



## what's cool

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Bill Pregler

Bill Pregler has worked in the winery equipment industry for many years and is a staff writer for *Wine Business Monthly*.

# Wine Technician Program at Chemeketa Community College

## National Science Foundation Grant Awarded for Training

**AFTER ATTENDING THE PACKAGING Machinery Manufacturers Institute's (PMMI) national convention last year, I wrote about how the association works directly with technical schools and colleges throughout the country to develop certified training programs to meet the ever-growing demand for skilled technicians.**

At the time, I interviewed **Maria Ferrante**, senior director of marketing and communications, who told me they are seriously proactive in developing and training future technicians, and at the end of my article, I announced that **Chemeketa Community College** in Oregon was on the verge of initiating a similar program, which is focused to our wine industry.

Last April I learned that Chemeketa had just received a **National Science Foundation (NSF)** advanced technology grant for researching, developing and instructing coursework specifically for beverage industry technicians.

As the principal investigator for the grant, **Charles Sekafetz**, the program chair of **Electronics and Networking Technologies**, explained, "Community colleges are challenged with designing technical education programs for occupations that are not clearly defined by a single, traditional title."

Today, these types of programs are often industry-driven due to a specific, emerging need. What is cool is Chemeketa will collaborate with beverage processors (wineries) as well as processing equipment manufacturers in the development of a new manufacturing systems technician education program. I have been waiting for this to happen for 20 years.

After years of selling winery equipment, designing installations and, finally, writing about the wine tech industry, I know this has been a glaring and almost embarrassing oversight in our industry. Things are not going to get easier when the equipment and systems constantly become more complex and rely on more PC operation and programming—while we also see the rise in robotics and sophisticated vineyard equipment.

Maintenance issues can start when an industry generally relies on a foreign manufacturing base—and those manufacturing companies do not have a



company technician either available in the United States or a policy to put a technician on an airplane to accommodate maintenance requests.

To combat this concern, Sekafetz said his goal is to develop a program with stackable certificates embedded in a two-year associate degree with a clear path to employment, one that can be used as a "prototype" or model for other community colleges and across the country interested in creating their own courses. "As courses develop, our project will use a work-based learning model that allows future employees to engage in both classroom and on-the-job training, assuring they can immediately utilize new skills with continuously updated knowledge," he said. This is too cool.

According to Sekafetz, they will be conducting a DACUM (Developing a Curriculum), an occupational analysis method developed years ago by **Ohio State University** and used extensively in developing two-year college workforce programs.

Using DACUM results will provide professional assistance for manufacturing employers (such as wineries) and educators alike and help develop a clear career pathway for students to gain access to constantly evolving technologies, such as robotics. "While people might consider someone who sets a temperature control system a technician, if they are not repairing that same equipment when it fails, they are not in the scope of our work," Sekafetz said.

I received a preliminary outline of the Chemeketa technical program from **Jessica Sandrock**, director of wine studies, who oversees development in their other wine-related programs.

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## what's cool



According to Sandrock, the technician program thus far will include courses on the following:

- Electrical issues: from theory to installation, schematics, measurement and industrial application of AC/DC motors, semi-conductors, generators, test equipment and more
- Pneumatic/Hydraulic Fundamentals: from theory, diagnosis, service and maintenance of components and systems
- Blueprints and Process Control
- Sensors, control elements, actuators and trouble shooting for everything from temperature, pressure, optical, positioning and flow.
- Welding: from basic to TIG, including steel, aluminum, stainless, magnesium and alloys.

Chemeketa Community College's **Center for Business and Industry** is located near Salem, Oregon and has five satellite campuses throughout the state that serve nearly 30,000 students. As per the project's submission to the NSF, courses will be available beginning in the fall of 2019.

I also learned that apart from enrolling new students, the college will afford opportunities for technicians already in the wine industry looking to update and better manage their growing responsibilities.

**WHAT'S COOL:** Chemeketa College will be analyzing feedback and data and then conducting an active search with their industry partners for skill sets, for both part- and full-time instructors. For more information, visit the HR department website at: [www.chemeketa.edu/about/human-resources](http://www.chemeketa.edu/about/human-resources), or contact program director [chuck.sekafetz@chemeketa.edu](mailto:chuck.sekafetz@chemeketa.edu) with a resume and cover letter stating qualifications and expertise. **WBM**

