

## ***New Program Seeks to Close the Industrial Maintenance Skills Gap***

***Building a stronger workforce by Preparing Graduates to enter careers, not jobs***



**Pictured above:** Mechatronics student Giovanni Rosario (gentleman with ball cap) discussing the program with Department of Education (DOE) Secretary Betsy DeVos; DOE Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education, Kim Ford (right of DeVos); President of Valencia College, Sandy Shugart (right of Ford); and Assistant Director-Curriculum & Instruction, Advanced Manufacturing Technology Center, Valencia College, Paul Wahnish (right of Rosario).

In 2016, Paul Wahnish set out to create a state-of-the-art mechatronics program at Valencia College's Advanced Manufacturing Training Center located in Kissimmee, Florida. Using NIMS Industrial Technology Maintenance industry standards as the benchmark, Mr. Wahnish worked with industry partners in the Southeast region to create Valencia's 600 hour advanced mechatronics training program.

The vision was to develop a program that directly aligns with the competencies necessary to gain immediate, well-paying jobs that provide opportunities for future career advancement. In year one of the program (slated to end June 2017), the program has reported remarkable success. Fortune 500 corporations across the nation are recruiting program graduates with starting salaries of up to \$24/hour plus overtime pay. This is \$5/hour over the average starting salary of \$39,770 for an industrial maintenance worker nationwide. Companies are encouraged to engage with program participants on day one, providing opportunities to showcase alignment between program training and the shop floor. "Education should align with industry needs, providing students with worthwhile learn-and-earn opportunities," said Paul Wahnish.

### ***Built on Industry Standards & Credentials***

Students participating in the program earn a total of 14 industry-driven credentials, which includes six NIMS Industrial Technology Maintenance credentials. These credentials validate students' competencies and make them career-ready at the end of the 20-week program.

"The partnership with NIMS allowed us to build a program that reflects the skills and knowledge in demand across the country for industrial maintenance technicians." – said Paul Wahnish

Recently, Department of Education Secretary Betsy DeVos toured the training center and remarked that the credentialing woven into the program is a "common sense approach" to helping individuals pursue higher skilled work.

### ***Reimagining the American Dream***

"After a visit to the facility, I packed my belongings and made the 18 hour drive from NYC to Kissimmee. Four months later, I have multiple offers to join companies that will provide me with a career and a competitive salary to match. This program has offered me peace of mind and stability to support myself and my family." – said Giovanni Rosario

**Interested in learning more about the program?** Contact Paul Wahnish, Assistant Director – Curriculum & Instruction, Advanced Manufacturing Technology Center, Valencia College at [Jwahnish1@valenciacollege.edu](mailto:Jwahnish1@valenciacollege.edu) or visit <https://manufacturing.valenciacollege.edu/>.

**Interested in offering NIMS ITM credentials at your school? An upcoming ITM instructor workshop?** Contact Christine Hubley, Director of Strategy & Outreach, NIMS at [chubley@nims-skills.org](mailto:chubley@nims-skills.org).