

## Alcohol-related crashes in DE high, preventable

By Michele Walfred  
mwalfred@dtcc.edu

The State of Delaware Office of Highway Safety, OHS, reports that in 2005, 40 percent of all traffic accidents in Delaware were alcohol-related.

According to its 2005 Annual Highway Safety Report, statistics indicate "males aged 21-34 are three times as likely to be killed in an alcohol-related crash." The statistics reflect the total number involved-drivers and passengers, regardless of fault.

The 2005 figures represent an increase of 16 percent from the previous year for all accidents involving alcohol.

Fatal crashes related to alcohol are up 21 percent statewide, according to the report, though Sussex County's numbers are

lower in that category.

Many students reach the legal drinking age while they are attending college.

All incoming freshman at the University of Delaware, including those enrolled in the Associate in Arts program at the Jack F. Owens Campus, are required to take an online alcohol education course - AlcoholEdu.

AlcoholEdu is now a staple at more than 450 U.S. colleges and universities. Currently, students at Delaware Tech are not required to participate in the curriculum.

Blake Collins, 17, a freshman at UD attending the Owens Campus, has yet to take the online program. In the meantime Collins took a defensive driving workshop with his family. Part of the course covered impaired driving.

"We were all given goggles to wear, we called them beer goggles," Collins said. The goggles represented different levels of impairment. Collins was asked to do simple hand-eye movements like catch a ball.

"I thought I was going to catch it, but I was no where near it. I was way off, after I had had a few," Collins said.

Collins said that being informed about drinking was one thing, but actually feeling disoriented made him more aware of the dangers.

Mike Love, community traffic safety program coordinator for Kent and Sussex counties, taught the defensive driving class, which is offered to the public.

Love suggests the first big step in improving accident statistics is pre-planning.

"Let's face it. Parties are going to happen. Start off right. Make sure you have selected options to get home safely," Love said.

"This is basic decision making," Love continued. "Pre-planning is everything."

Love advises drivers who know they are going to be socializing with alcohol to arrange ahead of time to have a designated driver or avoid driving at all by staying over."

Love stresses that party hosts have a responsibility to pre-plan and provide options for their guests.

Addressing all types of accident categories, Love theorized that young males have a higher rate because they tend to take more risks and drive more aggressively.

Continued on page 2

## Student lounge complaints draw 32 students to Senate meeting

By Lisa Moy  
lmoy@dtcc.edu

As returning Student Senate officers Jay Soto, June Rose "JR" Fatcher, and newly-elect co-Vice President Benjamin Cunningham took their seats ready to take command of the new school year, a larger than average group of students greeted them.

With an agenda full of concerns, they started off with the Jason Technology Center student lounge disruption complaints.

Student Senate President, Jay Soto said, "I would like to see it



Photo by L. Moy

Cutline: Student Senate officers Jay Soto, JR Fatcher, and Benjamin Cunningham disputed over the student lounge disruptions.

still used as a lounge, but if it's not, then the lounge could be taken away."

Some of the students that use

the lounge said they thought they were being singled out by public safety and they were not the only ones being disruptive.

Bill Wood, chief of public safety at the Owens Campus, said, "Nobody is entitled to be disruptive. The bottom line is to target the noise, not the people."

Wood said that not only the noise from the lounge is carrying up the halls and disrupting classes, but offices around the student lounge are complaining about the disruptions.

He added, "My department is here to assist people and make things better, we don't want confrontation."

Wood said, "We're a community, not individual groups."

Continued on page 2

# Drunken driving: College students making different choices

Continued from page 1

“Aggressive driving is a real issue,” Love said.

Statistically, male drivers are the ones who speed, make improper lane changes, and tailgate other motorists.

“They feel invincible,” he said.

Love also points out that while male drivers still lead in accidents, females are closing in on the statistics gap.

All accidents increase with driver distractions such as having friends in the car, playing with music devices, and using cell-phones when driving. Adding alcohol to that combination is very dangerous, Love said.

Love, who is also a paramedic, has been at the scene of many accidents.

“It is senseless when it is completely preventable,” he said.

Melissa Parker, 26, a horticulture student at the Owens Campus, came to a decision recently not to drink socially. She is content with her lifestyle choice.

“Some of my friends go to bars and drive home,” she comments. Parker’s friends occasionally take advantage of their sober friend to get them out of a bind.

