Northwest Intermountain Metal Manufacturing Career Development Program (NIMM) FUNDED
New Program to Assist North Central Idaho and Southeast Washington High School Students in Gaining Skill Development

The National Science Foundation has awarded to Lewis-Clark State College a grant of $839,809 to pilot the Northwest Intermountain Metal Manufacturing Career Development Program (NIMM). The grant is a collaborative effort between Lewis-Clark State College, Clearwater Economic Development Association (CEDA), and the University of Idaho and is supported by nineteen area school districts. The project begins June 1, 2017. It is designed to serve up to 90 area high school students.

The program will provide “free,” online and hands-on training that complements the entry-level skills needed by local manufacturers and entry level “hands-on” skills and ‘soft’ workplace skills for two groups of high school students interested in Mechanical CADD (Computer-Aided-Design) and Electro-Mechanical Technician jobs.

The training is to support regional metal fabricators, including ammunition and firearms makers, machine shops, a foundry, jet boat and trailer builders, and equipment manufacturers. They have common workforce needs for welders, machinists, and fabricators.

During two academic years, high school students will complete online coursework. They will attend summer academies in machining and electronics on the Lewis-Clark State College campus. Online courses provided through the Idaho Digital Learning Academy (IDLA) will include people and personal skills, workplace skills, 3-D Modeling, Applied STEM, Computer-Aided-Design and Blueprint Reading, and Introduction to Engineering Design. In the machining practicum, students will become familiar with blueprint reading; the properties of metals, alloys, and plastics; learn to operate manual equipment such as lathes, mills, and precision grinders; and learn shop safety and quality control. In the second summer academy on electronics, students learn electronics safety; the basic characteristics of voltage, current, and resistance; how to draw and interpret common electrical/electronic symbols; how to read, write, and edit ladder logic programs; and about the different types of wiring/insulation characteristics.

Students will be provided with mentors and opportunities for internships with area manufacturers. These introductory courses will serve as enticement for further education, including an intermediate or advanced technical certificate, an Associate of Applied Science, and applied bachelor’s degrees. It is anticipated that some will pursue related degrees in engineering and like fields.

College credit may be awarded to program participants through Idaho’s new SkillStack® program. The foundation of SkillStack® is the micro-credential or badge, which validates student skill against industry defined standards to create a wider talent pool for the state. Badges may be earned for each course within the Metal Manufacturing Career Development program. These badges are converted to college credit upon acceptance to Lewis-Clark State College and substitute for select program requirements, reducing the number of credits required for post-secondary certificate or degree completion.