Missoula College Information Technology Program Advisory Board

Minutes 10/8/2020

Attendees:

Rob Ball—Allegiance

Marc Dousset—Axiom

Mary Worden-Blackfoot Communications

Martina Pansze—Montana High Tech Business Alliance

Tom Gallagher—Missoula College

Victor Valgenti—Missoula College

Meeting minutes (heavily abbreviated and paraphrased)

* Introductions (all around)
  + Missoula College will host a Gen-Cyber Summer Institute for Junior High students summer of 2021 to teach students Cyber Security concepts and hopefully engender interest in STEM fields and cyber security.
  + Missoula College Information Technology program is benefitting from a GEER IT grant for bringing together 2-year colleges in collaboration as well as developing a cyber range for Cyber Security training.
  + Missoula College is now offering a certificate in cloud computing and is adding more cloud computing to the curriculum as well as focusing on cyber security with an ethical hacking course.
* Internships vs Cert:
  + The question was whether businesses had a preference for either certifications or internships (or both).
  + Consensus is that Internships train workers in soft skills and some hard skills but are generally desirable for students.
    - Internships can be difficult in some circumstances as the specifics of the work may require too much effort for employer and prove too specific for student.
    - Internships are a way for a business to give back to the community.
  + In general, the idea of Micro-certificates (i.e. short courses covering fairly specific skills) was well received.
  + It was noted that apprenticeships (and internships) were ways for companies to give back to the community.
* The question was asked if short courses in continuing education would be useful
  + The consensus was positive especially in areas of Programming, Networking, and Security
  + Also noted that doing training in-house can be expensive, so alternatives would be welcome.
  + Project Management, less focused on certification (more agile/less dense) would also be desirable.
* The question was asked if Missoula College could put together 20 hour courses (in a continuing education format) if that would be useful?
  + The consensus was that it would be useful depending on the subjects, of course.
  + Would be very useful for security skills as training in security is time intensive.
  + Would be useful for programming. Programmers that can program one language well is a value-add. .net is especially important locally.
* Programmers are needed in Missoula. Locally supply is dried up.
  + Question asked if code school works
    - Answer was there is a need for programmers. As long as they can program one language well there is work.
  + Most frequent needed skill locally is programming.