“They call me to come pick them up,” Parker explains. When that happens, she said there is no hesitation: “I definitely would.”

Dorian Hoffman, 21, also studying horticulture at Owens, said he definitely drinks less when he goes out.

Hoffman said that the conse-



Photo Source: OHS Web site

OHS new billboard reminds motorists that alcohol-checkpoints will be on the look-out for impaired motorists.

quences of drinking and driving have slowed him down.

Hoffman limits his alcohol intake and frequently makes a choice to stay at a friend’s house

rather than getting behind the wheel.

“You can only be stupid for so long,” Hoffman said.

# Senate: Gazebos weather-proofing and maintenance issues

Continued from page 1

All we’re asking for is a little maturity; people aren’t in junior high school anymore.”

The students representing the lounge mentioned an incident saying they felt they were in danger when an inebriated man entered the lounge.

The students said after telling a security guard about the incident, their complaint was dismissed, and the security guard left the room.

Student Senate officers said they didn’t know about the incident and encouraged the students to come to them if that type of problem arose again.

Bill Wood said with the transit bus stop on campus, non-students can come on campus, but public safety cannot do any-



Photo by L. Moy  
A group of students showed up to represent their side of the story at Oct. 5 Student Senate meeting in the Student Services Center Room 977.

thing unless they see the people doing something wrong.

The group of students present addressing the student lounge issue left the meeting after discussion the issue was finished.

## School maintenance issue

On another topic, co-Vice President “JR” Futchter said school maintenance is becoming a major concern again. She said, “Last year we

seemed to have it under control after we said something, but it’s getting bad again.”

Futchter said, the ladies’ restrooms have become a concern because of empty soap dispensers and broken faucets. Leaky roofs and odors in the

Jason Technology Center and cigarette litter around doors and gazebos are also problem areas, she said.

Delaware Tech’s maintenance department was unavailable for comment.

## Smoking Gazebos weather-proofed

The smoking gazebo closest to the Arts & Science Center will

have plastic screens put up, Futchter said, due to the efforts of last year’s student senate.

Futchter said, “The screens will cut the wind down when people are standing there shivering.”

## Wireless capabilities now available in library

In addition to wireless access in the Jason Technology Center and the Student Services Center, wireless capabilities have been added to the Owens’ Campus library.

Co-Vice President Benjamin Cunningham said, “This will help free up the computer lab. It doesn’t make sense not to do it.”

Student Senate meetings are held the first Thursday of every month at noon in room 977 in the Student Services Center.

# Technology changes classroom management

By Brian Tinsman

[btinsman@dtcc.edu](mailto:btinsman@dtcc.edu)

With the touch of a button, information can be sent around the world in a flash using the Internet or mobile devices. But teachers fear that this technology may be used to send information across the classroom.

According to CBS News, 71 percent of high school students today admit that they have cheated on an exam, up from 60 percent 10 years ago. In addition, more than half of high school students have admitted to plagiarizing an assigned paper.

Diana Young, department chair for the English and Communications programs at Delaware Tech's Owens Campus, takes cheating very seriously.

"Abuse of this new, ever-improving technology can be tempting to students," she said.

Owens Campus is a technologically proficient school, with multiple computer labs that serve as classrooms. With a computer and a cell phone within reach, Young recognizes the difficulty for students not to ignore it.



Photo source: [www.horizontes.uc.edu](http://www.horizontes.uc.edu)

## New-age cheating methods are easier for students to use and harder for professors to track

"I try to allow some freedom in my classrooms, but it's important to pay attention to the discussion in class."

According to Young, her exams are given in essay form, so she said that her biggest problem has come from students plagiarizing their writing assignments.

"The Internet is a great resource, but students need to understand the importance of doing their own work," she said.

One business student at Owens Campus admitted that he had used his cellular phone to text with a classmate during a math test.

"There's more of an emphasis put on grades and success than there is on knowing the information," he said. "I'm not proud of it, but it's more what you can get away with than what you can learn."

Delaware Tech adds a disclaimer to the back of every syllabus that discusses the details and repercussions of plagiarism and cheating, including specific regulations for cellular devices.

Diana Young said her classroom policy is that cell phones be turned off during class, but there have been exceptions, including one in which one of her students' children was hospitalized and later died.

