



For Immediate Release:

For More Information Contact:

Jerry Rostad, Assistant CIO for Core Technology Services

Bakken U | North Dakota University System

E-mail: jerry.rostad@ndus.edu

Bakken U Scholarships Awarded at WSC

WILLISTON, N.D. — This fall, the WSC Foundation generously donated five \$1,000 scholarships to displaced or current oil field workers/spouses as part of the NDUS Bakken U Scholarship Program.

The scholarships have been awarded and in a traditionally male-dominated field, WSC received several female applications. Anna Hayes and Alexandra Kirkegaard were two of Bakken U recipients.

“Bakken U provides current and prospective students an excellent opportunity to enhance individual skills and gives them the option to retrain for new jobs,” explained Acting President Dr. John S. Miller. “The Bakken U initiative extends beyond career/technical programs and is truly focused on providing students with expanded educational opportunities across a wide range of technical and transfer programs.”

Bakken U recipients are not required to remain in the petroleum industry, but Anna Hayes has. She is in her second semester of Petroleum Processing Technology with the goal to earn an AAS Degree. Hayes, a non-traditional student (over 25 years old), received the scholarship after losing her oil field position in September 2015.

“I’ve spent most of my life in North Dakota and graduated out of Divide County in 1990,” explained Hayes. “I thought going back to school would help me land a better position for my future.”

Unable to get grants, Hayes had to get a loan. She must travel 80 miles one way to school.

“The scholarships help me afford to come to school three to five days a week. And my part-time position helps with my bills,” stated Hayes. Currently, Hayes works as a lease operator (pumper), receiving hands-on experience and some college credits for her position. “I pump older wells every morning before I go to school.”

“Anna has to get up and leave the house every morning at 4 a.m. to check on her wells before she drives an hour and a half to spend a full day in classes. Then she goes home to work on homework and catch a few hours of sleep, before she does it all again,” said McGillivray. “What is truly impressive, is that Anna works hard, excels in all of her classes, and is one of our top students.”

Though born and raised in Williston, Alexandra Kirkegaard, came back in 2015 to help take care of her parents after both had hip replacements. Kirkegaard worked for two oilfield companies in

their safety and billing departments before receiving the Bakken U Scholarship, which allows her to go to school and focus solely on a degree in her chosen field.

With a goal of earning her Doctorate in Psychology and opening her own practice to counsel victims of various traumatic experiences, Kirkgaard is attending WSC to get her certificate in Mental Health and Addictions.

“I heard that WSC has a good transfer rate. Once I get my certificate, I can work as an addiction counselor while I pursue my degree in psychology,” explained Kirkgaard.

Appreciative of the Bakken U Scholarship, Kirkgaard recommends that anyone displaced by the oil field and interested in returning to school apply for the scholarship.

Katie Peterson Coordinator for Extended Learning and Kirkegaard’s mentor has known Alexandra for over ten years.

“She is a hardworking and caring young woman who has not let adversities in her life prevent her from reaching her goals,” Peterson explained. “I have no doubt that she will succeed in her time here at WSC and continue to succeed in her future endeavors. She is one student deserving of this scholarship.”

WSC's only requirement is that each student who applies and is awarded the Bakken U Scholarship is and remains a full-time student. Scholarships can be used to cover the cost of attendance, tuition, fees, books/supplies, transportation, room/board, and other miscellaneous educational expenses.

NDUS Chancellor Mark Hagerott said that the recipients embodied the spirit of the Bakken U initiative.

“These young women have shown a drive and dedication to furthering their own education, and careers,” Hagerott said. “Their continued hard work exemplifies the type of candidate these scholarships were set up to reward.”

For more information on the Bakken U Scholarship, please visit www.bakkennu.ndus.edu or contact Jerry Rostad at jerry.rostad@ndus.edu.

For more information on WSC, please visit www.willistonstate.edu, call 1.888.863.9455, or stop by 1410 University Avenue, Williston, ND.