



Triton College

CONNECT

A newsletter from your community college.

Fall 2025



Celebrating Adult Education
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Career-Focused Pathways



President Mary-Rita Moore

As we will soon start the 2025-2026 academic year, there's a sense of excitement and momentum across the Triton College campus. Each fall brings with it a fresh opportunity – for students to begin new journeys, for faculty and staff to guide and inspire, and for our entire

campus community to renew its commitment to educating and serving our communities.

At Triton, we value the individual and believe that education should be accessible, relevant, and responsive to the needs of learners and today's workforce. That's why our focus on year-round learning continues to play a vital role in helping students stay on track and meet their goals. With flexible scheduling, new 8-week courses and support services offered throughout the year, we make it possible for students to keep learning without interruption.

This fall, we're proud to expand our commitment to workforce-ready education with the launch of several new academic programs that meet the evolving needs of our communities:

- Barber and Cosmetology Certificates – Hands-on programs that prepare students for licensure and careers in the beauty industry.
- Associate in Engineering Science Degree – A strong foundation for students planning to transfer to a four-year institution to pursue engineering.

- Heating and Air Conditioning – Industry-focused training that includes stackable certificates to help students advance their careers.
- Electric Vehicle Technician – A forward-looking program that supports the growing demand for sustainable transportation.

These programs not only support student success – they also provide direct pathways to employment.

If you've been thinking about taking the next step toward a new career or continuing your education, now is the perfect time to get started at Triton College.

Classes begin Aug. 18 and spots in many of these programs are filling quickly. Take the first step toward your personal and academic goals – visit triton.edu or call (708) 456-0300 or stop by campus to speak with an advisor. Whether you're preparing to enter the workforce or planning to transfer to a four-year university, Triton College is here to support your success every step of the way.

New Cosmetology Program Blends Art and Science

Triton College is excited to introduce its new Cosmetology Certificate Program this fall. The program is designed to equip students with both the creative artistry and scientific knowledge to thrive in the beauty industry.

With a dynamic curriculum that blends hands-on training and academic instruction, the program will complement Triton's Barber Certificate Program to offer even more pathways into high-demand careers.

"Triton's Cosmetology Certificate Program is both cost- and time-effective," said Donita Mitchell, Cosmetology faculty. "There are endless possibilities for success."

Students will dive into all aspects of cosmetology – hair coloring, cutting, weaving, wigs, skincare and more – while also learning the science behind the services. Dr. Troy Moran, dean of Triton's Health Careers and Public Service Programs,

noted that the curriculum covers everything from anatomy and the nervous system to the biology of the scalp, nails and skin.

The program requires 50 credit hours, meeting the 1,500 clock-hour requirement set by the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation. Graduates will be eligible to sit for the state licensure exam to become licensed cosmetologists.

With Triton's affordable tuition, students can gain a high-quality education at a fraction of the cost of private cosmetology schools.

Mitchell emphasized that the beauty industry is booming. "There will be an 8% growth in the field," she said, adding that Triton students will be well positioned to take advantage of that.

Learn more about Triton's Cosmetology Program at triton.edu/cosmetology.



Donita Mitchell

Triton Powers Up with New Electric Vehicle Program



Triton College is accelerating its commitment to workforce development with the launch of a new Electric Vehicle (EV) Certificate Program.

Backed by a \$9.4 million Rev Up EV Initiative Grant, Triton is one of just six Illinois community colleges developing training programs for EV infrastructure. Students will gain hands-on experience using industry-standard equipment in the college's state-of-the-art learning facility.

"This is a rapidly growing, high-demand field," said Andrea Blaylock, chair of Triton's Engineering Technology. "Our program offers a more affordable, accessible alternative to technical schools – right here in our community," she said.

The program includes 17 credit hours in electric systems, safety, ethics and more. Students can earn stackable certificates in electrical installation and maintenance, and continue toward a Mechatronics degree. Graduates will also earn an OSHA 10-HR card and be ready for entry-level careers with utility companies, municipalities and EV manufacturers.