Young said she gave the woman permission to leave her phone on vibrate, and that when the call came, she left to attend to the emergency.

"If you expect an emergency and it happens, then by all means, take care of business," Young said. "However, there is a boundary between being safe and accommodating and being disruptive to the rest of the class."

# Workshop for financial aid helps students plan better

By Kyle Ricker

[kricker@dtcc.edu](mailto:kricker@dtcc.edu)

On Sept. 20 a workshop for financial aid and debt management met in Room 977 of the Student Services Center.

While for some attendance was required in order to receive their student loans, for the rest it was open and free to the public.

Third-year student, Cecil Day, said, "A lot of people don't know as much as they should about their student loans. I'm here to find out why I'm paying more now than I was last year."

Second-year nursing and work study student Renee Arbeene said, "The workshop was de-

signed to help students manage and repay their student loans as well as informing them about debt management."

The workshop wasn't just about advice on student loans or paying for college; it also discussed credit card debt, identity theft, and credit ratings.

Arbeene said, "Students need to be informed. They need to know what can happen to them if they do not plan ahead."

Attendees were provided a brochure listing 10 steps on taking control of student loan debt and a listing of various Web sites designed to show students where they can find

their credit ratings, financial aid history and how to save for college.

Senior Financial Aid Specialist Melissa Rakes said, "College is expensive, so you have to plan out ahead for an option to pay for it."

According to Rakes, this is the first year these workshops have been utilized, and its response was extremely positive and beneficial to those who've attended.



Photo by K. Ricker  
Melissa Rakes, senior financial aid specialist helps students with financial concerns.

To contact Melissa Rakes to address any questions about student loans or your managing debt, call 856-5400 Ext: 3410 or E-mail at [mrakes@dtcc.edu](mailto:mrakes@dtcc.edu).

## Automotive students get hands on, real-world experience

By Lisa Moy

[lmoy@dtcc.edu](mailto:lmoy@dtcc.edu)

Automotive Technology students collaborate with Delaware Tech students and staff by helping out with cost-free vehicle labor in exchange for real-life mechanic experience.

However, before handing over the car keys, participants must understand the program's objective is to teach students, according to Mark Swarbrick, automotive instructor.

Swarbrick said, "We really don't need live work with the vast amount of cars already donated, but it's a good experience for students because it's something new."

Swarbrick said the department does not rebuild motors or transmissions.

The department offers free of charge labor, but students and staff must pay for parts. "The department receives no money from the repairs," said Swarbrick.

Many people who have dealt with the program have donated money to the student automotive club, East Coast Performance (ECP), and last year about \$500 was donated, said Swarbrick.

In order to participate in the service, participants must do the following:

- Check the recent Delaware Tech register booklet and verify when the automotive department will be teaching the repairs related to the problem of the vehicle.
- Owners must be able to leave their vehicles for at least a week. No exceptions.
- Participants must sign a disclaimer.

The disclaimer states the vehicle repairs will be done by automotive students, under the supervision of the instructor, and the vehicle may not be done as quickly as a professional service facility.

Also participants are responsible for payment of the parts, there is no warranty implied, and any losses or damages are not the responsibility of the automotive department.

Laboratory Specialist Danny Ward said the newer vehicle work is a benefit to students.

He said, for example, by allowing students to work on cars that are not constantly being taken apart in the shop it gives students more of a challenge and real life experience as a mechanic.



Photo by: L. Moy

Automotive Technology students collaborate with Delaware Tech to offer cost-free vehicle labor, in exchange for beneficial hands-on experience.

According to Ward, the vehicle repairs are done by first year technicians, who are learning about electrical problems, brakes, steering and suspension, and air conditioning (HVAC).

Ward suggests people interested should physically go to the Trade and Industries Building and talk to one of the staff about the problem.

Ward said, "In some cases, it's a quick fix, and we can send them on their way."

## Joan Hart: One of the "voices" of the Owens Campus

By Brian Tinsman

[btinsman@dtcc.edu](mailto:btinsman@dtcc.edu)

Whether over the phone or in person, many students at Delaware Tech's Owens Campus have heard the friendly greeting from receptionist Joan Hart.

Raised in nearby Laurel, Del., Hart is living her dream. "Ever since high school, I've wanted to be in the secretarial field," Hart said.

