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HCC in the News: Students becoming certified firefighters at HCC

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With more than 50 wildfires burning across the state, it's important to find well-trained men and women who are ready to do this tough job.

Some 150 students in Hillsborough Community College's Fire Academy are on their way to certification with some intense training.

These cadets are done with their bookwork and finally getting hands on, gearing up, pulling



hoses, working a ladder and even practicing saving a life.

"It's tough. It's definitely tough." Jasmine Sieben said.

Sieben can't wait to be a full-fledged firefighter, but she says it's much more difficult than people think.

"Our bookwork is pretty rigorous and the physical side obviously. So, there's more than just coming here and learning a trade," Sieben said. "You need to prepare yourself before you even come to this class.

"You need to work on your cardio. You need to make sure you have solid study habits."

Instructor Dusty Mascaro says the state of Florida needs as many certified firefighters as it can get. Especially in times like these, when wildfires are burning across the state.

Mascaro said at HCC, they train the cadets beyond what the state requires, which includes fighting wildfires.

Watching these fires burn out of control, makes students like Steven Marshall even more determined to get on the front lines.

"We do get wild land certified and it was just recent so to have these come up and to have that certification come up within the last few weeks," Marshall said. "It shows how relevant it is.

"The things we learn in this class are applied to real life."

These students will be certified and ready to serve in June.

The Fire Academy at HCC [2] offers two options for students: Full time takes about four months going Monday through Thursday. Classes started Monday.

Part time offers classes on evenings and weekends over a seven-month period. The next session is July 10. **Click here for more information.** [2]

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