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Technician Careers Lift Off in Central Florida



When Valencia College in Orlando introduced its Precision Optics, Photonics, and Fiber Optics Technician training course last fall, the school aimed to have students job-ready in 15 weeks. The course falls under the college's Accelerated Skills Training (AST) program to prepare students for high-demand, higher-wage careers in a short amount of time. This month, students from the inaugural cohort graduated from the program, and many have already lined up job offers launching them into exciting and fulfilling optics careers.

“We worked closely with industry partners to understand their needs and the skills and knowledge base they’re looking for from their new hires.”

Carolyn McMorran, Assistant Vice President, Professional Continuing Education at Valencia College

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Energy and Collaboration Defined Photonics West 2024



Members of the AmeriCOM team were among 24,000 participants in the 2024 Photonics West (PW) exhibition in San Francisco, January 30 to February 1, 2024. The familiar “PW-buzz” of energy was ever-present, as was the sense of camaraderie characteristic of the optics, photonics, and imaging industry.

AmeriCOM hosted a panel discussion, ***Creating Ecosystems to Produce the Next Generation of Optics Technicians***, moderated by Jenn Cable, president of Thorlabs and a member of the AmeriCOM Board of Directors. The panelists included

Samrad Bukovcan, Moore Nanotechnology; Donn Silbermann, Optics Institute of Southern California and Board of Directors of Vital Link of Orange County; Bill Warger, Thorlabs Education Group; and Alexis Vogt, PhD, Endowed Chair & Professor of Optics at Monroe Community College and Executive Director of Workforce & Higher Education at AmeriCOM. Together, they represented academia, industry, and nonprofits, three sectors that are essential to establishing ecosystems and building the optics and photonics workforce.



Left to right: Jenn Cable, Alexis Vogt, Samrad Bukovcan, Bill Warger, and Donn Silbermann

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60 Years and Counting!



Congratulations to long-time Photonics West exhibitor Sydor Optics which celebrated 60 years of being in business as a premiere manufacturer of optical components. The third-generation, family-run business supports a variety of clients from the defense, entertainment, aerospace, medical, and semiconductor industries.

Sydor is deeply committed to workforce development, one of AmeriCOM's strategic objectives. The company has raised money for Monroe Community College's (MCC) optics technician training program for more than two decades and worked with the college to create a new two-year apprenticeship program to invest in its workers.

Optics Interview Strikes a Chord

Jennifer Owens always believed her degree in Instrumental Music Education from Ithaca College would lead to a fulfilling career doing what she loved. She started on that path, training and working as a band director. But life's next stanza brought some unexpected changes as she balanced homeschooling three children with caring for a severely ill parent. Nearly two decades after graduating college, Jen was ready to return to a career in music education. That's when she saw a television interview about optics that changed her tune.



Dr. Alexis Vogt is Endowed Chair & Associate Professor of Optics at Monroe Community College (MCC) in Rochester, NY and also serves as the AmeriCOM Executive Director for Workforce & Higher Education. When Jen saw her on a local news show promoting MCC's Optical Systems Technology program, she said she felt "a thunderbolt moment." Dr. Vogt talked about musicians often finding success in the optics field, and mentioned the program's flexible schedule. "There were certain things [Dr.Vogt] said in the interview that spoke directly to me," Jen said.

[Read Jen's Story](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Solar Eclipse

April 8, 2024

CPIA 2024 Rocky Mountain Photonics Summit &

Expo Denver, CO

April 18, 2024

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SPIE Defense and Commercial Sensing

National Harbor, MD

April 21-25, 2024

Vol. 2, Issue 2 - February, 2024

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