Dual Credit options are available through local high schools, allowing students to earn college credit while still in high school.

"EV technology isn't going anywhere," said Blaylock. "This program places our students at the center of one of the biggest transformations in the auto industry in over a century." Learn more at triton.edu/ev.

Golden Apple Scholarship Winners Prepare for a Career in Education



Amy Moreno

Yaritza Martinez, Gianella Giublimo, Amy Moreno and Donnialy Rivera, students in Triton's Education Department, were recently accepted into the Golden Apple Scholars Program. "This teacher preparation program accepts applications from high school seniors through college sophomores in Illinois," said Norma De La Rosa-Almaraz, Leadership Development Program participant.

"Those who are accepted can receive up to \$23,000 in total financial assistance," she said. "Students are set up for achievement to teach in diverse schools of need."

De La Rosa-Almaraz noted that this program also includes paid professional development and extensive classroom teaching experience during the summer while enrolled in college.

"Yaritza, Gianella, Amy and Donnialy are extremely passionate about becoming educators," said De La Rosa-Almaraz. "We're really excited for them to be a part of the Golden Apple Scholars Class of 2025."

From Marine to Barber: Jaime Lugo Finds His Calling



Jaime Lugo

Jaime Lugo's passion for hair cutting has been a constant throughout his life – from his teen years growing up in Plainfield, through his service in the Marines, to his current journey as a barber student at Triton College.

"When I wasn't playing sports in high school, I was cutting my friends' hair in my basement," he said. "I started cutting hair at an early age."

After becoming a father, Lugo said he "softened" a bit, but continued to look for a career that was more stable and aligned with his kids' schedules.

Never losing his passion for hair cutting, Lugo resumed working in barbershops. Driven by his enthusiasm, Lugo searched for barbering schools and chose Triton College for its affordability, proximity to his home and support for veterans through the GI Bill, which helps cover the cost of education and training.

Lugo said his favorite part of barbering is making men feel confident.

"I love showing guys the end result," he said. "I like showing them, 'This is who you are!' That guy will look himself in the mirror and walk out of the shop a little taller."

8-Week Courses to Help Students Succeed

This fall, Triton College is expanding its course options by offering 8-week classes designed to help students stay on track, maintain a flexible schedule and reach their academic goals faster. Whether you're a full-time student looking to complete your degree or a working adult balancing multiple responsibilities, 8-week courses can provide the flexibility and momentum you need to succeed.

Triton's 8-week format allows students to focus on fewer classes at a time, while still earning the same number of credits as in a traditional 16-week semester. Many students report that this approach helps them stay more engaged, manage their time better and see quicker results.

A wide variety of programs at Triton now offer 8-week courses, including popular areas like Business and career-focused fields like Respiratory Care. Triton's new Cosmetology and Barber Certificate programs also follow the 8-week format, giving students the opportunity to develop in-demand skills and prepare for licensure in a supportive, fast-paced environment.

In addition to shorter course lengths, students benefit from smaller class sizes, dedicated faculty, and resources like tutoring, advising, and career services.

Whether you're starting your educational journey, returning to college, or looking to advance your career, Triton's 8-week courses offer a smarter, more flexible way to learn. Fall classes begin Aug. 18 – enroll today and take the next step toward your future!

Triton Alum Makes River Forest Sweeter



Madonna Fantetti Slepicka

Triton College alumna Madonna Fantetti Slepicka, owner of the beloved neighborhood shop River Forest Chocolates, said her time at Triton ignited her love for chocolate and entrepreneurship.

As an adult student, Fantetti Slepicka enrolled in a chocolate-making class on a whim.

Captivated by the instructor's teaching style, she quickly developed a deep appreciation for the chemistry and crystallization process involved in creating chocolate.

The very experienced instructors at Triton College shared their own expertise with presentation, packaging, marketing and running a successful business – skills that Fantetti Slepicka says have stayed with her throughout her career as a chef and business owner.

"Triton sparked my passion for chocolate," she said.

