

NEWSLETTER

Professional Development Cohort A Success Again!

In the Fall 2013 semester, the DOL/NISGTC Student Success Team hosted a cohort which consisted of job preparation workshops, employer networking events, and mentoring. The cohort resulted in students gaining new certifications and employment at companies such as Dell Secureworks, Business Only Broadband, and many more! Since the initial cohort was a great success, the DOL team decided to host a second Professional Development Cohort in the Fall of 2014. The cohort involved 25 students who gained new communication skills, received mentoring, and even gained new tips on how to dress for success. Students who finished this program attended a networking mixer at Cisco in Rosemont, IL [pictured] where they received a tour of the "technology playground" and viewed the IT infrastructure of the building. Guest speakers from Cisco, CompTIA, and other IT businesses donated

their time to contribute their views to help the students gain a new perspective on their job search. The two cohort events were hosted and organized by both the DOL team and The Illinois Technology Foundation. Industry certification vouchers were donated to students to take their exams and start gaining new employment. Students were also given free memberships to AITP (Association of Information Technology Professionals) professional association. Out of the 25 students in the most recent cohort, 10 have started new careers and one has landed an internship. These efforts resulted in improved retention, student employment, and overall student success while meeting NISGTC grant initiatives. The DOL team would like to send a special thanks to all the guest speakers and MVCC administration for supporting us in these positive efforts.



MVCC Mourns the Loss of Professor Erich Spengler

Erich Spengler started at Moraine Valley in August 1994. Across the country he was the recognized and well-respected face of CSSIA, which is housed at the college. Over the years he has won a number of awards including the CyberWatch Pioneer Award, Cisco Networking Academy Master Instructor and Hi-Tec Educator of the Year among many other national and collegiate honors.

Those who knew him understood his quirky sense of humor and his passion for cyber security. His memory lives on through CSSIA and the co-workers and friends he forged bonds with.

Erich's passion was his students' success.



Erich was not only known for his passion, but also for his light-hearted humor.



Erich and John Sands have made a dramatic dent in the IT programs at MVCC.

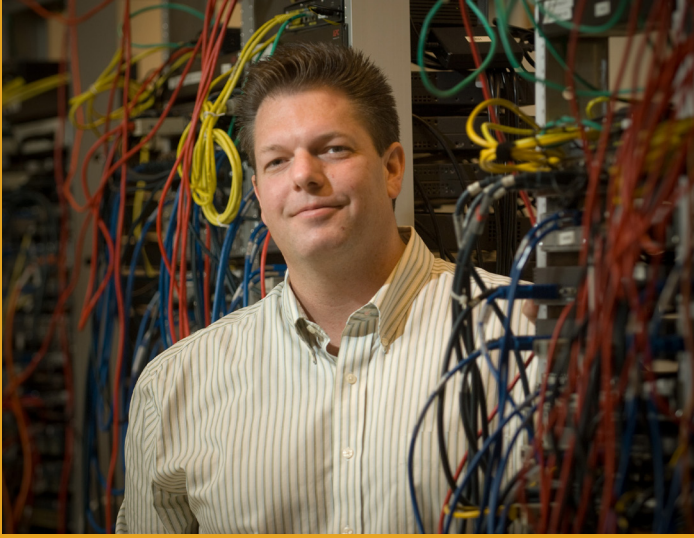


The CIA? The IT Task Force? Nope! Just Erich and John being the cool guys as usual.



Erich and his wife Kristi at a party celebrating 10 years of CSSIA.

Testimonials



"I worked with Erich for over 22 years. During that time I had the privilege of witnessing Erich's impact on both students and educators here at Moraine Valley and across the nation. Erich was recognized as one of the most knowledgeable people in his profession. He also was a master teacher for the Cisco Network Academy Program and cyber security. In this role he traveled the country teaching classes and speaking at conferences and events. Erich was known for his sense of humor and free spirit. He could strike up a conversation with anyone at any time. However, Erich's clock was a little different than most people, he was known to call friends and co-workers late at night just to ask how they were doing or to talk about work. I regularly received a barrage of emails late into the night."

Dr. John Sands, Department Chair, CIT/CO-Principle Investigator of CSSIA NSF Regional Center

"Erich was a brilliant, thoughtful and passionate man. I will miss our morning talks about what was on the agenda for that day and our late evening talks with him asking how my day went. He could always put you in a good mood with one of his stories or just his smile. He will be missed more than you could ever know, not only by me but by all those across the country who had the privilege of knowing and working with him."

