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Major of the Month: Paramedic Technology

Are you action-oriented, seeking a challenge, interested in medicine, good at working with people, or highly motivated with good leadership qualities? If so, then Paramedic Technology may be for you.

People's lives often depend on the quick reaction and competent care of Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and Paramedics. Paramedics are trained to manage all types of emergency situations by providing scene control, emergency medical care and patient transport to a medical facility or trauma center.

Here at Lake Superior State University, the paramedic program is designed to allow current fire science and public safety students to earn a minor and obtain their paramedic certification. It also allows students to obtain paramedic certification without committing to a four-year degree. LSSU offers an Associate's Degree in

Paramedic Technology for students seeking a major in pre-hospital medicine. Students can be certified as an EMT-Basic after the first year with little or no previous training; and as a paramedic at the end of the second year. "A paramedic is the highest licensed pre-hospital care provider." explains Shawn Jamison of the paramedic program.

LSSU offers three different career choices in the paramedic program. **Emergency Paramedics** work in the pre-hospital setting, providing emergency advanced life support in trauma and medical situations. Advanced life support services are an extension of the hospital emergency room, providing similar high level medical intervention for critical patients. The Emergency Paramedic is the leader of the prehospital team.

Firefighter-Paramedics work in municipal settings, providing fire suppression, rescue operations and emergency medical care.

Public Safety Officers work in the community, providing emergency care, fire/rescue and law enforcement services to the public.



Paramedics provide a variety of skilled functions in the pre-hospital phase of patient care.

The professional paramedic is highly motivated and is an integral part of the health care team. Today paramedics are in short supply. Cities around the nation are in search of certified paramedics wishing to practice in their city.

CAREER FACTS

SKILLS

Ability to react quickly and maintain emotional and physical composure in stressful situations; High proficiency for accuracy; Ability to make keen observations, and appropriate decisions; Proficiency in interpersonal communications; Ability to work cooperatively with people of other backgrounds

VALUES and ATTRIBUTES

Desire to help others; Health; Interest in challenges and working directly with others; Helpful and friendly attitude; Sensitivity to the needs and pain of others; Willingness to work irregular hours and weekends; Dependability

EMPLOYERS

EMS Agencies, Public Safety Departments, Fire Departments, Hospitals

SALARY RANGE

The median salary in 2002 for paramedics was \$24,793 and \$36,233 for firefighters according to the *Occupational Outlook Handbook 2004-2005*. Higher salaries are being negotiated today due to the paramedic demand in many large cities.

For additional information on the Paramedic degree at LSSU contact the Criminal Justice/Fire Science Dept. at 906-635-2384 or the EMS Faculty at 906-635-2125.

Paramedic Technology LSSU Alumnus Loves His Job!

Nicholas Vaught

B. S. in Fire Science

A. D. in Paramedic Technology

LSSU 2004 grad from Walled Lake, MI



Nick Vaught inspecting equipment and supplies before his next emergency run.

What are your responsibilities and current roles?

I am currently a full-time Firefighter/Paramedic for the City of Sault Ste. Marie Fire Department. Being a firefighter/paramedic I have two roles- I respond to EMS calls and fire calls within the city. On the EMS side, we provide primary emergency services to the city as well as intra-facility transportation for patients from hospital to hospital. Intra-facility transfers often involve providing care for the most critical patients that require medical care beyond the capability of one of the hospitals. As for the firefighter responsibilities, we respond to all fires within the city and provide heavy rescue in vehicle accidents.

Why did you choose to attend Lake Superior State University?

Lake State has a great Fire Science program which was what I was looking for.

Was Paramedic Technology your first career choice?

Actually, my first occupational choice was to major in Fire Science. But to acquire a Fire Science degree you should also obtain Paramedic Certification because most fire departments hire individuals with both certifications. I chose the Associate's Degree along with my Bachelor's Degree, which made me a more marketable firefighter.

What is your career path or future goals?

I plan on staying right where I am at. I love what I do; I wouldn't do anything else. There is an element of surprise when I come to work. I never know what to expect. I could be out of the station all day doing emergency runs, or I could be waiting for the tone to go off and to rush to an emergency. You just never know.

What advise would you give to students choosing this major?

I would definitely say that you have to study and try hard. Getting a degree in any major requires work. In this field of work people's lives are at stake. You need to pay attention and take your classes seriously.

COUNSELOR'S

CORNER



Spring is just around the corner and many of you will have the chance to finally get outside and enjoy some pleasant weather. With spring comes the fall scheduling period here at LSSU. Many students will be looking at their transcripts to calculate what general education requirements they have remaining or what classes they want to begin for a major or minor area of study.

If you currently are a freshman and completing your first year of study, you will more than likely have a few general education courses left to complete. You may want to consider taking a summer course or two at a local community college to transfer back to LSSU for fall semester. Before you begin courses at another college or a community college you should make sure these courses will transfer back into LSSU as a required general education course. When you meet with your advisor ask about what courses would be best to consider. Your advisor can also assist you with checking the admissions web site to see how courses from other colleges transfer in to LSSU. Transfer credit evaluations are on-line for most Michigan schools.

Spring and summer are great times to evaluate your progress as a student. If you are undecided about the career directions in which you are headed you should take the time to visit our Career Services Office. We have a staff that welcomes questions and concerns about careers and will assist you in finding the direction you need to go. Happy Spring!
-Mary Jo Meehan, LPC



Career Services

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