

BLUEPRINT

THE APPLIED TECHNOLOGY, ADVANCED MANUFACTURING AND WORKFORCE NEWSLETTER
FOR VANCE-GRANVILLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE



2025 Fall Edition

**Pathways to
Tomorrow's
Workforce**

From stackable credentials to career ladders and apprenticeships, we are shaping clear pathways that prepare students, support employers, and strengthen our region's future.

A young man with dark curly hair, wearing safety glasses and a dark blue lab coat, is smiling slightly while working in a machine shop. He is positioned in front of a large industrial machine, possibly a lathe or mill. The background shows a well-lit workshop with various pieces of equipment and a window. The overall scene conveys a sense of focused learning and technical skill.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Fall 2025 Edition of the Blueprint, Vance-Granville Community College's newsletter spotlighting applied technology, advanced manufacturing, and workforce development. As we move through the year, we're excited to share the latest updates and initiatives shaping our programs and student experiences. This edition highlights innovative developments, from new learning pathways and experiential opportunities to initiatives designed to support career growth and advancement. Whether you're a student, alumni, or community partner, there's plenty to explore in this season's updates – read on to see what's new and how we're building the future of skilled professions together.

-Fredesvinda Colindres

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North Carolina stands at a pivotal moment in preparing its workforce for the future. With projections showing a national shortage of 1.9 million advanced manufacturing workers by 2033, the need for innovative training solutions has never been more urgent. As the 6th largest manufacturing state, employing over 473,000 people, North Carolina is poised to fill this gap acutely – particularly as new industries such as electric vehicle and battery manufacturing add thousands of jobs requiring specialized skills.



Figure 1

THE FUTURE OF LEARNING

The Center for Advanced Manufacturing and Applied Technology is more than a building – it's a promise to prepare our community for the future of work.

Opening in 2027, the Center for Advanced Manufacturing and Applied Technology will provide cutting-edge training in mechatronics, welding, electrical, and HVAC—building a skilled workforce, meeting industry demand, and shaping the future of our community.

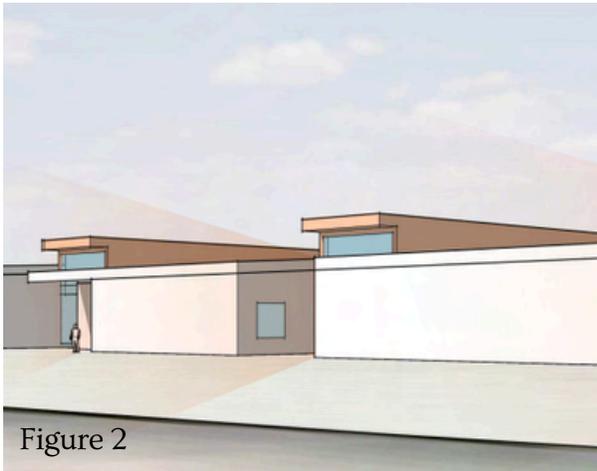


Figure 2

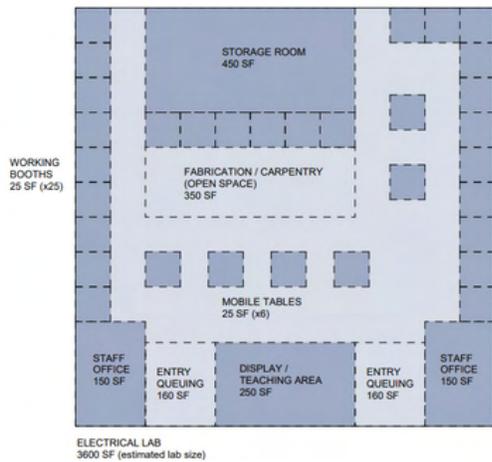


Figure 3

To meet this challenge head-on, Vance-Granville Community College is moving forward with the Center for Advanced Manufacturing and Applied Technology, a state-of-the-art facility currently in the design phase. Located on a 15-acre site in the Triangle North Granville Business Park, the Center is scheduled to open in the Fall of 2027 and will become a cornerstone for workforce readiness in our region. The facility will house the Mechatronics, Welding, Electrical, and HVAC programs, with open lab space designed for future growth and emerging industry needs.

