

Blackhawk Tech names Pierner new president

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JANESVILLE — Dr. Tracy Pierner, who currently serves as vice president of academic affairs at Henry Ford College in Dearborn, Mich., has been named the new president of Blackhawk Technical College (BTC).

The Blackhawk Technical College Board approved on Thursday a two-year contract with Pierner with a salary of \$170,000 a year. Pierner will assume the duties of president on July 1, taking the place of current president Dr. Tom Eckert, who has been with BTC since 2010.

“I am truly humbled to be selected by the Board for this job,” Pierner said. “This has been a goal of mine for many years and I’m excited to have the opportunity to return to the Wisconsin Technical College System.”

Barbara Barrington-Tillman, the BTC board chair and head of the presidential search committee, said Pierner brings a mix of teaching, administrative and private business experience that should suit Blackhawk’s needs not only with students, faculty and staff, but with district residents who rely on BTC as an important economic engine in the area.

“From the outset, the Board was impressed with Dr. Pierner’s dynamic personality, his energy and enthusiasm,” said Barrington-Tillman. “His breadth of experience in technical education and his background as a dean, instructor and engineer will fit in well with BTC’s current needs and future development. Throughout the selection process, the board sought a president who would inspire our educational community and build on the foundation created more than 100 years ago. We are excited to bring Dr. Pierner here to lead BTC into the next chapter of its history.”

Pierner, who is originally from the Green Bay area, earned his undergraduate degree in Electrical Engineering from the University of Wisconsin in Madison in 1993. He earned a Master’s degree in engineering from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1997, and his doctorate in Technology Management-Manufacturing Systems from Indiana State University in Terre Haute, Ind., in 2006. He also completed a one-year leadership program for college administrators at The Chair Academy in Madison in 2005.

Pierner has 19 years of experience in technical education in a variety of teaching and administrative positions.

Prior to becoming vice president of academic affairs at Henry Ford in 2013, he was in charge of the school’s career and technical education programs. He joined Henry Ford after spending five years as



Pierner

the dean of technical education at Aiken Technical College in Aiken, S.C. While at Aiken, he also served as an adjunct professor of electrical engineering at South Carolina State University.

At both Aiken and Henry Ford, he was considered a strong proponent of online educational services and flexible delivery options for students.

Pierner, 46, began his career in technical education at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College in Green Bay, where he was a lead instructor and curriculum developer in four programs — Electromechanical Technology, Automation Engineering Technology, Electronics Technology and Electrical Engineering Technology. He also served as a student adviser and facilities planner at the WTCS institution.

Following graduation from the University of Wisconsin, Pierner spent five years as an engineer for Rockwell Automation in Appleton and Cleveland, Ohio, and six years as an engineering consultant for Kimberly-Clark Corp. in Neenah.

He was chosen from five finalists for the president's position. Other finalists were Dr. Jon Mandrell of Sauk Valley College in Dixon, Ill.; Dr. Anthony Miksa of McHenry County College in Crystal Lake, Ill.; Dr. Greg Schmitz of the VGM Group in Waterloo, Iowa; and Dr. Muddassir Siddiqi of Morton College in Cicero, Ill.