School of Media and Information Technologies
3000 College Drive South • Lethbridge, AB T1K 1L6
Email: cit@lethbridgecollege.ca
Phone: 403-320-3468

Computer Information Technology
Advisory Committee Meeting

Minutes
March 8, 2022
Time: 6:00 – 8:00 PM
ZOOM: https://lethbridgecollege.zoom.us/j/91841449656

COMMITTEE CHAIR: Chris Rabl

PRESENT

Chris Rabl - Autovance Technologies	**Terry Kowalchuk** - Dean
Norm Nelson - Whipcord	**Candace Lewko** - Associate Dean
Nathan Sailer - Southland Trailers	**Toni Gfrerer** - Program Assistant
Lee Mosemann - Paytm Labs	**Timothy Frantz** - Faculty
Matthew Lynch - Service Alberta	**Stephen Graham** - Faculty
Brock Price - Altis MSP	**Shoja Mazidi** - Faculty
Nicole Geske - Surex	**Barry Robinson** - Faculty
Fergus Raphael - Tangle Media	**Briana Fleckenstein** - Academic Advisor
Barbara Jona, Natsi Abong - 1st Year Student Rep	**Shealyn Cossette** - 2nd Year Student Rep

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS
Chris called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm. He thanked everyone for attending.
ACTION ITEM: do not skip introductions in the future

APPROVAL OF AGENDA
MOTIONED and APPROVED

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
MOTIONED and APPROVED

DEAN AND ASSOCIATE DEAN COMMENTS
- Terry Kowalchuk, Dean
    - Thanked everyone for attending and staying connected with the CIT program, faculty and students.
    - Advisory members are so valuable to setting the direction of our curriculum.
    - We try to create the best experience for our students.

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- o Thank you to faculty, Candace, Deb and Toni for doing everything possible to meet the needs we had to deal with.
- o We are essentially back to normal and back on campus.
- o Post-secondary budgets have been cut again. We are functioning with a lot less public service dollars and a lot more student tuition dollars.
- o Has about 15% less dollars to work with this year than he had three years go
- o The Work Integrated Learning is a big part of this program and we are working towards more of that across our institution. It is the link to successful program and successful experiences for graduates.
- o Lethbridge College focusing on youth strategy, trying to get more and more students interested in our programming and the careers that our programming will lead them to in the future.
- o Looking at youth strategy plans for things as simple as an elementary school, summer camps.
- o Exploratory programming focus are grades nine and ten.
- o Dual credit was launched last semester (fall), we had 21 students, this semester (winter) we have 75 students.
- o Many dual credit students out there that are exploring programming.

- Candace Lewko, Associate Dean
  - o Thanked the Advisory Committee for attending.
  - o March 1st restrictions were lifted on campus
  - o Understands the challenges and transition back to on campus has been a difficult one for students.
  - o Resilience is incredible, eventually you become good problem solvers and you have the instructors as your mentors
  - o Early Alert Reporting System - students that are facing challenges in the academic environment or dealing with mental health issues, we use this system, which alerts the appropriate people.
  - o Student support available - academic advisors and the Learning Café.
  - o Motivation Coaches for student's available, students are lacking motivation.
  - o In terms of Applications for CIT for Fall 2022, we are doing very well, target is 90 and we are at 62 applications as of March 7th.
  - o International students, market continues to be very strong.
  - o Youth strategy - looking at summer camps for students. Program chairs have been asked what ideas they have for summer camps, for middle school students or even high school students.
  - o Synergies between dual credit and summer camps.
  - o Putting Lethbridge College into the community more and more, in hopes that Lethbridge College becomes the number one choice for post-secondary for our prospective students.

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- o Open House was held on Saturday, March 5th. There was great energy and excitement of being on campus. Craig, student representative from the CIT program was on hand interacting with prospective students, parents, etc. He loves the CIT program and had nothing but great things to say.
  - o It was a great strategy having the student representatives there; this strategy will be used in future open houses.
- Stephen Graham
  - o Historically, this open house has not been the strongest recruiting tool. The fall open house typically does better for the CIT program.
- Candace Lewko
  - o There are two research funds available for our instructors at the institution, one is called the Centre for Applied Research Innovation Fund and the other is the Scholarship of Teaching Learning Fund, which involves students as well. Shoja was the successful recipient of the Scholarship of Teaching Learning Fund and he is currently working on a project with students.
- Shoja Mazidi
  - o Two students that are part of this research
  - o This has to do with implementation of IoT (Internet of Things). It introduces students to IoT, which uses Raspberry Pi to remotely access sensors that are attached to it. They will eventually implement one lab going to the Aqua Centre, setting up the lab as part of the network, which will examine the response from the sensor and collect data.
  - o The Aqua Centre, as part of their new installations will see how it is going to help them collect and analyze data to optimize operations.
  - o Students have two labs that they will utilize the Raspberry Pi.
  - o Various sensors such as temperature, pH and water will be incorporated with remote access to their cell phone, computer or devices.
  - o It all combines the understanding of programming, hardware, networking and interface.
- Candace Lewko
  - o **ACTION ITEM:** share results of the SOTL project with Advisory members.
- Shoja Mazidi
  - o Invite the CIT Advisory Members to the lab, to see what they have been working on.
- Chris Rabl
  - o **ACTION ITEM:** invite CIT Advisory Members to tour the lab

