



# TRAININGnews

UA Education and Training Department

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## Message from James Pavesic Director of Education and Training



I've always been proud of our staff and all of the local union training staff across our two nations. Still, within this past year-and-

a-half, I have been overwhelmed with gratitude for how easily everyone has seamlessly pivoted and moved into a new direction when asked. These achievements have demonstrated precisely how intelligent, creative, and dedicated our instructors, training coordinators, and directors genuinely are. And these characteristics could not have been more apparent than during ITP week, August 9-13, 2021.

Early on, we had to decide to hold the Instructor Training Program virtually. We knew that this decision would force many of our instructors and stu-



dents into uncomfortable realms of instruction. We knew we had instructors and students who were not familiar with Zoom. We also learned that many of our classes would have to be adapted to teach virtually. No one complained—everyone embraced the challenge and went above and beyond to ensure their classes were as virtually friendly as they could be. I am aware of the countless hours spent on adapting courses and thank all of you for the utmost dedication to your crafts.

I'd also like to thank the WCC staff. Our ongoing relationship with WCC,

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the UA Education and Training Department is to equip United Association locals with educational resources for developing the skills of their apprentices and journeypersons. By thus facilitating the training needs of the membership, we maximize their employability and prepare them for changes in the industry. We are committed to making training opportunities available across North America, allowing members to acquire new skills and remain competitive in the industry regardless of geography. In this way, we are determined to meet the needs of the piping industry and enhance employment opportunities for our members, while remaining fiscally responsible to the beneficiaries of the fund.



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without a doubt, helps us offer the best training to our membership. Their continued support enables us to do our jobs better. It's hard to imagine that on Monday morning, August 9, all 1,351 instructors and close to 200 faculty members simultaneously logged in to 110 courses via Zoom. We should all take immense pride in this. Many thought it was unimaginable, but we got it done, and we got it done well!

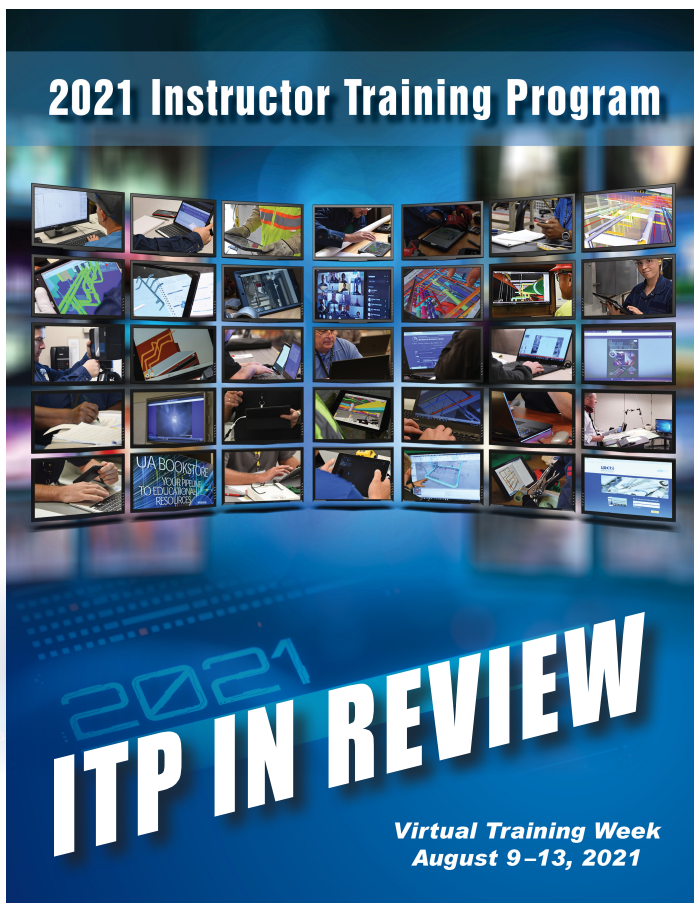
Our vendors were instrumental in assisting us with our successful Virtual ITP program this year as well, and I'd like to thank them for their past and continued support.

The overall response to this year's Virtual ITP was really positive, and everyone felt that it went very well. The feedback we are getting from both instructors and students boosts everyone's morale. We can now say that we know how to do this, and because of that, we will be expanding our online course offerings. With that said, it looks like our 2022 turnout will be

the largest ever. Everyone is looking forward to an in-person ITP.

Some final numbers from this year's Virtual ITP look like this—we had 1,351 students, 480 first-time students, 79 ITP graduates, 17 training coordinator graduates, and eight associate graduates. We offered 91 multiple sections of courses, with 192 Zoom sections in total. In response to our survey request, we received over 2,200 responses with an overwhelmingly positive response to the virtual program. We have shared some reactions to the program from both instructors and students in this newsletter. Read them and enjoy them and know that these comments are a direct reflection of the work you all put into this program.

As we move into 2022, I am confident that our programs will continue to offer our membership the very best training in the industry. ■



## Virtual ITP 2021—Utilizing Technology for a Changing World

*Submitted by Raymond W. Boyd, Assistant Director of Education and Training*

As the ITF approached this ITP 2021, we were struggling with exactly what we could offer our UA brothers and sisters. Director Pavesic challenged the ITF staff and UA instructors to come up with a Virtual ITP that would fit the needs of today.