"I try to be friendly and cooperative to everyone, because it's just who I am," Hart said. "But my husband might tell you differently," she added, with a laugh.

Although Hart has only been at the Owens Campus for three

years, she has been a secretary for more than 40 years.

After graduating from Goldie Beacom College with a degree in secretarial studies, Hart served as a secretary at Wilmington Trust and Delaware Electric Cooperative. She said that she found an ad for a part-time position at Delaware Tech and immediately applied.

"The job that I originally wanted was in childcare, but then this job opened up, and it fit what I was



Photo by B. Tinsman

Joan Hart operates the switchboard in the Carter Partnership Center.

looking for," she said.

Hart's favorite part of her job is interacting with the people.

"I love operating the switchboard and talking to all of the friendly people that need my help," she said. "It's very satisfying to know that I just made a difference in someone's day."

The biggest trouble that Hart finds in her job is keeping up with the ever-changing technology. "I know about as much as I need to know to get by on a computer, but I

learned how to type on a typewriter, and that will always be my first choice," Hart said.

"I know they say that you can't blow the computer up by making a mistake, but I'll take my typewriter- I know I can't hurt it," she said with a smile.

With a husband and grown daughter, Hart enjoys the flexibility of her part time job at the Owens Campus. In her spare time, she runs a successful cake business out of her own home, called "Cakes from the Heart."

"I love my jobs," Hart said. "I'm doing what I've always wanted to do."

# Delaware colleges cooperate for transfer credits

By Michele Walfred

[mwalfred@dtcc.edu](mailto:mwalfred@dtcc.edu)

Students of Delaware Technical Community College, University of Delaware and Delaware State University who are contemplating a continuation of their studies at any of the remaining two state institutions might be surprised to discover a convenient and cost-effective approach to obtaining credits toward their degree.

Delaware residents who are or would like to attend UD or DSU can often take a course at the Owens Campus at significantly lower tuition rates.

Delaware residents who attend UD in Newark pay \$828 in tuition for a three-credit class. The tuition for the same or equivalent course offered at Delaware Tech costs \$ 258.75. A three-credit course at DSU costs \$672.

Students at any of the three institutions can make headway toward a bachelor's degree by remaining at Delaware Tech. Increasingly, Delaware Tech courses are being accepted at UD and DSU for full or partial credit.

A student can determine which courses transfer by using Delaware Tech's Transfer Matrix.

The matrix is an easy-to-use guide to determine what individual courses other colleges accept. To visit the matrix log on to: <http://www.dtcc.edu/connecteddegree/>. The matrix link is found at the bottom of the second paragraph.

Once there, students can view a particular course or discipline. It is worthwhile to do some investigating because the course at Owens might not be in the most obvious or same curriculum category.

Many degree programs require an introductory course in psychology. Students can take the introductory course, General Psychology, at Owens, which is also accepted at UD and DSU under different course numbers.

Not all courses transfer for the full three credits. In viewing the matrix, some students will see hyperlinks for the numbers 2 and 1. These indicate the number of credits that institution will accept. A blank on a grid means that institution will not accept it.

College Mathematics and Statistics, MAT 153, is a 4-credit course at Delaware Tech. It does not transfer over to DSU, but UD accepts it for 3 credits as Math 114, which fulfills the math requirement for UD Arts & Science students.

The credit exchange flows both ways. Students at Delaware Tech who have attended UD or DSU may already have credit at Delaware Tech.

Katie Scott, a production agriculture student at the Owens Campus, has previously been a student at UD and DSU. As a result, Scott has often visited the matrix Web site.

"I have found it very valuable," Scott said, adding that most of the courses she has taken at all three schools are recognized by the other two.

"Except for some pre-tech courses, which is understandable," Scott said.

Scott also plans to transfer to Salisbury University when she completes her degree at Owens. "Almost all of my credits were accepted there," she said.

According to the Transfer Matrix Web site, "Transfer credit depends on the decision of the

receiving institution." In order to obtain approval for credit transfer within institutions, course descriptions and syllabi are submitted to the other colleges for review. This is done on a course-by-course basis.

In addition to course transfer, articulation agreements between institutions are continually being established, refined and reevaluated. These Connected Degree Programs enable a student to begin at one institution, usually for two years, and then transfer over as a junior to the accepting college.

