accreditation board has been positive, he added.

Ridgewater’s Law Enforcement instructor Mike Kutzke has been enthusiastically offering online courses like General Social Problems, Introduction to Corrections, Introduction to Criminal Justice, Psychology of Law Enforcement, and Law Enforcement Operations and Procedures. Courses like these lend themselves to online learning, he said, but he’s excited about the expansion of the full degree going online.

“The Ridgewater College Law Enforcement/Professional Peace Officer online AAS degree is designed to support students’ individual learning styles and individual life circumstances in an effort to best prepare them for the future,” Kutzke said. “The online AAS degree strives to link flexibility with accessibility to provide students a high-quality educational experience that will prepare them for a successful career in the criminal justice field.”

Students can now complete all of the academic requirements for the Law Enforcement AAS degree online, requiring only the skills portion to be completed in a face-to-face academic setting. Students then complete their Police Officer Standards and Training (POST) skills training to learn such things as weapon use, self-defense, and physical training through a partnership with Alexandria Technical College. Have no fear — officers and communities will still be well-trained and safe.
Ridgewater’s online advisory committee and task force are working to enhance online education – from orientation and technical support to student and bookstore services. The goal is to make the experience the best for everyone. Last spring, Brock and the online team coordinated a self-study to gather student, staff, and faculty input on the current experience and opportunities for improvement.

They learned that not all faculty place information the same way in the course management program for online delivery called Desire2Learn (D2L). Ridgewater is working to standardize a format for the students while recognizing instructor styles and preferences.

Ridgewater’s Julie Reginek is the online curriculum specialist for faculty working toward quality online experiences. Reginek, who also teaches the Activity Director program, has experience offering two online Activity Director certificates for about five years now. She and Jason Hulstein, D2L site administrator, and some of her equally enthusiastic peers have offered several Boot Camps to train faculty to transition their material to be effective as online options.

“We are being proactive to ensure quality,” Reginek said. Effective online offerings need to be interactive and use various methods, she said. “It’s not just students reading material and taking a test. We’ve really come a long way to help faculty focus on implementing a variety of strategies, techniques and technologies to deliver quality online classes.” Some might use videos and Internet links, plus research and class chatrooms, PowerPoint presentations or taped guest speakers.

Another outcome from the Ridgewater online self-study is that there continues to be a demand to expand technical online offerings.

“The technology to support technical courses online is increasing,” Brock said. “More fields have availability to simulations, like those used in aviation.”

Online courses are available in such technical programs as Nursing, Computer Support Technology, Engineering Technologies-Calibration, Accounting, and Administrative Support Careers. The Activity Director and Legal Administrative Assistant programs have certificates that are entirely online. Brock sees those options expanding, but doesn’t see every program going entirely online. “Online learning is not for everyone,” she explained. “Individuals need to be very self-motivated. I give students a warning — students who think this is the easy way: it is not.”

It may take more work or time than some classroom courses, Brock said, because a student cannot just show up for lecture, listen and take notes to review before a test. “Students have to pull their own information and be committed to assignments and discussions that may be going on with other students in the online class. It’s easier to go to class where someone may identify what’s important.” Online students take more responsibility for their learning.

**IS ONLINE FOR YOU?**

Ridgewater makes it easy to explore online classes and discover your potential success. Go to [www.ridgewater.edu](http://www.ridgewater.edu). Under Programs and Courses, select Online Education. You’ll find frequently asked questions, computer requirements, descriptions, and more. A link to Minnesota Online has videos of online students and considerations to think about. Take a brief self-assessment at [www.minnesotaoonline.org/students/distancelearningquiz.php](http://www.minnesotaoonline.org/students/distancelearningquiz.php).

What many people say is that if you know what to expect, you’re self-motivated, responsible, learn independently, and your computer meets specifications, then online might be for you!

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**TOP 10 THINGS TO CONSIDER**

*Before You Take an Online Course*

1. You’ll need a computer and Internet connection. Check Minnesota Online computer requirements.
2. Basic Internet and computer skills are required.
3. Online education courses are often accelerated and are most successful if you are motivated and can work independently.
4. Although you can save time taking online courses, you’ll still need to devote a sufficient number of hours each week toward your online studies.
5. You must be able to express yourself well in writing.
6. Generally speaking, online education courses are less expensive than traditional on-site college courses. [Calculate your potential cost savings.](http://www.minnesotaoonline.org)
7. Online education courses will likely fit better with your busy lifestyle, because you can access your online education classes anytime, anywhere through Internet.
8. You can simultaneously take on-campus and online education courses.
9. Some courses may require you to attend class in person. Check your course description.
10. Many students who aren’t comfortable participating in on-campus classes find they contribute more freely with online classes.

