Erie Community College will take a lead role in a consortium of 20 community colleges across New York applying for a share of $450 million in U.S. Labor Department grants aimed at connecting people to jobs in growing industries.

If ECC wins a grant, it would expand into an emerging field of study known as mechatronics.

The consortium is eligible for up to $20 million in Labor Department funding.

Mechatronics combines mechanical engineering, electronics, computers and robotics for use in advanced manufacturing.

Computer numerical control machining uses computers to control machine tools such as lathes and mills in an advanced manufacturing setting. It is a significant part of ECC's industrial technology degree program.

“It's the next generation of CNC machining,” said ECC President Jack Quinn, who introduced the proposal to the ECC board of trustees on Thursday.

Federal monies could help the college build a certificate program in mechatronics, while also leading to the creation of a new two-year degree program, said Richard Washousky, executive vice president of academic affairs at ECC.

The college has until July 2 to apply for the funding. Grant awards are expected to be announced sometime in October or November, Quinn said.

If awarded, the $20 million would be shared among the colleges in the consortium, although as the lead applicant, ECC potentially could receive a larger share of the pot, Quinn said.

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Ameisenknoenig  •  3 days ago

Now we just have to hope that the H.S. which will be feeding ECC with students will do their job and get the students ready to partake in these studies. According to ECC many students are not ready for college when they graduate from high school and have to take remedial courses. HW Hahn.