## Non-traditional students benefit – a personal testimony

Take a look around the halls and classrooms, and it is clear that not all students at the Owens Campus are in their late teens or early 20s. Many students at the Owens Campus fall into what is often called a non-traditional category. I am one of them.

Non-traditional students are those who, for personal or professional reasons, decide to return to higher learning after some time off. Perhaps they wish to change the course of their educational experience, embark on new career training, or finally complete a degree. Learning at Delaware Tech provides an excellent opportunity.

I took a 25-year break between my sophomore and junior year.

In 1977, with two years at UD completed toward an English degree, I opted for marriage and left my textbooks and papers behind to raise a family.

Five years ago, my family relocated to Sussex County, and I was fortunate to obtain a support staff position with UD in Georgetown. I immediately took advantage of UD's educational benefits to go back to school part-time.

At first, completing my English degree downstate appeared challenging. Most of the courses I needed were in Newark. Gas prices were high, I was closing in on 50, and I feared I would be an old lady before I would be able to don my cap and gown.

But with a little tweaking of my major to a journalism concentration, I was delighted to discover that many of the core courses I needed could be fulfilled here at the Owens Campus.

Mary Miller, my UD advisor, broke the good news to me. She first told me about the matrix.

A Delaware Tech communications class, such as Newswriting II (writing for this paper), transfers fully as three credits to UD as English 407, one of my requirements. It would also transfer to DSU. While a course grade is transferred and displayed on my transcript, it is not reflected in my GPA at UD.

Additionally, there may be some restrictions or caveats on how many transfer courses an institution will accept. In some cases, transfer credits are accepted only as fulfillment of general categories and are restricted towards a major requirement. These courses are usually footnoted. Students should discuss any questions about course transfers with their educational advisors.

With a little creative thinking, excellent advisement, and a will to learn, all students can combine Delaware Tech, UD and DSU classes, online courses and work with instructors and professors for independent study to make significant progress towards a four-year degree and for a lot less money.

Opportunities abound. All one has to do is look around. The Transfer Matrix is a great place to start.

## Kappas involved in community cleanup effort

By Brian Tinsman  
[btinsman@dtcc.edu](mailto:btinsman@dtcc.edu)

"We want you!" declared Dr. T.J. Mumford, department chair of human services at the Owens Campus of Delaware Tech and advisor to the Owens Campus chapter of Phi Theta Kappa (PTK).

On Nov. 3, at 10 a.m., PTK held a road cleanup on Route 404 in Georgetown. As a member of the "Adopt a Highway" beautification program, Owens PTK cleans a mile-long stretch of Route 404, adjacent to the college, three times a year.

"This is a community service project that has been going on for more than 20 years here at Delaware Tech," Mumford said.

Mumford said that members planned for a group of volunteers and PTK members to clean both sides of the highway between Hardee's and the Kiwanis BBQ stand further west on Route 404. Volunteers were supplied with trash bags and gloves. After finishing, DelDOT picked up the bags of trash alongside the road.

According to its Web site, Phi Theta Kappa is the official honor society for the two-year college. Founded in 1910, the organization combines pride in academics with opportunities for personal growth and leadership development.

One major goal for Owens PTK this year is to help improve the environment.

In addition to cleaning the road, the members have already worked in conjunction with Seaford Middle School to clean Williams Pond in Seaford, Del. After a day's work with local environmentalist Jose Belamonte, the group collected 157 pounds of trash.

"We found everything from trash and discarded toys to lawn chairs and target deer heads," Mumford said.

Owens PTK is also involved in several donation projects.

On Oct. 7, members walked in the "Heart Walk" in Georgetown to raise money for the American Heart Association.

"Contributing to this great organization is very important to us," Mumford said.

Another donation project will help to increase literacy rates and improve the environment at Owens Campus.

The "Better World Books" program collects books for underprivileged children in the US



Photo by B. Tinsman

and Africa, while contributing 50 cents per book back to the donating organization.

By the end of October, PTK raised about \$250 and plans to use the money to buy a tree to donate back to the campus.

"The main objective was to donate the books, but, because of the reward, we decided to give something back to the campus," Mumford said. The idea for a tree fits in perfectly with our environmental goals."

For information on becoming a member or volunteer for Phi Theta Kappa or any of its activities, please contact Dr. Mumford at his office at 855-5937.

