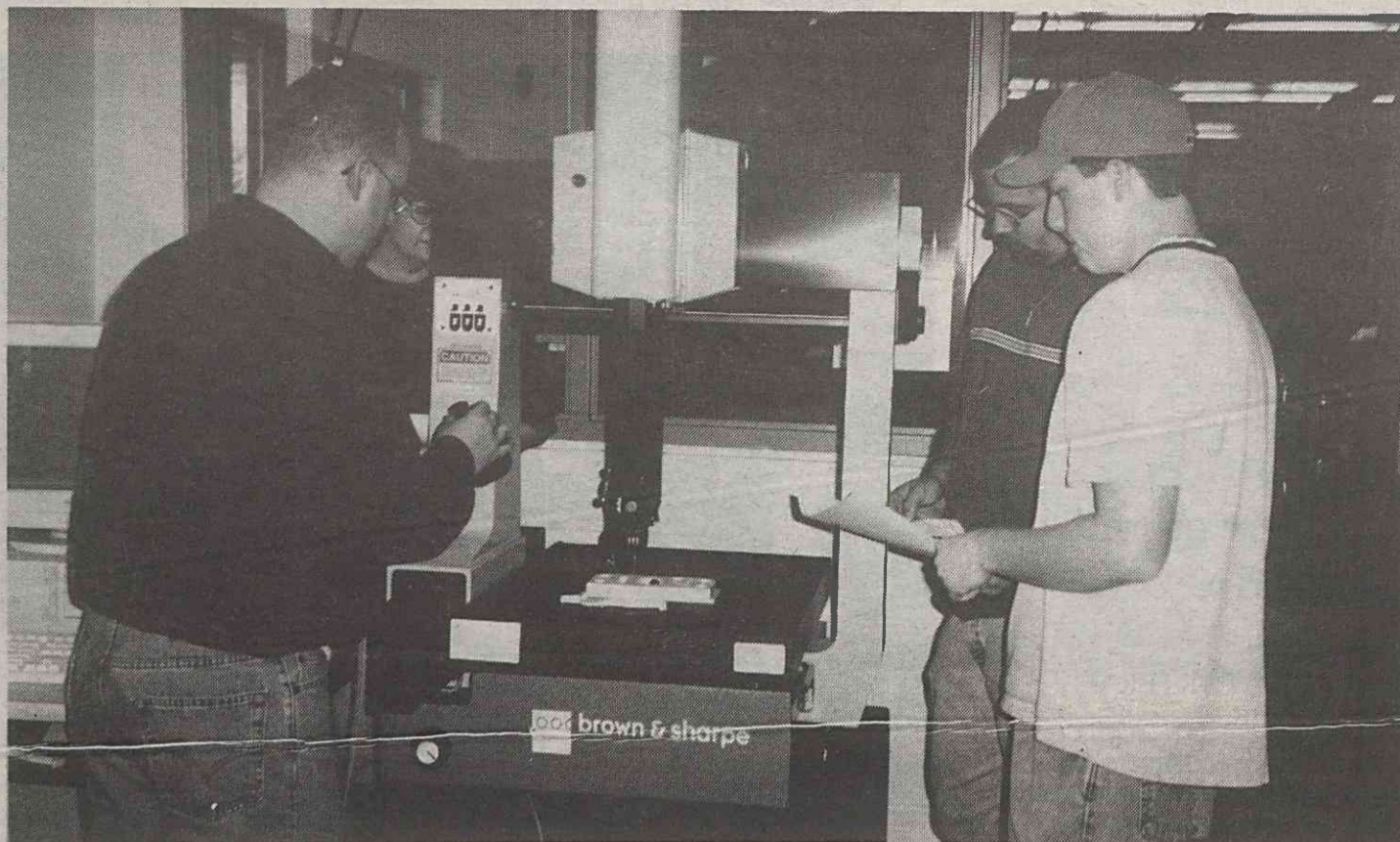


Former student returns as instructor, finds changes in machining program



Chad Strickland, left, manipulates controls while machining program students Freda Tesseneer (hidden by equipment), Brian McStay, and J.T. Burn observe. PHOTO: CRYSTAL STRICKLAND

By CRYSTAL STRICKLAND

When Chad Strickland was a student at WCC in the fall of 1993 and enrolled as an associate of science major, he decided to take the summer off because he was uncertain of what he wanted to do after college.

During his time away from school he worked in a machine shop in Smithfield for about 3 months.

After this experience he realized that he wanted to go to school to learn more about the machine shop.

He then tried to get into a machine shop program at Johnston Community College, but he was the only one to sign up for the course.

He decided to come back to WCC where he graduated in the 1-year Machining Program and was hired at General Electric where he worked for 5 years.

One day he got a call from Paul Compton, a WCC instructor who needed an instructor to teach machining.

Strickland took the job and he found the program had changed greatly within the past 7 years.

Now students choose from 2 program options, a 2-year associates degree for those who wish to further their education and a 1-year degree for those who want to go straight into the workplace.

When Strickland was a student, the computers were based on DOS. Now they are more dependent on Windows.

The number of students has also increased. Approximately 25 students are enrolled. Strickland said the job outlook, opportunities, and pay in this field are excellent.

The program is mostly lab and hands-on. With the small number of students enrolled, instructors are able to spend more time one-on-one with students.

Students are allowed to make tools for themselves as a process of learning and working with the equipment.

The newest piece of equipment is the CMM, which stands for Coordinate Measuring Machine.

Its basic job is to inspect parts of tools and other equipment to make sure they are correctly made after manufacture.

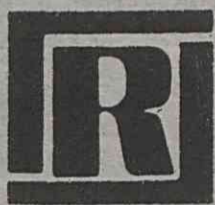
The instructors are hoping to have a class designed just for the CMM.

Another piece of equipment is the HAAS, which has control simulation boxes that allow students to run a program on the simulator before cutting a part of an object.

Strickland said, "It's simple to use and can be taught in a short period of time."

The HAAS produces the medallions awarded to student participants in the Summer Exploration Camp and the 2 putters given away during the Golf Tournament which the Foundation sponsors to raise money for student scholarships.

Those wanting more information about the machining program should contact Strickland at extension 299.



R. N. Rouse & Co., Inc.

GENERAL CONTRACTORS

Since 1929

