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**A Cut Above: Triton Cosmetology Students Train like Pros in New Salon Space**



*Cosmetology faculty member Donita Mitchell (left) watches as student Alexus Orozco practices hairstyling on a mannequin in Triton College's recently constructed cosmetology and barber lab.*

**RIVER GROVE, III.** — As Alexus Orozco walks onto the floor of Triton College's recently constructed cosmetology and barber facility, she feels as though she's been transported to her godmother's salon.

She strolls past the sleek seating in the reception area, tracing her steps over the polished white floors until she arrives at her styling station — one of 20. She gets to work unpacking her kit and organizing her collection of styling tools, including shears, brushes and combs, a hair dryer, nail files and clippers, and a handful of nail polish bottles. As she preps her station for class, it's easy to imagine her turning to face the entrance and calling for her next client awaiting an appointment in her own salon.

Orozco is confident she's found a new home in Triton's cosmetology program. Working in its state-of-the-art facility, she's eager to make her mark.

"It's like I'm working at a salon," she said. "Learning in this setting positions you in a mindset to succeed and prepares you for your future in the industry by actually putting you in a salon and giving you the tools and the space to get creative and become who you want to be."

"When I walk in here, it makes me feel like a professional," said classmate Juan Ware.

Like Orozco, Ware has ties to the beauty industry through family — his father works as a barber, and his godmother runs a salon in Maywood, where he also works.

As a loctician, Ware's niche is working with hair. He has always had a fascination with hairstyling and layering locs, adding extensions, and experimenting with chemicals and colors. He enjoys working with clients and helping them figure out what they want for their hair. When his work is done and he turns them to face the mirror, he relishes seeing their reaction.

"That's my favorite part, and it's why I do this," he said. "It makes me happy that I can make them happy. It makes them feel good to physically see the image they had in their head, and I just feel like that's my purpose."

Ware sought out Triton's cosmetology program to sharpen his craft and earn his credentials.

"A lot of colleges don't offer cosmetology," he said. "So, when I saw that Triton did, I knew I had to check it out. One day I want to be able to do something extraordinary in the hair world, but before I do that, I need to make sure the fundamentals become second nature to me. And that starts here."

Whether you're looking to launch a new career, develop your beauty and grooming skills, or start your own business, Triton College's cosmetology and barber program provides the training and industry connections to help students succeed in this dynamic field.

Students' education won't be confined to textbooks — they learn firsthand about the ins and outs of the cosmetology industry, including haircutting, styling, skincare, nail technology, chemical services and coloring techniques.

Just as important as acquiring the tools of the trade, instructor Donita Mitchell emphasizes professionalism, cleanliness and efficiency.

"We run a tight ship around here," she said. "Sure, we give you the freedom to flex your creativity, but we also hold you accountable because so much of this business is interacting with your clients and really owning your craft."

“Not only does working in this lab make you feel like a professional, but we make sure that when you leave here, you are one.”

Spring registration at Triton College is open, and the cosmetology and barber program has announced the launch of evening classes ideal for working students. [Go here to register today.](#)

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Triton College is a public institution of higher education dedicated to student success. Recently recognized by the Aspen Institute as one of the Top 200 community colleges in the nation, Triton offers more than 120 degree and certificate programs that prepare students to pursue meaningful careers, transfer to four-year universities, and thrive in a global economy. Guided by our mission—*Valuing the individual, educating and serving the community*—Triton serves nearly 12,000 students annually on its 110-acre campus in River Grove, Illinois. Our dedicated faculty and staff provide high-quality, accessible and affordable educational opportunities that empower students and strengthens the communities we serve. Triton College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and a member of The Illinois Community College Board. Illinois is home to 45 colleges in 39 community college districts. Learn more at [triton.edu](http://triton.edu).