

Students visit local robotics industry

By CATHERINE GERRINGER

What would life be like if we were all able to have a robot in our homes?

Students in Bob Biggers Design Drafting II class recently went on a field trip to find out exactly what robotics is and how it works at Production Automation.

Biggers said the purpose of the trip was to determine and understand the products manufactured as well as the most critical and complex manufacturing processes, and to learn how the engineering department at a business functions.

Biggers and the students saw a demonstration of a

welding operation in which 2 pieces to be joined were grabbed and held in place by metal fingers while a robotics arm under computer control brought the welding electrode to the pieces and supplied the necessary heat and filler metal.

Biggers said an added bonus was to see how a recent WCC Design graduate, Mike Passmore, was able to fit into the organization and quickly become productive.

Passmore was the tour guide; he is a project engineer employed with the company for the last 10 months.

David Peele started the business 5 years ago on his brother Camille's back porch.

Camille said, "Starting salaries range from \$8.00 to \$17.00 per hour," considered the highest average in Wayne County.

The company needs students to be strong in math, science, physics, communication skills, English, and reading.

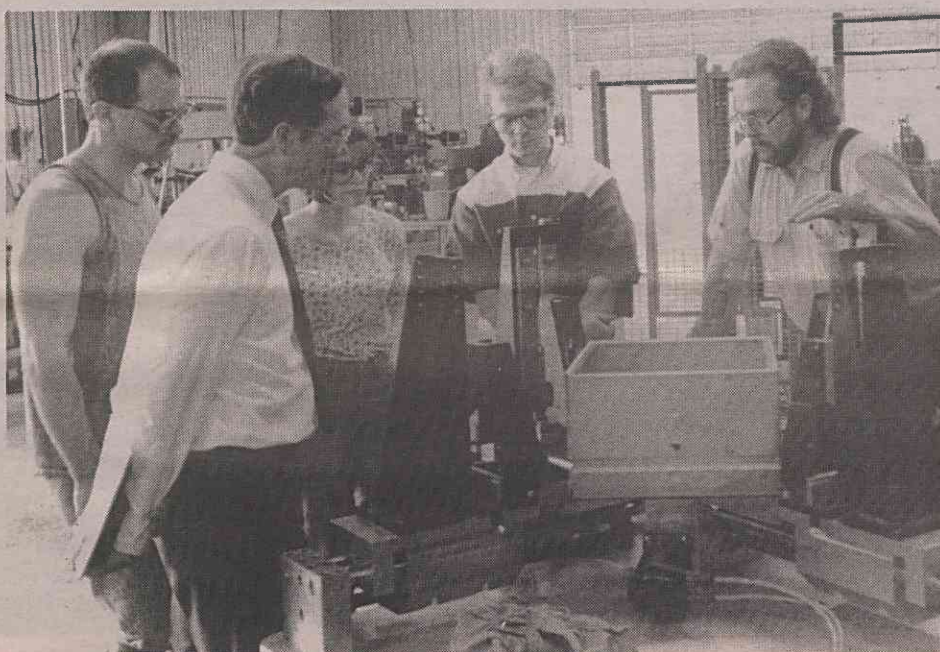
Production Automation reimburses employees who attend school and maintain a "C" or better in their grades.

The company employs 14-15 full-time and 8-10 part-time workers. Of the total employees, 1 electrician and 6 machinists have attended WCC.

The company prefers employees to have a 2-year Associate's degree in Design and Drafting and have mechanical experience.



Bob Biggers and students visited this facility on South George Street. PHOTOS: CATHERINE GERRINGER.



Biggers and engineering students (l to r) Bill Pinch, Melanie Murdock, and Robert Walters observe Production Automation's equipment as Michael Passmore explains the processes.

Production Automation specializes in manufacturing robotics cells to accomplish welding operations, Biggers said.

Semesters to be in place in 1997

By JENNIFER L. TAFE

Wayne Community College will be switching from quarters to semesters beginning in the fall of 1997.

Most of the 58 schools in the system have used the quarter system since their establishment.

According to Curtis Shivar, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, the next year will be spent working on course conversion.

