



# Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College

## Process Operations Technology

**M**ississippi Gulf Coast Community College’s process operations technology program was created to meet statewide demand for workers at power generation facilities, waste treatment plants, petroleum refineries, and more. Today, the program—one of the largest at the college—not only maintains enrollment of nearly 300 students but is also expanding opportunity for women in particular to enter these well-paying but male-dominated professions.

Women are at the center of MGCCC’s student success efforts even before they walk onto campus. The process operations technology program recruits prospective female students by hosting summits—each attended by more than 100 high schoolers—that

include hands-on demonstrations and panels introducing them to women from different generations and at different stages of their career who are working in the field. The program recruits single parents, too, and makes sure to hire women and people of color as instructors.

“We specifically wanted to create a panel so that women can hear from someone and ask questions,” says department chair John Poelma, an electronics and instrumentation instructor.

Process technology students can build a schedule that fits their lives: day or evening, part-time or full-time, face-to-face or online. And all students in the program—and the

college—benefit from thoughtful initiatives to support and retain students. Advising is mandatory each semester, and as at many colleges, MGCCC faculty monitor attendance, homework, and grades through an online alert system. But they also track more nuanced warning signs that students may face challenges, such as how early, or late, they register for classes. The institution uses the information gathered to assess students’ needs and direct them to supports.

By prioritizing recruitment and retention from the outset, Mississippi Gulf Coast has set its students up for even greater success. ■



**MEDIAN ANNUAL EARNINGS:**

**PROCESS TECHNOLOGY GRADUATES:**

**\$53,000**

**ALL REGIONAL EMPLOYEES:**

**\$43,000**