



# News Release

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## **Ridgewater's Drafting Certificate Program Ranked #3 in US**

HUTCHINSON and WILLMAR, MN – Students pursuing a drafting certificate can feel good about their investment in education when they choose Ridgewater College. The Ridgewater College Computer-Aided Drafting and Design program recently garnered national recognition for being in the top 3 for its value and quality by [www.BestValueSchools.org](http://www.BestValueSchools.org).

Best Value Schools is an organization that reviews post-secondary institution academics, student life, options, and student opinions, and then compares that with financial outcomes data to give prospective students comparisons of most valuable programs based on both quality and affordability. "Each Best Value School has been selected because it meets criteria important to post-secondary students of all ages," states the website.

Evaluators look for institutions where students can fit in and have a good experience; where they find appropriate, top-notch academic options; where attendance costs are reasonable and financial aid is available to minimize debt loads and default rates; and that include commendable graduation rates and special college attributes.

"When our Computer-Aided Drafting and Design program went online in 2009, our faculty did so with student flexibility and accessibility in mind," Ridgewater Dean of Instruction Matt Feuerborn said about instructors Stacey Nass and Dave Moen. "They continue to innovate and improve the experience for students of all backgrounds. Online delivery helped remove both location and time barriers. Complement that with Ridgewater's long history of affordable education and generous Ridgewater Foundation student scholarships and you have a recipe for great success for our graduates."

Ridgewater CADD students can earn the 29-credit certificate, a 64-credit diploma, or a 67-credit Associate of Arts degree. Students learn AutoCAD, Inventor, Solidworks, Creo Parametric, and MasterCAM. All of the program's 87 students pursuing the various credentials are totally online, with about half from Minnesota and even one from Ecuador.

BestValueSchools.org states that its goal is "to reward schools not only offering competitive tuition but also providing students with the skills needed to graduate and successfully enter the workforce."

"We are both committed to delivering a quality, affordable education to our students," Moen explained regarding himself and Nass, "working hard to help students complete their goals in a timely fashion."

Columbus State Community College in Ohio took the top honor, while Tennessee College of Applied Technology – Murfreesboro, TN, was ranked second. Also part of Minnesota State, Alexandria Technical and Community College placed fifth.

In 2019, Ridgewater’s CADD program also earned US recognition as the #2 Online Associate’s Degree Drafting Program by BestColleges.com.

The 2018-2028 projected growth rate for mechanical drafters in central Minnesota is 19 percent, significantly higher than other parts of the US and the state, with the exception of northwest Minnesota at 25 percent. (Source: [www.careerwise.minnstate.edu](http://www.careerwise.minnstate.edu))

For more information about Ridgewater College’s CADD program, go to [www.ridgewater.edu/cadd](http://www.ridgewater.edu/cadd). To learn more about the recognition, go to [www.BestValueSchools.org](http://www.BestValueSchools.org).

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Ridgewater College is a community and technical college with campuses in the central Minnesota communities of Willmar and Hutchinson. The college serves more than 5,000 students through its nearly 100 academic programs and more than 68,000 training hours for individuals and businesses through customized training and continuing education. The college is a member of Minnesota State and accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

*Minnesota State includes 30 community and technical colleges and 7 state universities serving approximately 340,000 students. It is the third largest system of two-year colleges and four-year universities in the United States.*

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