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.