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'Without STCC, I wouldn't be here'

Springfield Technical Community College graduate Tanner Glantz watched with pride as the \$2.7 billion nuclear-powered attack submarine, the future USS Vermont, was christened in October during a ceremony.

As the ship's manager, Glantz is responsible for overseeing the construction of the vessel which one day will be packed with torpedoes and missiles and will carry out a variety of missions around the world.

"I'm directly responsible for the overall cost schedule and safety of the ship," said Glantz, who grew up in Springfield. "I need to make sure we hit our milestones - on time and under budget - and deliver a good product to the United States Navy."

Overseeing the work on the ship, now known as pre-commissioning unit (PCU) Vermont, will be Glantz's full-time job until the 377-foot-long submarine with a hull diameter of 34 feet is delivered in the fall 2019. Once commissioned, the ship will carry 134 sailors and will be capable of delivering special operations forces, conducting surveillance, intelligence and reconnaissance, among other stealth

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Tanner Glantz, a STCC graduate, works at Electric Boat in Groton, Conn., where he is overseeing construction of a nuclear-powered submarine.

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missions.

"The christening was one milestone among many milestones to go. Outfitting the vessel is a 65-month process from start to finish," he explained.

Glantz has been a ship manager since Feb. 2017, when he oversaw work on the USS Illinois. He worked in other positions at General Dynamics Electric Boat in Groton, Conn., ascending through the ranks since being hired in 2007.

But he credits his degree from STCC with getting his foot in the door.

"Without STCC, I wouldn't be here," Glantz said. "The STCC degree provided me an opportunity to obtain a job at Electric Boat. I started here in 2007 in sonar engineering, which was a direct result of my Laser Electro Optics Technology degree at STCC. EB was looking for people specifically with fiber optic skill."

The laser program - now known as Optics and Photonics Technology - provides

students with a solid working knowledge in a broad range of photonics areas, including laser systems, electronics, optics, electro-optics and fiber optics.

Nicholas Massa, department chair, described Optics and Photonics Technology as a hidden gem at STCC.

"We prepare our students to enter the workforce as technicians, where they can make good salaries," Massa said. "The jobs are there. Companies want to hire our graduates. They can't fill their positions fast enough."

Massa said Glantz's story illustrates how someone can obtain a degree from STCC's Optics and Photonics Technology program and find an exciting and successful career.

"I'm proud of Tanner, and it's inspiring to hear how much he has accomplished since he left STCC," Massa said. "He's in a field that continues to grow. Companies like Electric Boat will need technicians in the coming years, and we're here to train them and get them ready to go to work."

STCC President John B. Cook said the Optics and

Photonics Technology program teaches students about innovative technology and prepares them for careers in advanced manufacturing.

"The program provides students with hands-on experience using state-of-the-art laser equipment," Cook said. "Our graduates are ready to start working after earning an associate degree, or they can continue with their education at a four-year institution. Whichever path they choose, we are always thrilled to hear how our graduates are doing."

After receiving his associate degree from STCC, Glantz transferred to Central Connecticut University, where he earned his bachelor's degree in electrical engineering technology. He then joined Electric Boat. While Glantz had earned his bachelor's degree, Electric Boat was focused on his fiber optic knowledge, which he acquired at STCC.

While working at Electric Boat, Glantz continued with his education and earned a master's degree from the University of New Haven.

While his days now are focused on the deadlines

and details related to the construction and delivery of a nuclear submarine, Glantz still carries fond memories of his time at STCC. He enjoyed playing sports on the campus green and studying at his own pace.

"It was a great environment to obtain an education," Glantz said. "I enjoyed the flexibility. I can't say enough about the professors."

A father of three, Glantz hopes STCC will continue to

be a family tradition in the years to come.

"You better believe my kids will be taking the same path that I took," Glantz said. "It's more affordable than starting at a four-year school, and I met a lot of great people who helped me along the way."

Interested in applying to STCC's Optics and Photonics Technology program? Visit stcc.edu/apply or call the admissions office at 413-755-3333.