Being able to host almost 1,400 students, with close to 500 of them being first timers, has shown the ITF the need for virtual training in the future. We certainly understand the importance of in-person training, but this will give us the opportunity to offer training to an even larger base of UA members.

One of the things that was so rewarding to see was all of the UA instructors providing such interesting training topics. It's not easy to hold the interest of your students for that long of a period of time on a Zoom platform.

Hats off to the instructors and students, as we move forward to other training opportunities. Through the Virtual ITP, we have put another vital training tool in our toolbox. We have learned something crucial through this Virtual ITP—that we can change with an ever-changing world and continue to offer our members the training they need to succeed. ■

## Virtual ITP Week in Review

*Submitted by Laura Ceja, National Recruitment and Outreach Coordinator*

Instructor Training Program 2021 was like no other. Students who may not have had the opportunity to travel and attend in person in the past had a great opportunity to take part in this annual educational event. Any instructors who wanted to attend this year could do so without incurring the usual costs of travel. ITP week was magical, as it always has been. And, this could not be more true than it was this year, as students went from class to class with a click of a button. At the end of a day's worth of instruction, everyone was able to log out and walk right back into the comfort of their own homes.

The UA Master Course Instructors teaching at ITP week truly went above and beyond to make the experience engaging. They spent the last year preparing for Virtual ITP week by honing their on-line teaching skills with their apprentices. Attendees were impressed with the quality and quantity of information that was conveyed over the virtual medium.

*"Virtual training proved our organization can overcome any challenge or adversity put before it."*

*—Greg Harle, Local Union 23*

*"I was inspired by the UA participants hunger to learn, participation and energy. The spirit and discipline of excellence was showcased by the UA members the entire week."*

*—Tim Coleman, Local Union 669*

In the end, Virtual ITP week was a great success. Our ITP instructors and attendees were able to accomplish what few thought was possible. But as successful as ITP week was this year, everyone is looking forward to next year when they will be able to interact and exchange ideas face to face in real classrooms. ■

## Virtual ITP—A Hurdle We All Cleared

*Submitted by Robert Vilches, UA Training Specialist*

When the decision was made to hold a Virtual ITP, my first thought was, "This is a mistake." I was wrong in that thought. From the time the decision was made, the staff at WCC, ITF, and all the ITP instructors did not disappoint. The result was something we can and should be proud of.

The ITF and WCC staff held weekly meetings to work out the logistics of our first ever Virtual ITP. The willpower of everyone on the team to make this a success was overwhelming. There was never a time that we didn't know how we were going to proceed. For two months we worked out as many details as we could. The playbook was written, and it was ready to be passed onto the ITP Instructors.

When we released the game plan to the instructors, we had nothing but support and honesty from all of them. The instructors offered no resistance to the plan and even suggested some changes that we ultimately added into the mix. Some instructors even came back and said that their class will not work virtually. Our goal was and always will be to deliver the best experience to our members, so, there were no hard feelings about canceling a class.

One of the biggest hurdles that every instructor had to navigate was time. They all had to participate in mandatory training to prepare for a virtual format. This had to be done while modifying their class for a virtual format and maintaining their full-time job and family. The level of dedication shown by all the instructors is something that every UA member should be proud of.

With all the planning out of the way, it was time to fire up the computers and login for Day One. Support staff was on standby to help instructors and students navigate any issues that may pop up. As the week progressed, we ran into few issues. A storm knocked out power in parts of Michigan, but the students and instructors who were affected simply grabbed a mobile device and jumped right back into their classes. It would have been easy for the students to just take a long break and blame it on the power outage, but that is not the UA way. We have always been a group that overcomes and adapts to any situation and this was no different.

Once the week was over, everyone took a long, deep breath and downed a glass of their favorite drink. The following days and weeks involved reviewing students' and instructors' feedback, which were overwhelmingly positive.



*"While we all would prefer to be "in person" it is very impressive to look back at how the UA Training Department, and our WCC partners prepared us and sustained the technology throughout ITP week and how our ITP students were prepared for the virtual experience and engaged virtually for a whole week. My pride in this organization sustained as well. Hopefully, we will be in person next year!"*

—ITP Instructor Ed Engel, Local Union 420

*"Virtual ITP week was phenomenal as all participants were prepared and eager to learn. The UA Training Staff did a remarkable job of establishing requirements for preparation and provided sufficient scheduling to ensure all ITP instructors and students had the opportunity to obtain the necessary tools and skills needed for a successful training outcome. While I am sure everyone is looking forward to in-person training next August, it is reassuring to know the UA is prepared for whatever the future holds."*

—ITP Instructor DJ Berger, Local Union 60

The staff and students should feel accomplished in the fact that we can still provide high-quality training even from behind a screen. My faith in the UA being able to provide training, no matter the obstacle, has been fortified. With that said, let's never do this again! ■

## The Impact of Virtual Training

**Submitted by Robert Derby, UA Training Specialist**

As we reflect on ITP 2021, we consider the impact of virtual training. The pandemic has given our current society an opportunity to react. Our reaction could have been to reject the idea of virtual training or embrace it. In true UA fashion, we collectively chose to embrace it. With that decision came a tremendous amount of preparation that was outside of the normal preparation required each year. The UA staff stepped up and took the responsibility to make sure everyone—the

instructors and students—were adequately prepared to engage in virtual training to be successful. Many UA training centers had already been transitioning into a hybrid of virtual training to enhance their already established training programs. However, many members had little or no experience with such technical training. Mandatory training prior to attending Virtual ITP 2021 was required. The result was an organization that not only embraced the change but took the opportunity to enhance what was already the best in the industry.

