Today’s global economy has forced significant changes in the way we deliver education. Nearly 70 percent of all new jobs require training beyond high school. In addition, there’s a growing demand for careers that require strong preparation in the areas of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Secondary and post-secondary institutions need to work together, now more than ever, to ensure seamless college and career transitions for students.

Given this current outlook, Kirkwood, the University of Iowa, K-12 school districts and industry partners have strategically aligned to form a unique partnership, not found anywhere else in the nation. This partnership connects resources across the educational spectrum and beyond, to create a viable, educated workforce to sustain the competitive advantage and quality of life in our region.

The broad scope of the courses offered within the walls of the Kirkwood Regional Center at the University of Iowa will make education more accessible to everyone, from high school students up through adults who might need certification for a promotion or a whole new career.

In addition, the center will provide University of Iowa education students and professors with opportunities to test innovative teaching strategies in STEM. Current K-12 teachers will gain valuable training and certification offerings from both Grant Wood Area Education Agency and the University of Iowa. This training will expand the reach of the center to classrooms across the state.

Industry partners provided thoughtful input for the classes to be offered at the center. Through collaboration with Kirkwood’s Continuing Education and Training Services branch and local industry, training demands will be met and will directly feed employment needs of the Johnson County region.
With global vision and innovative curriculum, key partners are creating new learning opportunities for today’s students. The Kirkwood Regional Center at the University of Iowa is a long-term educational investment for the central Kirkwood region offering traditional college programming as well as:

- Innovative, high tech career academies with industry recognized certifications.
- Liberal Arts and Sciences transfer courses.
- College readiness assessment, placement exams, National Career Readiness Certification.
- Financial aid services, academic advising and career counseling services.
- Grant Wood Area Education Agency Services
- Kirkwood Continuing Education courses and certification programs.

Students may follow several different pathways after completing Kirkwood's career academies. Examples include college certificates, diplomas, associates, bachelors and graduate degrees, in addition to immediate employment.
Career Academy Benefits

Kirkwood's unique cooperation with area school districts puts high school students in hands-on technical programs and arts and sciences classes. Through this partnership, highly technical state-of-the-art labs were created to train students in areas that lead to high-skill, high-wage career opportunities.

Students earn both high school and college credit at NO COST to their families. More importantly, students explore specific career fields to help them make decisions about their future. In many cases, career academies allow high school students a jump start on an applied science diploma, degree or technical certificate at Kirkwood, or fully transferrable credit they can take with them to a university.

In addition, career academies offered at the Kirkwood Regional Center at the University of Iowa are bolstered by student access to high tech companies and research centers on the University of Iowa campus, such as the State Hygienic Laboratory, National Advanced Driving Simulator, University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, Iowa Institute for Hydraulics Research and Center for Computer Aided Design. Career academy students also have opportunities to do research with University of Iowa faculty.

District Partners – Kirkwood Regional Center at the University of Iowa

- Clear Creek-Amana Community School District
- College Community District
- Iowa City Community School District
- Solon Community School District
- Tipton Community School District
- West Branch Community School District
- Regina Catholic Education Center

Academies offered at the Kirkwood Regional Center at the University of Iowa

*Denotes a STEM-based program.

- Advanced Manufacturing/Engineering Technology*
  - American Welding Society MIG Welder qualification and National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS) machining certificate
- Agriculture
- Architecture & Construction Management*
  - OSHA and First Aid/CPR certification
- Arts & Sciences*
- Business
- Criminal Justice
- Education
- Emergency Medical Services*
  - EMT & CPR certification
- Graphics & Media Communications*
- Industrial Maintenance/Energy*
- Information Technology*
  - A+ certification
- Paralegal/Pre-Law
- Patient Care*
  - OSHA, First Aid/CPR and nurse aid certification
- Pharmacy Technician*
  - Pharmacy Technician certification
- Project Lead the Way: PTE (Pathway to Engineering)*
- Project Lead the Way: Biomedical*
- Transportation*
  - Snap-on Shopkey, Meter and Ethos Scan tool certifications

Kirkwood meets you where you are, with workforce training, certification, transfer credit or a full associate degree. The possibilities are endless!
According to a recent Iowa State University study* that focused on direct from high school students who had earned college credit while still in high school:

- 72% of entering students who were Iowa residents already had college credit.
- Early college credit students had higher GPAs, higher graduation rates and, changed their majors less than those who did not take college credit in high school.
- Early college credit students added minors and second majors more frequently.
- The amount of credit didn’t affect success. Any amount of college credit taken in high school better prepared students for future educational success.

* Iowa State University Early Credit Task Force Final Report, December 2011

**Work. Learn. Connect.**

Co-locating at the Kirkwood Regional Center at the University of Iowa is the Workplace Learning Connection. Fully embedded in the learning experience at the regional center, the Workplace Learning Connection brings students together with local business and industry to provide job shadows and internships. These experiential learning opportunities expose students to real life, on-the-job situations, while at the same time allowing industry to mold future employees.

Our unique partnership means Kirkwood will strive to provide programming in the academic areas students request most for on-the-job experiences. Last year’s job shadow data indicated Kirkwood’s programming aligns with many “hot jobs” students want: health care occupations, engineering and teaching.

**Concurrent Enrollment Opportunities**

College credit for high school students is not limited to the Kirkwood regional centers. Kirkwood continues to partner with area school districts for other concurrent enrollment opportunities within the walls of each high school.

Kirkwood’s concurrent enrollment options are accredited by National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP), a national peer-reviewed accrediting body that safeguards the quality of concurrent enrollment options.

To earn accreditation from NACEP, Kirkwood was judged on criteria such as instructor preparation and qualifications, curriculum alignment, student services, assessment and evaluation.