



L&C Education Gives the Best Gift: Employment

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Recent Process Operations Technology graduate Joseph Highsmith, of East Alton, is living his dream thanks to the education he received at Lewis and Clark Community College. He begins a new job as an operator in training at Phillips 66 Jan. 6.

"I couldn't even dream of a better situation," Highsmith said. "My 10-year-old daughter is the most important thing in the world to me, and now I am confident that I will be able to provide for her, especially when she goes to the college of her choice. This is the best Christmas present I could have gotten this year."

Highsmith is one of 10 L&C Process Operations Technology students starting at Phillips 66 in early January 2014. He is proof that completion of L&C's program provides a high probability of placement as a process operations technician within the process industry.

"The instructors not only educated and challenged us, they also inspired us," Highsmith said. "I was impressed at how prepared I was to enter the workforce in this specific field."

Process technicians learn how to operate furnaces, distillation columns, reboilers, heat exchangers, steam systems, and cooling-water systems — the essential elements of all process industries.

"I recommend the program to my friends who are currently out of work," Highsmith said. "Even if you don't know anything about the field, I think you will find the problem solving aspect of process operations to be interesting."

With degree credentials and supervised on-site internship experience in hand, students who complete the program will qualify for a career in the nationally critical field of petroleum refining, oil and gas production, petrochemicals production, biochemicals production, base chemicals production and power generation.

Before beginning the Process Operations Technology program, Highsmith worked in a number of occupations, from installing flooring to running a tax office and driving a school bus.

“I went from not working to being offered two jobs,” Highsmith said. “I plan on working in process operations until I retire. I kind of got a late start on finding the career that was right for me, but it looks like I’ll have a strong finish.”

For more information on L&C’s Process Operations Technology program, including how to enroll, contact Program Coordinator Mike Morgan at (618) 468-4922 or mmorgan@lc.edu

To learn more about the program’s offerings, visit www.lc.edu/program/processop