In 2010, Fantetti Slepicka took that inspiration and began cooking in a rented commercial kitchen in Melrose Park. With strong support from the village of River Forest, she opened a brick-and-mortar storefront in 2011 and later expanded to her current, larger location in 2018.

For nearly 15 years, River Forest Chocolates has been making the Triton community – and River Forest – a little "sweeter."

Do you enjoy baking? Learn about Triton's Hospitality Industry Administration (HIA) Program at triton.edu/hia.

Student President Aims to Inspire



Dmytriy Zahar Havrylyak

Dmytriy Zahar Havrylyak of River Grove has always been interested in serving his community. Now as the president of the Triton College Student Association (TCSA), he's channeling that interest into boosting student engagement across campus clubs and activities.

"I want our campus to grow and flourish," he said.

Havrylyak's interest in leadership and giving back began during his time at East Leyden High School, where he became active in extracurricular activities and advanced coursework. When it came time to choose a college, he carefully considered his options.

"I liked that Triton was local and cost effective," he said. "I wanted to study pre-engineering and I knew Triton had a great program, and my credits would transfer to a four-year university. The community is amazing."

After a year of joining different clubs and organizations on campus, he set his sights on student government. With some networking, a bit of campaigning and gathering signatures, Havrylyak successfully ran for president.

"I want to increase overall campus interest in events and academics," he said.

TCSA offers students the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in leadership, governance and campus event planning. By joining the TCSA, students develop leadership skills, serve on campus committees, and most importantly, make a positive impact on student life. The organization is composed of 25 elected student senators and five elected officers.

Celebrating Adult Education



Triton College's Adult Education Department proudly hosted its 47th Annual GED Graduation and End-of-Year Celebration on campus this summer. The event honored the remarkable achievements of 169 Adult Education students who reached important milestones on their educational journeys.

The celebration honored a wide range of student accomplishments, including ESL Program completers, Westlake Health Foundation Scholarship Program completers, Triton's Board of Trustees Scholarship recipients and graduates who earned their Illinois High School Diploma (formerly High School Equivalency).

A highlight of the celebration was an inspiring keynote address by Paula Gamboa, who began her academic journey at Triton in fall 2024. Balancing full-time work with her studies, Gamboa stood out for her unwavering determination and commitment to learning – earning her the admiration of her peers and faculty alike. Learn more about Triton's Adult Education at triton.edu/adult-education.

Triton's S.E.E.D. Program Graduates Shine



Triton College's Center for Access and Accommodative Services (CAAS) held a celebration commemorating Midi Romero Luther, George Shepley, Natalia Gutierrez, and Texcalli Vazquez, who completed the Skill Enhancement and Employee Development (S.E.E.D.) Program over the summer.

The graduation ceremony included several speeches, with the graduates receiving medallions and certificates to mark the occasion.

"The S.E.E.D. Program is a safe space for students to obtain career skills and meet peers their age," said Dominique Dial, director of CAAS. "It also provides an encouraging and welcoming environment."

Graduate Natalia Gutierrez of Melrose Park said the S.E.E.D. Program helped her discover her passion for becoming an ultrasound technician. Gutierrez was elated at the ceremony.

"I'm so happy and so proud of her," said Gutierrez's mother, Claudia Carrillo, who was moved to tears. "She plans to continue her education at Triton College to earn her associate degree."

Triton's S.E.E.D. Program provides neurodivergent students with opportunities to earn certificates through Triton's School of Continuing Education. Through in-person instruction, employment experiences and more, students are equipped for independent, competitive employment. Visit triton.edu/caas.

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Triton College is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action institution.

Triton College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (hlcommission.org), an institutional accreditor recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation to accredit degree-granting colleges and universities.



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Ophthalmic Technology Program Focus on a rewarding career!

Triton College's Ophthalmic Technology Program is the only accredited program of its kind in Illinois. Learn from experienced faculty who've worked in the field – and are now here to help you succeed in it. From vision testing to optical equipment, you'll gain the hands-on skills employers are looking for. Don't blink and miss your chance!



For more information,
go to triton.edu/vision,
or scan the QR code
on the left.