Going virtual for course 8000, administration of the UA Weld Certification Program, gave the students the ability to learn how to navigate and utilize the information on the UANet in an interactive way. Having a diverse group of students with backgrounds ranging from full-time trainers with experience in utilizing the UANet, to part-time trainers who had never accessed the UANet prior to ITP created a learning environment that encouraged discussion from the beginning. Virtual training required each student to have full access to a computer, which enabled us as instructors to establish interactive exercises that the group could experience. Simple functions, like screen sharing, allowed for better instruction and a deeper understanding by the students. As tradespeople, the student-instructors learned a trade that required kinetic skills before they were selected by their locals to become trainers. The kinetic learning modality is the most-common way our members gain understanding. Virtual training, having a computer as a tool at their fingertips, gave the student-instructors that hands-on connection that helps in retaining information that would have previously been delivered in lecture form. Students were able to leave course 8000 with knowledge and confidence to effectively execute the duties required to provide welder qualification testing to their members in accordance with the UA Welder Certification Program System manual.

The feedback that Matt Ruggles and I received from our students was very positive. There were very few technical difficulties, and that is a reflection of the students' dedication to the training they were required to take before ever entering the virtual course. Although some aspects of the training would have been better in person, the overall objectives of the course were met. Our environment created a necessity for change, and with change came growth at a fast pace. Once again, the UA proves that we are up to overcoming challenges in a timely matter and meeting a deadline in the classroom, just like on the jobsite. ■



## Overcoming the Challenging Obstacles of Virtual ITP

*Submitted by Michael Galfano, UA Training Specialist*

I hope this newsletter finds each of you well, while you're navigating your training centers through these taxing times due to COVID. I have the honor and privilege to work with 29 dedicated Master Instructors who teach 16 different courses at a typical Instructor Training Program (ITP). When the decision to move ITP to a virtual platform was decided, each of the training specialists were responsible to reach out and see if their ITP courses could even be held online. Many thoughts and concerns came to my mind regarding moving forward. We all knew this effort could be challenging and overwhelming with so much uncertainty. Through honest discussions with my groups, the answer to move forward was positively yes. I am happy to report 13 of the 16 courses were taught online this year at ITP.

Each of these Master Course Instructors put in countless hours updating their ITP courses, sharpening their online teaching skills, and attending required WCC online training courses to make this happen. We also encountered other significant challenges, including written and performance certification exams and hands-on skills instruction obstacles to contend with. With our Medical Gas courses, we were able to coordinate with N.I.T.C. to register local office professionals to proctor exams if the local didn't have a current proctor. Our Industrial Rigging courses also presented significant challenges. We were able to film multiple rigging videos ahead of ITP to help with instruction. We coordinated seven Industrial Rigging exam test sites geographically throughout the U.S. and Canada to proctor certification testing.

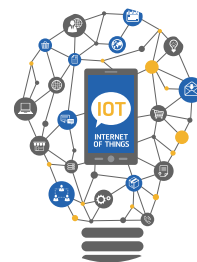
I want to personally thank each of the training coordinators from locals 50, 189, 208, 342, 372, 488, and 777 for all their help and support. I am inspired by the creativity of all our Master ITP Instructors. Kevin Gaby (Advanced Tube Bending) made up tubing boards and shipped them to students to help with their hands-on instruction. Trent Mauk (Pipefitting Layout) sent out a course material list to all students who were participating in hands-on layout techniques. Instructors also implemented video equipment to help capture practical shop demonstrations. As I visited the virtual classrooms, I was excited to see student participation and engagement.

With some time to reflect, 2021 ITP was a success. I believe we all learned from this experience, which will make us a

better organization. This was a collective effort by so many. I want to thank our ITF leadership, office professional staff, and the WCC staff for all their tireless work. Thanks to all our Master Instructors for your professionalism, dedication, and commitment to training. You all stepped up without hesitation. I am looking forward to next year, where we can gather in person. ■

## How Does This End?

*Submitted by Richard Benkowski, UA Training Specialist*



When the decision was made in the spring of 2021 to deploy a virtual experience for ITP only one question came to mind: What happens on Monday morning of August 9th at the opening of the first session?

In a perfect world the ITP instructor takes roll and begins to teach. It happens every year in Ann Arbor, right? Would it be that simple in 2021? No one wanted to entertain the thought of *not* having ITP *again*. Everyone on the ITF staff, along with our training partners at WCC, agreed that no amount of preparation would be enough.

**How did we get here?** The coronavirus pandemic that has gripped the country has presented many unique challenges, including in all sectors of the piping industry. Every ITP instructor was offered the chance to teach their course in a digital classroom. The response was positive. Yes, we will!

To create that "perfect world" outcome, the staff in Ann Arbor and Annapolis knew a multi-layered approach would be necessary for both instructors and attendees. Proof of competency for a smooth launch on August 9th required resources to be offered for a uniform, repeatable, and reliable experience.

