Computer Science Bachelor of Science
Focus Group Meeting Minutes
10/19/2023 from 12 p.m. to 1:15 p.m.
Student Center Conference Rooms

Presenters:

- Ellen (Facilitator, Zoom)
- Kia (Facilitator, In-Person)

Attendees:

- Ron Wright, Wahkiakum Instructor
- Larry Davidson, Orion Science of Technology
- Seth Hart, City of Longview
- Elkan Wollenberg, Red Canoe
- Steve Jones, ALCOA (retired)
- David Wallis, City of Longview
- Tracy Stanley, Information Technology LCC
- Mike Price, Kelso School District
- Terri Brewer, UKG
- Corky Jackson, Westrock
- Sean Moore, Workforce SW WA

- Jodi Hines, NWP
- Vickei Hrdina, ESD 112
- Bill Ofstun, Longview Public Schools
- Kristen Finnel (LCC – Vice President)
- Tamra Gilchrist (LCC - Dean)
- Michaela Jackson (LCC - Director)
- Mark Gaither (LCC - Faculty)
- Jennie Bergman (LCC Advisory)
- Devin Hendricks (LCC STEM Advisor)
- Nicole Faber (LCC Outreach)

Agenda:

1. Introduction of Artemis Connection Team
2. Discussion on Bachelor of Science in Computer Science Program
3. Employment Needs and Degree Relevance
4. Open Discussion and Q&A

1. Introduction of Artemis Connection Team

- **Ellen**: Facilitator for Zoom with 6 years of international experience in management consulting and brand strategy. Formerly with Proctor and Gamble, L'Oréal, and a Swedish brand strategy firm. Holds a Master's in Business Management and an MBA.
- **Kia**: Facilitator for in-person attendees with 15 years of experience in strategy advising across various sectors. Principal at Artemis with a BA in Psychology and an MBA.

2. Discussion on Bachelor of Science in Computer Science Program

- The new degree program is a four-year Bachelor's, targeting high school students, unlike the existing two-year applied science degrees.
- Aim: To assess employability and industry needs for graduates, focusing on aligning the program with what employers seek.

3. Employment Needs and Degree Relevance

- **Roles Requiring IT Degrees**: IT specialists, network technicians, and roles overseeing student information security.
- **Degree Alignment**: Includes Computer Science, Digital Forensics, and Business Administration. Employers prefer candidates with degrees but also value practical experience.
- **Financial Assistance**: Some organizations offer financial support for employees pursuing further education.

4. Open Discussion and Q&A

- **Skills and Experience**: Degrees are often required, but experience, communication, and teamwork are crucial.
- **Hiring Challenges**: Difficulty finding candidates with both technical skills and effective communication abilities. Smaller organizations need versatile individuals.
- **Educational Impact**: Curriculum should focus on technical proficiency, communication, and real-world applications.

5. Industry-Specific Needs

- **Ken Taylor**: Emphasized the importance of automation, machine learning, and technology integration in the steel industry and other sectors.
- **Program Focus**: Need for balancing broad education with specialization. Curriculum should include practical skills and project management.

6. K-12 and Community Involvement

- Increased engagement with K-12 and rural community schools was suggested. Partnerships with organizations like the Telephone Memorial Institute for STEM education were recommended.

7. Next Steps

- **Data Collection**: Surveys to be distributed to employers and students to assess needs and program feasibility.
- **Feasibility Study**: Statement of Need and Feasibility Study to evaluate the viability of the degree program, including faculty availability and program requirements.
- **Program Development Timeline**: Estimated two-year development process, with potential launch in Fall 2025.
- **Advisory Committee Formation**: A committee will be formed to support program development and current IT degree offerings.
- **Continued Engagement**: Attendees are encouraged to remain involved in ongoing development and advisory roles.

Action Items:

1. **Review Degree Relevance**: Reassess the importance of specific degrees versus practical skills for hiring purposes.
2. **Curriculum Development**: Explore incorporating soft skills and practical technology applications into educational programs.
3. **Industry Collaboration**: Engage with local industries to align educational programs with industry needs.

Meeting Adjourned: 1:15 PM