

COMMUNITY COLLEGE GRADS OUT-EARN BACHELOR'S DEGREE HOLDERS

NEW YORK (CNNMoney) By Jon Marcus at [The Hechinger Institute @CNNMoney](#) 2/2013

Nearly 30% of Americans with associate's degrees now make more than those with bachelor's degrees, according to Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce.

Berevan Omer graduated on a Friday in February with an associate's degree from Nashville State Community College and started work the following Monday as a computer-networking engineer at a local television station, making about \$50,000 a year. That's 15% higher than the average starting salary for graduates -- not only from community colleges, but for bachelor's degree holders from four-year universities. "I have a buddy who got a four-year bachelor's degree in accounting who's making \$10 an hour," Omer says. "I'm making two and a-half

times more than he is." (Note: Actual salaries vary; the median wage for this position is \$39,870) Omer, who is 24, is one of many newly minted graduates of community colleges defying history and stereotypes by proving that a bachelor's degree is not, as widely believed, the only ticket to a middle-class income.

Nearly 30% of Americans with associate's degrees now make more than those with bachelor's degrees, according to Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce. In fact, other recent research in several states shows that, on average, community college graduates right out of school make more than graduates of four-year universities.

The average wage for graduates of community colleges in Tennessee, for instance, is \$38,948 -- more than \$1,300 higher than the average salaries for graduates of the state's four-year institutions. In Virginia, recent graduates of occupational and technical degree programs at its community colleges make an average of \$40,000. That's almost \$2,500 more than recent bachelor's degree recipients.

"There is that perception that the bachelor's degree is the default, and, quite frankly, before we started this work showing the value of a technical associate's degree, I would have said that, too," says Mark Schneider, vice president of the American Institutes for Research, which helped collect the earning numbers for some states. And while by mid-career, many bachelor's degree recipients have caught up in earnings to community college grads, "the other factor that has to be taken into account is that getting a four-year degree can be much more expensive than getting a two-year degree," Schneider says.

A two-year community college degree, at present full rates, costs about \$6,262, according to the College Board. A bachelor's degree from a four-year, private residential university goes for \$158,072.

The increase in wages for community college grads is being driven by a high demand for people with so-called "middle-skills" that often require no more than an associate's degree, such as lab technicians, teachers in early childhood programs, computer engineers, draftsmen, radiation therapists, paralegals, and machinists.

With a two-year community college

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PHOTO: THINKSTOCK

COMMUNITY COLLEGE GRADS OUT-EARN BACHELOR'S DEGREE HOLDERS

BY JON MARCUS AT [THE HECHINGER INSTITUTE @CNNMONEY](#) FEBRUARY 26, 2013: 6:23 AM ET

HOW DOES MACC MEASURE UP?

MACC scored high in measures of college success, as 53% of MACC students graduate within three years from the time they begin. An article <http://money.cnn.com/pf/college/community-colleges/?iid=EL> 'How Does Your Community College Stack Up?', published online in **CNN Money**, reported on a recent survey of community colleges conducted by **College Success Measures**, a non-profit partnership between the American Institutes for Research and Matrix Knowledge Group, focused on using data to drive improvement in higher education outcomes in the United States.

The survey ranked approximately 800 community colleges nationwide enrolling over 200 freshman annually on measures of student success. **MACC ranks second in the state**, topped only by St. Louis Community College—Meramac, which showed a 55% graduation rate within a three year time frame.

MACC's overall ranking was 104, placing our school in the top 13% of all community colleges nationwide. For more information, go to: <http://www.collegemeasures.org/>

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degree, air traffic controllers can make \$113,547, radiation therapists \$76,627, dental hygienists \$70,408, nuclear medicine technologists \$69,638, nuclear technicians \$68,037, registered nurses \$65,853, and fashion designers \$63,170, CareerBuilder.com reported in January.

"You come out with skills that people want immediately and not just theory," Omer says.

The Georgetown center estimates that 29 million jobs paying middle class wages today require only an associate's, and not a bachelor's, degree.

"I would not suggest anyone look down their nose at the associate's degree," says Jeff Strohl, director of research at the Georgetown center.

"People see those programs as tracking into something that's dead end," Strohl says. "It's very clear that that perception does not hold up."

The bad news is that not enough associate's degree holders are being produced.

Only 10% of American workers have the sub-baccalaureate degrees needed for middle-skills jobs, compared with 24% of Canadians and 19% of Japanese, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development reports.