**Next steps.** Zoom accounts were set up. Each ITP instructor worked to learn and satisfy the core elements for a smooth delivery. Zoom webinars were initiated for both the ITP instructors and ITP attendees to satisfy the irreducible steps for participation. Can I log in? Will the class see the presentation? Does the attendee hear my voice? And, do I see a question in the chat box? All participants were offered a series of online coaching events to increase their comfort level with the digital platforms.

The effort to normalize the biggest event on the ITF calendar became a series of conference calls, test Zooms, communication exchanges, and email challenges to ensure that on August 9th every ITP instructor would take roll and just teach.

Additionally, many UA locals gathered their attendees at the training center to minimize distractions during ITP week.

Mission accomplished! All's well that ends well. ■

## Course 8015 ASME Section IX Welding Code

*Submitted by Randall Gandy, UA Training Specialist on behalf of Instructor Dale Gavin and Co Instructor Kenny Eden*

As with any job experiences, as a pipefitter, we are trained to achieve our final goal. Whether installing or servicing a process piping system to ensure it provides our end-users with the expected performance, or passing on our knowledge to the future members of our organization. We work with the equipment and the materials presented to us to achieve the best final outcome.

Sometimes, we are forced to improvise! This happens more than not!

This past year, the UA training staff, the ITP instructors, and students had to use the technology available to us to maintain the level of training that has come to be expected from our UA training programs. More importantly, we had to get our mindset pointed in the right direction that we can, and we will deliver!

I was disappointed and skeptical when the decision was made to have a Virtual ITP program. Not an easy decision at all!

1. Would anyone register for this type of training?
2. Could we deliver an acceptable training experience?
3. What subject matter would be a good fit for virtual training? What subject matter would not fit?
4. How am I as an instructor going to gain a deeper working knowledge of Zoom and Blackboard™ to deliver my course?
5. What technical issues may be encountered?
6. On and on and on ...

My Blackboard class was slimly populated with course material because we always had face-to-face delivery available. So, as a result, I was complacent to build the content to a useful level. In fact, other than a syllabus and course description, my Blackboard class site was pretty useless.

Then came mandatory Zoom and Blackboard support classes, and 24/7 help desk availability from the UA training department and WCC. The effort by the UA training team inspired me to "Get off my \_ss" and build this class!

By August 8th, I think all of us could not wait until this week was over and behind us! I think most of our expectations were very low on the outcome of the success that we expected.

But as trained pipefitters, using all the tools availed to us through the week, even with power outages, password issues, green monsters, shadowed faces from background bleeds, we all managed to deliver a surprisingly solid training program!

I honestly think some of us may have even surprised ourselves that 2021 Virtual ITP worked as well as it did!

As with all organizations, the pandemic is teaching us that we need to think outside of the box. Do things a little different, deliver some flexibility with these tools, and raise the bar on our programs. We need to use our resources to the best of our abilities and continue the great tradition of providing the best training to our UA family. **And we all did that!**

That said, we all want to be in Ann Arbor in the summer of 2022, so we can take advantage of our entire program offerings. But if we are forced to train with alternate methods, no matter what they are, the UA will stand strong and continue to find a way and will always provide the best opportunities for our members! ■

## Leadership in Troubled Times

*Submitted by Bruce Dantley, UA Training Specialist*

The ITP virtual seminar was held in August 2021. In attendance for the Apprenticeship Standards Refresher Course were business managers, trustees, and training directors.

Senior leadership teams are being faced with tough decisions—organizational structure, social justice and injustice, and economic issues in the workplace. In addition, health concerns, the global pandemic, and vaccination mandates

are equally contributing to the troubled times for leadership. All of this can be affecting our training centers.

Decision makers should remember there is a duty of loyalty, prudence, and due diligence in making decisions that will best serve the interest of the training centers five to 10 years in the future. The ITF Training Department hopes the material disseminated will assist all of us in making sound choices.

General President McManus states "I like to skate on my toes and not on my heels anticipating where the puck is going to be in the future and not the present moment." ■

## The Story of How 2021 Virtual ITP Came To Be

*Submitted by Lauren Friedman, Instructional Technology Coordinator*

Before I came to the UA, I spent about 10 years working at universities, learning the ins and outs of how to teach people to teach online. My last position before I landed here was at Johns Hopkins University as a trainer who focused on helping professors learn the ins and outs of teaching online and, more specifically, how to move in-person classes to online or hybrid environments.

At this point, I don't think I would be spilling any giant secrets if I said that online learning is hard. Online teaching is hard. Online life is hard. It's easy to get exhausted, to get burned out, to get distracted and pulled away to do something else. Online teaching and learning are different skillsets than classroom, in-person teaching and learning.

But one of the most amazing things over the past year and a half has been watching various locals and instructors learn and create new ways to adapt their teaching to the world we were forced to confront. I worked with Al Caron and Dave Lavoie out of Local 51 to conceive, build, and test a multi-camera shop setup for teaching welding classes online. I worked with Dennis Molnar, Local 172, as he trained close to 100 new ICRA certified hands and he and I figured out how to smoothly manage an online classroom. I learned from John Sullivan, Local 1, how to manage a situation with multiple instructors at

separate locations as he and his fellow Water Quality instructors ran a webinar for the entire state of California.

