

Motlow Mechatronics and Robotics in high gear

There are several very exciting developments underway at Motlow State Community College – McMinnville campus, that dovetail with Warren County High School and the Tennessee College of Applied Technology.

These all support providing qualified applicants with good-paying jobs with Midstate employers. Please see below the annual BRAC update with Motlow.

Student headcount in Mechatronics classes for this fall semester are approximately 300 which is similar to a year ago.

The tentative counts are as follows:

Motlow-McMinnville	90
WCHS	20
Motlow-Smyrna	100
Oakland High School	45
Motlow-Fayetteville	20
Franklin County High School	15*

* To go to Motlow – Fayetteville on dual enrollment

Motlow now has eight Mechatronics instructors full time and three adjunct instructors. Four of the eight instructors are new. The instructors are as follows:

- Eric Reynolds – Fayetteville
- Kevin Brown
- Dr. Keith DeMell
- Charlie King – WCHS & Motlow (35 years of industrial maintenance experience)
- Melissa Paz
- Paul Sand
- Omar Tantawi - Smyrna
- Dr. Khalid Tantawi – Smyrna

I asked about the expected impact of TN Reconnect students (tuition free) on demand for Mechatronics classes. Motlow is expecting 300-400 new students this semester from TN Reconnect (adults 25 years of age or older) for all five campuses. While this overall impact at the college will be substantial, it is too early to determine if there is extra demand for Mechatronics.

One major new development for Mechatronics is Motlow has developed a collaboration with Tennessee State University

such that a four-year bachelor's degree in Industrial Technology with a concentration in Mechatronics will become available for program entry in August 2019. This plan has been approved by TSU and Motlow and will be applied for by TBR (Tennessee Board of Regents).

This means this four-year degree could be achieved totally within Warren County. This program does not conflict with the MTSU Mechatronics Engineering bachelor's degree.

The latest outlook for the Automation & Robotics Training Center (ARTC) is to be complete by April 2019 with non-credit classes beginning in May 2019. Construction progress is clearly discernible every day for passing motorists.

Robotic equipment is already on order. One major challenge to Motlow and the new ARTC has been to develop training contracts with the three major robot manufacturers – Fanuc, Yaskawa/ Motoman, and ABB. Larry Flatt, executive director of the ARTC, has

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been working diligently on this need for almost a year.

Contracts are now in place with Motoman and ABB and pending with Fanuc. This means the Motlow ARTC will be broadly supported by the robot manufacturers. This will involve some revenue sharing, but helps to assure

revenue and training success of the ARTC here.

Larry's current forecast is for \$350,000 in training revenues in the first year of ARTC operation with a total of 180 students (industry employees) and 24-30 training classes. The Motlow ARTC will be on the websites of the robot manufacturers. These one-two week training classes for robot operators and maintenance people will be exactly as offered at the robot manufacturers for the exact same price. This overall strategy will translate into the Motlow ARTC being busy the day classes begin!

Continued on 7A

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