



Sun Valley High School Validates Architectural Drafting Skills With Autodesk Certification

Autodesk Certified User Certification Sets Students On A Path For Professional Development

Sun Valley High School is part of Union County Public Schools (UCPS) in Monroe, North Carolina. UCPS has a very strong Career Readiness Department. Robert Filter, Union County Public Schools Director of Career Readiness, said, "Our goal is to allow students to authenticate their knowledge of skills learned and be able to document that they have met specific industry standards."

When teacher Eddie Mull arrived at Sun Valley High School three years ago with a 35-year background in the

drafting industry, he aimed to rejuvenate the drafting program to make sure students learned work-ready skills.

"The drafting program was offline when I got to Sun Valley," said Mull. "We were a Certiport Authorized Testing Center and offered Microsoft and Adobe certifications, but we were not offering Autodesk certifications."

Mull's illustrious career gave him the background necessary to help his students thrive and learn in-demand drafting skills. He was a Draftsman in the United States Navy for more than 20 years, followed by 8 years as a CADD Program Director at Key College in Florida where he saw the value of Autodesk certification for students. Mull then worked for two different Autodesk



SUN VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

LOCATION:

Location: North Carolina

PROGRAM ENROLLMENT:

- 70 students per semester
- 140 - 150 per year

SUCCESS METRICS:

- Validates in-demand computer-aided drafting skills
- Satisfies statewide initiative for certification
- Builds strong resumes through industry-recognized certifications

Getting Up and Running

resellers and training centers. Over his career he earned several Autodesk Certified Professional certifications and had seen their value in the workforce.

"I knew I wanted to get Autodesk certifications going at Sun Valley," said Mull. "The professional-level certifications are valuable in the workforce and if I could get my students earning the user-level certifications they would be on the path for career success."

Mull set the computer lab back up and worked with Certiport to offer Autodesk certification exams at Sun Valley High School. His goal was to have Drafting 1 students earn the Autodesk Certified User AutoCAD certification, and to have Drafting 2 students earn the Autodesk Certified User Revit certification. About 80 percent of the Drafting 1 final exam was focused on AutoCAD, so preparing students for the certification would also prepare them for the course final exam.

Funding was not an issue since CTE programs are strong in North Carolina and the state receives over \$35M in Perkins funding each year. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction is a strong supporter of certification and there are Certiport Authorized Testing Centers all over the state. Since

Sun Valley was already offering Certiport certifications in other departments it was easy for Mull get to get it going for Autodesk.

"Our CTE department was willing to pay for a GMetrix practice test, a Certiport ACU certification, and a re-test if necessary for each student," said Mull. "I just had to guide the students along in their learning to help them pass the certification but the CTE department really set us up for success with these tools."

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction provided the course outline, which fit in nicely with the Autodesk certification program as well. As a result, Mull decided to have students take the Autodesk Certified User exam right before the final exam at the end of the semester.

Mull decided that recognition would need to be an important part of the Autodesk certification program so he adopted a series of incentives for students. Those who passed an Autodesk exam would receive recognition, a trophy for the highest score, a certificate and perhaps most importantly – 100 percent in the final semester of the course. "If they passed the exam, their grade would become an A automatically for the final semester," said Mull.



"In order to motivate students, Mull decided to spend about a week at the beginning of his courses exploring career opportunities and talking about why it is important to learn drafting skills."

- Eddie Mull
High School Educator

- LEED Green Associate and AGC Certificate of Management in Building Information Modeling Chief Illustrator / Draftsman U.S. Navy (retired)
- Autodesk AutoCAD & Revit Certified Professional
- Autodesk Building Performance Analysis Certified



Validating Drafting Skills with Certification

He also talked to students about how with the right training they could start to make money at drafting before they finished high school.

As a result of Mull's efforts and the support of the CTE department, Sun Valley students quickly caught the fire of earning Autodesk Certified User certifications. Each semester approximately 40 to 50 students take Drafting 1 and most earn Autodesk Certified User AutoCAD certification, and another 15 or so take Drafting 2 and most of them earn the Autodesk Certified User Revit certification.

"They want that bullet point on their resume, they want the certificate," said Mull. "They want to get good at something so they can get a head start and differentiate themselves in a career."

A new statewide initiative directs Drafting 3 students to earn a professional level certification – which is very difficult. "It is hard but doable, I have had two students earn the Autodesk Certified Professional certification so far with about a dozen more preparing," said Mull. "The program will be formally implemented next year."