Over the last 20 years, the number of graduates with associate's degrees in the United States has increased by barely 3%. And while the Obama administration has pushed community colleges to increase their numbers, enrollment at these schools fell 3.1% this year, the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center reports. Graduation rates also remain abysmally low.

Meanwhile, many people with bachelor's degrees are working in fields other than the ones in which they majored, according to a new report by the Center for College Affordability and Productivity.

"We have a lot of bartenders and taxi drivers with bachelor's degrees," says Christopher Denhart, one of the report's coauthors.

Still, the salary advantage for associate's degree holders narrows over time, as bachelor's degree recipients eventually catch up, says Schneider.

Although these figures vary widely by profession, associate's degree recipients, on average, end up making about \$500,000 more over their careers than people with only high school diplomas, but \$500,000 less than people with bachelor's degrees, the Georgetown center calculates.

As for Omer, he's already working toward a bachelor's degree.

"Down the road a little further, I may want to become a director or a manager," he says. "A bachelor's degree will get me to that point."

This story was produced by [The Hechinger Report](#), a nonprofit, nonpartisan education-news outlet based at Teachers College, Columbia University. It's one of a series of reports about [workforce development and higher education](#).

AVERAGE SALARIES FOR THE TOP SEVEN

MACC CAREER AND TECHNICAL PROGRAMS

(from data compiled for the 180 day graduate placement report on graduates from summer 2011, fall 2011, and spring 2012 semesters)

Occupational Therapy Assistant -OTA	\$22.71 per hour/\$47,237 annual
Associate Degree Nursing-RN	\$21.78 per hour/\$45,302 annual
Welding and Metals Technology	\$17.04 per hour/\$35,432 annual
Practical Nursing-LPN	\$14.80 per hour/\$30,784 annual
Medical Laboratory Technician-MLT	\$14.25 per hour/\$29,640 annual
Computer Information Technology	\$14.00 per hour/\$29,120 annual
Law Enforcement Training Center-LETC	\$12.46 per hour/\$25,917 annual

NOTE: Most of these are two year Associate of Applied Science or Associate Degree Nursing programs, but Practical Nursing takes one year (three semesters) and the 32 credit LETC certificate takes just one semester.

MECHATRONICS PROGRAM to begin at MACC

Shared by Jo Fey, MACC's Dean of Career and Technical Education

Mechatronics is a new and exciting interdisciplinary field which combines knowledge of control systems, robotics, mechanical systems, electronics, computers, advanced manufacturing, industrial maintenance and more.

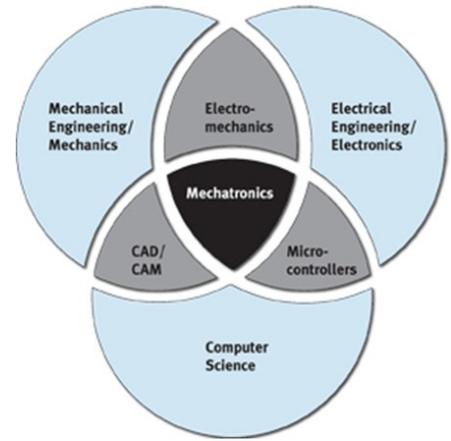
An electro-mechanical technician with mechatronics training would find entry-level employment in area manufacturing companies, including such companies as **3M, Kraft, Quaker, Gates, Hubbell, American Air Filter**, and others. More and more employers are seeking technicians with broad knowledge to troubleshoot and correct computer/machine errors before they impact the manufacturing line. Mechatronics is predominantly hands-on and involves work with computers, machines, and systems.

The diagram to the right illustrates the broad variety of industries employing technicians trained in mechatronics. It is important to recognize, though, that jobs for these technicians are not entitled "Mechatronics." Job titles run the gamut from production technician to engineering technician to industrial maintenance technician. Students enrolled in the program will prepare portfolios listing the classes they have taken and the skills they have attained. They will be prepared to recognize the jobs that they will be qualified for and demonstrate their qualifications during a job interview.