Renderings included here (Figure 1: site layout, Figure 2: building exterior, Figure 3: electrical lab draft) show a vision of a modern, flexible space built to adapt to tomorrow's technologies. Beyond classrooms, the Center will also provide just-in-time training, dual enrollment opportunities for high school students, and stackable credentials developed in partnership with local industries.

This initiative is not happening in isolation. VGCC is already working as part of the AdvanceNC Coalition, developing micro-credentials with Education Design Labs, and expanding both pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs with regional employers. Many local industries are actively engaged, ensuring that the programs align with real workforce needs. Currently, five companies have advanced manufacturing apprentices enrolled at VGCC, with four more participating in work-based learning programs.

The community impact will be significant. By addressing the skills gap and preparing students for high-tech and skilled trade careers, the Center will strengthen local businesses, create clear pathways for students, and help secure economic growth for our region. Employers will gain a reliable pipeline of talent, while residents will gain access to rewarding, sustainable careers in advanced manufacturing.

Fundraising efforts are underway to make this vision a reality. The Center for Advanced Manufacturing and Applied Technology represents more than just a building—it represents the future of learning, the future of work, and the future of our community.

THE RISE OF MICRO-PATHWAYS

In recent years, higher education has been evolving to meet the changing needs of both learners and employers. One of the most promising innovations in this landscape is the development of micro pathways—flexible, modular training opportunities that allow students to earn stackable credentials aligned with high-demand careers. At Vance-Granville Community College (VGCC), we are proud to be part of this movement through our involvement in the Advance NC coalition and our collaboration with Education Design Lab.

Together, we are working to design micro pathways that will directly support workforce needs in high-demand manufacturing sectors. Specifically, our design team is currently focused on pathways in industrial machinery mechanics and welding—two fields critical to both our local and regional economy. By creating targeted learning experiences that can build into larger credentials, we are helping students take manageable steps toward long-term success.

A central part of this work has been understanding the needs of our institution, our processes, and most importantly, our learners. During the Foundations of Design phase, we had the privilege of engaging deeply with students, faculty, staff, and employers. These conversations provided invaluable insights into what is working well at VGCC and where we have opportunities for growth. Listening to students share their perspectives was especially powerful, as it underscored the importance of designing programs that are not only practical but also deeply supportive of the whole learner.

In July, we conducted learner journey mapping sessions that gave us a window into the real experiences of our students.

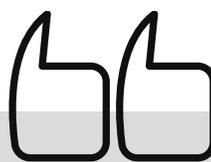


Learners like Joseph Richmond and Omar Ramos Espinoza shared their stories—the challenges they've faced, the goals they're working toward, and the ways in which they hope education can empower their futures. One of the most important insights that emerged from these conversations was how much students value being seen and supported holistically. For them, education is not just about gaining knowledge or skills; it is about building trust, relationships, and a sense of belonging within the community.

This insight reminds us that systemic change requires more than just the introduction of new programs or policies. It demands an ongoing commitment to relationships, to listening, and to creating spaces where learners feel acknowledged as whole people. The success of micro pathways will depend not only on their design but also on the ways in which they are delivered—with empathy, flexibility, and attention to individual needs.

As we continue to shape these pathways, we recognize the importance of collaboration at every level. While we are working with other institutions across the region to ensure that our micro pathways provide scalable solutions, we remain grounded in the voices of our own community. The perspectives of VGCC faculty, staff, employers, and students are shaping the design process, ensuring that our programs are not only regionally relevant but also locally responsive.

The rise of micro pathways represents an exciting opportunity for learners and institutions alike. At VGCC, this work is more than an initiative; it is a reflection of our commitment to meeting students where they are, helping them move forward with confidence, and building a stronger future for our region.



