Laboratory and Santa Fe Community College announce new program for machinists

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Los Alamos National Laboratory Director Thom Mason and Santa Fe Community College (SFCC) President Becky Rowley announced a collaboration creating a new training program for machinists at an online event April 16.

“The Laboratory is pleased to work with partners like SFCC to help bring good-paying, technical job opportunities to workers in our local area,” said Director Thom Mason. “Building the regional workforce benefits both Northern New Mexico and the Laboratory and is one of the concrete ways that we support the people in our communities.”

“The college is very excited to move forward with this collaboration with the Laboratory,” said President Becky Rowley. “We’re glad to respond to the growing demand at the Lab for skilled machinists. This program will offer SFCC students a path to high-paying jobs in the region.”

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The 41-credit-hour program trains students to be precision machinists, who use computers, lathes, milling machines, and grinders to produce metal parts. Precision machinists often produce small batches of parts or one-of-a-kind items. The Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that in New Mexico and nationwide, machinist jobs will be in high demand over the next eight years. Salaries for Lab machinists range from $56,000–$80,000 per year. The training program begins with the Fall 2020 semester. Students will be reimbursed for tuition, fees, and books.

“This is a hands-on STEM program,” said Associate Dean Colleen Lynch. “It would be a good fit for students who like to solve practical problems, can read plans and diagrams, are good at visualizing in 3-D, and are both creative and precise. It requires students who are ready for intermediate or college algebra, who like using tools and computers, and who like to understand how things work.”

Prospective students should contact either instructor Miguel Maestas (miguel.maestas@sfcc.edu) or Associate Dean Colleen Lynch (colleen.lynch@sfcc.edu) for more information. Eligible students will be notified this summer if they are selected for the program.