None of this was easy. In fact, it was downright difficult; learning and progress sometimes proceed at a stutter-step pace—one forward and two back. There were things we found we couldn't do. Even with all the innovation of AI and Dave's weld setup, there was no effective way to make sure their students would have the equipment or internet stability to get a supervised practice session. Dennis and I ran a tight classroom, but online learning suffers from a lack of spontaneity and connection that you just can't get from a chatbox. We struggled, and sometimes we failed. Sometimes, we did better than others. But in the end, we did it.

And that's very much the story of how 2021's Virtual Instructor Training Program came to be. Slow, challenging, and at times painful. One of our toughest hurdles was that there was no level ground to start from. We had instructors and students with various skill and comfort levels; some of whom had been teaching online for more than a year and a half, who had been doing it pre-pandemic, and some of whom we were worried

wouldn't get Zoom to run on their Windows 7 laptop. So, before we could start to plan, we had to find a way to get everyone to a base 0, to make sure that a certain level of competence could be assumed.

The team at Washtenaw Community College made the training plan possible. We offered more training than most people took, and that's okay. The important part to us was that people wouldn't have emergencies during

the week, that a student wouldn't need to derail the class asking how to mute their mic, or that an instructor wouldn't feel like they were alone in the uncaring world, wishing they knew what to do.

And to an extent, I think we succeeded. There were trials and tribulations, of course. No one could have expected some of the weather-related power outages that cost some learner's valuable classroom time. But I think the thing I am most proud of is that we prepared more support than we needed, and the people who attended their mandatory trainings found success.

Which is not to say I'm champing at the bit to do it again. I believe that technology is a powerful teaching tool, and I believe that the Brothers and Sisters of the UA could quite easily use it for the next 100 years to train, teach, and learn with great success. But there are human factors that I think we





all missed this year. I know I missed registration day; a 14-hour slog that brings me face to face with most of our participants. I missed the pin traders outside of the ML building. I missed driving my golf cart at frankly unsafe speeds through crowds to do my seventh guest presentation of the day. I missed the block party, and sitting in hotel parking lots at 10pm, and the terrible coffee. All the little things that make a little corner of Ann Arbor into a home for a week were missing, and we were poorer for it.

But if 2021 has one important takeaway, it is this; it was hard, but we did it. Together, we, as a fraternal order, pulled off a unique, difficult, and challenging week. We came together from far apart, and we learned and taught, and we took it home to pass along. And I am beyond proud of and happy for every single person who made the best of their tough week.

For those of you who had your first taste of ITP through your laptop, I cannot wait to share the in-person experience with you in the future. And for those old friends who I missed at Haabs and Connor O'Neills and the parking lot in front of GL, I can't wait to see you again. I'll be the woman dancing like a fool at the block party, with a grin on her face, happy to be back in person, and excited to learn. ■

## 2021 Virtual UA ITP, Block Party, 5K, and Pub Crawl

*Submitted by Micheal Hazard, UA Training Specialist*

Every Monday night, during the UA Instructor Training Program, Main Street in downtown Ann Arbor is transformed into UA Town. This is the night that we circle on our calendars well in advance, because this is always a special night, where we can reconnect with old friends and make new ones as well. But the 2021 ITP Virtual Block Party was nothing like we have ever experienced before. There we were glued to our computer screens as the Milwaukee Tool Shed Band rocked our socks off, which was so awesome to see and truly made this event a big hit! The band playing coupled with the multiple cocktail hours throughout the week was a great way for all of us to experience the fun times associated with ITP, regardless of where we were located. But, clearly missing that day was the camaraderie and hometown feeling of being on main street in downtown Ann Arbor with all our UA Sisters and Brothers.

Despite what was missing that day, one thing that was very evident was our UA family's strong "no matter what it takes" commitment to our combat wounded, critically ill, and catastrophically injured military service members and their families. We were honored to have Mrs. Vanessa Keane, Senior Manager, Outreach and Community Events for the Semper Fi & America's Fund, as well as Retired U.S. Marine Corps Corporal Josue Barrón participate in the ceremony this year.

A message from Mrs. Vanessa Keane, Senior Manager, Outreach and Community Events for the Semper Fi & America's Fund:

*"We are very grateful to the UA, Destination Ann Arbor, the sponsors, and all the participants for their 10 years of support. In that time, this event has raised over \$536,000 for our combat wounded, ill, and injured service members and their families. You have continued to support our critical mission through an unprecedented pandemic, at a time when those we serve needed us most. We could not do it without you—you are part of the Semper Fi & America's Fund family!"*

The support that we provide to the Semper Fi & America's Fund is only possible with the continued support from all of you at this event. Thank you very much to every one of you who donated or registered for the 5K and/or pub-crawl. We would also like to give a special thanks to our amazing sponsors that supported this year's virtual event:

International Pipe Trades Joint Training Committee  
Southern California Pipe Trades  
MCAA - Mechanical Contractors Association of America  
NITC - National Inspection Testing Certification  
Milwaukee Tool  
DeWalt  
Lincoln Electric  
Greater Michigan Plumbing & Mechanical Contractors Association  
UA Local 190, Ann Arbor, MI  
Destination Ann Arbor & Ann Arbor Sports Commission  
K&R Promotional Products  
Washtenaw Community College  
IAPMO - International Association of Plumbing & Mechanical Officials  
E.H. Wachs  
BMA Media



We appreciate everyone's support more than you'll ever know. This event would not be as successful as it is without the generous contributions from all of you and our sponsorships, so thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

We also want to commend UA Director of Training and Education Jim Pavesic for his courage and leadership in bringing Virtual ITP to reality. Despite the challenges of hosting such an event virtually, Mr. Pavesic and his staff brought ITP to a whole new level this year—the entire UA Training and Education Department worked tirelessly to ensure this event was a seamless experience for all participants which was accomplished without a doubt!