Colleges need systems that do more than hand you a degree – they should prepare you to keep learning and succeed, especially for students who leave high school without knowing what's out there. That's why it means so much to me to be involved in building micro-pathways and to know they're on the way.

Omar Ramos Espinoza

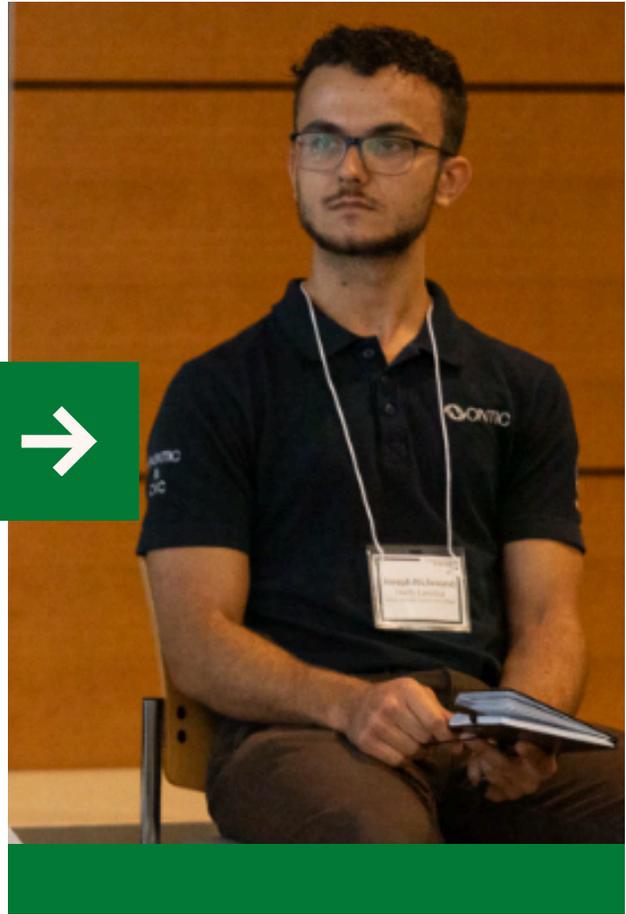
Q&A

WITH JOSEPH RICHMOND



INSIDE THE MIND OF AN ELECTROMECHANICAL TECHNICIAN APPRENTICE AT ONTIC

At just 19, Joseph Richmond from Creedmoor, North Carolina, is pursuing a degree in Mechatronics Engineering with aspirations of building a career in aerospace engineering. Today, we're sitting down with him to learn more about his experience.



Q

What is one word that describes your experience at Vance-Granville Community College?

"If I had to pick one word to describe my experience here, it would be 'surprising.' I came in not expecting much beyond maybe earning a degree, but within my first semester I landed a job and discovered so much potential. The support I've received has been incredible, and I've been able to get far more out of this college than I ever imagined. It's shown me that opportunities here go well beyond just the classroom."

Q

How has your apprenticeship at Ontic helped you connect classroom learning to real-world applications?

"My apprenticeship really bridged the gap between the classroom and the real world. Safety was always a priority in class, so stepping into the industry felt natural because I already understood its importance. I've also gained a solid understanding of manufacturing processes, how to contribute to a company's goals, and even the simple but essential skill of knowing which tools to use and how to use them."

Q

What advice would you give to someone thinking about joining one of the programs in Applied Technologies?

"Understand that these programs require focus and genuine interest – if you don't commit to becoming good at what you do, you never will be. I took it seriously from the start, and that's why I've been given the opportunities I have. No playing around – hard work really does get rewarded. These skills can open doors you might not even know exist, but only if you're willing to put in the time and effort. The more you invest in yourself now, the more it will pay off later."

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AT VGCC:

WORK-BASED LEARNING & APPRENTICESHIPS

At Vance-Granville Community College, experiential learning bridges the gap between classroom instruction and real-world application. Through hands-on experiences such as work-based learning and apprenticeships, students gain valuable skills, build professional connections, and enhance their career readiness. Whether you're a student exploring a new industry or preparing to enter the workforce, or employer seeking to grow your talent pipeline, VGCC's experiential learning programs are transformative.

