

Golden West College's Academic Connection

There are a number of myths and preconceived notions often associated with the quality of education students will receive at community colleges. Among them that a degree from a community college isn't as good as a university degree or that the faculty isn't the same as the faculty in four-year schools.

The truth is that a degree from a community college, like Huntington Beach's own Golden West College, is in many cases a first step directly into the job market. Attending a community college also gives students the ability to save money for two years, which can literally afford them the opportunity to go away to a university without incurring 10 years worth of debt (GWC offers a great educational value at an affordable price at only \$20 per unit).

And the notion that the faculty isn't of the same professional caliber of as that of instructors at a university is simply not true. At GWC, faculty is recruited from across the country to give students the benefit of diversity and all faculty members hold masters and Ph.D. degrees just like that of their university counterparts. But it is true that the level of education students experience at GWC is different from that of a university – smaller class sizes, the fact that there are no graduate students teaching classes, availability of instructors to meet with students one-on-one are just a few of the reasons why students don't just get as good an education as that which they might receive at the university level; they often get a better one.

The following are just a few examples of the certificate programs offered at GWC, along with current statistics on starting salaries and a bit of insight from students who participated in the specific program outlined:

Architectural Technology

Position after graduation: Architectural Drafter 1

Starting salary: \$35,756; Median salary: \$46,212

"As an older student, my instructor Ted Palmer appreciated the challenge of working full-time and going to school. He and I connected on a personal level, and through his attitude and encouragement I attained my educational goals." – *Randy Jepson, GWC alumni*

Criminal Justice

Position after graduation: Police Patrol Office

Starting salary: \$42,533; Median Salary: \$51,845

"We're very proud of our program because it's real world and very contemporary and we place our students with most of the agencies in the area. The majority of our instructors are working police officers, deputy sheriffs and deputy district attorneys." – *Ron Lowenberg, director of the GWC Criminal Justice Program and former HB Chief of Police.*

Digital Arts

Position after graduation: Graphic Design Specialist

Starting salary: \$37,446; Median salary: \$49,225

"When I started at GWC, I had never even turned on a computer. Every year, the equipment and software in this field are upgraded. I want to stay ahead of the pack, and this is definitely the best place to do that. The lab here is bigger than labs at most four-year colleges." – *Joe King, student and designer for "Fourth World" clothing company.*

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GWC offers 22 Career Programs with over 60 Certificates

Administration of Justice

- Criminal Justice

Business & Information

- Systems
- Business
- Accounting
- Management/Marketing/Real Estate
- Office Administration
- Computer Science
- Information Technology

Arts & Letters

- Broadcast & Video Production
- Digital Arts
- Music/Recording Arts
- Interpreting for the Deaf

Health Professions

- Nursing

Technology

- Architectural Technology
- Auto Collision Repair
- Automotive Technology
- Cosmetology
- Design
- Diesel Technology
- Drafting Technology
- Engineering Technology
- Environmental Studies
- Floral Design

Nursing

Position after graduation: Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN)

Starting salary: \$38,709; Median salary: \$41,401

"I am here because GWC has the best Nursing Program in the state. The science teachers are excellent." – *Ryanne Stouff, GWC nursing major.*

As of Spring '06, Golden West College opened an innovative Weekend Nursing Program in addition to the traditional weekday program. The Weekend section is scheduled on Friday, Saturday and Sunday as well as Thursday and Friday evenings. All other aspects of the program are the same, including the length of the program (four semesters), the curriculum and the method of instruction.

Diesel Technology

Position after graduation: Diesel Engine Mechanic

Starting salary: \$35,697; Median salary: \$43,055

"I was working as a lab technician at an alternative fuel testing lab, but always had interest in working in the marine industry as a diesel technician. I contacted several people who work in the industry and was told that Golden West College had the best diesel program in the area. I then visited several local colleges and determined that GWC did in fact have the best program for me. The scheduling and course content met my needs as a working student by allowing completion of the certificate program in one year's time. I elected to continue my education in order to receive my AA degree. Prior to completing the program, I began receiving several job opportunities one of which I am currently working in. I would highly recommend this program for anyone wishing to enter into any aspect of the diesel industry." - *Joseph J. Dolence* **HB**

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**Stacy Taylor, Principal
Huntington Beach, CA**



**tel 714.791.0848
efax 240.266.8303**

**Stacy@TaylorPublicRelations.com
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