CTEC -MINUTES
October 24, 2025, at 8:00 AM
Zoom

Members Present: Lucas Mason (Committee Chair), Software Developer, JRT Mechanical; Ray Nelson (Vice-Chair), Instructor, Cascadia Technical Academy; Sean Strauss, Founder, Insight Interview; Tom Strobehn, Owner, Fastech Solutions; Patrick Earl, Software Developer, MSVC USA

Guests:

Members Absent:

Clark College: Bruce Elgort, CTEC Instructor, Clark College; Adam Coleman, CTEC Instructor, Clark College; Elizabeth Flores, Advisory Coordinator, Clark College

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The meeting began at 8:02 AM, and a quorum was met.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The committee has a tentative meeting scheduled for January 30th, 2026. The committee will meet during the spring quarter on May 29, 2025, in person.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes from the previous meeting on May 2, 2025, were approved.

Introduction

The committee conducted introductions and introduced a new committee member, Sean Strauss.

WORK PLAN

Bruce shared that the work plan was reviewed in the previous spring meeting.

WEB DEVELOPMENT – IN-PERSON CLASSES

Bruce announced that core web development coding classes will return to fully in-person delivery beginning Winter and Spring 2026. Some supporting courses will continue to be offered online. Remote and online learners will use AI-supported tools to help assess student learning.
Sean expressed support for in-person instruction, noting that online learning can amplify comprehension when used intentionally.

Tom also supported in-person learning, emphasizing that limited hands-on experience negatively impacts students when entering the workforce.
Sean noted that offering one or two online class days mid-term would likely not cause harm.
Bruce shared that one current course already meets in person every other week.
Patrick asked whether the program anticipates enrollment loss due to the shift.
Bruce acknowledged this is possible but emphasized that modeling professional workplace expectations is a guiding principle of the program.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) & CURRICULUM

Bruce asked about the current demographics of developers.
Patrick noted that the average age of developers is decreasing.
Tom shared that AI will significantly change the workforce.
Bruce explained that AI use is guarded in introductory courses to ensure students still gain foundational knowledge. The program continues to explore how fundamental courses should evolve in the future.
Sean stated that students must demonstrate understanding of arithmetic, algebra, and number systems (base 2 and base 16), recommending passing assessments to progress into advanced programs.
Bruce noted that while web development does not rely heavily on binary, the college maintains open access with prerequisites.
Ray shared that Washington State is pushing early coding education, including Minecraft, at the middle-school level.
Patrick and Tom agreed that while AI will accelerate productivity, students must still understand core fundamentals to use AI effectively.
Lucas asked about infrastructure knowledge and system handling.
Patrick explained that industry work is iterative, sprint-based, fully tested, and focused on continuous improvement.
Bruce shared that AI is currently used as a tutoring tool to reinforce basic concepts. He asked whether students still need to recognize and understand lines of code.
Tom and Sean both agreed that foundational coding knowledge remains essential.
Ray shared that Cascadia Tech emphasizes deconstructing computers to build critical thinking skills, stressing that students must understand fundamentals to ask the right questions and provide the right inputs.
Sean asked whether courses need to change.
Adam confirmed that the program evolves regularly, with foundational updates approximately every three years.
Tom asked whether IT project management is taught, citing a workforce gap.
Bruce confirmed it is covered, and Adam noted that curriculum adjustments occur nearly every quarter.
Tom requested copies of the course map, course descriptions, and catalog.
Action Item:

- Bruce will send links to web development and computer support course catalogs.

Tom requested that major course changes be brought to the committee for review.
Bruce agreed, and Adam welcomed ongoing industry feedback.

OPEN DISCUSSION – INDUSTRY FEEDBACK

Bruce asked what employers appreciate or find lacking in new hires.
Lucas cited gaps in infrastructure knowledge and understanding how to apply written code.
Bruce noted that two years is a short timeframe for learning and that AI may help bridge gaps.
Tom emphasized the importance of setting student expectations that their education provides a foundation, not mastery.
Tom shared concerns that students struggle to build on their education post-graduation, particularly with managing AI tools. He sees this at both the state and Managed Service Provider (MSP) levels and suggested continuing education for IT professionals.
Action Item:

- Bruce will speak with Patricia FitzPatrick and Laura in Continuing Education about offering AI-focused professional development.

Tom shared that he may be forming a state-level committee and invited support.
Sean and Bruce offered assistance.
Sean noted that many businesses adopted AI with unrealistic short-term expectations. Employers expect rapid turnaround, making communication skills critical. Students must be taught how to manage expectations and timelines.
Patrick discussed current software usage and emphasized the need for a strong technical knowledge base, viewing AI as an accelerator rather than a replacement.
Ray emphasized logic, workflow, and process understanding. He suggested running a full class day in Microsoft Teams to simulate a professional work environment.
Tom supported this learning model.
Ray discussed course scheduling and prerequisites with NTEC, noting the lack of articulation agreements.
Tom asked whether Clark offers migration coursework.
Adam shared that foundational concepts are taught.
Bruce noted declining enrollments and shifts toward DMA programs.
Tom suggested offering courses not available at local universities to attract more students.
Adam reiterated that his goal is to teach awareness and conceptual understanding.
Sean asked for clarity around what is considered foundational versus advanced creation skills.
Action Item:

- Elizabeth will invite Dwight to the next meeting.

CERTIFICATIONS

Adam shared that the Washington State Library provides access to certain certifications and asked members to share relevant opportunities.

Tom reported seeing fewer certifications among applicants and prioritizes experience and interpersonal skills.
Bruce discussed students completing Harvard CS50 certifications and highlighted recent student recognition at the executive level.
Ray emphasized the importance of real-world experience.
Tom described his company's interview and evaluation process.
Sean recommended incorporating resilience training, including maintaining composure and leadership in challenging situations.
Tom highlighted the importance of teaching students about decompression tools.
Sean recommended curriculum content focused on communication skills, emotional regulation, and managing expectations with managers and customers.
Tom invited committee members and faculty to visit his workplace.
Sean supported the idea.
Bruce welcomed suggestions for expanding and diversifying committee membership.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Ray nominated Lucas as Committee Chair; Tom seconded. Motion approved.
Ray volunteered to serve as Vice Chair; Tom seconded. Motion approved.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 am

Prepared by Elizabeth Flores