Work-Based Learning (WBL) is an academic program that combines classroom studies with on-the-job, career-related work experience. It is typically short-term, semester based and designed to give students a glimpse into a career field through internships. These opportunities are often unpaid. In contrast, apprenticeships are long-term and can last from one year to six years. They are paid programs where individuals earn while they learn, gaining industry-recognized credentials and often securing full-time employment afterward.

At Vance-Granville Community College we partner with local employers to offer hands-on work-based learning and apprenticeship programs that lead to industry-recognized credentials and career advancement. Through work-based learning programs, employers can introduce students to their industry, build community partnerships, and identify promising talent early, at no to minimal cost. Apprenticeships go even further by allowing employers to train individuals to meet specific company needs. Apprentices are productive employees from day one, and because they learn on the job, they gain skills tailored to the business. Both pathways help reduce hiring costs, improve retention, and ensure a strong pipeline of skilled workers.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT EXPERIENTIAL PROGRAMS AT VGCC, CONTACT:

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Experiential Learning
Coordinator

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BUILDING CAREER LADDERS TO EMPOWER STUDENTS

Vance-Granville Community College (VGCC) has taken a forward-thinking approach to student success by developing career ladders for each of its academic programs. These structured pathways are designed to help prospective and current students visualize how each credential they earn can lead to specific job opportunities and salary ranges – making education more transparent, goal-oriented, and aligned with real-world outcomes.

What Are Career Ladders?

Career ladders at VGCC are visual and informational tools that map out:

- Credential milestones (certificates, diplomas, associate degrees)
- Associated job titles at each level
- Estimated salary ranges for those roles
- Opportunities for further education or advancement

This approach helps students understand not only what they're learning, but also why it matters in the job market. These ladders are especially helpful for adult learners and career changers, who may be looking to upskill quickly or pivot into new industries.

Supporting Student Success

VGCC has also invested in roles like the Outreach & Adult Student Support Coach, who helps adult learners (ages 25–55) navigate enrollment, access support services, and stay on track with their career goals. This personalized guidance complements the career ladders by ensuring students have both the information and support they need to succeed.



Welding Technology

CAREER GUIDE

How to Use This Guide

- 1. Identify Your Path:** Determine which area of Paralegal Technology interests you most.
- 2. Follow the Educational Path:** Enroll in the corresponding VGCC programs and complete the necessary coursework.
- 3. Pursue Entry-Level Positions:** Gain experience through internships or entry-level jobs while still in school.
- 4. Advance Your Career:** Use the career ladder to plan your progression from entry-level to expert positions.



WELDING TECHNOLOGY

Data Sources: Median salary ranges for NC by position based on AI from O-NETonline.org, Talent, Indeed, ZipRecruiter, Salary, CareerExplorer, Glassdoor and RandstadUSA.com.

These are general examples of positions that might be found in this career track. Actual positions and salaries vary depending on the industry, individual company, and specific location.

Vance-Granville Community College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award associate degrees. Contact the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of Vance-Granville Community College. Vance-Granville Community College is an equal opportunity institution. The college serves all students regardless of race, creed, color, age, sex, national origin, or disabling conditions. Vance-Granville Community College is a Tobacco-Free College.

The Career Services Team is Growing!

We are thrilled to introduce two new staff members who have recently joined our Career Services Department. Each brings valuable expertise to their respective areas, and we are excited to see the contributions they will make in supporting our students' career growth and opportunities.

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FOR WORK-BASED LEARNING AND APPRENTICESHIP QUESTIONS, CONTACT:

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Phone: [\(252\)738-3336](tel:(252)738-3336) **Email:** hawleyl@vgcc.edu

FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES REGARDING THE CAREER SERVICES DEPARTMENT, CONTACT:

Dr. Krystal Foxx, Director of Career Services & Experiential Learning
Phone: [\(252\)738-3466](tel:(252)738-3466) **Email:** foxxk@vgcc.edu



LaShawn Hawley

In May 2025, we added another team member, LaShawn Hawley. She has 20 years of experience in career development, advising, job placement, and career & technical education. Most recently, she was a Career Advisor with NC Works. She is excited about joining the Career Services Team, here at VGCC, building relationships with current and future students, faculty /staff, and other stakeholders that will lead to personal and career success.