Mechatronics is a program designed to prepare individuals to be electrical and mechanical maintenance technicians for the highly technological, integrated and automated manufacturing facilities of the modern workplace. The program is designed to integrate mechanical, electrical, process and control skills as employers are demanding technicians who are "cross-trained. Students learn to install, replace, troubleshoot and repair equipment used in manufacturing facilities. All technical courses have an intensive hands-on lab com-

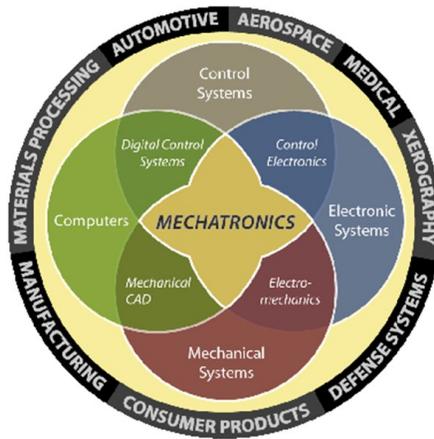
ponent as students learn skills in electrical systems, motor control, hydraulics and pneumatics, programmable logic controllers, instrumentation, workplace safety, and problem solving and teamwork.

Mechatronics has been identified as one of the 10 emerging technologies that will change the world. The U.S. Department of Labor listed mechatronics as a new and emerging "green jobs" growth area and part of an in-demand industry cluster specializing in the repair and maintenance of manufacturing equipment, operation systems and the related computer programming components that keep businesses operating efficiently and cost effectively. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the job outlook for mechatronics is bright through 2018. Plus, the National



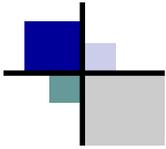
Council on Competitiveness estimates that 100 million new jobs will be created in the 21st century for workers skilled in multiple disciplines. **Mechatronics technicians** fit this multidisciplinary/multi-skilled requirement and can expect an annual salary around \$50,000. (Note: Actual wages vary. From MERIC, in 2011, entry wage averages \$36,308; mean salary was \$56,691; and experienced workers averaged \$66,882. The national median wage from the Bureau of Labor Statistics was \$49,550 for Electro-mechanical technicians)

cal equipment that is controlled by electrical, electronic and computer systems used in a wide variety of applications. Such technicians are in high demand in many industries: food processing, forest products, manufacturing, health care and educational facilities, petroleum, renewable energy, mining, agriculture, aerospace, defense, and telecommunications. Successful mechatronics technicians require good reading skills and the ability to think analytically about interrelated systems. Successful technicians are self-starters, willing to learn on-the-job, and have the ability to work alone and in teams.



There is no mechatronics industry sector; rather, it is an enabling approach to technology that is increasingly applied in a number of economic sectors including: alternative/renewable energy and a variety of green jobs, biotechnology, life science and medical; electronics and applied computer equipment; telecommunications and information services; distribution, transportation and logistics; heavy and special trade construction; energy, mining and related support services; petroleum refining and chemical; transportation equipment; production support and industrial machinery; agriculture, forestry and food; and aerospace, homeland security and defense.

Mechatronics/Industrial Maintenance technicians troubleshoot, maintain, and repair mechani-



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**NEW TRADITIONS
 SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS**

MACC's long-standing New Traditions program provides scholarships and grants from a variety of donors and three separate sources of funding. MACC offers five annual institutional awards valued at \$500 per semester and renewable for one semester. The application deadline for those awards is April 1 each year.

However, there is also funding through state legislation that offers fee waivers for Displaced Homemakers and there are also privately funded New Traditions scholarships. Students who may have missed the deadline or were not selected for Institutional Awards can still apply for other scholarships and grants for the fall 2013 semester through the New Traditions program.

Interested applicants are encouraged to apply by phone. Please contact Elaine Avery, Career Specialist, weekdays between 8 am—noon at (660) 263-4100 ext. 11319, or Pat Twaddle, Director of Career and Placement Services, ext. 11232, between 1—5 pm.

The application deadline is September 20, 2013.

UPCOMING EVENTS

OFF-CAMPUS SCHEDULE
 Career Counseling by appointment
 660-263-4100 ext 11232

FREE services include vocational assessment, academic support, and applications for grants and scholarships through the **New Traditions** program.

Columbia	Mexico
Thursday, July 11	Tuesday, July 9
Wednesday, August 8	Wednesday, August 14
Thursday, August 22	
Thursday, August 29	
Hannibal	Kirksville
Thursday, July 25	Thursday, July 2
Thursday, August 8	Friday, August 16

**GREYHOUND ORIENTATION EXPRESS
 (New Student Orientation Sessions)**
 Moberly: 10 am Friday, August 2
 Hannibal: 10 am Thursday, August 8
 Columbia: 10, 11:30 & 1:30, Saturday, August 10
 Mexico: 10 am, Wednesday, August 14
 Kirksville: 11 am, Friday, August 16