# CASH FOR BOOKS

## Bookstore's Buy-Back Schedule

Friday, Dec. 1 (10 a.m. to 2 p.m.)

Monday thru Thursday, Dec. 4 to Dec. 7 & Dec. 11 to Dec. 14

(10 a.m. to 2 p.m. & 5 to 7 p.m.)

Friday, Dec. 15 (10 a.m. to 2 p.m.)

# As temps drop, you can still feel the burn

By Brian Tinsman  
btinsman@dtcc.edu

Weight room, treadmills, basketball court, indoor and outdoor tracks, and playing fields. What do all of these things have in common? They can all be found at Owens Campus, and all are free to Delaware Tech students.

Fitness Director Tom Jackson is in charge of managing and maintaining the gym, located in the Jason Technology Center.

“With a combination of diet and exercise, students can reduce weight and stress, while having a good time,” Jackson said. “But it’s important to realize that you can’t stay healthy with just diet alone, you need to have the exercise.”

The gym is open from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, and from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Tuesdays and Fridays. However, Jackson said the best time to

come is during the off-peak hours between 10 a.m. and noon, and between 2 and 4 p.m.

“Our goal here at the gym is to involve as many students and faculty in exercise routines as possible, and to motivate them to better themselves,” Jackson said. “And the gym is free, so there’s no excuse not to come over.”

Curtis Brock, the intercollegiate athletic and sports complex director, is in charge of all of the organized sports teams on campus, as well as serving as the Roadrunner’s Baseball Coach.

“I want students to be able to mix athletic activity into their academic schedules,” Brock said.

While the three biggest sports at Owens Campus are baseball, softball, and co-ed golf, Brock said that intramural sports are, unfortunately, a well-kept secret.

There is currently a men’s bas-

ketball league as well as plans for co-ed volleyball and softball in the spring.

“Our main goal is to encourage more students to participate, especially women, and get more female teams and leagues together,” Brock said.

In the future, Brock hopes to utilize the field beyond the back parking lot, and restart the soccer teams at Owens Campus.

“Unfortunately we had to cut soccer about seven years ago, but hopefully we can get that back in the next few years.”

“If I had one bit of advice to students, I’d say to get involved,” Brock said. “If you have the time to join a team, then it will be worth it.



Photo by B. Tinsman

In addition to the fitness center, there is a three-quarter mile and one mile outdoor walking tracks that circle the Owens Campus.

And if we don’t offer what you’re interested in, then come to me and we’ll get it started,” he added.

Students interested in intramural or intercollegiate sports should contact Curtis Brock at (302) 855-1636.

For information about the gym, please call Tom Jackson at 856-5400 x2270

## Program serves as a test bed for national simulator study

By Michele Walfred  
mwalfred@dtcc.edu

They are 65 feet long, weigh an average of 35 to 40 tons and travel up to 65 mph. When drivers take them on the road, it is important that they not only know what they are doing, but they know how to do it safely.

Thanks to a nationally certified curriculum, the instructors at the Owens Campus’ Commercial Transportation Program, located off-campus in the AirPark in Georgetown, provide students with the training to operate tractor trailers and commercial vehicles.

Graduates of the program obtain a commercial driver’s license, or CDL, and well-compensated positions in a high demand industry.

And now, due to Delaware Tech’s national standing, their Commercial Transportation

Program will serve as headquarters for the nation’s only test bed, SimVal, created to evaluate the effectiveness of entry-level training using simulators.

Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, VTTI, was contracted by the U.S. Dept. of Transportation to conduct a study to validate the effectiveness of using simulators in entry-level training. After examining the lesson plans and curriculum of many schools, VTTI selected Delaware Tech’s program as SimVal’s home.

The \$300,000 simulator is owned by VTTI. Installations are now underway by VTTI’s representative, Scott Tidwell. The actual simulator is due to arrive on Dec. 5.

Instructional Coordinator Chris Antonik said that Tidwell has been busy “doing everything” in preparation for the simulator delivery. Currently Tidwell is installing

video cameras on all the road trucks so that actual driving events and conditions can be recorded for the simulator’s programming.

In addition, Antonik said that Vorax radar will record precise following distances and closing rates so that the simulation program reflects real world driving experiences.

