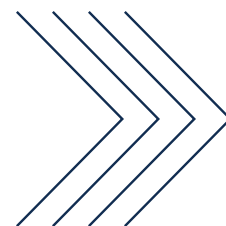


DICKINSON STATE UNIVERSITY

2021-2023 BIENNIUM

HAWK HIGHLIGHTS



Recent high school grad finds calling as a welder

“I could do this forever,” DSU welding student Dawson Moore said.



DSU welding student Dawson Moore with a metal target system he created for a class project. Contributed / Dawson Moore

By Jason R. O'Day

December 23, 2022 04:31 PM

DICKINSON — Dawson Moore, a 2022 Dickinson High School graduate, said he feels blessed to have found an awesome career after grappling with the uncertainty of what to do with his life, as he had little interest in academics.

“I was so lost. I wouldn't say I barely graduated, but damn near barely graduated. And so I was like, ‘I don't think anyone's going to accept me in college.’ And I ended up getting (accepted) to NDSU and a school in Watford,” Dawson said, adding that he wasn't quite ready to leave Dickinson.

He said he got to dip his toes in the fires of welding for a few days during a high school agriculture course, and knew he enjoyed it despite how challenging it was. Now he's halfway through Dickinson State University's newly launched welding program.

It's a comprehensive program that takes students through several different methods and types of welding. He's still living at home with his parents to save money and said the one year program is costing him approximately \$11,000 with tuition, fees and books. Dawson expressed contentment in knowing that he'll avoid the heavy debt load so many college students take on.

“So it's like all the positions: overhead, flat, horizontal and vertical. And then we learn it with all of the different mig, stick, arc, oxyacetylene. And then we do a little bit of aluminum as well, we haven't done it yet. But we plan to do it here in a couple of weeks actually,” Moore said. “Then we'll do it with different size plates, thinner material, like eight inch and really thick stuff, like three eighths or maybe half inch if we can get some.”



Dawson Moore works on a project.
Contributed / Dawson Moore

Much of the material they use is donated from local businesses, such as Steffes and Fisher Industries.

Before securing his part-time welding job with Iron Works with the help of his instructor Carl Bercier, Moore was working at Walmart unloading trucks and stocking merchandise. It didn't take him long to get this new job and his pay has increased substantially since making the switch.

"He wrote down a list of 25 different places. I called up every single place in Dickinson that does welding. And the only place that called me back the same day was Iron Works," Dawson said.

He had to pass a test that included lap joints, t-joints and downhill welding. The class hadn't covered downhill yet, so Bercier came in on a Friday when they didn't have class to spend 4-5 hours teaching him that technique.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics website, the average hourly wage for welders, cutters, solderers and brazers in May 2021 (latest available data) was \$27.57. This makes for an annual salary of \$57,550. Moore said some welders on the higher end of the spectrum can make anywhere from \$100,000 to \$250,000 per year.

"I plan to just do whatever I have to do to hit that \$150,000 mark. That's my goal," Moore said, adding he's considering taking a pipeline welding course after completing this.

He added that he's grateful to have an older brother who already has more than two years of welding experience. His father Dustin Moore also provided additional guidance and resources, as he owns a repair service called Dakota Power Hydraulics.

For a recent class project Dawson combined his passion for welding with his love for firearms by creating a mechanized system of steel targets. The targets can be folded up, and collapse when hit. He said he's gotten several requests from friends and might start selling them.

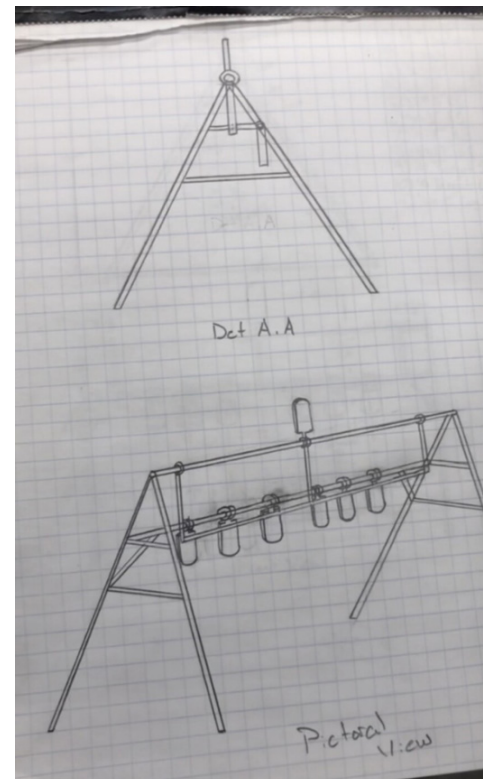
"I learned a lot from doing this. This is more like a prototype. I'm probably gonna make another one and do it the right way. Don't use galvanized steel," he said, adding that next time he'll make sure to use hardened steel for the targets. "We had a 9mm Glock and that works perfectly fine. It did the actions, it reset. But when I got to my .556 AR it just blew right through the thing because it was soft steel so I didn't really use the right steel for the entire project but we have the concept put together and made a blueprint for it."

