One of the newest faculty members and program chairs at Sullivan College of Technology & Design (SCTD) earned recognition at the Kentucky Association of Career Colleges and Schools (KACCS) annual conference at Sullivan University on August 22. Malandra Gibson, chairperson of the Interior Design department, was named the KACCS 2014 Rising Star among faculty. She, along with seven other applicants, competed for this award and for the Instructor of the Year Award.

Malandra is a professional interior designer who joined SCTD as the Interior Design program chairperson and instructor in the fall of 2013. She is an active member of professional organizations, including the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) and the International Interior Design Association (IIDA). She is active with the National Kitchen and Bath Association (NKBA) and has helped boost enrollment and participation in the NBKA’s local group. She also sits on the Interior Design advisory board at Western Kentucky University.

Between her work with professional organizations and her networking with individuals in the field, she is able to stay up to date with current and future trends in the field and, in turn, influence the interior design industry and its markets. These close relationships have led to curriculum development and modifications, ensuring that SCTD Interior Design students are familiar with the tools being used on the job and that employers find SCTD’s graduates to be proficient with current software.

Malandra also recognizes the importance of working as a team member with the academic and evening division deans and the student services coordinator to address barriers students may encounter while working toward their degrees. She cares about her students and strives to help each of them achieve their career goals. By getting to know each student as an individual, she has been able to diagnose student issues and help them overcome challenges, ultimately keeping them on a path toward graduation when odds may have been against their completion without her intervention.

Students in Malandra’s program have had the opportunity to partner with students in other departments to work on projects. Some have partnered with Metro Louisville and/or OpportunitySpace to gain real-world experiences. She also facilitated a student redesign of the large student lounge at SCTD, which provided more real world experiences that students need.

A co-worker of hers states that Malandra, "has breathed new life into the department and her passion is contagious. She has received full support and appreciation from the Interior
Design instructors and they are excited again about the potential of this program."

One student said, "She was so great with all of us and she worked with each of us as much as possible."

Another student stated, "She pushes me to do my best. Although it's a lot of work, I enjoy every aspect of it because it has taught me a lot about myself as a designer."

After careful review of all the applications, student and community letters and exhibits from each of the applicants, the KACCS selection committee narrowed the field to eight finalists. Of these, Malandra was chosen as the 2014 KACCS Rising Star Instructor. Congratulations to Malandra Gibson!

Photo Caption: Malandra Gibson, 2014 KACCS Rising Star