We would also like to thank everyone who attended Virtual ITP classes this year. We realize 40 hours on Zoom is not an easy feat to accomplish. Each year, we try to visit as many classes as possible during ITP to educate participants on the UA Veterans in Piping Program. The enthusiasm and motivation we experienced from all of you to support the VIP program during our visits was truly remarkable. To date, the UA VIP Program has trained over 2,600 transitioning service members. This is something every UA member should be proud of. The VIP Program would not be possible without the support from UA members and contractors, providing opportunities to our nation's heroes—so thank you all for helping us provide meaningful careers to those who deserve it most!

We also experienced an influx of questions this year related to VA benefits. The VA has recently implemented a few changes to the GI Bill process. Please know we are here to assist if anyone has any questions regarding the VA GI Bill benefits process or the responsibilities of locals with veterans utilizing their benefits throughout the apprenticeship program.

Also, the Veterans in Apprenticeship class continues to grow in attendance each year, and we are very proud of how this course has evolved and appreciate everyone's participation who attended virtually this year. It is a testimony to the UA's commitment to supporting veterans and learning more about the challenges faced as they transition into careers with the UA. We appreciate each and everyone of you welcoming veterans into our organization and educating yourselves on ways to better support veterans throughout their apprenticeship. If you missed the class this year, we encourage you to register for the regional course or next year at ITP 2022.

While the COVID pandemic has brought hardships and challenges to all of us, there have been many among us, especially those in our veteran community, who have been hit very hard by the stress of this pandemic. If you or someone you know is struggling with thoughts of suicide, please call the **Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 or text HELLO to 741741**. The hotline is available 24/7 regardless if you are in crisis or not. If you experience a **veteran in crisis, please call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1 to talk to someone or send a text message to 838255 to connect with a VA responder**. You can also start a confidential online chat session at **Veterans Crisis Chat** via <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/chat>. ■

## A Virtual ITP

*Submitted by Kenneth Schneider, UA Training Specialist*

After the disappointment of 2020, cancelling 2021 ITP wasn't an option but a "Virtual ITP" was going to be a hard sell, not only to the instructors attending, but those who were responsible for delivering a UA quality course. Let's face it, we all have been on those jobsites which were challenging to say at the very least, but we were able to overcome the challenges, complete the job, and deliver a quality product. A Virtual ITP—challenging seemed to be an understatement. However, we were able to complete the task at hand and deliver a quality product thanks to all the extra work the ITP staff and instructors put into it. I think the quote below says it all and sums up how many of us felt going into ITP.

“I cannot tell you how impressed I was with the UA's effort to hold the virtual ITP this year. Maybe I was a bit skeptical too, but I was wrong. Great experience, great students, great organization, great tech, instructor, and student support. Just so you know, I will definitely be bragging on your UA Training Department crew.”

Sam W. White, PhD  
Professor  
Institute for Labor Studies & Research  
West Virginia University

”

I thanked Sam for his kind words and thought about how my thoughts, prior to ITP, were the same. I also knew that we had a job to complete and failure was not an option. So, we rolled up our sleeves and began the process of delivering a quality product to all the hard-working instructors who trusted UA Education and Training to deliver a first class training event—virtually.

We didn't do this all alone. With the help of our many great instructors and industry partners, the BIM/VDC classes were a success using VDI's (virtual desktop infrastructure) and local training centers that opened their doors and their CAD labs to ensure the content was delivered for the following classes,

- Autodesk® Revit® MEP
- Advanced Autodesk® Revit® MEP
- Understanding the BIM/VDC Workflow in Today's Construction Industry
- DfMA and Modular Construction

As Diana Lee, UA Local 601 and DfMA and Modular Construction instructor, stated:

*"Virtual ITP was a great experience to be a part of—our class was successful because of our students! We were able to discuss the content we planned on, just in a different format. I think the course was more in-depth than we anticipated, because students were at their home locals and shared real-time experiences related to our instruction."*

We applaud so many talented ITF instructors for all the extra work that went into every course to make this truly UA worthy! Utilizing technology to deliver the technology training has become common across our industry. The pandemic has pushed this technology adoption faster than anticipated. All of this has helped us to deliver virtual training in ways we never thought of or at least in ways we were hesitant to use. Even the new classes such as the updated Advanced Plan Reading class went well, although we are looking forward to having this as a regional class offering in person in 2022.

The Fire Protection courses had their challenges too, from fire pump courses to ITM, we were able to deliver quality courses using Zoom, cameras, and headsets to communicate the training content that makes the UA the best in class when it comes to training!