Working with metal burning torches all day has its risks.

"You notice how my hands are all kind of red all over. It just burns through my gloves. Because your gloves will get so hot. I do pulse arc... 400 amps, and it's extremely hot," Dawson said. "You have to treat your gun like it's an actual gun, you know, you don't want to point it out yourself. Otherwise it will stab right through your clothes, and then it'll poke right through your hand into your leg. Five, six inches. And I've heard a lot of bad stories. Luckily, I've only poked myself, like once in my hand with it and kind of learned my lesson there."

Despite that, he said he loves it and feels like he's found his true calling.

"It mainly just started out as a hobby just at school even and then I thought about it like, I could do this forever... Once you're happy doing something life gets easier," Dawson said. "It's not a job. I get to go to work, not have to."

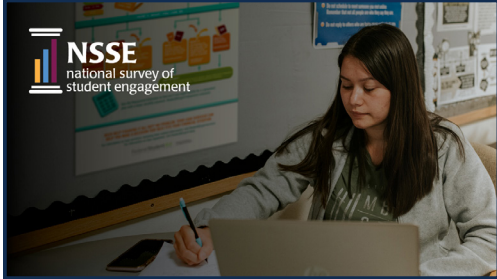


One of the sketches Dawson drew for his project.
Contributed / Dawson Moore



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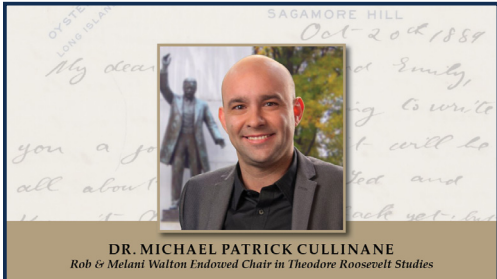
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Working at school while in school

By Brad Nygaard

Time management and flexibility are key for Divide County Elementary School para-professionals Ally Grote and McKenzie Hallgren.

Both, now in their second year working at the school, are also licensed substitute teachers – and full-time students at Dickinson State University (DSU), studying elementary education.

The ability for Hallgren and Grote to study at Dickinson while working in Crosby exists because the School of Education at the university started a distance learning curriculum during the spring of 2021. The distance component, according to Department Chair, Joan Aus, allows students flexibility by giving them access to traditional in-person instruction, or online via digital instruction delivered live (synchronously), or recorded (asynchronously).

Hallgren, then a junior at DSU, used the program to start working in Crosby last September. Grote, then a sophomore at Williston State College, was able to start working here three days a week.

Both were answering a local need, according to Sherlock Hirning, school superintendent. “We were desperate last year for ‘paras,’” said Hirning. “They (Grote and Hallgren) were able to re-work their schedules to where we could use them both.”

The duo basically split one fulltime position. Grote would attend school in Williston three days a week, working in the elementary school on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Hallgren’s schedule was opposite. In addition to their paraprofessional duties, both got their licenses to serve as substitute teachers, allowing them “to do a little bit of everything.”

“The on-the-job training they’re getting far exceeds anything they could read in a textbook,” Hirning said.

“Far exceeds,” might be a little generous, but Grote and Hallgren said the hybrid nature of their arrangement is providing invaluable experience.

“I think it’s really good experience for us to be paras, going into teaching,” Grote said. “I feel like I’m way more prepared than just going to a college campus all the time, honestly.”

Hallgren supports that sentiment.

“You can read all the text books in the world, but once you get in the school district, you understand more about how to deal with different situations,” she said.



Brad Nygaard -- The Journal
Ally Grote and McKenzie Hallgren are both working -- and learning -- at Divide County Elementary School, while also attending college remotely.

Hallgren and Grote are just two of roughly 25 DSU students currently working fulltime as paras and substitute teachers, according to Aus. Five, she said, are teaching fulltime on emergency licenses in other districts in addition to taking full class loads. Overall, Aus said, more than a third of the elementary education students at DSU are employed in various school districts as paraprofessionals on either a full or part-time basis.

