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Ames Hunziker Center

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Hunziker Center- Ames

As the 1990s drew to a close and the home construction industry was on the rise, contractors in the Story County area found it more and more difficult to locate quality employees. Turning to the school districts of the area, they found that most high schools no longer offered building trades programs and no longer taught the skills that their employees needed. Their next call was to DMACC. DMACC Exec. Dean Randy Mead and a group of Story County school administrators met with Hunziker Construction and cooperatively began a Building Trades program that was offered out of Ames High School. Instructor Joe Brend was hired and in the fall of 1998 began the first DMACC Career Academy Building Trades program. Through the success of the Building Trades program, additional programs were developed and offered at locations such as the Mary Greeley Dialysis Center in Ames and the Ankeny Campus.

As the popularity of career academy programs grew, the seven high schools of Story County formed the Story County Vocational Consortium, and the idea of a DMACC facility in Ames was formed. The Story County Vocational Consortium eventually hired their first Director, Larry Shaeffer, who worked along with Randy Mead to develop the academy programs and to build support for the programs throughout business and industry and the Story County community. With the help and support of President Rob Denson and Executive Vice President Kim Linduska, the idea of a DMACC Ames presence developed.

Multiple public and private donations, grants and DMACC funding allowed for the construction and equipping of the 35,000 square foot facility at 1420 South Bell Avenue in Ames. The largest single donation came from the Erb and Marge Hunziker family, and the building bears their name. The DMACC Career Academy Hunziker Center opened its door in August of 2006 as the first educational facility in the state of Iowa constructed for the primary purpose of serving a consortium of high school students in college credit career academy programming. In addition to the 10 career academies offered at the facility, a variety of college credit courses are also offered, serving approximately 850 students in its first year of operation. Career academy programs included Building Trades, Auto Technology, Auto Collision Repair, Culinary Arts, Health Occupations/C.N.A., Career Work Experience, Teacher Academy, Criminal Justice, I.T.N.A, and Visual Communications.

As the success of the courses and programs offered at the Hunziker Center continued to grow, so did the partnership with area high schools and Iowa State University. Demand for classroom space increased, and in May of 2013, construction of a 9000 square foot addition began, and was completed in December of that same year.

“The new space has enhanced opportunities for college and high school students, staff and faculty during the day and evening,” said DMACC Executive Dean of Program Development Randy Mead. “This completes the original footprint planned for the DMACC Hunziker Center.”

DMACC Boone Campus Provost Tom Lee, who coordinates the liberal arts and science classes and the partnership with ISU, said DMACC is excited to be able to offer additional science classes in the new chemistry and biology lab. Lee said these courses will help DMACC and Iowa State University students meet science lab requirements.

“We listened to the needs of ISU students who enjoy taking courses at DMACC because of the smaller class sizes and opportunity for more one-on-one instruction, plus the affordability,” said Lee. Courses offered include marketing, sociology, psychology, philosophy, math, composition, literature, history, and business law.

The new biology and chemistry lab includes six work stations, a fume hood and an incubator. The computer lab has 24 computers that are open to students day and night. Lee

said they can be used for school projects, research and studying. DMACC has also added multi-use space to be used for testing, English as a Second Language (ESL) and HiSET courses or as a writing lab.

In the fall of 2014, DMACC was serving high school students from 15 different school districts in its career academy programs, as well as approximately 850 college students. The Hunziker Center continues to be the model state-wide for career academy setting and programming, while expanding opportunities for students.

Created August 2015 in celebration of DMACC's 50th Anniversary.