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PROGRAM UPDATES

- o CIT-2275 Final Presentations - Tim thanked Chris for his contributions to the final presentations that were held in December. Chris' support of our program through his involvement and leadership is appreciated beyond expression.
- o Thank you to our Advisory Members for your continuous involvement and contribution to the CIT program.
- o CIT-2276 Final Presentations (finished projects) - Save the Date for Friday, April 22nd.
- o IT Integration Seminar (professional development course) - Tim thanked Lee Mosemann for coming in and sharing some amazing stories of the real world.
- o Speed Networking Night - we had planned to have one in January, but with the enhanced COVID restrictions, we were unable to do so.
- o Speed Interviews - we are hoping to have this event next year; it was cancelled this year, as we did not have enough employers sign up. We need a minimum of 10 employers for this event.
- o Students are having a hard time adjusting with going from online classes last year to back in person classes this year. Their work ethics are not strong.
- o Struggle to get enough practicums for students
- o Move has been on to try to get the practicums done earlier and earlier.
- o Many students have part-time jobs, so juggling school, work and practicum is a challenge. Faculty are seeing student burnout.
- o Most students wait until school is over and then they do their 200 practicum hours.
- o Been challenging with the back and forth of classes.
- o There has been a slight modification in the Mobile App Development course, as they are now teaching React Native.

STUDENT REPORTS

- Shealyn Cossette - 2nd Year Student Representative
  - o Motivation continues to be a challenge for students.
  - o Students do not like to turn on their cameras.
  - o The term they came up with is work, life, school whiplash.
  - o Feel like they need a push in the right direction.
  - o For the most part, students are excited to be back into it.
  - o Second year students trying to figure out what they are going to do.
  - o Thankful to instructors for understanding, being flexible and patient, while they readjust to the work, life balance.
  - o As graduation approaches, students are feeling 40/60, 40% not prepared.
  - o Students are wondering how interviews will go, what's been covered or not covered, what type of questions will be asked.
  - o Nervous about their first steps into a new career.

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- o They feel prepared when it comes to languages.
- o Half of the classmates have a high drive for achievement and are looking to further their education at University and complete two more years.
- o The other students want to jump right into their career.
- o Shealyn's plan is to complete the Computer Information program and then enrol in Virtual Augmented Reality.
- o The biggest difference in the last year is how they communicated. They went from meeting people online to now having to come on campus and communicate face to face, it has been a reality check.
- o It is easier to go to a student and ask for help than an instructor, as a student is on the same level, easier to understand.
- o Easier to ask for help online (email, chat, discord) versus going and asking an instructor face-to-face. Worried about what instructors will think if they ask for help? Will they think we are not listening and paying attention? At the same time, we know they understand and are here for us, but it is overwhelming.
- o Perhaps offer classes online and in person, lectures online and hands on practical classes, students come on campus.
- Barbara Jona, Natsi Abong - 1st Year Student Representative
  - o Motivation is a challenge, less and less students coming to class.
  - o Students do not like to turn on cameras.
  - o Agrees with Shealyn, that they need a push in the right direction.
  - o Some students are only showing up on campus to write their exams.
  - o Students are finding it hard to balance school and work, feeling burnt out.
  - o Assignments and issues, first year students getting help from second year students on Discord.
  - o Tend to learn better from other students than instructors.
  - o Appreciate the recorded lectures.
  - o Some of the courses are overwhelming.
  - o Recorded lectures are helpful, as you can refer back to them.
  - o Students are changing careers based on how they like their courses.
  - o Instructors are very understanding and flexible with students.

MOTION TO TAKE A FIVE-MINUTE BREAK

7:28 PM TO 7:33 pm
MOTIONED and APPROVED

INDUSTRY DISCUSSION

- Nicole Geske, Surex, Business Analyst
  - o Surex is an insurance company where you can go online, enter your information and get quotes from about 10 or so insurance providers.
  - o Surex has been trying to hire developers since November.

