

# Ivy Tech Robotics Degree Boosts Job Possibilities, Practical Skills

**A**fter she entered the workforce, Rebecca Stoops realized she really loves active, hands-on work. Give her a challenging problem to troubleshoot and she's in her element.

That's why the Catalent Pharma Solutions employee, who already holds a bachelor's degree in biology from Indiana University, decided to extend her education. Now Stoops, 28, is earning an associate degree in advanced automation and robotics technology at Ivy Tech Community College Bloomington through Ivy Tech's Achieve Your Degree tuition deferral program.

The Bloomington native says she couldn't have taken a smarter step to advance her career prospects and increase job satisfaction.

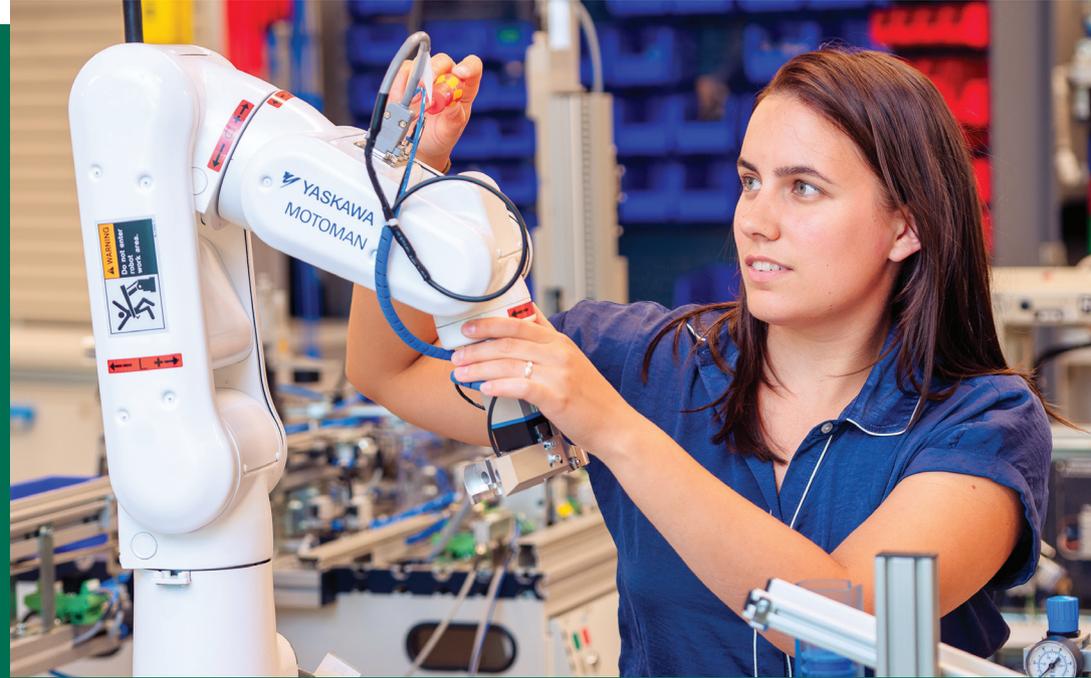
"I started looking at different degrees and options," says Stoops, who has worked at Catalent (formerly Cook Pharmica, LLC) since fall 2012. "Ivy Tech had that new degree and it seemed really interesting." After taking several classes in 2014, Stoops enrolled in the program in 2016 and expects to graduate next year.

She's already reaping benefits at Catalent.

Catalent is a development, delivery, and supply partner for drugs, biologics, and consumer health products. As part of the degree program, Stoops earned the Siemens Mechatronics Operator certificate in December. With that, she was able to move into a new position as a manufacturing associate team trainer and technical writer for the drug substance protein purification process. Now, her job is to help oversee clarifying and purifying medicines.

Stoops has already seen the benefit of the Ivy Tech program. "I'm able to look at equipment I use and recognize different components and see how they fit together, so I can help identify causes of problems," she says.

She says her training in advanced manufacturing processes and robotics gives her a well-rounded knowledge of all aspects of being a technician and working in manufacturing, including lean manufacturing techniques that cut waste



Rebecca Stoops, Ivy Tech advanced automation & robotics student. Photo by Martin Boling

and improve efficiency. "I'm learning the big picture of how things work in the manufacturing environment, and safety factors," Stoops says.

What's more, she's having a good time in small classes of about 10 students.

"I really like the instructors," Stoops says. "They have a lot of experience in the manufacturing industry. They push me and challenge me and give the class hands-on experience with a lot of equipment. I've never been to a class where more people are happy to be there. You feel good when you're able to fix and make things in class."

The 2012 Bloomington High School North graduate says she feels fortunate to earn her degree with no upfront costs through the Achieve Your Degree program. Ivy Tech assists students with the college and financial aid application process, and defers billing until the semester's end. After financial aid is obtained, employers pay tuition costs in accordance with their current policy.

Stoops says Catalent pays tuition if students earn A's or B's. So far, she says, she has earned all A's.

Employers customize Achieve Your Degree by selecting degree programs based on company needs. More than 200 students are now enrolled in Bloomington from 16 employers, and Ivy Tech expects enrollment to grow. Statewide, more than 100 companies participate.

When she's finished her degree, Stoops expects the benefits to continue. "I'm getting more skills under my belt," she says. "It will help me advance at Catalent and qualify for different jobs."

Employers can learn more about Achieve Your Degree™ by arranging a time for Ivy Tech to visit. Contact Jessica Duncan at [jduncan71@ivytech.edu](mailto:jduncan71@ivytech.edu) or (812) 330-6349.



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