

Technician Spotlight – Sam Suarez, Thorlabs



Sam Suarez first arrived at Thorlabs in the summer of 2018. As a Quality Control Inspector, he closely examined lenses at the Newton, NJ facility. But a year into the job, Sam walked into the CNC lab to learn about the lens manufacturing process. He never looked back.

Today **Sam is Team Lead for the Advanced Photonics Department**. He manages a crew of six optics technicians who complete the early-stage manufacturing process of blocking, grinding, and cleaning. Sam credits his success to his manager, Navid Entezarian, who first brought him over from the Quality Control team. "He saw something in me that he thought would make me a good candidate to join the CNC team that manufactures lenses," Sam explained. "Navid continues to motivate me to learn new processes and skills that actually reinforce my love for the field."

Now Sam gets to pay it forward.

As an adjunct professor at Sussex County Community College in the Optics Technology program, he guides students toward fulfilling careers in precision optics. Sam says the disciplined nature of precision optics has served him well. "One thing my career in optics has helped me master in my personal life is how to work with small reachable goals until I achieve the big picture goal. Instead of shooting for the "ultimate" goal from the beginning, I look at the stages it would take to reach it and go after it one stage at a time."

APOMA Conference Highlights Front Range Community College

Front Range Community College (FRCC) in Colorado is aggressively growing its Optics Technician Training Program and recently showcased its progress before a national audience. **Dr. Amanda Meier, Optics Technology Program Director**, has ambitious goals. She wants to build the FRCC program and graduate a steady pipeline of technicians feeding the optics manufacturing workforce.

What better opportunity to highlight the program than the 2022 APOMA Tech Workshop featuring optics manufacturing employers from around the country?


[Read More](#)

Where Have All the Technicians Gone?

Planning on attending Photonics West 2023 in San Francisco? Be sure to stop by AmeriCOM's panel titled "Where Have All the Technicians Gone? Learn How Optics Ecosystems Are Bringing Them Back." Moderated by Dr. Alexis Vogt, the discussion will feature collaborators from industry, education, and nonprofit sectors highlighting how their participation in an AmeriCOM optics ecosystem is raising awareness of the optics industry and building back the technician workforce. Our panel is scheduled for February 1st from 2:45-3:45 PST at Moscone Center's Expo Stage, Hall DE (Exhibit Level). You'll find a full description of the session [here](#).



Ever wonder how teaching at your local community college might help your company's recruitment efforts?

We talked to **John Pietruszka**, a Technical Specialist at Lumetrics and an Adjunct Instructor teaching Optical Systems Technology at Monroe Community College (MCC) in Rochester, NY. John has some answers – including a misconception about teaching he wishes he'd known sooner.

[Read More](#)

High School Students Find Job Prospects in Billion-Dollar Industry

Paul Conrow teaches physics and chemistry at **East High School** in Rochester, NY. When he applied for a state grant to build a precision optics lab in his high school, he couldn't imagine where the process would lead. Years later, students are reaping the benefits and snatching up good-paying jobs in a highly sought-after field.

[Read More](#)


UPCOMING EVENTS

SPIE Photonics West
Jan 28 - Feb 2, 2023

SPIE Defense and Commercial Sensing
April 30 - May 4, 2023

Education in Optics & Photonics (ETOP)
May 15-18, 2023

Subscribe to the **Optics Insider** for the latest in optics news each month.



AmeriCOM
CENTER FOR OPTICS MANUFACTURING



[Privacy Policy](#)

American Center for Optics Manufacturing

© Copyright 2023, American Center for Optics Manufacturing

American Center for Optics Manufacturing, 1565 Jefferson Road, Suite 420, Rochester, NY 14623

[Manage preferences](#)