

## Water/Wastewater Community College Curriculum:

A water/wastewater industry wide Ad Hoc Committee has been put together for the purpose of returning water/wastewater classes to Iowa's Community Colleges' curriculum. The committee includes IWPCA, AWWA, IRWA, IAMU, and DNR members. The members of the committee are Phil Koundakjian, Steve Moehlmann, Jim Rasmussen, Tim Wilkey, Jim Stricker, Scott Wienands, Kris Evans, Jenny Puffer, Kevin Moler, Bob Watson, Kevin Jacobsen, Carla Schumacher, and Bob Haug. There is no ownership involved in this endeavor. We are seeking to regain college curriculum for our industry, not for any particular organization.

This is a joint effort with DMACC of Ankeny. We have a subcommittee working with Scott Ocken, Dean of Industry and Technology, to identify existing classes and to design classes that may need to be added for a water/wastewater degree. That work is well along. Existing classes have been identified. New needed classes have been identified and plans are being made to put them together. Meetings are ongoing with Kirkwood to see if their online classes can be made a part of this curriculum so that new online classes for non-traditional students would not need to be put together from scratch.

As of now, classes will begin in the fall of 2010. But because many of the classes are already in existence, students could start taking classes now and have them count towards the degree when that program comes on line in 2010.

There will be three areas of study; water, wastewater and water/wastewater embedded in a larger two year AAS Degree industrial program. There will be three levels of education available; a Degree, a Diploma, and a Certificate of Specialization. By embedding into a larger industrial program, we won't have the pressure of keeping numbers of water/wastewater students up in order to keep the water/wastewater program alive. When the number of students allows it, the program will be offered to a consortium of other community colleges around the state.

The curriculum will be "in class" and "web based" to reach both traditional and non-traditional students. As envisioned now, the web based students would attend one day of concentrated classes a week on campus. This allows students who are working to take classes while employed. It also allows those plants who would like formal training for their workers to have this option open for them.

The committee has set up a "Water Wastewater Special Projects Fund" with the DMACC Foundation. This is a scholarship fund to help pay tuition and books for Iowa residents seeking Iowa jobs; or, further education in the water/wastewater area with the end result being employment in Iowa. This does not preclude others from taking this curriculum; it just means we are giving scholarship help to Iowa residents looking for Iowa jobs.

There may be a point in time that the fund has more money than students would use in that calendar year, but the curriculum might be short an adjunct professor needed

to teach water/wastewater classes. Because this is a “special projects” fund and not just a “scholarship fund”, it will also allow us to direct funds towards that adjunct position in order to have the classes available for students working towards their water/wastewater degree. The committee is also working on identifying other outside funding streams which would allow a “Chair for Water/Wastewater Studies” to be a permanent part of the program.

The scholarship language is:

“Water/Wastewater Special Projects Fund Requirements:

The applicant for these funds shall maintain a C average. If their grade point falls below the C average for two consecutive semesters, the scholarship help shall be withheld until such time as the student has raised their grade point to a C average.

The applicant for these funds shall be an Iowa resident, receiving an education in the water/wastewater discipline, to obtain employment in the water/wastewater field in Iowa, or, to seek higher education in the water/wastewater discipline, to obtain employment in Iowa.

A letter from the applicant shall be submitted with the application for these funds. The letter shall be in the applicants own words and give reason(s) for pursuing training in the water/wastewater field. A letter shall be required for each new academic year. This information will be audited in order to substantiate that the student’s intentions are within the guidelines for receiving this scholarship help.

The funds are available to all students who qualify, including first semester freshmen.”

Besides resulting in a water/wastewater operator degree, this curriculum can be used as a “pass through” to higher education; as long as the result being pursued is an Iowa job.

We envision the main funding stream for this scholarship fund coming from Iowa’s 960 incorporated communities. We are hoping to get the League of Cities to fashion a resolution that cities and towns would adopt, and to send it to towns and cities through their network. Alternatively, we are working with Decorah city officials to fashion a resolution that our members would take to their respective cities. Our members will lobby for the resolution at their respective city councils. The resolution, as envisioned, would have communities contribute a nominal amount, \$50. We will ask cities to renew that contribution each year; the timing of which will be in connection with the “Water Wastewater Workers of Iowa” proclamation week.

We have contacted the Governor’s office about proclaiming a “Water Wastewater Workers of Iowa” week which would give us a time frame for taking the funding resolution to cities. The Governor’s office has accepted that request in principle. We have submitted suggested language and have asked for the third full week, yearly, in July. That

would work well for our funding timing and would work well for the Governor's state wide visits to water and wastewater plants during that week.

The suggested language for that proclamation is:  
"Proclamation for a 'Water and Wastewater Workers of Iowa' week:

Recognizing that the State of Iowa's wealth of natural resources has been threatened by the degradation of surface and ground waters, the Water and Wastewater workforce of Iowa have dedicated themselves to applying environmental passion and science to enhance drinking and recreational waters of Iowa. Their applied environmentalism continues to be a vital element in improving the quality of life and preserving and protecting public health in our state; and promoting sustainability in our way of living."

We would then ask the State to match any amount that we raise during that year. John Beard, House Representative Decorah, has agreed to work on introducing legislation in the House next session for matching funds. We will ask the Feds to match the combined total amount, each year. We will look at other funding streams as well, including going to membership for a nominal \$5 contribution to start the fund.

Because the State is out of money this year and there will be no matching funds available this year, we have intensified our membership ask. We have asked for 25 people or businesses to contribute \$1000 dollars; or, 100 people or businesses to contribute \$250 dollars; or, all of our members to contribute \$5 dollars. If we get to \$25,000 dollars in the scholarship fund, we can help 25 students this first year.

The WWSPF fund has been opened. Checks can be made out to the DMACC Foundation, write WWSPF on the memo line or in a note with the contribution. Contributions can be sent to DMACC Foundation, 2006 South Ankeny Blvd, Bldg 22, Ankeny, IA 50023-3993. The DMACC Foundation is a 501 (c) (3), so any contribution will be tax deductible. We include this information in case you know someone in the industry who might like to contribute to this scholarship fund. This fund extends to other community colleges' students as the college's become part of the consortium. The DMACC Foundation will administer funds to those students too.

What we are asking membership to do to help us in this endeavor is twofold:

First, we would like members to identify, through high school guidance councilors, business clubs, science and environmental clubs, industrial arts teachers, etc, and mentor high school students who may be interested in a career in water/wastewater. These would be students interested not only in water/wastewater, but also and necessarily, those who wanted to use this opportunity to stay in Iowa for their career. We also are asking membership to provide summer employment for those high school age prospective workers in their towns' wastewater and water plants if at all possible. And, provide curriculum internships, where possible, for those students at their plants while

they attend college. These internships are part of the Degree and Diploma required curriculum. We are looking at federal funding to help off set those internship costs.

Second, when the resolution for funding the scholarship fund is brought up and debated by your respective city council, we would like members to explain, talk about, and encourage your city to adopt this resolution. It may turn out that our members will have to take that resolution to their city councils directly. If that is so, it will be in the same time frame as the Water Wastewater Workers proclamation week. We will ask members to do this each following year at this same time rather than ask cities for an annual funding resolution.

To make all this easier for members, we are putting together a PowerPoint program. This PowerPoint program will be self-referential in the sense that it will explain the entire program and explain to members how to use the PowerPoint program. The ppt will be available on each respective organization's web site and we hope to include it with the resolution sent to cities.

Bob Watson  
Water/Wastewater Ad Hoc Committee