Source: [www.minnesotaoonline.org](http://www.minnesotaoonline.org)
If you want to know the caffeine content of your soda, you read the label, right? Well, maybe most people, but that’s not enough for students in Dr. John Benson’s chemistry class.

A favorite lab project for these students, they each analyze their favorite beverages for caffeine content using an instrument called a High Performance liquid Chromatograph (or HPLC). “Students here not only learn fundamental laboratory techniques, but they also collect data with modern instrumentation and equipment,” says Dr. Benson, chemistry instructor at Ridgewater.

Many students have appreciated getting started on their chemistry studies at Ridgewater. “I believe that to be the case because here they have access to the professor right from the start. They’re not in an auditorium with over a hundred other students and a teaching assistant leading the discussion.”

“Taking chemistry at Ridgewater was a great experience for me,” says Mike Meier, a Ridgewater alumnus now in the pre-pharmacy program at North Dakota State University. “After having experienced what chemistry is like at a much larger college, I am grateful that I started taking chemistry at Ridgewater. The class sizes at Ridgewater are a fraction of what they are at a larger school, which allowed us to really connect with other students, and even more importantly, with the professor.”

In Ridgewater’s 100- and 200-level chemistry courses, students learn basic concepts, theories, and techniques related to modern science. This includes discussions around what an atom is believed to look like (no one has seen an atom; our understanding is based on observations of large numbers of atoms), how molecules form and interact with each other and with light, and fundamental lab techniques, including measurement using traditional glassware as well as computers which help interpret data.

The Ridgewater faculty are proud to have modern facilities and equipment, which allow students to receive the same instrumental experience as at many 4-year institutions, but at significantly lower
Students interested in pursuing a degree in a science-related field such as medicine, veterinary medicine, biology, pharmacy and other health-related fields have an opportunity to build a very strong educational foundation at Ridgewater. Just ask Meier, who’s taken chemistry courses both at Ridgewater and a large university. “I have absolutely no regrets about taking chemistry at Ridgewater. I would strongly recommend it to anyone even remotely interested in taking a chemistry course.”

As you might imagine, many instruments used by chemists don’t come easily. That hasn’t stopped Ridgewater from ensuring that its students have access to the latest technology, though. Along with the HPLC, Ridgewater students also have access to a Fourier-Transform Infrared (FT-IR) Spectrometer, funded by a grant proposal submitted by recently retired chemistry instructor Ron Haraldson. In addition we have access to Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) spectroscopy, a powerful instrumental analysis tool used in the study of Organic Chemistry. Through a partnership with Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU), Ridgewater students send samples to SMSU for analysis on their NMR spectrometer. Raw data files are then sent back to Ridgewater, and students analyze the data, just as if we had the instrument here. “To the best of my knowledge, this is a unique partnership, which is a great benefit to Ridgewater chemistry students,” concludes Dr. Benson.
Moving Forward

Still on the hunt for the right college for you? Rachel Marks explains why Ridgewater was a great fit for her and why you should take a second look.

As she prepared to begin her senior year at BOLD High School in Olivia, MN, Rachel Marks had already made her decision. She had visited colleges during the previous year, including Bethany Lutheran College, the College of Saint Benedict, and St. Cloud State University, but instead chose Ridgewater College.

The benefits of Ridgewater were too great for her to ignore. The small campus and class sizes, the proximity to her home and family, and the affordability made the decision an easy one.

“I didn’t like the other colleges when I toured them; they were too big,” says Marks. “What I liked best about Ridgewater was the smaller size, the friendly staff, and that the teachers were willing to talk about problems or grades if you needed.”

Rachel graduated from Ridgewater in 2008 with an AA degree emphasizing Law enforcement and corrections. “I started out with the intent of entering the Human Services field,” she recalls. “After taking Introduction to Human Services, I realized that it wasn’t what I wanted to be doing. I actually found the helping aspect of the criminal justice field more interesting.”

Law Enforcement instructor and former police officer Mike Kutzke made a big impact on Rachel. His real-world experience helped her to better understand the course content. “Mike made class fun by connecting the information from the class to real life experiences,” she says. “He has a lot of excellent experiences of his own that he is willing to share with the class. Those stories helped put the material into perspective.”

Accessibility

Accessibility outside of the classroom was another trait that made Kutzke a favorite instructor of Rachel’s. “He was very open and willing to help anyone who needed it. He was also helpful in getting me started on the right foot in my bachelor’s degree program.”

