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100 years  
of making  
futures







**Gateway Technical College laid the cornerstone of career training when Racine Continuation School began classes November 3, 1911 as the first compulsory, publicly-funded school in Wisconsin – and, in doing so, also became the first in America.**

From its inception to today, Gateway has provided students with education and training to pave the way for their career and their future, serving its communities and providing the spark for economic development. Training has been tailored to the needs of the industry of the day – as well as addressing those emerging career fields. Gateway continues to serve its communities by supplying local industry with trained workers and residents with opportunities to gain solid paying careers.

In June of 1911, the Legislature passed a groundbreaking law calling for the creation of compulsory continuation schools in all cities of more than 5,000 and Racine was the first to open. A total of 325 students attended that first year in the Christie school

next to the high school and received training in patternmaking, cabinet making, molding, cooking, dressmaking, and drafting. After two years of joint leadership, Alexander R. Graham became its first director in 1913.

A year after Racine opened, Kenosha Continuation School opened its doors, located in the auditorium of Frank School with an enrollment of 295. Robert M. Tarbell was its principal 1912-14 before David Scull was appointed director in 1914.

Continuation schools, at their birth, were places where students could “continue” their education part-time if they chose to leave school at age 14. Educators at the time said these teens age 14 to 17 were falling through the cracks between education and work. They were not required to go to school, and many left, but did not have the skills to find jobs.

Industrialist H. E. Miles and Racine schools superintendent Burton Nelson envisioned a better future for these teens and sold the idea of compulsory education to Wisconsin Governor Francis E. McGovern. Miles conducted a survey showing the necessity for







this type of education and said in a 1936 interview for the Racine Journal-Times that in 1911 one-half of all American school children left school by age 14 or sooner. “These children were hand-minded and could not learn from white pages with black marks on them,” Miles said. “Those employed worked only half the time in dead-end jobs that offered no means of advancement.”

In 1917, federal money was appropriated under the Smith-Hughes Act to develop industrial education and teacher training in what would be called vocational schools. Day and evening trade and business education classes resulted in increased enrollment in Racine and Kenosha continuation schools.

Enrollment in vocational schools – as they were now called – increased in the 1920s and the makeup of its students broadened. Teens continued to receive part-time education and training because of a 1921 law requiring unemployed youths between 14 and 16 years old to attend half-time, and eight hours’ attendance for youths ages 16 to 18, an increase from the required half-day a week at its inception.





# English instruction part of technical college tradition

Technical colleges, since their creation, have provided instruction to immigrants and their children to learn English speaking and writing skills. Gaining these skills helped new residents to assimilate into the American culture, gain employment and become part of the economic engine of southeastern Wisconsin.

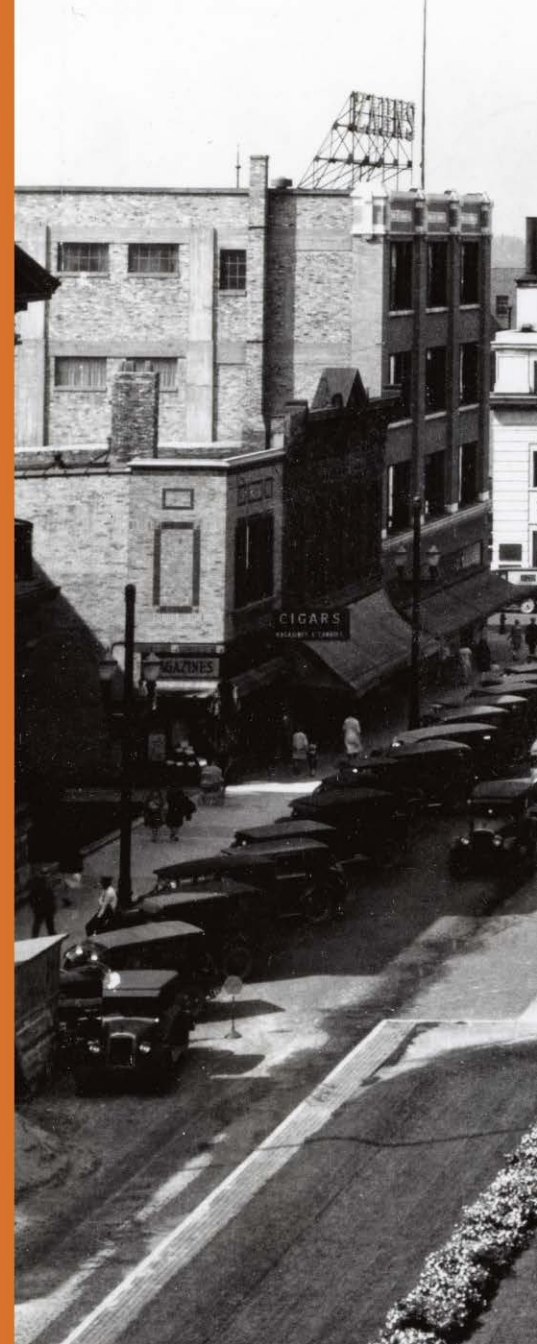
A few quick examples:

- Shortly after it opened in 1911, up to 500 students took English and citizenship classes in the Racine Continuation School.
- In 1913, the Kenosha Continuation School sought to enlarge its night school – and printed its formal notice of opening in English, Polish and Italian. Many English courses were held at night. Night school deposit was \$2, returned to the student when they attended at least 85 percent of the classes. That same year, the school had more than 300 enrolled – and had one teacher to instruct only Armenians.

The course of study expanded to include naturalization instruction as well. The Racine Continuation School, by 1916 was working closely with the U.S. Department of Naturalization and invited “all foreigners to attend night school, learn English and prepare for citizenship,” Racine superintendent of schools B.E. Nelson said in a 1916 report. “... It is planned to open schools where English and citizenship will be taught on Sunday afternoons in the various foreign localities of the city, using their halls.”

And in 1924, a celebration was held for 42 who completed courses in English and citizenship at the night school at the Kenosha Vocational School.

Technical colleges have worked hard to provide the tools to potential workers and give them a pathway to their future career. Today is no different. Gateway offers English Language Learners courses at all three of its campuses – Racine, Kenosha and Elkhorn – as well as the Burlington Center. Non-English speaking students learn how to speak and write English and succeed in their career and life.









## Wartime Prompts Changes

World War I veterans returning home also enrolled, fueled in part by the opportunities created by the Soldiers Education Bonus Act.

Various buildings were used in Racine to hold classes until the school initiated a \$300,000 building project at 800 Center Street in the late 1920s and finished in 1930. It became the school's headquarters for the next 42 years. The first courses to be held in the new building were home economics and business education. The Kenosha Vocational School (KVS) moved into its own building in the 1920s at 18th Avenue and 62nd Street. By the 1930s, the KVS was filled to capacity and temporary classes – “portables” – were erected at the school grounds and other locations.

The makeup of vocational schools in the 1930s again took on a new direction because of new legislation and the Depression. The Legislature passed a school attendance law in 1933 that kept most youth in high school until age 18 or graduation so vocational schools continued to move toward training post-high school adults. A lack of jobs also



kept students in school longer, prompting school officials to turn training more to adults.

Wartime impacted vocational education again in the 1940s. The threat of World War II prompted vocational schools to train workers for defense jobs in specialized trade courses like pilot training and ground aeronautics. By January 1942, the Racine Vocational School was operating 24 hours a day.

Women, in increasing numbers, began signing up for industrial courses as industry recruited them to replace the men who were drafted to go off to war. Following World War II, returning veterans enrolled in vocational schools to prepare for jobs in peacetime business and industry which, by that time, required a higher level of technical training. Their education was fueled by the G.I. Education Bill.

Kenosha held courses in the 1940s such as photography, patternmaking, mechanical drawing, bookkeeping, office practice, comptometry, radio repair, electricity, science, practical nursing, chemistry and machining. They also broke ground for the Kenosha Vocational School at 52nd Street and Sixth Avenue in 1949.











## Breaking Educational Ground

Gateway broke educational ground again in 1949, by being the first vocational school to offer a one-year practical nursing program.

By the 1950s, the boom of veterans enrolling into Kenosha and Racine declined, and the schools began offering more adult short-term day programs in home economics and business. Officials increasingly began to look at another educational delivery change to ensure that vocational schools met their full potential to serve students and their communities.

Their decision to begin offering associate degree programs in 1959 – beginning with business education – transformed Gateway into a post-secondary institution of learning.

KVS captured the attention of the nation in the late 1960s when new two-year programs such as Pilot Training, Aviation Mid-Management, Data Processing, Court and Conference Reporting, Fluid Power, Horticulture, Interior Design, Library Technical Assistant and Police Science resulted in a surge of students.









Space was made possible for these innovative programs through a new, 190,000-square-foot, 50-acre campus in Kenosha in January 1967 which included a Horticulture Center.

The Kenosha Technical Institute — as it was now called — was the first Wisconsin project to be built under the Vocational Act of 1963 and Governor Warren Knowles helped lay the building's cornerstone in 1965.

Walworth County decided to join the Kenosha vocational district in 1968 and a classroom building was built three years later. Four one-year programs began in Fall 1970 – power mechanics, drafting, food service assistant and hotel-motel sales, geared for the recreational-agriculture nature of Walworth County.

Kenosha Technical Institute Walworth County Campus in Elkhorn was dedicated May 16, 1971, a 17,000-square-foot, \$95,049, pre-engineered steel building. Kenosha Technical Institute and the Racine Technical Institute officially merged, along with the Walworth County campus into the Kenosha-Racine-Walworth vocational, technical and adult education District 6 in April 1971. Tri-County Technical Institute as a name



for District 6 lasted a month. July 20, 1972, members of the board voted to change the district's name to Gateway Technical Institute, following an outpouring of support from the public.

Gateway began a new chapter in its work in Racine in 1972 as it moved out of its two locations — its main building on Center Street and the rented space at the old McMynn building at 620 Lake Avenue — and into the former University of Wisconsin-Racine and UW-Parkside campus buildings in July 1972, the current location of its Racine Campus at 1001 S. Main Street.

By this time, Gateway was offering several different one- and two-year diplomas as well as associate degrees. These opportunities provided graduates with pathways to solid jobs in a number of career fields.

Gateway continued to provide new and innovative programs to meet the needs of industry and its students in the 1980s. Programs developed during this time included Composite Manufacturing Technology, Desktop Publishing, Legal Secretary and Technical Communications.









# Partners shape technical colleges – yesterday and today

For much of its history, Gateway Technical College has partnered with area industry. Equipment, knowledge and capital provided by industry officials shaped – and continue to shape – the education delivered at Gateway. Industry experts also sit on Gateway advisory boards, offering their expertise and insight into the skills demanded in industry today – and those of tomorrow.

In its earliest days, the Racine Continuation School was also referred to as the Racine Industrial and Continuation School. Many Racine businesses, within a year of its inception, embraced the continuation school concept. They initially thought their businesses would suffer while their child workers went to school. That changed relatively quickly, though, as they saw the benefit educated and properly trained workers brought to their workforce and bottom line:

- Rooms were provided through the courtesy of the Chicago Rubber Company in Racine for the instruction of girls between ages 14 and 16 in 1911.
- From its first day in October 1912, factories offered to provide rooms for students at the Kenosha Continuation School.
- According to the “History of Racine,” apprentices started in 1911. The Arnold Electric Company was the first to indenture an apprentice under the new apprentice law of 1911 when it selected a student from the Racine Continuation







School as a toolmaking apprentice. Other companies would follow suit, including Case Plow, Horlick Malted Milk Company and the Hartman Trunk Company, the book indicated.

- In 1918, applicants for war training enrolled at vocational schools, including 110 specifically enrolling for truck driving at the Kenosha Vocational School. American Brass Co. furnished trucks and instructors.