A proud Henderson native, she was educated in the Vance County Schools system and holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Clothing & Textiles from North Carolina A&T State University. Additionally, she has obtained these certifications: Human Resources Specialist Certificate from Vance-Granville Community College and Career Development Facilitator from NC Works Training Center.



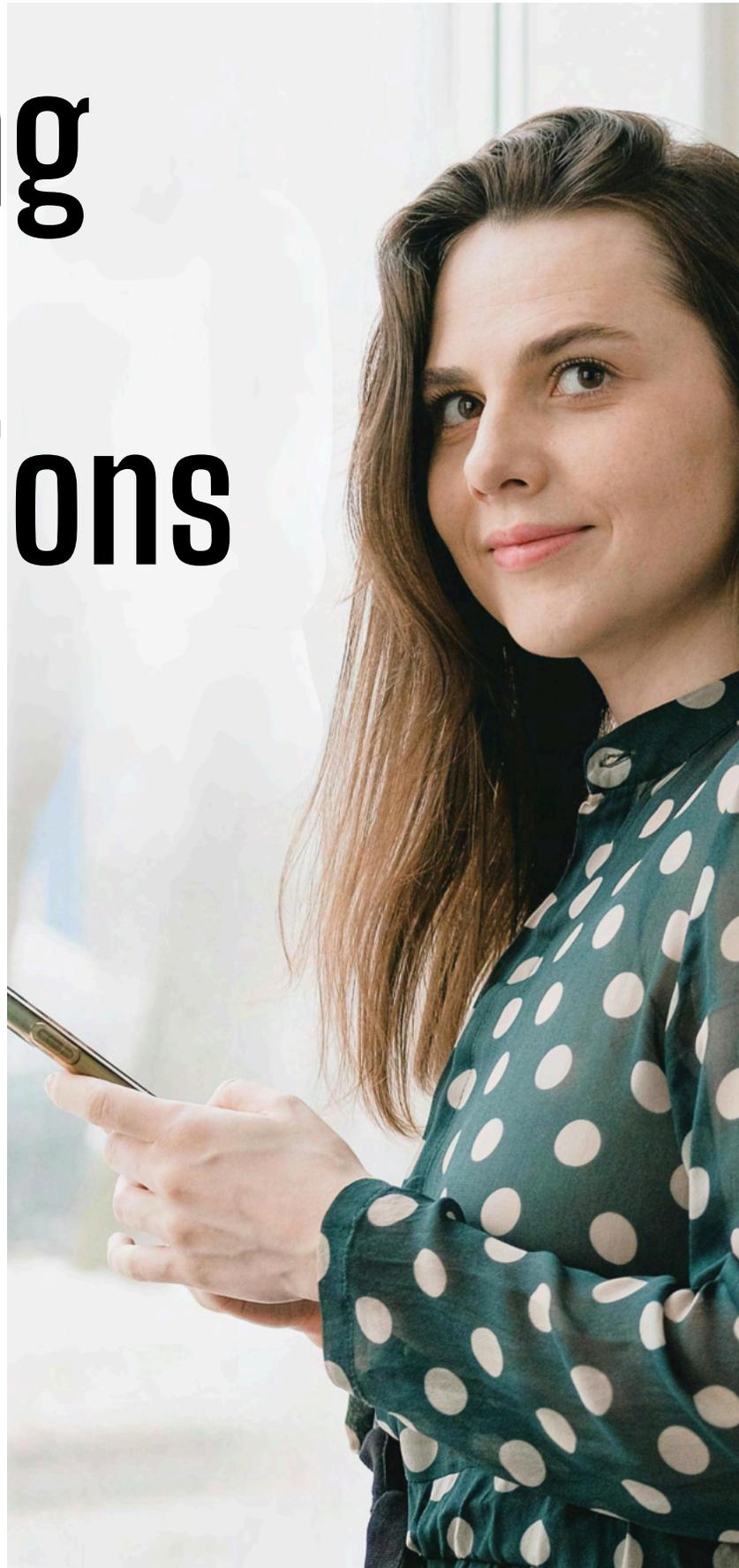
Lorene Allen

In November 2024, Lorene Allen started in the department as the Career Development Specialist. She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in corporate training and classroom instruction at the American Red Cross. She is enthusiastic about creating a culture that enhances personal, educational, and professional growth. Mrs. Allen is a graduate of Vance-Granville Community College's Business Administration program and holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration Management from Shaw University.

Expanding Career Connections

Launching Handshake to Empower Student Success

Vance-Granville Community College proudly became an official Handshake partner in January 2025, opening new doors for employer-student engagement. Since the launch, approximately 180 students have created active profiles, and we are continuing to expand our presence on the platform through a robust outreach campaign. Beginning Fall 2025, all student appointments with Career Services will be scheduled exclusively through Handshake—further integrating the platform into our students' career development journey. Handshake empowers our students to connect directly with employers, submit applications, and participate in virtual interviews, streamlining the hiring process for both students and organizations.



CAREER SERVICES ON THE MOVE



Mini Career Fairs and Upcoming Events

On June 25, 2025, the Central Sterile Processing Department teamed up with Career Services to host a successful Mini Career Fair for our graduating students entering the field. Following that momentum, the Medical Assisting Department partnered with Career Services again on July 30th to host another Mini Career Fair—this time focused on job placement for graduating medical assisting students ready to step into the workforce. These exciting events were a great opportunity for students to connect with potential employers, learn about current job openings, and explore different career paths and next steps in their career journey.

Both events took place on campus and featured participation from six major hospitals and surgical centers such as Granville Health, Maria Parham, UNC Rex, and Wake Med. Over 20 central sterile processing and medical assisting students got the chance to network face-to-face with recruiters who were actively hiring for entry-level roles. These fairs are just one of the many ways Vance-Granville Community College continues to support students as they move from the classroom to a career in healthcare.

