



Tunxis' new energy management program has drawn a mix of traditional college-age students and energy pros who want to further their skills. Shown (from left) are instructor Dave Bebrin, a senior engineer at Eversource, and students Brad Charron, Peter Kenefick and Kyle Kalisz.

Energy industry turns to CT colleges for worker pipeline

By Matt Pilon

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Colleges often talk to local companies to gauge their future workforce needs, searching for opportunities to build new programs to help fill the gaps and attract students amid a competitive high-end market. The latest focus has been on the state's energy industry, as evidenced by new degree programs at Farmington's Tunxis Community College and Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven.

The fledgling programs, which each have their own niche and were designed based on discussions with utilities, energy companies, business associations and others, were created because of a perceived growing demand for ways to reduce it, and facilitates managers. They're careers that pay somewhere between \$40,000 and \$60,000 a year, according to the program's marketing materials.

Looking for traction

Tunxis launched its energy management program, spearheaded by director Eric Gribin, in the fall 2016 semester. Gribin invited a reporter to meet with students and teachers earlier this month at the campus. There were traditional college-aged students like Kyle Kalisz, 20, of Newington, who started at Tunxis as a business administration major but decided it didn't suit his personality.