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Triton Faculty and Barber Zachary Morris Emphasizes Community Building, Fellowship, as Integral Elements to Barbering



RIVER GROVE, III. — Throughout history, governments have risen and fallen, wars have been fought, and major discoveries have been made. But according to Zachary Morris, a licensed barber with more than 16 years in the business, one thing has remained consistent—the necessity of a good haircut from a trusted barber.

Have a job interview where you need to look professional? Trying to impress a date? Is that mop of hair just getting too long and unruly? A great barber has you covered on all fronts, Morris said.

Morris is the program chair for Triton College's new Barber Certificate program, which combines hands-on learning with academic instruction to prepare students for a dynamic career. He teaches classes on campus in a cutting-edge barbering facility—one designed to emulate a real-world barbershop environment.

After years of experience in the industry, one of the key lessons Morris imparts to his students is the true value of barbershops in the community. Thinking of barbershops and salons as simply places to get your hair done only scratches the surface, he believes.

“Barbershops are more than just places for haircuts,” he said. “They’re vital community hubs that foster social connections, promote mental well-being, and contribute to the local economy.

“If you look back in history, you’ll see that barbershops and salons were places where people held meetings, had discussions, and made decisions.”

Morris added that barbershops can provide space for open dialogue and often act as informal support systems, particularly for men.

Under Morris’s tutelage, students learn haircutting, styling, coloring techniques, skincare, esthetics, shaving, chemical services, and sanitation. He also teaches skills you can’t just learn from a textbook or by practicing on a dummy: how to build trust and meaningful relationships with clients.

“When you are behind the chair, the barbershop becomes a system of sharing,” he said. “When you have that level of access to the community, it’s important to create and maintain a space for fellowship—a place where people can share laughs and important moments. A barbershop is where people go to let off steam, to socialize, and to feel heard. They want to feel like they’re part of a community, like they’re part of something bigger.”

The Barber Certificate requires 50 credit hours, equivalent to the 1,500 clock hours mandated by the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation. After completing the program, students will be eligible to take the Illinois Licensed Barber Examination.

Morris said he’s excited to see the barbering profession on the rise. He remembers a time when it was considered more of a side hustle than a primary source of income, and he’s happy to see that perception changing.

“I really feel like someone who would do well in barbering is someone who lives their life through acts of service—someone who enjoys helping others feel good about themselves,” he said. “They say, ‘Do something you love, and money will never be a question.’ That’s how I feel as a barber, and my goal is to build that passion in my students.”

Certificate earners at Triton College will be prepared to enter a growing industry. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment for barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists is projected to grow 8% by 2032—faster than the average for all occupations. The median hourly wage is \$18–\$25, with experienced professionals earning more. Top employers include salons and spas, beauty brands, media, and opportunities for self-employment.

Information about Triton College’s Barber Certificate Program and how to enroll is available [here](#).

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ABOUT TRITON COLLEGE

Triton College is an institution of higher education dedicated to student success. Triton offers more than 120 degree and certificate programs designed for students to realize their career aspirations and effectively compete in a global economy. The college campus spans 110 acres in River Grove, Illinois, holds classes at satellite locations and offers online learning opportunities. Triton's exemplary faculty and staff work to provide high-quality, convenient and affordable educational opportunities to more than 10,000 students each year. Triton College is a member of The Community Colleges of Illinois and accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. Learn more at triton.edu.