



# News Release

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## **Ridgewater's CADD Program Ranked #2 Online Associate's Degree Drafting Program in US**

HUTCHINSON and WILLMAR, MN – To be ranked in the top 10 of all national online Computer-Aided Drafting Associate degree programs is quite an honor for Ridgewater College. But to be ranked #2, only behind a Florida university, is certainly an accolade that can garner confidence for students considering drafting careers. Ridgewater College earned the runner up ranking from [www.BestColleges.com](http://www.BestColleges.com) for 2019.

The national ranking is based on a rigorous analysis of academic quality, affordability, and online competency based on the most recent data available from the [Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System \(IPEDS\)](#) and [College Navigator](#), both of which are hosted by the [National Center for Education Statistics](#). The evaluation applied 15 criteria to 2,300-plus eligible colleges and universities nationwide that offer online programs.

“When our Computer Aided Drafting and Design program went online in 2009, our faculty did so with student flexibility and accessibility in mind,” Ridgewater Dean of Instruction Matt Feuerborn said about instructors Stacey Nass and Dave Moen. “Online delivery helped to remove both location and time barriers. With a combined 50 years of teaching experience at Ridgewater – and more than 10 years for each as leaders and innovators in the online space - our faculty have truly developed a high-quality program that offers students flexibility in their learning. A key strength of the program is that Dave and Stacey highly value personal connections with students and provide outstanding instructor support.”

Feuerborn added, “It’s rewarding to see the program and instructors Stacey Nass and Dave Moen recognized for the honor’s key factors that are our priorities as well - academic quality, affordability, and online competency.” Nearly 100 percent of the program’s 60 students are now online, with close to half from Minnesota. Others enrolled come from more than 20 states and even one from Korea.

In addition, key ranking factors also include a school’s admission rate, enrollment rate, retention rate, graduation rate, cost of the program as it relates to the amount borrowed and owed after graduation, and more. Program quality is determined by a review of faculty, the length of time the school has invested in online learning, and support for distance learners.

BestColleges.org states that its goal is “to reward schools not only offering competitive tuition but also providing students with the skills needed to graduate and successfully enter the workforce.”

“We are both committed to delivering a quality education to our students,” Moen explained regarding himself and Nass. “We are constantly working to improve our online courses by keeping them up to date.” Ridgewater’s program is accredited through Minnesota Online.

The honoring organization now shares a bit of Ridgewater’s story with a summary at [www.bestcolleges.com](http://www.bestcolleges.com) which states:

*The computer-aided drafting and design program at Ridgewater College features a fully online format with start dates in the spring and fall. Students learn how to transform mechanical drafting ideas into feasible solutions and how to create 3D plans for production with industry software. Students also learn how to read blueprints, understand ASME standard practices, carry out advanced and basic drafting design, and review manufacturing processes. The curriculum allows students to explore various industry software, including AutoCAD, Creo, Inventor Professional, MasterCAM 3D machining software, Solidworks, and Advanced Solidworks.*

*Students learn from experienced instructors with state and student recognition for teaching impact and excellence. Instructors record interactive demos and lectures as well as class discussions from on-campus and online students. Most courses boast certification from Quality Matters, the federal benchmark for high-quality education. Drafting students participate in hands-on projects, collaborating with campus manufacturing programs. They also enjoy small class sizes, promoting personalized attention.*

Just this week, alum Cory Klassen sent this message to the instructors: “I took your courses and received my degree in spring of 2017. It was the best thing that I could have ever done with my life! While attending Ridgewater, I was an intern for a local company and later hired on full time, working for a total of three years with (them). Approximately four months ago, I moved on and accepted a position which I am considering my dream job! ... Thanks again for everything you’ve done for me!”

Hodges University of Florida received the top honor, while Winona’s Minnesota State College Southeast also earned a top-10 ranking.

Ridgewater’s #2 ranking in 2019 is 12 places better than in 2018 and 2017. Karen Weber, BestColleges.com outreach coordinator, said in the congratulations communication to faculty that improving rankings is no easy feat.

Nass and Moen credit part of the effectiveness and improvement of their program to their commitment to students. “We feel that it’s important to be responsive to our students so we try to respond to email and inquiries as quickly as possible,” Nass said.

It appears to be paying off.

For more information about Ridgewater College’s CADD program, go to [www.ridgewater.edu/cadd](http://www.ridgewater.edu/cadd). To learn more about the recognition, go to [www.bestcolleges.com](http://www.bestcolleges.com).

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Ridgewater College is a community and technical college with campuses in the central Minnesota communities of Willmar and Hutchinson. The college serves more than 5,000 students through its nearly 100 academic programs and more than 68,000 training hours for individuals and businesses through customized training and continuing

education. The college is a member of Minnesota State and accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

*Minnesota State includes 30 community and technical colleges and 7 state universities serving approximately 400,000 students. It is the fourth-largest system of two-year colleges and four-year universities in the United States.*

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