

# Computer Information Technology Advisory Committee Meeting

## Minutes

March 9, 2021

Time: 6:00 – 8:00 PM

ZOOM: <https://lethbridgecollege.zoom.us/j/91434911591>

**COMMITTEE CHAIR: Chris Rabl**

## PRESENT

**Chris Rabl** - Autovance Technologies  
**Norm Nelson** - Whipcord  
**Nathan Sailer** - Southland Trailers  
**Alfonso DeCicco** - Alberta Health Services  
**Brock Price** - Altis MSP  
**Nicole Geske** - Farmers Edge  
**Fergus Raphael** - Tangle Media  
**Shealyn Cossette** - 1<sup>st</sup> Year Student Rep  
**Megan Hebert** - Career Dev. Coordinator

**Terry Kowalchuk** - Dean  
**Candace Lewko** - Associate Dean  
**Deb Hadley** - Program Chair  
**Toni Gfrerer** - Program Assistant  
**Stephen Graham** - Faculty  
**Timothy Frantz** - Faculty  
**Shoja Mazidi** - Faculty  
**Stephanie Savage** - Alumni Engagement  
**Briana Fleckenstein** - Academic Advisor

## WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Chris called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm. He thanked everyone for attending.

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTIONED and APPROVED

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTIONED and APPROVED

## BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

MOTIONED and APPROVED

- a. **ACTION ITEM:** someone from the CIT Faculty or LXD connect with Teconnect to discuss what they are seeing and what can the college do to help.
  - o Stephen made the connection, encouraged Teconnect and Economic Development to extend their reach and engaged some folks to be tech advisors.

- These tech advisors will act as mentors for students who might be working in practicum placements who do not have tech departments.
- This will give students experience with an IT person.

## DEAN AND ASSOCIATE DEAN COMMENTS

- Terry Kowalchuk, Dean
  - Thanked everyone for attending and staying connected with the CIT program, faculty and students.
  - Hoping normality returns in the fall, with at least 50% return of students to campus
  - Labs, the hands on practical pieces is what we are hoping to be back on campus for.
  - We might continue with online for lectures or students will have the option of online or on campus face to face.
  - High flex delivery, lectures recorded and students can revisit those as many times as they need.
  - Students like and prefer virtual office hours to face-to-face office hours.
  - Funding Model - reduction in the overall operating budget, provincial government paying a smaller portion of the post-secondary costs and students will be paying a bigger portion.
  - Government has stressed the importance of work-integrated learning and Lethbridge College well positioned to meet that challenge. CIT well above other programs with work-integrated learning.
  - We need to have good quality service and good quality experience.
  - Top-notch instructors that are producing top-notch curriculum with top-notch equipment and top-notch industry partners, we have that.
  - We need to be responsive to challenges.
  - Role of Advisory Members - chance for all advisory members to give us perspective on what we can do to create a better curriculum. We want to make sure our curriculum matches industry needs.
  - Appointment letters on behalf of the Board of Governors along with the terms of reference will be issued to all Advisory Committee Members this summer.
- Candace Lewko, Associate Dean
  - Fall 2021 and Winter 2022 we will be moving into Phase 2+ in terms of a more flexible learning environment.
  - We are hoping to provide students with more opportunities for on campus learning experiences.
  - Commend the CIT Faculty for the support they provided students who faced challenges in transitioning into this new delivery model.
  - Student support available - academic advisors and the Learning Café.

- 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.
- Students, faculty and staff, mental health is a priority.
- Motivation Coaches for students available, as we learned in the COVID19 Survey students are lacking motivation.
- New online course called Motivating Virtual Learners.
- Friday, March 12<sup>th</sup> is the Virtual Open House for our Centre.
- In terms of Applications received for CIT for Fall 2021, we are doing very well, around 100 applications received to date.
- International students, market is very strong and in the event they cannot attend our campus, we are able to provide high flex learning.

## PROGRAM UPDATES

- Curriculum built and delivered to students synchronously or asynchronously, at their own pace with repetitions.
- Labs divided into parts, on campus and off campus, one week they are on campus and the other week they are participating in the class via zoom.
- 6 students at a time attend on campus for the CIT-1158 (Computer Networking Labs)
- Hardware course in November/December had six to twelve students in the labs and they did a compressed theory portion prior.
- Course material, all the quizzes, assignments and theory portion all done in the theory week and then the midterm.
- Labs compressed into four days then the final exam.
- Students liked the smaller class sizes, but did not like the compressed information in such a short period. It was hard to learn all the information in such a short time.
- Students are ahead in their projects, doing their schoolwork and adjusting to the COVID life.
- According to Top Programming Community Language Index, Assembly is number nine of the top 10 languages that are very popular right now. The list includes C, Java, Python, C++, C#, Visual Basic, Java Script, PHP, assembly and SQL. CIT teaches six of these languages.

## STUDENT REPORTS

- Shealyn Cossette - 1<sup>st</sup> Year Student Representative
  - Students really enjoy having classes recorded, so they can go back and listen to the class again.
  - Students definitely struggling with motivation, but faculty have been great at engaging conversation.