Ginny Swyndroski, CSSIA/DOL Grant Secretary

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He could always put you in a good mood with one of his stories or just his smile.

"Erich's ability to be so focused and brilliant and yet still throw in a wisecrack here and there is what I'll miss the most. His humble personality was larger-than-life. He was a person everyone wanted to be around, and he loved being part of the action. He had a way about him that made you proud to be a part of the CSSIA team. His leadership, sense of humor and mostly his friendship will be greatly missed."

Lynn Dohm, CSSIA Communications Coordinator

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Erich was a hard-working, dedicated and focused individual.

"Erich was a hard-working, dedicated, and focused individual who would always put his family, friends and students before himself. Erich had a genuine care for the people that surrounded him. His quirky sense of humor around our office will be missed, but the foundations he built here will continue to grow and achieve great things."

Dave Termunde, DOL Student Success/Industry Outreach Coordinator

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I will miss his energy and enthusiasm.

"Professor Erich Spengler was an amazing person. I will miss his energy, enthusiasm and can-do attitude. His leadership abilities were off the chart. He was just a pleasant person to be around. He was recognized as a leader in education by institutions from all over the country. I will also miss his awkward sense of humor."

Ricky Moore, IT Program Coordinator/Associate Professor

"Erich had a way of making you feel comfortable around him. He was a great leader. You wanted to do your best work when you were around him because he expected no less from himself. He went out of his way to give you the tools you needed to excel at your job because he believed that the better you were the better the team was. Anyone that knew Erich knew that about him. He was a man of vision and he will be greatly missed by the DOL team that he created."

Tina Sawa, DOL/TAACCCT Grant Secretary

STUDENT SUCCESS

RICARDO RODRIGUEZ



I was going from job to job with no direction until I finally decided that I had enough.

I saved money for college and in January of 2014 I took my first IT class. What brought me to Moraine Valley Community College was that I wanted a degree so that I can have a career and be successful. At this time, I am working on finishing my Associates in Applied Science for Computer and Local Area Network Technician. I am looking at completing Computer and Local Area Network Technician by June of 2015. Thanks to the grant I am able to attend workshops,

certification reviews sessions and a professional development cohort. This grant helps me because I am given access to resources that I normally would not have and I am able to receive help from the student success team. My future plans are to continue my education but before I moved onto a four-year university I would like to get the IT Specialist degree and few other certificates.

STUDENT SUCCESS

DANNY TAMAYO



Thanks to the DOL Grant I have learned how this industry works and what is wanted in an employee.

I came to Moraine Valley because I wanted to save some money as well as figure out what I really wanted to major in. I started out by studying accounting but soon switched fields. I took an Information Management Systems course and had an instructor by the name of Steve Mastej. He introduced me to the world of computers that later led me to pursue a career in the IT field.

When I entered the IT program here at MVCC two of the staff members that belong to the DOL grant (Michael Hines and Dave Termunde) discussed all the benefits of joining the grant. I liked what I heard so I joined. The grant has helped me make my resume presentable for potential employers and even help me look for jobs. This has helped me a lot because I have learned how this industry works and what is wanted in an employee. My plans are to get certified starting off from the bottom with the A+. Second, I plan to continue my studies and attain stackable certificates so I can join Cisco at some later point. The 2014 Cohort really helped put everything into perspective for me, I have a game plan now and I know the steps I need to take for my career thanks to the work of the DOL staff.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

BRIDGET NEE

I am 50 years old and decided after my divorce was finalized in December of 2013, I was going to make a huge change.

While living in a domestic violence shelter, I became a full-time student at Moraine Valley and began chasing my dream. I originally started to pursue a degree in paralegal studies but then in my first semester I went to a Women In Technology bootcamp and also to a Cybersecurity seminar and I was hooked! I am presently studying for the A+ and Network+ certification tests and plan on also getting my Security+, CCENT, CCNA and CEH certifications before I graduate. Moraine has a phenomenal group of instructors and staff and I am so excited about this program.

The DOL grant has been a tremendous benefit for me ~ especially the student success team. From joining the cohort to figuring out what classes to take, they have been extremely helpful. I would not have the knowledge I have

now about how to proceed with my career pathway without them. If I ever have a question and don't know where to go, I just ask them and they will steer me in the right direction. One of my biggest fears was it would be hard for me to find a job due to my age and because I have been out of the workforce for so long. After the fall cohort, I have been given the chance to network with industry professionals and am no longer worried about that at all.

