

# American Graduates to Fly Pioneering Falcon



America's very first Bachelor of Science in Maritime Technology, offered by Northwestern Michigan College, is to get a special Falcon ROV. In what the college describes as a pioneering new capability, the Falcon will be fitted with an advanced sonar system that will help graduates to study ROVs as a multicomponent resource used across a wide range of subsea activities.

Students will employ the Falcon to evaluate systems integration and the effect on underwater performance when different equipment is added. They will also benefit from first-hand experience in piloting the ROV under International Marine Contractors Association guidelines.

The aim of the BSc programme is for graduates to be proficient in applied technology for the marine industry onshore and offshore. Their studies cover the calibration, deployment, operation, maintenance and management of marine technology assets, including data collection, processing and mapping.

The Falcon's distributed intelligent control architecture makes it straightforward to add and change a variety of systems, including manipulators, cutters, cameras and survey and sonar systems. It has enabled the college to develop its pioneering concept that for the first time incorporates a Kongsberg M3 multi-beam sonar and a Greensea station-keeping system onto an ROV the size of a Falcon.

The college believes this capability will significantly enhance the experience of the students in exploring and extending technological capabilities of ROV operations and management. The sonar system will enable students to experience a range of imaging and profiling data collection options that include bathymetric measurement, seafloor imaging, obstacle avoidance, structural inspection and vessel hull inspection.

Students will have the opportunity to operate the Falcon in the Great Lakes from a research vessel or dockside, and in a newly built test tank facility with a 260,000 litre capacity.

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