- Positive and negative comments from students when it comes to classes, but really appreciate having the classes recorded.
- Students getting more comfortable on zoom.
- Internet Connection has been an issue for some students.
- Some of the International students have issues getting on to Discord, so they are looking at different platforms like WhatsApp.

## PRACTICUM DISCUSSION

- The onus is on the students to find a place to work.
- If you have a practicum position, please let Stephen know.
- There are 41 students to place this year and so far, 9 have been placed.
- It was suggested putting a blurb on LinkedIn and Facebook for practicum host.
- Students need to complete 200 hours by June 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- One student has already completed all their work.
- Nathan has found communicating with practicum students via MS Teams has been a challenge this year, as it is connecting through a college guest account. Stephen will follow up with ITS, if they have a solution.
- Present Convocation model does not require you to complete, it requires you to be on track to complete.
- Graduation requires students to have all course work completed.

## INDUSTRY DISCUSSION

- Fergus asked if the College is teaching Agile Development. Is it being taken into account in the Systems Analysis and Design course?
- Shoja - Internet of Things - trying experiments, creating Apps, interfacing with different devices and then analyzing.
- Tim - the majority of the students have never completed a system design; students need to have the basics first.
- Tim - had some projects last year and one this year trying to do Agile and they did not know where to go with it. In the CIT program, we are trying to give them a real experience of understanding systems, analysis and design through their projects. We are teaching them the steps, giving them the basics, the building blocks.
- Chris - there is tension between what the industry desires and how the college can deliver it in a teaching format.
- Nathan - as a senior in Industry, hiring a junior, I will teach them the methodology I want them to use. Hoping that the college is giving them the base and that they know what methodology is. I want them to know how to learn, learn a new product, new methodology or a new development

platform. Students should be capable of taking that on with minimal supervision.

- Chris - what can we do to reduce the tension between teaching a particular set of formal methodologies and aligning better with industry expectations of students once they graduate? Perhaps consultation with employers and then design curriculum around that.
- Tim - we do not force them in any particular methodology, our curriculum is set out to teach them all of the pieces. We teach them how to put those pieces together and how they can use them later. Companies have their own style and their own methodologies.
- Candace - we are looking at integrating or at least aligning Lethbridge College's Core Competencies, life skills into our curriculum  
<https://learninginnovation.ca/student-cc/>
- Megan - foundational skills are not industry specific. We give them the skills to learn those technologies and adapt on a regular basis, we set them up for success.
- Megan - where's the line and ownership between what employers are required to train versus what educational institutions should be teaching.
- Alfonso - looks for students with drive and desire that show they have the ability to adapt and learn.
- Nicole - industry sessions are an opportunity to get exposure.
- Chris - as industry members we should be providing that. Suggested someone from the college reach out to arrange this.
- Fergus - agreed with Nicole and Chris and that the college take this on, as it will increase outcomes in the systems design course for students, giving them better results and projects.
- Terry - something our program will explore, it is a great opportunity to invite industry members into our classes. We could also explore a seminar series; incorporate our work integrated learning piece, where someone in the industry can provide a seminar.
- Shealyn - students love speakers, creates an idea of where they want to go and where they want to be.
- Chris - great opportunity for industry to display their experience.
- Nicole - careers like Business Analysts and Products Managers, do they fall under CIT or College? There is a lot of opportunity in industry.
- Chris - product managers are becoming very important liaisons between development teams and marketing organizations.
- Tim - in the Systems Analysis and Design course, we are not just teaching programming or software development, we are teaching project management and project delivery. Students are taught how to manage projects, how to be part of a team, how to envision things from A to Z and

how to systematically approach problem solving in general. There are many different skills, platforms, methodologies and categories that are taught to students, it is not just programming or software development.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

- Future CIT Advisory Meetings
  - A new school, School of Media and Information Technologies and CIT has been an integral part of the new school. In discussion with leadership and looking at how Advisory Committee meetings are held throughout the School and Centre, CIT is the only program that holds meetings twice a year.
  - Looking to move the Advisory Committee meetings to one formal meeting per year.
  - Suggested breaking it down into formal and informal meetings.
  - Can meet on an ad hoc basis throughout the year if needed.
  - Advisory Committee would determine the month the meeting is held.
  - Program chair and faculty to keep connection with the Advisory Committee throughout the year.
  - Advisory Committee can keep connection with students by doing presentations and/or short meetings; bring the students in as an audience.
  - Members in attendance appreciate having two meetings a year and staying connected to the College.
  - Advisory Committee feels it is important to stay engaged, important for the students and important for their career and industry.
  - Committee missed having the Networking night this last year. It was suggested maybe that be the second meeting or have a pre-meeting on the same night as the Networking Night.
  - Members in attendance voted and majority in favour of keeping future meetings from 6:00 to 8:00 pm.
  - Leadership to discuss and make a decision on the future of CIT Advisory Committee meetings.

## **NEXT MEETING DATE & TIME**

Tuesday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 6:00 pm

**ADJOURNED at 8:10 pm**