



Faculty Interview Laramie County Community College



Steve Hrkach

The very first time Steve Hrkach saw wind turbines, he was in the Air Force, driving through the Mojave Desert, and, in his words, he “was mesmerized”. When he retired as an electromechanical technician, he gave being a wind technician a shot.

Steve first went through the Wind Technology program at Laramie Community College as a student, and after graduating enjoyed several successful years working as a wind technician in industry. In the fall of 2017, he returned to where it all started, putting his skills and education to good use as a new wind instructor at Laramie.

"Obviously we want to give technicians the skills they need, but one of the things we emphasize in this program is teaching students to think critically," Hrkach says. "Much of what we teach here are technical skills, but we must also instill the right attitude for our graduates to be successful in the workplace."

Although the wind program at Laramie is quite successful, it's not without its challenges. Hrkach says that having a diverse population of students is definitely a plus, but sometimes it can be difficult for a student to start from scratch if they do not have a background in fundamental mechanical and electrical concepts.

"When I see students picking up information quickly, I try to pair those students in the laboratory with less experienced students who otherwise might struggle," Steve says, "If we can

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have our more accomplished students assisting the beginners, then they can cooperate with each other and everyone's learning is elevated."

From the results, it seems to be a great approach.

"One of the most rewarding things that happens after a student graduates is the call back saying, 'Thanks for training me, I'm progressing fast'", says Hrkach. "Those are moments where I recognize that, 'Yeah, we have a really successful program here.'"