

Dear IT Employer:

Currently Iowa State University offers BS degrees in Computer Science, Computer Engineering, and Software Engineering. Students typically enter these degree programs straight out of high school as college freshman. The students who graduate from these programs fill a need throughout the country for design and research engineers. ISU has been very successful in meeting the demands of employers for these degrees. However, there is an unfulfilled need by employers for students who have the technical and managerial skills necessary to enter careers in the design, application, installation, operation, and/or maintenance of computer or network systems. In addition to a gap in student production the programs at ISU do not offer a smooth transition for students who have earned credits or a degree at a community college. Often community college transfer students need to take over 3 years of courses at ISU to obtain one of the classical computing degrees.

ISU is in the process of creating a new BS degree in Computer and Network Engineering Technology which will be designed to fill the gaps in both the employers and in the incoming students needs. This degree will provide an educational path for students that are currently not served by ISU. Additional information about the degree program and the workshops can be found at: <http://www.it-adventures.org/tech-degree>. Our goal is to seek ABET accreditation for the degree, which will make this the only ABET accredited technology degree program in the state of Iowa. In order to develop this new degree program we need to gather input from our primary constituents (potential employers, community colleges, and potential students). We have established a very aggressive goal of admitting our first students in the fall of 2010. In order to facilitate this we will be holding a series of workshops designed to gather input and to establish an external advisory board to provide long term input into the new degree.

The Iowa Department of Economic Development, the Technology Association of Iowa, and Iowa State University are sponsoring two workshops in December. The first workshop will be held on December 6<sup>th</sup> as part of our community college Cyber Defense Competition. This workshop will focus on gathering input from community college instructors who teach in departments that would produce students that might articulate into the new degree program. The second workshop will be held on December 16<sup>th</sup> and will be focused on gathering input from businesses and industries that would be potential employers of the graduates. Additional workshops will be held as needed during the first part of 2009.

I would like to invite you or someone from your company to join us for the workshop on December 16<sup>th</sup> to help create the program educational objectives for the degree. We are looking for your guidance as to the skills you would like from the potential graduates of this degree. The workshop will also identify an advisory board that will help define and champion the new degree.

I'm hoping that as a result of the workshop we are able to move forward with a curriculum design. It is our goal to design the entire curriculum using input from business and industry. We are looking at creating around 20 new courses at ISU to meet the needs of the students and employers. I look forward to your company's involvement in this process.

The event will be held from 10 am to 3 pm on December 16<sup>th</sup>. The workshop will be held at the CPMI building which is located at 2321 North Loop Drive in Ames. (At the ISU research park).

The tentative agenda is:

1. Introductions and workshop goals.
2. Overview of ABET process and program criteria.
3. Small group breakout to define what skills employers needs
4. Small group reporting and discussion
5. Draft program educational objectives.
6. Action items

In order to help with planning for the event we need to know who and how many are coming. Please RSVP to Doug Jacobson ([dougi@iastate.edu](mailto:dougi@iastate.edu))

Thanks for your help and support of this very important project.

Doug Jacobson  
University Professor, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering.