



News release

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**Students commit to Gateway
at annual Signing Day event**

Jake DeMarco, a senior at Big Foot High School, Walworth, says he's always wanted to be a pilot.

"Ever since I could talk, I wanted to be a pilot," says DeMarco. "Being a pilot has just always been the career I wanted to get into."

DeMarco was on hand Thursday at Gateway Technical College to find out more about the college's Aeronautics program and to celebrate his intention of enrolling in the program for Fall 2025.

DeMarco joined 160 other high-schoolers as they signed their letters of intent to also attend Gateway in Fall 2025 as part of the annual NC3 National Career and Technical Education Letter of Intent Signing Day.

Students from 34 area high schools – including Walworth County, Racine County, Kenosha County as well as four other Wisconsin counties and even Illinois – were at Gateway's signing ceremony held in HARIBO Hall of the Madrigano Conference Center on Gateway's Kenosha Campus.

"National Signing Day is an exciting and symbolic moment for high school students as they formally commit to continuing their education at Gateway

Technical College,” said Tammi Summers, Gateway Technical College vice president, Student Affairs.

“This day marks the beginning of a new academic journey – one filled with opportunity, growth and the promise of a bright future. For students, Signing Day provides a sense of pride, excitement and belonging. It allows them to publicly celebrate a major life decision with their peers, families and communities, showing that college and career success are not only possible but within reach.”

Darian Davis, J.I. Case High School, Racine, said he will enroll in the college’s Criminal Justice program and then intends to go on to the college’s Law Enforcement Academy.

Much like DeMarco, Davis knew what he wanted to do from an early age.

“I want to be a police officer,” said David. “Being a black male, I want to have an effect on my community, to help affect change, and I feel the best way to do that is to be a police officer.”

River Kerpec, Indian Trails High School, Kenosha, plans to enroll in Gateway’s Liberal Arts program, intending to then transfer on to a four-year college where he will seek an environmental science degree. Gateway holds agreements with many four-year colleges which allow students to earn their associate degree at Gateway and then transfer to a four-year college, saving them time and money.

“My dad is an environmental scientist, and I wanted to follow in his footsteps,” said Kerpec. “Coming to this event will help me celebrate that and to find out a little more about how Gateway works.”

The Liberal Arts degree was designed for students interested in earning a bachelor's degree, and program completion guarantees them admission to area four-year colleges and they enter with junior status.

“National Signing Day reinforces our dedication to student success and supporting all students and it also strengthens our partnerships with area high schools,” said Summers.

“By celebrating students’ next steps in such an intentional and affirming way, Signing Day becomes more than just a moment – it becomes a milestone that inspires confidence, community, and connection between all new students who are becoming Gateway Red Hawks.”

For Yareni Cruz, a student at St. Catherine’s High School, Racine, that has already happened – she is also a Gateway Red Hawk. Cruz, who intends to become a nurse, has already earned 21 Gateway credits toward that degree and will earn three more before summer.

She came to the event to show that she’s fully dedicated to attending Gateway.

“I’ve liked all the instructors I’ve had, all the classes,” said Cruz. “I want to be more involved at Gateway, that’s why I’m here.”

Event photos can be found here:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/gatewaytechnicalcollege/albums/72177720325004>

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A video of the event can be found here:

https://youtube.com/live/lrcjj6wCG_o?feature=share

and affordable for our diverse community. The college collaborates with communities in Kenosha, Racine and Walworth counties to ensure economic growth and viability by providing education, training, leadership and technological resources to meet the changing needs of students, employers and communities.

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