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- o   Focus has been Ontario.
- o   Competition for developers is quite high right now.
- o   Biggest challenge is finding staff.
- o   People turning jobs down because they are not remote.
- o   High demand in industry in terms of technologies.
- Chris Rabl, Quorum Information Technologies
  - o   Formally transitioning our brand into the one quorum brand.
  - o   Moving towards a more empowered product team approach, which involves a new set of skills that the development team has had to learn.
  - o   Also making the transition to more formalized Agile Methodology.
  - o   Seeing more developer involvement in all of the scrum ceremonies.
  - o   In addition to things like user acceptance testing, doing more iterative quality assurance.
- Matthew Lynch, Service Alberta
  - o   In November, 2020 hiring round with an excess of 300 qualified applicants.
  - o   In February, 2022 had another hiring round, very similar position, had 50 applicants.
  - o   Many challenges in terms of expectations of prospects, people pushing for remote work.
  - o   They have a requirement that you have to live somewhere in Alberta and that becomes a red point.
- Fergus Raphael, Tangle Media
  - o   University has become the pool that they are drawing from more so than the college. This is because the barrier to entry just within their organization has grown steadily higher.
  - o   When COVID hit, they were faced with the most incredible surge and demand for services.
  - o   When you are in a remote work environment, it removes many of the barriers to entry for project-based work.
  - o   It might be an interesting opportunity for students to get their feet wet and to get started in the real world.
  - o   Specialize at what you are good at, get a good rating and earn some extra cash.
  - o   Rise of No Code and how it fits in the theme of gig work; it is becoming part of the world. The proliferation of No Code tools is fascinating.
  - o   No code can be a way to get working tools that demonstrate concepts relatively quickly.
  - o   For prototyping, it is an unbelievable asset if used correctly.
- Stephen Graham, CIT Faculty
  - o   From the college's perspective, in what we deliver and what we create, we need to prepare people to support it, train it, and work within those frameworks that are the current version.

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- Matthew Lynch
  - Complexity of what you are building.
  - Operational parameters and considerations with licensing.
- Lee Mosemann, Paytm Labs, Site Reliability Engineer
  - Does not see No Code as a giant threat to developer's future.
- Barry Robinson, CIT Faculty
  - How do our students make the jump to using these advanced tools? What background is required? How do you go from building blocks?
- Fergus Raphael
  - Tools are utterly simple and fantastic points into concepts.
  - A great way to have an introductory experience with concepts that can be scaled into a more advanced angle.
  - Not more complicated nor advanced, it is a gradual easing the curve on something where then, if you have experienced some of these tools, is a fantastic way for a student to push outside the boundaries.
- Chris Rabl
  - Students have a tendency to embrace these sorts of prototyping environments or low code environments.
  - Incorporating rapid prototyping into the curriculum is an entry point.
  - Retool is the perfect toolset to start introducing to students as a means of a rapid prototyping. A way of demonstrating very advanced concepts in a fairly simple and easy to understand way.
- Matthew Lynch
  - Core knowledge, understanding how things work and why they work, are all foundational concepts.
  - When evaluating candidate's skills that he looks for our troubleshooting skills and critical thought.
  - Cares less about particular technologies, as that is easy to teach someone.
  - People who have a solid foundation and have the troubleshooting skills and are capable of critical thought, they are gold.
- Chris Rabl
  - We can bring a subcommittee of the group to discuss these issues on a more regular cadence.
- Stephen Graham
  - How do we bring this into the fold from a curriculum development perspective and from a teaching perspective? How do we know that these are valuable things to incorporate into the program?
- Lee Mosemann
  - There is still a lot of value in teaching the fundamentals from the bottom up. Having people learn the basics of the networks, how the internet works,

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operating systems, the low-level theory to high-level things like how to work with Linus and windows at the server level.
- o Basic low programming languages and learn how to work from the ground up.
- o Encourages the college to try chasing all of the new frameworks.
- o These technologies, there is a ton of value in giving students those fundamentals and letting them know the high level things exist.

OTHER BUSINESS
- Advisory Committee
  - o Discussion of sub committees can take place over chat.
  - o Fireside chats to show students Advisory Members are there for them.
  - o Shealyn suggested inviting Advisory members to join CIT students on Discord.
  - o As per Terry and Candace, Advisory Committee Meetings held annually.
  - o Terry suggested short meetings in addition to Advisory Meetings if needed.
  - o Advisory Committee can stay connected with students by doing presentations, attending CIT events (Networking, Speed Interviews, etc.)
  - o CIT Advisory Committee has 13 members.
- **Chris Rabl**
  - o **ACTION ITEM:** Invite CIT Advisory Members to Discord.
  - o **ACTION ITEM:** before and after in person events, meet for 15-30 minutes for feedback.
- Committee Chair Appointment 2022/2023
  - o Chris motioned for the election of a committee chair and asked for nominations
  - o Chris let his name stand as Chair, no other nominations were received
  - **CHRIS RE-ELECTED AS CHAIR**

NEXT MEETING DATE & TIME
Tuesday, March 7th, 2023 at 6:00 pm

ADJOURNED at 8:30 pm