I plan on pursuing my bachelor's degree at Governors State when I am done at Moraine Valley and the sky is the limit! If I had realized how empowering school was I would have fought tooth and nail to do this years ago. I see school as my ticket out of poverty and I have also discovered that I love learning.

UPCOMING REVIEW WORKSHOPS

CompTIA Network+ Review
T-Building T953
February 7, 2015 - 10am-2pm

Cisco CCENT Review
T-Building T102
February 21, 2015 - 10am-2pm

CompTIA Security+ Review
T-Building T102
March 21, 2015 - 10am-2pm

Cisco CCNA Review
T-Building T102
May 16, 2015 - 10am-2pm



DOL GRANT ALLOWS MVCC TO BETTER EDUCATE STUDENTS AND COMMUNITY

Moraine Valley Community College was awarded the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCT) grant in 2011. This grant gives Moraine the opportunity to expand their curricula. These new courses allowed students to complete their degrees faster and compete for higher paying positions. This grant has done several things to advance and promote the student body, the college, and the people in the community of Palos Hills, IL by placing the focus on those who are facing job loss and/or those students who are actively seeking employment.

The National Information, Security, and Geospatial Technologies Consortium (NISGTC) represents a group of seven colleges from around the country. The colleges are Collin College in Frisco, TX, Bellevue College in Bellevue, WA, Bunker Hill Community College in Boston, MA, Del Mar College in Corpus Christi, TX, Rio Salado in Tempe, AZ, Salt Lake Community College in Salt Lake City, UT and Moraine Valley Community College in Palos Hills, IL. This collection of academic entities was jointly awarded the TAACCT Grant for their dedication to training students in IT and occupational skills.

The DOL grant has afforded Moraine Valley the ability to purchase and implement the Big Yellow Box; the college's virtualization data center. The virtualization center is part of the Center for Systems Security and Information Assurance (CSSIA) and is a pivotal part of the learning experience for MVCC students. The LAN, hardware, software, database, and mobile functionality have been upgraded, more advanced technology courses are being offered, and a new Geographic Information Systems (GIS) program was created. The DOL grant assists Moraine Valley in providing the education students need during these technologically advanced times.

The community also benefits from the DOL grant awarded to MVCC. With the new funding the college is able to offer seminars on various topics such as 'How to Choose A Major in Information Technology'. MVCC representatives work with the Chamber of Commerce and also provide speakers to career and education fairs in the area. Because of the DOL grant the college can provide additional outreach services to help people prepare for gainful employment.

MVCC is experiencing exponential growth in comprehensive programs due to the DOL grant. This has enabled outreach that will impact the community and the students alike. Guest speakers from leading technology companies like Dell, VMware, and Cisco have made the rounds at MVCC and shared their expertise with the students. This enlightening and encouraging experience has bolstered confidence in the school and strengthened the student's prospects after graduation.

The DOL grant has allowed students to set goals that are viable and up to date, effectively recreating the student success lifecycle and finding meaningful advancement in the process. MVCC faculty and staff are there assisting every step of the way. The tools provided are more extensive and well rounded as a result of the grant, allowing students to dive into specialty areas and niche technologies. Testing, workshops, and education are now in-house which lets MVCC accommodate student's needs from top to bottom.



FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

DR. MIKE STRNAD

Dr. Mike's is currently employed by Dell, Inc. as Program Project Management Senior Advisor. Prior to Dell, Mike worked at the University of Chicago as the Assistant Director of IT, Desktop Support and Project Management.

Mike spent 13 years of service with the United States Army holding positions as a United State Army Drill Sergeant, United States Army Recruiter, and two tours in Southeast Asia. He enjoys reading and listening to fine music in addition to spending time traveling with his wife of 35 years. Mike donates his free time to schools helping our young students. He is also an active member of ITF, Co-Chairs the Student Small Interest Group for the Chicago Chapter of AITP, and is a member of the CIO SIG Group from AITP. He is currently an adjunct instructor at Moraine Valley Community College.

Mike earned an Associate Degree in Information Technology from Moraine Valley Community College, a Bachelor's Degree in IT from Governors State University, a Master of Business degree with a concentration in IT Management from Western Governors University, and a Doctorate in Management, Organizational Leadership from The University of Phoenix.