In 1914 at the Racine Continuation School, part-time instructors were employed teaching painting, barbering, plumbing, baking, meat cutting and beauty parlor work. An advisory committee was established for each of these crafts made up of employers and employees. Because the typical teacher was not well-versed in these specific trades, the school hired local tradesman to teach in their vocation and each took five to six boys in their shops for the day. The boys and shop owners liked this plan, says A. Graham, the first director of the school.

The courses taught at the early continuation schools also offered professional development for working professionals. As an example, by 1914, Saturday courses at the Racine Continuation School were offered to journeymen bakers who wished to receive more training in the theory and practice of their trade.

Today, Gateway's industry partners continue to help form the colleges' education and training programs through industry insight and work on college advisory committees. Industry officials played major roles in the development and construction of two world-class training facilities for Gateway, the Horizon Center for Transportation Technology, led by Snap-on Incorporated, in Kenosha and the HERO Center in Burlington, led by Pierce Manufacturing.



## Gateway Today

Gateway changed its name to Gateway Technical College in 1987. Some of the courses offered at Kenosha included Instructional Television, Horticulture, Aviation, Airframe and Power Plant, Architectural Drawing, Accounting, Court and Conference Reporting, and Data Processing.

Gateway also worked to forge transfer agreements with four-year colleges, giving its graduates even more career and educational opportunities. The college, from 1990s to present, continues to be innovative in its educational approach by offering courses in new and emerging careers. Technology centers, dedicated to providing training and instruction in highly technical career fields, were built in Sturtevant, Kenosha, and Burlington.

The Horizon Center for Transportation Technology in Kenosha and the Health and Emergency Response Occupations (HERO) Center in Burlington received national accolades for their training environments and high level of instruction delivered there.





At the century mark, Gateway reached an historic full-time equivalent student enrollment figure of 6,000. Gateway also ramped up the number of program transfer agreements with four-year colleges throughout Wisconsin and in other states.

Gateway continues to lead the state and nation in offering educational programs in “green” and sustainable careers such as Geoexchange Technology, Water Resources, Sustainable Energy Systems and Wind Torque Technology, providing training opportunities for the jobs of tomorrow.











**Elkhorn  
Campus**



**Kenosha  
Campus**



**Racine  
Campus**



**CENTER FOR BIOSCIENCE  
& INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**



**BURLINGTON CENTER**



**CENTER FOR ADVANCED  
TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION**



**CENTER FOR  
SUSTAINABLE LIVING**



**HERO CENTER**



**HORIZON CENTER FOR  
TRANSPORTATION TECHNOL-**



**LAKEVIEW ADVANCED  
TECHNOLOGY CENTER**

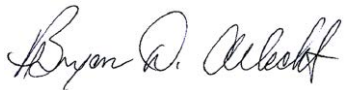
As we look to the future we are reminded of the historic value of our college to the communities which we serve. Like the pioneers in the 1800s and the industrialists in the 1900s, we too must keep our eye on the future. Gateway's vision is an agenda designed to enrich our college community through innovative and responsive programs and services focused on the changing needs of our students. As a pioneer we have a new frontier to explore — one that is filled with technological opportunities which will continue to redefine education. Our experience working with the business community through some of our country's most challenging economic times has positioned Gateway to reinvigorate the spirit of entrepreneurship, supported by a skilled workforce now and into the future.

The exponential growth of knowledge, shared through technology-driven platforms of the internet and social media, has defined our time as the information age. Again, Gateway is there to ensure that residents obtain the skills they need to succeed in this new reality. Gateway will continue to honor its time-tested cornerstones of integrity, innovation, quality, and partnerships.

As our name indicates, our mission is to serve as a gateway for students as they travel along their chosen path to prosperity. As Gateway's president, I am inspired every time I visit a classroom, meet a new student and watch a business succeed as a result of the energy invested in the Gateway experience.

As a community of pioneers and futurists, it is imperative that Gateway takes a leadership role in working with our partners to embrace each new frontier with the confidence only a well-trained workforce can bring. The future will bring new partnerships that reflect the global nature of our society. Thank you to all those who have shaped the Gateway experience in the past and I look forward to continuing our journey into our next century.

Respectfully



Bryan D. Albrecht  
President







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