



## Faculty Interview Tunxis Community College



**Eric Gribin**

It isn't hard to see that Eric Gribin takes a lot of pride in the Energy Management Program at Tunxis Community College – and he definitely should. When he left the construction management field to go into higher education in 2009, he started the first sustainable technology and building efficiency certificate in Connecticut. But it wasn't long until they wanted to expand the certificate programs into something more.

In 2013, Eric learned about living laboratories and received a grant to work with Lane Community College in Oregon. By early 2014, he convened their first industry group to brainstorm ideas for creating a similar program, receiving funding from Connecticut's Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to kick start the program.

Today, the program is the only one of its kind in the state of Connecticut, and only one of two in the entire New England area.

Energy courses in the program are offered at night so that those working day jobs can still attend. The program is actively engaging to bring more high school students into the program. Dual credit agreements with area schools will allow high school students to get college credit for free.

"The most rewarding part for me, as the Director and Student Advisor, is helping students find jobs. Seeing them go from intro courses to having a strong grasp of the concepts and knowledge and getting full time job offers, doing exactly what they wanted to do when they started the program, that is the reward for me. And, of course, knowing that they will part of the workforce that helps us mitigate climate change."

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