



3240 Fort Road
Toppenish, WA 98948
(509) 865-8500



2170 Crimson Way • East 220
Richland, WA 99352
(509) 372-7333

Date: June 3, 2015

Heritage Contacts: Michael Durst, associate professor and pre-engineering program director, (509) 865-8529 or durst_m@heritage.edu.
David Mance, media relations coordinator, (509) 969-6084 or mance_d@heritage.edu.

WSU Tri-Cities Contacts: Joseph Iannelli, professor and executive director of engineering and computer science, (509) 372-7420 or joseph.iannelli@tricity.wsu.edu
Maegan Murray, public relations specialist (509) 372-7333 or Maegan.murray@tricity.wsu.edu.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Heritage University Partners with Washington State University for Seamless Engineering Transfer Opportunity

TOPPENISH, Wash. – A new partnership between Heritage University and Washington State University Tri-Cities will allow students to chart a path to an engineering degree while staying close to home in the Yakima Valley.

Beginning in August, Heritage will offer a pre-engineering program, which consists of a two-year associate of arts degree where students may specialize in mechanical, electrical or civil engineering. Upon completion, students will be eligible for a “seamless transition” to WSU’s nationally accredited engineering program to pursue a Bachelor of Science degree at the Tri-Cities campus in Richland, Wash.

“We know there’s a growing need for engineers to continue the spirit of innovation that contributes to quality of life for society, which then provides economic opportunity for those who are breaking new ground,” said Michael Durst, who joined Heritage last year as an associate professor of math and science and will serve as director of the new pre-engineering program. “Our program, as well as the partnership with WSU Tri-Cities, will provide a chance for local students to be part of that innovation and make meaningful contributions to the communities in which they live.”

“I am excited for our partnership and look forward to seeing Heritage students come to WSU to finish their engineering education,” said Joseph Iannelli, executive director of the WSU Tri-Cities engineering program.

The Heritage pre-engineering program will offer imbedded internships, giving students the chance to learn practical job skills over summer breaks while earning money and academic credit. Some of the internships may also provide a certificate of completion, which will qualify students for future job opportunities.

The program is heavily concentrated in math; students will receive at least as much math as if

they were pursuing a degree in physics, chemistry or mathematics.

The pre-engineering program is the brainchild of Heritage President John Bassett, who says he was inspired by “Project Lead the Way,” a series of courses offered at Toppenish and Wapato high schools that prepare students for a global economy through science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) programs. He formed a multidisciplinary group at Heritage to explore the potential of a pre-engineering program.

“A light bulb went off in my head,” he said. “We need good engineers, and there are a lot of 18-year-olds with the potential to be engineers who we are not reaching. It’s another opportunity in the Yakima Valley for students to have careers where there are a lot of open positions.”

Once students finish their two-year program at Heritage and join WSU Tri-Cities, Iannelli said, they will have exposure to a world-class education and a variety of hands-on learning opportunities. From the chance to study abroad to a multitude of internships sponsored by organizations close to home, he said, students will graduate with unmatched experience.

#

Heritage University is a non-profit, independent, regionally accredited institution of higher education offering undergraduate and graduate education across the state of Washington. Visit our website, www.heritage.edu.