Today Rachel is continuing her education right in her own living room. She takes her courses when she wants to and where she wants to. She is able to do this, because she is currently enrolled in the Community Psychology BA program online at St. Cloud State University. She intends to graduate from SCSU in 2010 with a Bachelor of Applied Science degree with an emphasis in criminal justice. She loves the online format of her program, as it allows her to get her degree from SCSU, without having to endure the large campus and big crowds.

The transfer process to SCSU was a smooth one. As part of her AA degree at Ridgewater, she completed the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum, which is guaranteed to transfer to any public university in the state. “My transition and switch to St. Cloud was very smooth overall; I didn’t have any problems with it,” she says.

Rachel admits that she’s not sure what her ultimate career goal is, but she’s confident that she has the education and skills necessary to be successful in her chosen field, thanks to Ridgewater. “Ridgewater is a wonderful school to start out at! They offer you everything you need to get off to a great start in your career.”
Growing up in Willmar, “I was the weird kid that got on the bus with both hockey gear and a sketchbook,” says Andrew Nordin, Ridgewater College (then Willmar Community College) alum. “I wasn’t good at sports, but I would research athletes and do sketches, cartoons… My interests always overlapped.”

In Nordin’s world, art has found its way in — no matter what his other interests. As a new college student in 1990, Nordin wasn’t sure exactly what career he wanted to pursue; but already living and employed in the area, he found Ridgewater to be an ideal launching pad for his future. “It was a place I could be comfortable because my life was already in place,” he says. “That allowed me to try things and figure out what I wanted to do.”

Part of the Community

Knowing art would be involved in whatever path he chose, Nordin took Ridgewater’s foundational courses (as well as independent studies) and developed himself as an artist and student. “It was about learning fundamentals,” he explains. “I learned the basics of being a successful artist as well as a college student.”

With smaller class sizes, individual attention, ample studio time, field trips, and many opportunities for involvement (with the school newspaper, art gallery, and more), Nordin found the environment supportive and nurturing. He found a level of engagement not always possible at bigger schools, he says. “It felt like I was part of a community.”

The art community at Ridgewater influences not only the culture at the college, but in the greater area as well. “I don’t know anywhere else in outstate Minnesota where contemporary art — art that’s relevant in the world today — is presented,” Nordin notes. It’s the elements of exposure and opportunities for growth that make Ridgewater’s art program unique. “It’s a short time, but it’s a place where you’re able to transform,” Nordin says.

Nordin personally influences central Minnesota’s culture as a working artist. Founders of ARTHouse in New London, Nordin and his wife, Lisa, feature theirs and other artists’ work three times a year — when they transform their home into an art gallery and delight area art lovers with their innovative win-win endeavor. “We wanted to give artists an opportunity while answering a need for an audience that’s underserved in contemporary art,” Nordin explains. “It’s one of those things where you don’t know you need it until it’s there.”

For the past three years Nordin has also been an adjunct faculty member at Ridgewater College. As a teacher, Nordin strives to help students find what’s “there” as artists. “I try to give them space to explore,” he says. “You have to be able to screw some things up, make some messes, make wrong choices… to know what a right choice is. Art is about process, a journey — and not necessarily the results.”

“It was about learning the fundamentals — I learned the basics of being a successful artist as well as a college student.”
Attention Alumni

We always enjoy hearing from our alumni! Please update your information by visiting www.ridgewater.edu... and be sure to let us know what you’ve been doing!

Do you know an alumna/us who is a dedicated volunteer, has an outstanding career or has achievement in service? If so, please let us know!

Nominations can be made by visiting www.ridgewater.edu.

The deadline for nominations is March 15, 2010. The award will be presented during the Annual Scholarship Award Dinners in April.

Ridgewater College Alumni Association is Seeking Nominations for the 2010 Alumni Awards.

Distiguished Alumni Award

The Distinguished Alumni Award was established by the Ridgewater College Foundation/Alumni Association to recognize and honor an alumna/us of the College for exceptional accomplishments in his or her profession, and/or for outstanding service in the community. Each year, the Alumni Association honors alumni who have:

1. Attended Willmar Community College, Willmar Technical College, Hutchinson Technical College (during or before 1996) or Ridgewater College (1996 to the present);
2. Completed at least two semesters and/or used Ridgewater College as a springboard to transfer for further education;
3. Distinguished themselves in a professional career;
4. Distinguished themselves in service to their community or nation; and
5. Been recognized by the professional community for leadership abilities or as a role model.