Kevin Convy, UA Local 268 and Reliable Fire Protection Valves instructor, stated:

*"Having the manufacturers attend in person and working with others who were in person, helped with delivering training via Zoom. Combining the hands-on training with the cameras and the headsets that were sent by the ITF made for a successful virtual training event that produced positive reviews and comments for those who attended the class."*



Although I do believe that Virtual ITP was a success, and I am very proud of the accomplishments by all, I sincerely hope we never do this again! I look forward to seeing everyone in person at ITP 2022. Stay safe Brothers and Sisters! ■

## Remote Training Through Live Feed

Submitted by Randall Gandy, UA Training Specialist

In the Summer of 2018, Training Specialist Randall Gandy and Instructional Technology Coordinator Lauren Friedman embarked on a pilot program called "Distance Welding" which was introduced during the 2018 Instructor Training Program. The idea was that, with specific technology, a training center could not only record a weld being done but broadcast it across the internet. At the time, Gandy and Friedman imagined it as a training program between locals—the ability to show a technique from an expert in Florida to a class in Alaska, in real time, with no travel. Using a WeldWatch weld camera, a VR laptop, a Bluetooth earpiece, and an instance of GoToMeeting, Gandy was able to give welder Justin Forni instructions from across campus, while classes observed.

In the early days of 2020, the project started to take a different shape. With the pandemic raging, Gandy and Friedman enlisted Forni again, this time joined by Al Caron and Dave Lavoie, to start discussing and planning a way to teach their ITP classes or regionally, online.





Technology had changed a little in the year and a half since the first pilot. While a high-end laptop, Bluetooth earpieces, and a weld cam were still involved, the new pilot also included web cameras to catch the posture and positioning of the welder himself, lighting to make sure the whole scene was visible, and mounts and tethers to keep expensive equipment as far away from the extreme heat as possible. The platform also changed from GoToMeeting to Zoom, as it was what the teachers were more comfortable with. It was a much more elaborate setup, designed to not only catch the weld being done, but the environment that surrounded the welder.

The goal was not to teach welding itself, as that requires hands-on training, and most students taking the class did not have laptops powerful enough to broadcast the detail needed, but to impart teaching techniques. On April 29, 2021, Caron, Lavoie, and Forni were joined by welders from all over the country for a Gas Metal Arch Welding (GMAW) course—a first-of-its-kind experiment that allowed welding in Rhode Island to be witnessed by people in New Mexico in real time. Click on link to view a short clip of the distance welding video <https://youtu.be/zJmoBUXJrpY>.

As a result of this new technology, the ITF was able to successfully offer nine welding courses; three of which utilized the WeldWatch weld technology during the 2021 Virtual Instructor Training Program. ■

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## A New Training Path

### The Residential/Light Commercial Technician

*Submitted by Robert Vilches, UA Training Specialist*

Later this year we will be releasing a new training path to assist in gaining market share in the residential/light commercial market. This will be accomplished by adding a new five-year apprentice path in Appendix A consisting of plumbing, HVACR, smart home technology curriculum, and a journeyman level STAR Exam.

In 2018, we formed a curriculum committee of Subject Matter Experts (SME). Members included Jeffrey Berger of LU 322, Tim Hammack of LU 15, Ray LeVangie III of LU 398, and Albert Garcia of LU 342. This committee was tasked with the layout of the five-year apprentice training path to include work pro-

cess hours and course offerings in Appendix A. The focus was plumbing service, HVACR service on unitary products under twenty tons, and smart home tech. Earlier this year, an MOU was signed with NATE to offer incoming candidates with prior experience and training an opportunity for advanced placement into this training track.

In 2018, during ITP week, the UA held a meeting with NITC and Ferris State University to discuss the need to update the residential/light commercial STAR exam. As a result of this meeting, an exam update committee was formed. Members included Tim Blevins of LU 162, Albert Garcia of LU 342, DJ Berger of LU 60, and Gregory McKendall of LU 60. The STAR exam update committee, in cooperation with NITC and Ferris State University, went to work overhauling the current test with questions that apply to the residential and light commercial markets. The revised test will include material from both the plumbing and HVACR crafts, along with smart home technology. The committee reviewed approximately 600 test questions, and, in the end, they put together two revised tests consisting of 200 questions each, and two recertification tests consisting of 50 questions each. As we moved into the next phase of pilot testing, the country was hit hard by COVID-19, and the project was delayed.

As we look to put COVID behind us, and the country starts to open back up, the UA and NITC have begun reaching out to local training centers to pilot this new test. DJ Berger with the National ITC Corporation had this to say about the project, "As part of general examination maintenance and development protocols, NITC depends heavily upon the piping industry's support and participation in the periodic validation of the STAR examinations. Working with Ferris State University and Subject Matter Experts from across the country, NITC is able to ensure the STAR examinations are current by including newly proven technologies, while retaining existing relevant information in the design of the question banks. The data compiled during the BETA testing phase substantiates the validity of the examination for assessing the trade-specific skillset of the craftsperson being tested."

By embracing the residential and light commercial service training, we will have ample opportunity to expand the UA brand and be ready for the opportunities at our doorstep.