M. Lee Derrickson, driving instructor for the program, has been the project leader and point man and has been instrumental in getting the program off the ground. Derrickson works closely with Virginia Tech in getting the study coordinated and underway.

Simulators have long been used as a standard part of training in other applications such as submarines, aerospace and

Continued on page 8

## CDL Program offers impressive opportunity in a short time

Continued from page 7

the airplane industry. The realistic or virtual environment provides an excellent opportunity to refine skills.

But currently, data does not exist to determine the value of simulator use for beginning students. As a result, simulator training has yet to be recognized in commercial driving programs.

The SimVal study will provide needed data over a four-year period.

Antonik said that the Phase II simulator will contain five rear-projection units with nine viewing screens surrounding an enclosed cab for a realistic experience.

It will replace an earlier, open-styled simulator that was featured last year on WBOC-TV with Jimmy Hoppa. His television broadcast is available for viewing at the Delaware Tech's CTP Web site: [www.dtcc.edu/owens/truck/photogallery.html](http://www.dtcc.edu/owens/truck/photogallery.html).

"This simulator will mimic a real truck and will closely replicate the commercial driving experience," said Antonik.

That will also include the bumps and vibrations a driver on the road would experience. All sorts of weather conditions can also be programmed.

Antonik also credits the backing of the administration and college President Dr. Orlando George's encouragement in seeing that the program continue to grow.

Students entering the program in January will be divided up into groups with one-third of the students learning on the simulator and a control group out on the road in a traditional learning setting.

The simulator will be programmed so that students in either group will share the same experience.

Antonik also wanted prospective students to be aware that a "significant" stipend will be paid to students who participate in the study, regardless of whether they fall in the control or simulator group.

As a test bed, two thirds of the enrollment will earn their CDL the traditional way, with half of these traditional students acting as a control group.

The other third will receive training on the simulator.

The course is typically eight-weeks in duration, but students can select from eight, 16, 24 and 32-week programs.

Within those options, flexibility is built-in to accommodate almost any schedule. Students will also earn 12 college credits.

Jack Taylor is a range instructor for the program. He also served as executive director of Delaware Motor Transport Association for the past four years.

His 35 years experience, which included driving for the U.S. Army, is now put to good use instructing students on the difficult maneuvers truck drivers must master such as turning, parallel parking and alley docking.

Taylor trains students on the coupling and uncoupling of the truck to the trailer, a 25-step procedure that a student is expected to accomplish in 15 to 20 minutes.

"Backing up is the most challenging," said student Marc Jackson, who is nearing the completion of the course.

"It is a whole different feel...a lot different," he said of the experience behind the wheel of a tractor trailer.

Jackson was attracted to the program because he considers it good, honest work and will have his own hours.

A graduate of the commercial transportation program can expect to obtain a position as a local driver and earn an average \$35,000 to start. A mature driver can do very well, Antonik said, adding that commercial drivers enjoy excellent job security.

"There is no other curriculum at Delaware Tech that can claim that kind of opportunity in such a short amount of time," Antonik said. "It is a great way for someone to get on their feet financially."

The total out of pocket cost for a student including tuition, all fees, permits and materi-

als is \$3,400, Antonik said.

The program has been in existence since 1971. The current facility, which includes offices, classrooms and the Simulator Room, was built in 2002 near the Sussex County Airport.

Antonik, a '88 graduate of Delaware Tech, later graduated from Wilmington College. He drove commercially for eight years, locally and long distance. He has been with Delaware Tech's program since 1996 and is proud of the program's accomplishments.

"We try to do the job the right way, the way it should be done. We have an excellent program," he said. "Hefty academics go into this program."

In addition to classroom time, students receive 56 hours of on-the-road experience with instructors.

The average student is 35 years of age and male. But the program has taught women, and students have ranged in age from 20 to 61. Students are required to pass a physical and random drug testing.

"Our students take it very seriously," said Antonik.

"A truck can be very unforgiving. But there is a great element of fun and excitement as well."

Together Antonik, Derrickson and Taylor, along with their students, form a cohesive group that is "very tight-knit."

Graduates of the program often stop by to pay a social visit. Antonik says that while long distance drivers earn more, most of his students choose to become local operators. He sees his graduates all the time on the road, but they don't acknowledge him.

"They were paying attention to the road," he said with a smile.