Another way that students are supported and able to meet potential employers is through hands-on learning such as work-based learning internships. In July, the Career Services team visited UNC Hospitals in Chapel Hill, NC and Duke Raleigh Hospital in Raleigh, NC to see histotechnology students working in histology labs. This experience provided great insight into the learning that is taking place in the classroom and how VGCC students are putting that learning into action.

GET INVOLVED – LOOKING AHEAD AT FUTURE EVENTS:



Looking ahead, Career Services will host another Mini Career Fair on **October 15, 2025**, from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM at the VGCC Civic Center. This event will focus on seasonal and part-time job opportunities, giving students and community members a chance to connect with local employers who are in need of flexible employees.

In addition, the Career Services team will celebrate Career Development Week, **November 10–14**, with various activities planned for all four VGCC campuses. We'll also be heading out to visit several local CTE partners at high schools in our four-county service area to participate in their career-focused events and support future college students and job seekers as they explore their paths.





FULL STEAM AHEAD

Science: Everyday, Everywhere, Everyone

Vance-Granville Community College (VGCC) hosted its first-ever North Carolina Science Festival at the South Campus in Granville County, bringing together over 150 curious minds of all ages for a vibrant day of exploration, learning, and community engagement. VGCC partnered with two high school robotics clubs, three local industry leaders, and several departments across the college to create an exciting, hands-on experience.

Attendees enjoyed a wide array of activities, including drone flying, robot operation, and DNA manipulation, providing immersive opportunities to engage directly with science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM). Students and families had the chance to engage directly with college faculty and industry professionals, ask questions, and try out experiments themselves – making learning interactive, fun, and memorable.



The Mechatronics and Biotechnology programs were prominently featured, offering insights into educational pathways and career opportunities in this rapidly growing field. Participants also connected with local industry partners, some of whom shared information about current job openings and career tracks.