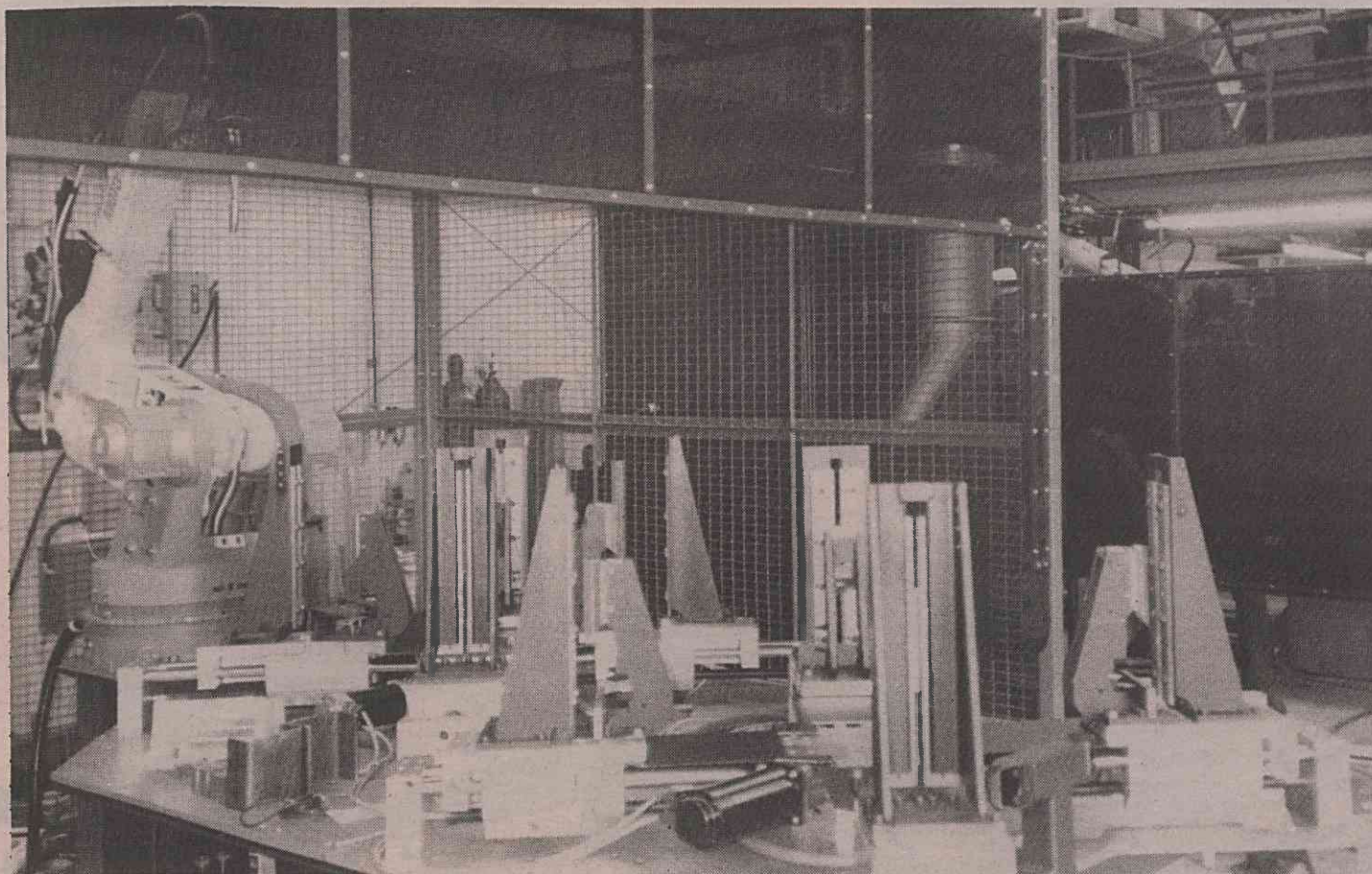
The State Board of Community Colleges have advised community colleges about how the change can be smoothly accomplished.

Shivar said that WCC instructors will be invited to work on committees at the state level to plan how to effect the change.

According to a "Campus Voice" survey in the fall 1994 issue, 75% of faculty and 66% of students who responded favored the change to semesters.

The reasons for their enthusiasm ranged from easier credit transfer to longer breaks.

Some faculty see disadvantages in major revamping of courses and a serious commitment from students.



Students saw robotic processes during their field trip as well as learned about the experiences of a former student.