Mike has been working with the MVCC Cohort program now for about 18 months. He has mentored students and guest lectured on topics that include branding and effective communications.

EMPLOYER INTERVIEW

SYSTECH INFORMATION SERVICES

Laura Scott, Office Manager
Systech Information Services

Why do you like hiring Moraine Valley students who come out of our IT department?

Systech has found that the students from Moraine Valley have been competent, focused and hard-working individuals.

Are Moraine Valley students ready for the job market? Are they prepared for the workforce?

The students have come to us with solid technical foundations and good communication skills, these skills are necessary in our field of work.

The MVCC students we have hired have had a good understanding of the technical background they need to succeed and the requisite work ethic to accomplish the goal.

SYSTECH
Progressive, Proactive IT!
www.SystechInfo.com

Why do you like hiring from Moraine Valley?

They have a good combination of skills that prepare them for success. Technicians must have a well-rounded background in the application of technology in the real world and the communication skills necessary to be successful. MVCC prepares their students well for the real world.



DOL PUNCH CARD RAFFLE A HUGE SUCCESS

Throughout 2013, the Illinois Technology Foundation sponsored an incentive program for students in our NISGTC grant. Students were able to pick up a punch card to keep track of their attendance. Students earned punches for attending workshops, sessions, and mentoring events.

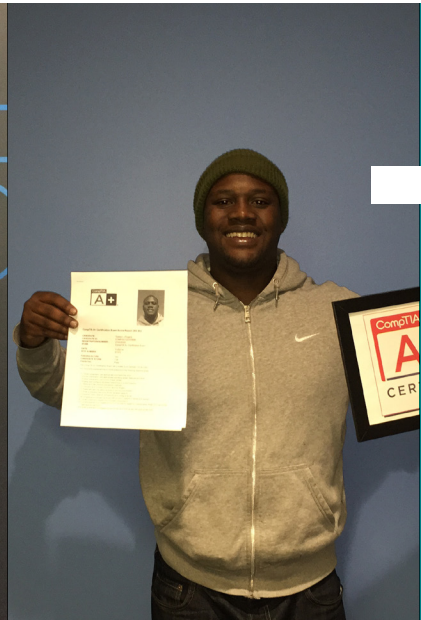
On December 2nd we hosted our pizza party and contest winners! Our winners included Sam Diab, Robert Kleefisch, Darren Cooper, and Bridget Nee. We would like to thank all of our students for helping the continued success of our workshops and review sessions. Students were also donated exam vouchers, gift bags, and gift cards throughout the semester.



PEARSON VUE AND THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR GRANT

With the help of the DOL grant we were able to bring on a PearsonVUE testing center for our students. PearsonVUE testing provides exams for CompTIA, Cisco, VMWare, Microsoft, and many more. These exams include the A+, Network+, Security+, Linux+, VCP, and CCNA exams. This allows our students to take their industry certifications on-site within our CIT program here at Moraine Valley. Employers are looking for students with industry certifications and are requesting it in their minimal qualifications within job descriptions. The more certifications a student can achieve, the more likely they will land a great job within the information technology field. To this date, about 350+ students have taken exams in our testing center. This service has helped us dramatically meet our goals on the NISGTC/DOL grant. The grant has enabled us to assist our students in becoming certified by offering review workshops and MeasureUP practice exams. By offering these items, more students have become certified, which has led to more students gaining employment. Students leave our grant programs with career certificates, associate's degrees, and industry certifications making them valuable and marketable to future employers.