A special thanks goes to Altec Inc., Ontic, and Plantd for their enthusiastic participation. Altec's bucket truck rides were a particular crowd favorite, giving attendees a fun, real-world glimpse into engineering and technology.

This event successfully highlighted the exciting opportunities available in biotechnology and mechatronics, increased awareness of local STEAM careers, strengthened partnerships between education and industry, and left a lasting impact on students, families, and the broader community. Thank you to everyone who joined us and made the day such a success!

Stay tuned for our next event. There's more hands-on discovery and STEAM exploration coming soon, and we can't wait to see you there!





REGISTER TODAY!



ABOUT US

This short training course will teach you the foundational skills you need to begin a career as a process technician for a biotechnology, pharmaceutical, or chemical manufacturing company. Process technicians are responsible for the production of chemical and pharmaceutical products.

BIOWORK PROCESS TECHNICIAN

Scan the QR Code for upcoming class information. Online class component included.

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE!

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

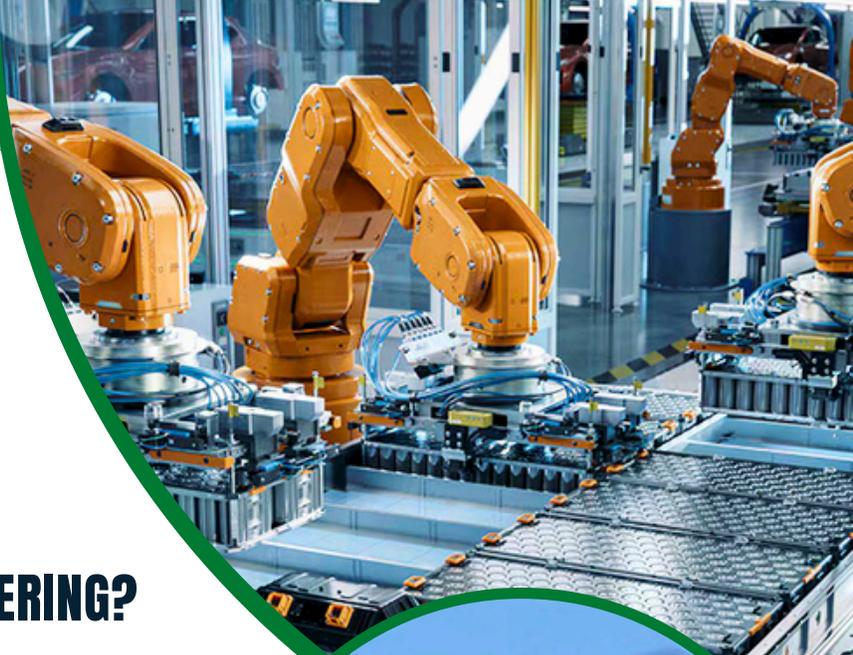
Contact Elisa Rodwell at 252-738-3276 or
rodwelle@vgcc.edu

MECHATRONICS ENGINEERING

WHAT IS MECHATRONICS ENGINEERING?

MECHANical and electRONICS.

Mechatronics is an interdisciplinary branch of engineering that focuses on the integration of mechanical devices, electrical circuitry, electronic components and software, and also includes a combination of robotics, computer science, telecommunications, systems, control, automation and product engineering.



INDUSTRIES SERVED

- Automotive
- Medical
- Facility Automation Service
- Manufacturing



CREDENTIALS OFFERED

- Associates in Applied Science
- Programmable Logic Controllers Certificate
- Robotics and Machine Design Certificate
- Entry Level Mechatronics Certificate



PROGRAM OPTIONS

- Online Courses
- Hybrid Courses
- Day Courses - All Courses Available at South Campus



Contact Us Today! ☎ 252-738-3541 ✉ mechatronics@vgcc.edu

41ST ANNUAL VGCC GOLF TOURNAMENT SUPPORTS STUDENT SUCCESS



Pictured From Left to Right: Sheri Jones, Dr. Rachel Desmarais, Randy Hoyle, Kenny Abbott, David Fairey, Lisa Radford, and Tanya Weary.

