BC3 pilot program creates online opportunity for Butler County Area Vo-Tech students

May 1, 2019

(Butler, PA) Butler County Community College this fall will offer to Butler County Area Vocational-Technical School juniors and seniors the opportunity to earn up to 15 BC3 business course credits online before they graduate from high school as part of a pilot program through BC3's College Within the High School program.

An information session for current Vo-Tech students will be held at 8 a.m., 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. May 9. A second information session, for parents and prospective Vo-Tech students, is scheduled for 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. May 22.

Information sessions will be held in Large Group Instruction Room at the Vo-Tech, 210 Campus Lane, Butler.

Beginning this fall, juniors and seniors – regardless of their course of study at the Vo-Tech – can take BC3 classes online in business mathematics, productivity applications, marketing, principles of management and salesmanship.

"The online format really was derived out of necessity," said Dr. Christian Ola, BC3's dean of business, adding that the Butler County Area Vocational-Technical School offers two-hour technical education sessions to its students three times daily.

"Then they return to their home districts," added Amy Pignatore, BC3's dean of admissions and college registrar. "A traditional on-ground class would not work in this type of schedule."

But, according to Morgan Rizzardi, BC3's associate director of admissions, "Having the flexibility to take online courses allows students to not miss out on the opportunity to further their education while still in high school."

Twelve to 15 credits will transfer into BC3 associate degree programs in accounting, business management, marketing management, hospitality management and technical trades: cosmetology management.

BC3's business programs are nationally accredited by the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs.

Credits may also transfer to a four-year college or university.

"Students enrolled in any of the Vo-Tech areas of study may decide that they would like to own their own, and manage their own, business," said Erin Cioffi, BC3's assistant director of high school programming. "The courses through BC3 can offer them a solid foundation."

Having an understanding of business concepts is the "perfect complement" to the technical skills and certifications Vo-Tech students earn in their programs, said Taylor Gall-Ruggiero, a school counselor with Butler County Area Vocational-Technical School, which draws students from the Butler, Karns City, Mars, Moniteau, Seneca Valley, Slippery Rock and South Butler school districts and this spring has 337 juniors and 336 seniors enrolled.

"The ability to use management, organizational and decision-making skills in the classroom here will be really helpful for our students and they will be able to put those business skills into action since our programs are designed to simulate the actual environment out in the industry."

BC3's online courses are available in the spring, summer and fall. Vo-Tech students can take one course per semester for five semesters to complete 15 credits.

To be eligible, students must have a grade-point average of 3.0 in their junior year at Vo-Tech or a 2.75 in their senior year.

Tuition for each three-credit online course is $369. BC3 will waive the $25 application fee and $25 per-credit technology fee for Vo-Tech students who enroll for the fall 2019 semester.

To learn more, contact Erin Cioffi at 724-287-8711, Ext. 8254, at erin.cioffi@bc3.edu or visit bc3.edu/bcavts.