PEARSON
VUE-Authorized
Test Center



NATIONAL CYBERWATCH CENTER PIONEER AWARD

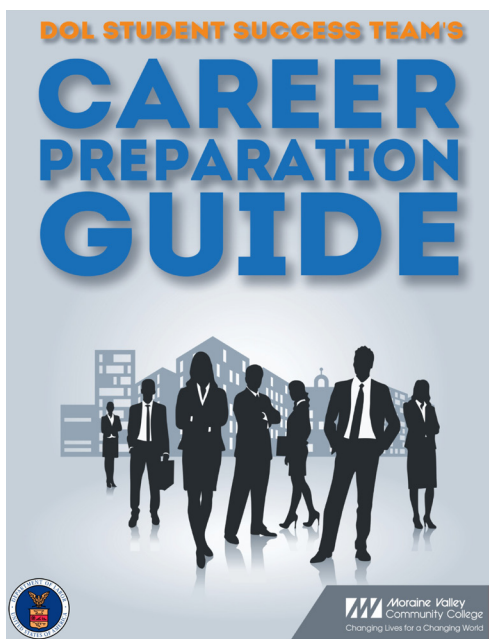


Erich Spengler, Director and Principal Investigator of CSSIA earned the first National CyberWatch Center Pioneer Award. The National CyberWatch Center is an Information Assurance/Information Security Advanced Technology Education Center of the National Science Foundation (NSF) which aims to advance cybersecurity education and ultimately strengthen the workforce. It started a cybersecurity conference strictly for community college educators, The Community College Cyber Summit (3CS) which was co-hosted by CSSIA at Moraine Valley this past July.

One of the new CyberWatch programs focuses on awards and recognitions. The Pioneer Award is one of the honors under this new program. Recipients of this award are not limited to cybersecurity educators, and it is given to someone who helps create or develop new ideas and methods.

"I personally consider Erich one of the best in any academic setting. He is someone I have professionally looked up to since I first met him in 2004 when he sat on a visiting team that came to Prince George's Community College as part of NSF's due diligence before CyberWatch was awarded its first NSF Advanced Technological Education grant," said Casey O'Brien, principle investigator of the National CyberWatch Center. "Erich's contributions in curriculum development, virtual learning environments, competitions, faculty professional development, mentoring, and successful grant management have set the bar to a standard many will try to attain for years to come. Most importantly, he's one heck of a guy."

CAREER PREPARATION TIPS



Finding a job can be considered a full time job! The application process alone can be a time consuming task. In our CIT department, we've worked hard to gather some top job search websites for you. Some new ones include Neuvoo, MyJobHelper, and K-through-12 jobspot. The goal of these websites is to not just find a job that may suit you, but to see what the market is looking for. Do you have the proper skills? What are you lacking? By looking at requirements and job descriptions it gives you a good feel for what employers are looking for in future employees. In our past DOL workshops, we've had employers state that not all jobs are online. Sometimes

you have to build connections on LinkedIn and go to networking events. Sometimes it's not about what you know, it's about who you know. Utilize all of these resources to assist you with your job search! If you are a participant in our DOL/NISGTC grant, feel free to stop by T100 to pick up a free copy of our career preparation guide.



MVCC IT DUAL-CREDIT PROGRAM WINS AWARD

Moraine Valley Community College received top honors for its Information Technology Dual-Credit Program from the National Career Pathways Network (NCPN).

The college earned first place within the Career Pathways Partnership Excellence Award nominations. This award was established by the NCPN to emphasize the importance of career guidance, professional development for educators and employers, and the employer role in providing work-based learning opportunities for students.

The winning program gives students the opportunity to take classes at their high school and Moraine Valley simultaneously.

Those students learn more advanced content and gain college credit while learning about potential careers as computer repair technicians, help desk professionals, cyber security specialists, network administrators, wireless and mobile devices support specialists, and support professionals for data center and virtual computing centers, for example. Moraine Valley partners with the following high schools: Argo, Evergreen

Park, Reavis, Richards, Queen of Peace, Shepard, Eisenhower, Mother McAuley, Stagg, Sandburg, Andrew, Brother Rice, Oak Lawn, Marist, and Mount Carmel.

The program is designed on stackable certificates that lead to a two-year degree. Students complete a career orientation class and multiple entry-level certifications while attending high school. These stackable certificates articulate into upper-level stackable certificates that lead to two-year degree programs. Moraine Valley's Center for Systems Security and Information Assurance (CSSIA) and local employers have been instrumental in the program.

"This program is an example for other dual-credit technology programs across the country. Our staff is being recognized for this high level collaboration, and the number of students who complete the program and continue it as college students at Moraine Valley. Staff here have put a lot of work into the program, and it's nice to be recognized," said Dr. John Sands, professor of Information Technology and Co-Principal Investigator of the CSSIA NSF Regional Center.

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Can't get enough of NISGTC? The easiest way to stay up-to-date on the latest and greatest of the grant is to subscribe to our e-newsletter. Scan the QR code to sign up.

NISGTC News is published by the National Information, Security & Geospatial Technologies Consortium located at Moraine Valley Community College, 9000 W. College Pkwy., Palos Hills, IL 60465-2478. Questions and comments should be directed to Angela O'Donnell, administrative director, at **(708) 608-4241** or odonnella29@morainevalley.edu.

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