Presented by Granville Health System

The 41st Annual Vance-Granville Community College (VGCC) Golf Tournament, presented by Granville Health System, took place on May 5 and 6, 2025, at the Henderson Country Club. Despite inclement weather on the first day, the two-day event concluded with a beautiful day of golf, camaraderie, and community support.

The tournament is a long-standing tradition aimed at raising funds for need-based scholarships and student emergency funding for students at VGCC. These resources help students overcome financial barriers, remain enrolled, and achieve their educational goals.

"We are deeply grateful to our presenting sponsor, Granville Health System, and to all of our participants and supporters," said Dr. Rachel Desmarais, President of VGCC. "The success of this year's tournament—despite weather challenges—demonstrates the strength of our community's commitment to student success."

Funds raised from the tournament directly benefit VGCC students who are in financial need, whether through scholarships or short-term emergency assistance for unexpected expenses. Because of our sponsors and supporters, our students are able to achieve their educational dreams," said Tanya S. Weary, Executive Director, The VGCC Foundation. "Your investment in education changes lives and strengthens our entire community."

For more information about supporting VGCC students or future events, please contact The VGCC Foundation at foundation@vgcc.edu or 252-738-3264.

The VGCC Foundation Hosted Successful 2nd Annual Wine Tasting Gala & Silent Auction

The Vance-Granville Community College (VGCC) Foundation proudly hosted its 2nd Annual Wine Tasting Gala and Silent Auction at the picturesque High Rock Farm in Oxford, bringing together community members, supporters, and friends for an evening of wine, fellowship, music, celebration, and giving.

Guests were treated to a vibrant musical performance by the Oxford Preparatory School Jazz Band, followed by the talented pianist and VGCC Student Saylor Gray, creating a warm and elegant atmosphere throughout the evening.

A special highlight of the night was hearing from VGCC Automotive Student Kyle Harris, whose inspiring story underscored the Foundation's mission: supporting students whose educational journeys are at risk due to unexpected life emergencies. Kyle's testimony was a powerful reminder of the life-changing impact of these funds.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of attendees, sponsors, and donors, the event raised over \$13,000, which will go directly to assisting VGCC students in times of urgent need, helping them stay on track to reach their academic and career goals.

The VGCC Foundation extends heartfelt gratitude to everyone who made this event a success and looks forward to building on this momentum in the years to come.

Be a Pioneer in Building the Future of Advanced Manufacturing.



Never before has there been an opportunity like this – for Vance-Granville Community College (VGCC), for our communities, and for the entire region.

We soon will be laying the foundation for the Center for Advanced Manufacturing in Granville County – and you can be one of the first to help make it happen.

Whether you're passionate about workforce development, education, or economic growth, this is your chance to be part of something transformational and leave a legacy.

Contact The VGCC Foundation today to learn how you can support this groundbreaking initiative at foundation@vgcc.edu or 252-738-3264.



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Vance-Granville
Community College

National Manufacturing Day

This event empowers manufacturers to come together and address their collective challenges and build excitement about manufacturing careers to help their communities and future generations thrive. Join us as a vendor!



[Register Here](#)

Friday, October 3, 2025
8 am to 12 pm

VGCC Civic Center

200 Community College Rd, Henderson, NC 27537

 David Bullock, Department Chair
252-738-3541 or bullockd@vgcc.edu



FILL THE PANTRY
CRAFT SHOW
FUNDRAISER

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10 | 2PM-7PM
VGCC CIVIC CENTER | 200 COMMUNITY COLLEGE ROAD

**Cost of admission is 3 canned goods,
nonperishable food items, or paper goods.**

Vendors who would like to participate, contact the VGCC
Food Pantry at 252-738-3323, douglasa@vgcc.edu or view QR
code for entry form. Spaces are limited.



**Raffles Throughout
Event**

**Food & Beverage
Vendors**

Indoor Event



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