Both the curriculum and the STAR exam are expected to be completed by the end of 2021. For questions on the STAR exam and curriculum, please email [vilches@uanet.org](mailto:vilches@uanet.org). ■



## WHAT STUDENTS, INSTRUCTORS, AND TRAINING COORDINATORS ARE SAYING!

"From the point of view of this Director and the participating instructors of Local 5, the 2001 Virtual ITP, while not a full substitute for an in-person experience, was a resounding success. The efforts of the UA to hold non-class social events and do their very best to imbue the week with a sense of community and togetherness was noted and well-received by all participants. The ITP instructors clearly went above and beyond to keep their online students engaged and interacting with one another despite the virtual format.

At the UA convention, I was able to recognize and chat with several students from my virtual classes, from around the country, about our shared learning experience. That in itself speaks much about how cohesive the 2021 ITP conference ran and the level of participation and engagement within the classes. I'm very much looking forward to future, in-person summer ITP sessions again, but it was wonderful to see that under the current trying circumstances the UA, the ITP instructors, and the students across North America were able to come together and not just learn, but engage and collaborate to yield outstanding educational AND social results. Well done, on all counts."

—Chris Biondi, Training Director, Local Union 5

"ITP this year was a great success. The amount of hours put in by the training department and WCC staff was something that needs to be noted. Matt stated, "I went from only ever being on Zoom for a short call to having the capability to host a room with close to 20 people, and use almost all of the functions that Zoom offers efficiently." Our class was very productive and informative as a virtual class; the students exit interviews reinforces that. The ability to have the computer in front of the students is a great aspect of virtual learning because all of the information covered in the course is on the UANet. The students were able to learn to

navigate, in real time, the pathways on the UANet that they will be using to administer UA Weld Test Sessions at their respective locals. Being forced to have ITP virtually made us all realize that some classes actually benefit from it."

—Instructor: Bob Derby, Co-Instructor: Matt Ruggles  
Course 8000 Administration of an Authorized UA Weld Test Facility

"The UA International Training Program and Washtenaw Community College made ITP 2021 a success. The training and preparation prior to UA week provided by our experts in Blackboard, technology, Zoom, and online learning strategies really paid off. The challenges were numerous: Covid19, internet reliability, Zoom skills, a year off, four time zones, and the loss of the mutual support, reinforcement, and shared expertise in the classroom. Despite all of these new challenges, the UA team accomplished the core mission of delivering content. We can't wait to see everybody next year!"

—Instructor: Roger Thein, Co-Instructor: L. Wickland  
Course 8004 Piping Codes for Industrial Work and  
Course 8040 Quality Control Management

"Last week was outstanding! I had 13 first time instructors gathered at our training center participating in the online ITP. I also had 3 returning plus Assistant Coordinator Kelly enrolled. Everyone said they were amazed on how well the classes went and was excited about what they learned. Next year I plan to send a total of 24 to Ann Arbor; that would be a record number for us. On behalf of all of us with the LU533 Training Center, thank you and all of the hard working folks up there that made it happen."

—Chris McGhee, Local Union 533

"We are the UA! When the situation arose that getting together in Ann Arbor was not going to happen, it would have been easy to take another year off. But we are UA! Instructors from all over learned how to do more with Zoom and Blackboard and how to teach virtually and today we showed everyone who we are! Hats off to all of us who took the time to step out of our comfort zone and do whatever it took to make ITP happen. This 37-year UA Member could not be more proud. Have an incredible week Brothers and Sisters!

—Gary Shimmel, Local Union 520

### WHAT STUDENTS, INSTRUCTORS, AND TRAINING COORDINATORS ARE SAYING!

"Speaking with several of our instructors who attended the live zoom courses, they were pleasantly surprised on how their courses exceeded their expectations! Although there is no replacement for the face to face experience in Ann Arbor, there was still an opportunity for the instructors (students) to engage

with each other before the start of class and during breaks. The Zoom courses also provided an opportunity to include guest speakers who otherwise would not of traveled to Ann Arbor. Over all I received a positive reflection from our instructors who attended."

—Brad Tisdale, Director of HVACR Training, Local Union 449

"We have been teaching online for over a year, and now we know how it feels to be those students."

—Ron Schell, Local Union 486

## Save the DATES

The following are  
important upcoming  
training events for 2022.

**UA Training Directors Meeting**  
January 31 - February 1, 2022

**Pipe Trades Training and  
Technology Conference**  
February 2 - 3, 2022

**Instructor Training Program (ITP)**  
August 13 - 19, 2022

**Mark your Calendar!**

### EDUCATION AND TRAINING DEPARTMENT OFFICE PROFESSIONALS

#### ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS

Suzanne Ellis

#### ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT (VIP)

Nicole Jeup

#### CERTIFICATION DEPARTMENT

Carrie King, *Office Manager*

Kristyn Ivey

Angie Sterling

#### IPTJTC BOOKSTORE

Dianne Lash, *Office Manager*

Peggy Jarrett

Darlene Lee

Jay Meadows

David Parmenter

#### ITF COMPTROLLER

Matthew Robertson

#### ITF FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Helen Holmboe

Tammie Parezo

Kathy Walker

Tracy Webster

#### INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY COORDINATOR

Lauren Friedman

#### RECRUITMENT

Kiva Straser

#### REGISTRAR'S OFFICE

Cathy Merkel, *Registrar*

Tyler Masengale

Agatha Wolyn