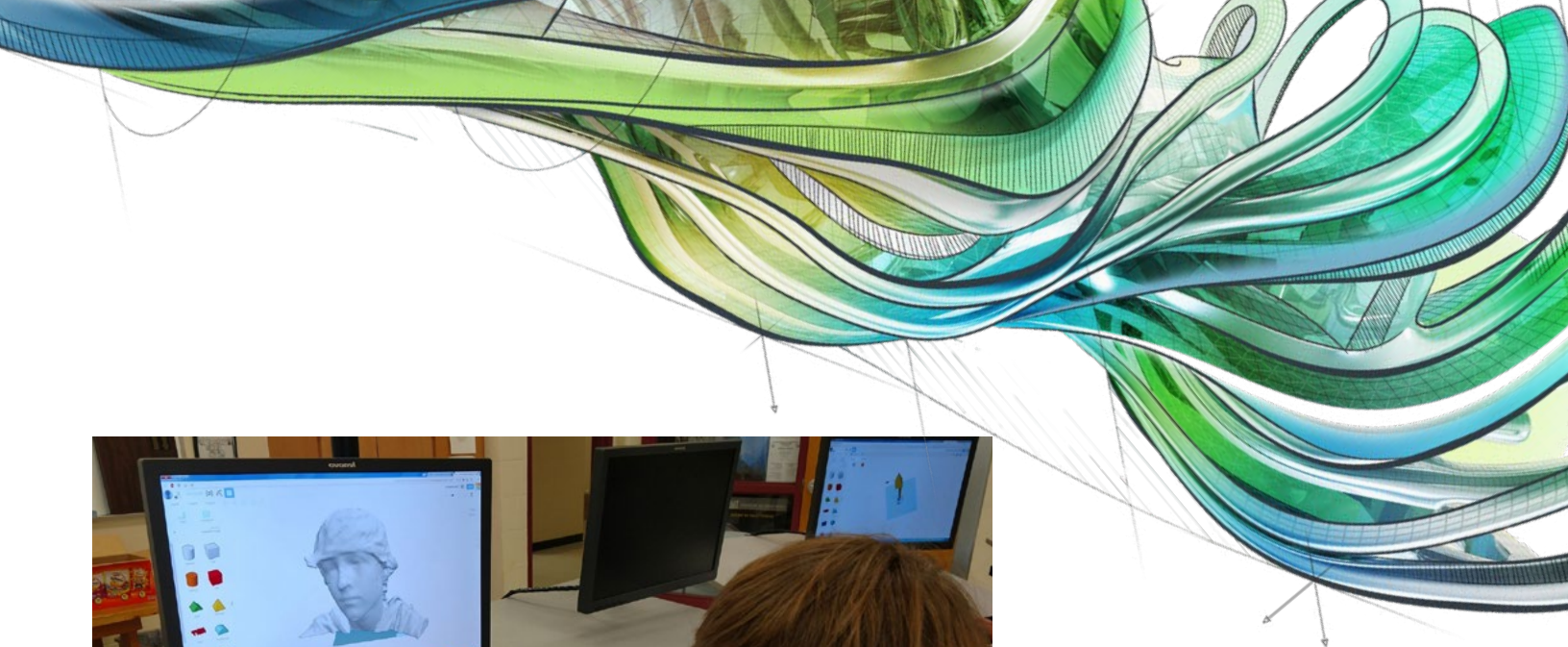
Mull works with students to make sure their Autodesk Certified User level and Autodesk Certified Professional level certifications stand out on their resumes and even provides a resume template.

Some of his recent graduates with Autodesk certifications have interviewed at as many as five places and have been offered jobs by all five.



"The certification indicates that students have the skills and are able to perform the tasks necessary to utilize the Autodesk applications," said Filter.

- Robert Filter, Union County Public Schools Director of Career Readiness



Mull also recommends that students keep the certification on their resume four years after college.

Whether his students plan to go to college or enter the workforce, Autodesk certification helps with admissions and job interviews. "The certification indicates that students have the skills and are able to perform the tasks necessary to utilize the Autodesk applications," said Filter.

"It provides the students and an opportunity to spotlight their skills and knowledge over other potential candidates when applying for a job."

Recent Sun Valley graduate Gabriel Blount said earning an Autodesk Certified User certification has already helped him as he builds a career in drafting. "Adding Autodesk certification to my resume has been extremely beneficial since it shows my ability to learn and be flexible in a professional setting. Autodesk certification has helped in my future career – the principles I learned are how a part of my new job and I would have never guessed how helpful it would be when I was taking the drafting courses."

SVHS plans to implement Inventor and Fusion 360 ACP exams.

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- Gabriel Blount,
Sun Valley High School
Graduate and Autodesk
Certified User.