

## **VESTA Student Profile: Tom Moore**

By Emily Gray

Once in a lifetime opportunities don't often come around very often, which is why VESTA student Tom Moore decided to forgo retirement for a position in the wine and grape industry.

Moore had retired from a career in Mechanical Engineering, but when he was offered a position as the Viticulture Technician at Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, he could not pass up the opportunity.

"...taking the job here at Kirkwood was one of those "just for fun" opportunities that come around once in a lifetime," Moore said. "I am really enjoying my time at Kirkwood and will stay here and continue to build the program for the foreseeable future."

Wine and grape production has been an interest of Moore's for over 30 years. His experience ranges from vineyards in Oregon to Paul Tabor's Tabor Home Vineyards and Winery in Baldwin, Iowa. Tabor opened the first commercial wine grape vineyard in Iowa and Moore has had the pleasure of meeting him and getting involved in Iowa grape growing for the past three or four years.

As the Viticulture Technician at Kirkwood, Moore designed and currently maintains the 1+ acre vineyard at the school and teaches a series of eight vineyard management classes for the Continuing Education Program. He also teaches the "Introduction to Wines and Spirits" class for Kirkwood's Culinary Arts Program.



Moore attributes much of his knowledge as a viticulture instructor to the courses he has taken while pursuing his Associate of Applied Science Degree in Viticulture through the VESTA Program.

"The instruction that VESTA provides is the key knowledge necessary for me to manage Kirkwood's vineyard and help other new vineyard owners grow the best quality grapes," Moore states.

Out of all the VESTA courses Moore has completed, he counts the vineyard management courses some of the most helpful in his occupation. However, he is looking forward to taking some of the Enology courses the VESTA offers as well. Moore appreciates the flexibility of the online classes. In his opinion, this flexibility has been the key for his ability to complete the courses.

While Moore does not operate his own vineyard, he does offer helpful advice to other VESTA students hoping to start a vineyard, based on his experience in the field.

“Do lots of planning up front before you ever plant a vine,” Moore says. “You will have to live with all of the mistakes you make and so the more you know when you start out, the better, (and) easier it will be through out the life of the vineyard.”

Moore feels his involvement in viticulture has many rewarding aspects. Meeting and working with some of the highly intelligent and creative people in the wine and grape industry, as well as the chance to use his passion and the skills he has learned in the VESTA Program have made this one opportunity that should not have been missed.