Distiguished Service Award

The Distinguished Service Award was established by the Ridgewater College Foundation to recognize and honor friends of the College for exceptional accomplishments in his or her profession, and/or for outstanding service to Ridgewater College and the community. Each year, the Foundation honors those who have:

1. Distinguished themselves in a professional career;
2. Distinguished themselves in service or a friend of Ridgewater College, their community or nation;
3. Been recognized by the professional community for leadership abilities or as a role model.

Yes! I would like to invest in student success. Enclosed is my gift and/or pledge. Please detach and mail to: Ridgewater College Foundation, PO Box 1097, Willmar, MN 56201

Giving Information

I am giving $ __________________ .
I give my donation as indicated below:

☑ Individual
☑ Organization
☑ Business

☐ My gift is to remain anonymous
(All donations will be listed in the annual report unless otherwise requested.)

Please send me information on:

☐ Including Ridgewater College Foundation in my estate planning
☐ Endowments and memorials

Name: _______________________________________________________________
Address: ______________________________________________________________
City: __________________________ State: ________ ZIP: ________________
Phone: ( ) _______ – _________________________ E-mail: ______________________

I am selecting the following payment option:

☑ Check enclosed payable to Ridgewater College Foundation
☑ Please charge my gift to (please circle) Visa MasterCard

Card #: __________________________ Exp Date: ________________

Signature: __________________________________________________________________________

☐ I am a Ridgewater College alumni (taken credit course or received degree)

☐ My spouse or I work for a company with matching gift program and have enclosed a completed form

Employer Name: ________________________________________________________________
Employee Name: ________________________________________________________________

Thank You for making a difference in our college and community with your investment in the Ridgewater College Foundation.
Where are you going?

Why Ridgewater?
We have a course schedule that is just your size, whether you're studying pre-med or taking a few generals. Our campuses are FRIENDLY, and offer opportunities to be involved in and out of the classroom. Our educational VALUE is unmatched – couple that with our SMALL CLASS SIZES, and that ensures you will receive the most out of your education. At Ridgewater, the POSSIBILITIES are endless. Where are you going?

Transfer Programs
- Accounting
- Agriculture/Ag Education
- Art
- Biological Sciences
- Business
- Chemical Dependency Counseling
- Chemistry
- Computer Science
- Early Childhood Education
- Economics
- Education (Elementary/Special/Secondary)
- Engineering
- English
- History, Philosophy, and Political Science
- Human/Social Services
- Law Enforcement - Professional Peace Officer
- Law Enforcement - Corrections
- Liberal Arts
- Mass Communications
- Mathematics
- Mortuary Science
- Music/Music Education
- Nursing
- Physical Education/Health/Recreation
- Pre-Chiropractic
- Pre-Dentistry
- Pre-Engineering
- Pre-Law
- Pre-Medical Technology
- Pre-Medicine
- Pre-Nursing
- Pre-Occupational Therapy
- Pre-Optometry
- Pre-Pharmacy
- Pre-Physical Therapy
- Pre-Veterinary Medicine
- Psychology
- Radiologic Technology
- Sociology
- Speech and Theatre Arts

Technical Programs
- Accountant
- Accounting Technician
- Activity Director/Assistant
- Administrative Assistant
- Agri Business
- Agronomy Technology
- Audio Technology
- Auto Body Collision Technology
- Auto Mechanics Technology
- Automated Systems Engineering Technology
- Calibration Engineering Technology
- Carpentry
- Computer Aided Drafting and Design
- Computer Art and Publishing
- Computer Programmer
- Computer Publishing
- Computer Support Technician
- Cosmetology
- Dairy Management
- Educational Assistant
- Electrician
- Electronics Technology
- Esthetician
- Farm Operations/Mgmt
- GPS/GIS for Agriculture
- Health Information Technician
- Healthcare Administrative Assistant
- Insurance Claim Representative
- Law enforcement - Professional Peace Officer
- Legal Administrative Assistant
- Machine Tool Technology
- Marketing and Design
- Marketing and Sales Management
- Massage Therapy
- Medical Assistant
- Medical Coding Specialist
- Multimedia Design
- Nail Technology
- Network Systems Administration
- Nondestructive Testing
- Nursing Assistant
- Nursing
- Occupational Skills
- Office Assistant
- Paramedic
- Photography
- Universal Care Assistant
- Veterinary Technology
- Web Programming
- Welding
- Wireless Communications
- Electronics

Visit www.ridgewater.edu for more information about the college and its programs.
From “practicing” to practicing

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