



Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology

Electrical Technology

The namesake of Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology was a lawmaker who, attuned to the needs of people in poverty, played a foundational role in bringing free public education to Pennsylvania, decades earlier than other states. More than a century after the technical institute was founded, the college remains committed to serving the “economically and socially disadvantaged,” as its mission statement says.

Stevens’s electrical technology program is a model of that commitment. The program specifically recruits populations underrepresented in the electrical trades—a high-wage, high-demand field—including by partnering with nonprofit organizations, such as YouthBuild and a charter school

network in Philadelphia. Over five years, the college tripled the enrollment of women and increased enrollment of low-income students and students of color by 34 percent and 47 percent, respectively. “Recruiting this population remains key to achieving our founder’s vision for the college,” says electrical professor Jon Kramer.

Stevens is “essentially providing a free education” for low-income students, Kramer says, through the Stevens Grant, a Pell Grant supplement that covers not just tuition but also housing, food, books, and tools. In fall 2018, 41 percent of electrical technology students attended on the Stevens Grant.

Once students are enrolled, Stevens ensures students have the supports they need to complete on time. One

unique arrangement is the Driven Project. After noticing that reliable transportation was often a barrier to employment, Stevens helped working students acquire driver’s licenses and partnered with the National Auto Body Council to provide them donated cars. Not only does this program support electrical technology students, but it also provides collision repair students with an opportunity to fix damaged vehicles for their classmates to use.

Nearly all electrical graduates complete full-time, paid summer internships, and they often graduate with 20 job offers apiece. Five years out, alumni make \$67,500, which is \$7,000 more than the median salary for all Pennsylvania electricians. It’s a path to the middle class Thaddeus Stevens would have been proud to know he paved. ■

100%
of students
employed one year
after graduation

Average salary
one year after
graduation:
\$58,000

