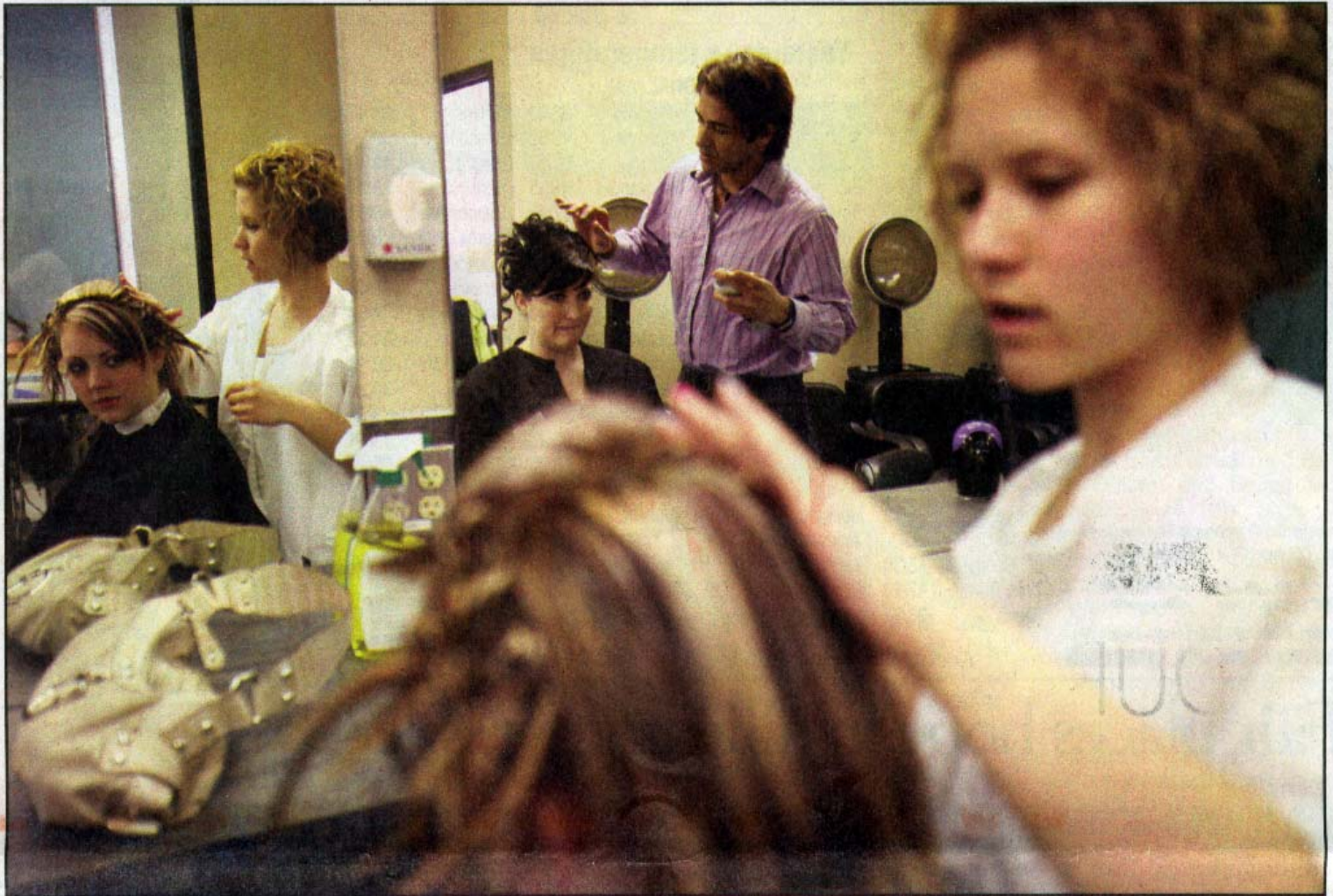


PROFESSIONAL LINKS



DJAMILA GROSSMAN/ Standard-Examiner

(From left) Brittany Prescott, Jessica Wetters, Audra Herle and Bruno Do'Santos work on each others' hair Thursday at the Ogden-Weber Applied Technology College in Roy.

Custom-fit training is key to Roy Business Link

By **BROOKE NELSON**

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ROY — Rhonda Shaw had no bookkeeping experience before offering to help her husband with a startup business, but she caught on and kept things running.

Three years later, she needed to upgrade her skills but decided a four-year college degree wasn't a good fit.

"I couldn't bite off college — financial or timewise. They make you take all these other classes that aren't necessary," she said.

"I just needed the skills to do my job."

Enrolled in an accounting

technician course, Shaw said the custom-fit training at the Ogden-Weber Applied Technology College's Roy campus, 1843 W. 4000 South, met her needs.

"We're saving a lot of money (because we aren't) calling the accountant," she said. "It's helped us to better understand our cash flows and how we're doing as a business."

Custom-fit training is a key component of the new Roy Business Link. The expanded campus of the OWATC has been running since September as a resource for local businesses.

Home-based entrepreneurs can meet their clients for free in small offices in the building instead of in their living rooms.

"Or you might have a

manufacturing company that's holding meetings in their break room," custom-fit training manager Monica Schwenk said of the fully equipped boardroom also available for free use.

"We just want to be a link and a resource for the business community."

The facility also offers more than 1,000 possible courses in safety training, project management, software training and other topics to help businesses stay ahead of their competitors.

This training is crucial in a community in which 71 percent of businesses employ 10 people or fewer, said Jim Taggart, vice

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president of instruction.

“It’s a great opportunity for generating growth,” he said of the custom-fit training. “Small business is really a huge chunk of the economy in Weber County.”

The school also houses The Final Touch hair salon, where cosmetology students earning their last hours of certification operate as their own small business.

The Roy campus also houses a real estate school.

“This is a buyer’s marketplace,” said instructor Lee Holt. “I have four major real estate firms calling to ask when our next student body will be graduating. They’re saying, ‘We’re too busy.’”

Students can choose to be certified as a real estate agent, broker or a mortgage officer, or as a principal lending manager.

The math classes required for certain business and real estate certifications are taught on site in a self-paced format. Also taught are remedial courses that will transfer to Weber State University.

Since September, the campus has averaged 200 students per month and provided five free business seminars to the public.

Full-time tuition at the technical college is about \$200 per month, Schwenk said, and many students are eligible for government, employer or scholarship assistance.

Shaw said staying ahead was as easy as taking the first step back into school.

“It’s not as scary as a lot of people might think. People that have been out of the school atmosphere for a long time are intimidated by that, but the different ages and skill levels make it so it’s not an issue.”

For more information, visit www.owatc.edu/roy.