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Barton announces fully online Occupational Safety and Health degree

Story by Brandon Steinert

Safety at job sites of all sizes has received more emphasis in recent years, with full time jobs dedicated to occupational safety and health available in many industries.

Barton Community College has rolled out a new Occupational Safety and Health (O.S.H.) Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) degree, available completely online or via evening classes, to help safety-minded individuals further develop skills and advance their careers.

The degree is 64 credit hours which can be completed in one year if a student maintains an aggressive course load and takes advantage of accelerated online sessions starting mid-semester. Students pursuing the A.A.S. will also earn an 18-hour certificate in occupational safety and health in the process. The certificate is available as a standalone program as well.

“Industry professionals are looking for people with safety backgrounds,” said Bill Nash, Dean of Fort Riley Technical Education and Military Outreach Training. “Any manufacturer or construction business for example, will have to have a safety-trained person. These qualifications are what make a good foreman or supervisor and there are also dedicated safety positions available. This training gives people the base knowledge they need to go look at the workplace and do a job hazard analysis, see what employees are actually doing and they can



then apply intent of the regulations to that and they're able to make the workplace safer. They can then develop programs and training based on their analysis."

Occupational Safety and Health Programs Director Brandon Green agreed, saying the jobs available to a well-educated safety and health professional are many.

"The number of jobs and someone might hold as a result of earning a degree in Occupational Safety & Health are numerous and widespread," he said. "They can become Site Safety Inspectors, Safety Specialists, Safety Managers and Site Safety Superintendents. These are just a few jobs graduates might find themselves in as a result of the education they receive through Barton Community College's O.S.H. degree program."

Midwest OSHA Education Center Offerings

Barton is one of only 42 government-sanctioned Occupational Safety and Health Association (OSHA) education centers in the U.S. and it is the only one in Kansas.

Barton's designation as a Midwest OSHA Education Center also allows the college to offer two professional O.S.H. certificates, each of which can be taken with either a construction or industrial emphasis. The first level is a 6.5-credit-hour Specialist in Safety and Health certificate. The second level is the 14 credit-hour Certified Safety and Health Official certificate.

The credit hours used in these certificates can be counted as electives toward the associate degree.

Nash said students gaining these certificates will have an eye-catching resume to employers when job-seeking. He said the program is appropriate for both traditional full-time students and people who are already working in the industry and building their skillset.

"It's possible that adding these skills and qualifications could lead to a substantial pay raise, and solidify a position that they already have if they can complete this program."

The program is guided by an advisory board that includes business and industry executives as well as government safety officials.

For more information, contact Director of Occupational Safety and Health Programs Brandon Green at greenb@bartonccc.edu or (785) 238-8550 Extension 735.

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