“We’re continually adapting our practices to meet the needs of distance students, who want to teach in their communities (many rural, such as Crosby) without sacrificing the quality of the content instruction,” said Aus.

Distant, not left out

Just because they’re in Crosby doesn’t mean Grote and Hallgren aren’t involved in their classes.

Hallgren, who has a daily class from 9:50 a.m., takes a break from her duties as a para to attend live, via the internet.

“Just because there’s so much going on in that class,” said Hallgren. “Usually when you watch those, professors will have you submit notes you took throughout the class, or they’ll say ‘Email me the answer to this question.’ They’ll point us out and make us feel involved. They treat us like we’re in the classroom even though we aren’t. They know our names.”

Other professors, Grote said, post not only pre-recorded lectures, but also discussion boards online.

“Then you can talk to other students,” she said.

That ability to discuss and collaborate with fellow students and faculty, even online, is helpful Hallgren and Grote said. Especially when it comes

to students with IEPs (Individualized Educational Plans). IEPs are typically given to a child who has a disability identified under the law, is attending an elementary or secondary school and receives specialized instruction and support services.

“When a professor gives a scenario, you may have a different perspective,” Hallgren said. “It all depends on the student and what works for them.”

Multidimensional

Being a paraprofessional with a substitute’s license virtually guarantees Grote and Hallgren will spend time in every classroom in the building at some point. That exposure, they said, is invaluable. Not just to them, but also sometimes to the district.

“Say a teacher had to go home sick, we could go in that classroom for the rest of the day,” Hallgren said. “They (administration) wouldn’t have to worry about finding someone.”

“It teaches us flexibility,” she continued.

“It’s a huge learning experience,” Grote said.

So is the opportunity to observe firsthand how each teacher approaches things like transitioning from one topic to the next, developing lesson plans, or how they spend their prep time.

Their roles also allow them to build one-on-one connections, with students as well as teachers.

“I don’t think I’ve run across a teacher who hasn’t been willing to help me with a lesson plan, or give me a resource to make my lesson better, or my paper better,” said Hallgren.

“And if we don’t know something, they’re more than willing to explain it to us,” Grote said.

That support, Grote said, is more than welcome. “A lot of times, they check in, ‘Hey, how’s school going?’” Grote said. “It feels, most times, like a sense of community here.”

Both young women began their education at Divide County Elementary – in fact, Principal Tanja Brown was their kindergarten teacher. Both said they’d be more than interested in coming back after getting their degrees to teach fulltime.

They’ll be welcome, provided there is a position open.

“Unfortunately, there are no guarantees,” Hirning said. “But if past history is any indication, we might have a place for them.”

Wherever they might land after graduating, Aus is confident their combinations of experiences puts Grote and Hallgren on a path as good as, or perhaps better than, their traditionally instructed counterparts.



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TrainND Northwest to expand CDL course availability to Dickinson area



TrainND Northwest(kfyr)

By Michael Anthony

Published: Jan. 27, 2022 at 5:47 PM MST

WILLISTON, N.D. - In order to meet the ongoing demand for more commercial truck drivers, TrainND Northwest officials say they are working to provide more opportunities to train drivers in southwest North Dakota.

Since 2020, Dickinson State University has partnered with Williston State College and TrainND Northwest to offer CDL courses in Dickinson every other month that meet federal requirements. Officials say the recent closings involving milk distributors show the need to provide more frequent classes.

“We all know the trouble we’re having with moving materials and products and all those things, so there’s a massive shortage, and Dickinson is one of the areas that we can expand,” said Kenley Nebeker, Regional Director of TrainND Northwest.

“This expansion effort into Dickinson is ultimately an effort to try and respond and do our part to affect in a positive way that shortage,” said Kenley Nebeker, Regional Director of TrainND Northwest.

Spots are available for training in Dickinson on February 28. Nebeker says he hopes to have monthly courses in Dickinson starting in July.

For more information or to register, visit <https://willistonstate.augusoft.net/>

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Since its inception, Dickinson State has strived to deliver excellent education to meet the needs of the region. As the needs of our community have evolved, the University has answered the call for change. We listen to our community task force, who informs us as to what the business community needs in the way of trained workforce leaders. Whether this is certificate, two year, four year or graduate level, the University is responding to the region it serves and offering, or collaborating to offer, educational pathways to meet the need. DSU is offering the same type of education up and down the spectrum to ensure that our workforce in North Dakota is qualified and workers do not need to travel elsewhere to receive education or training.

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