# Landscape Analysis of Oregon Community College Cooperative Work Experience Programs

Fall 2022 Sabbatical Report

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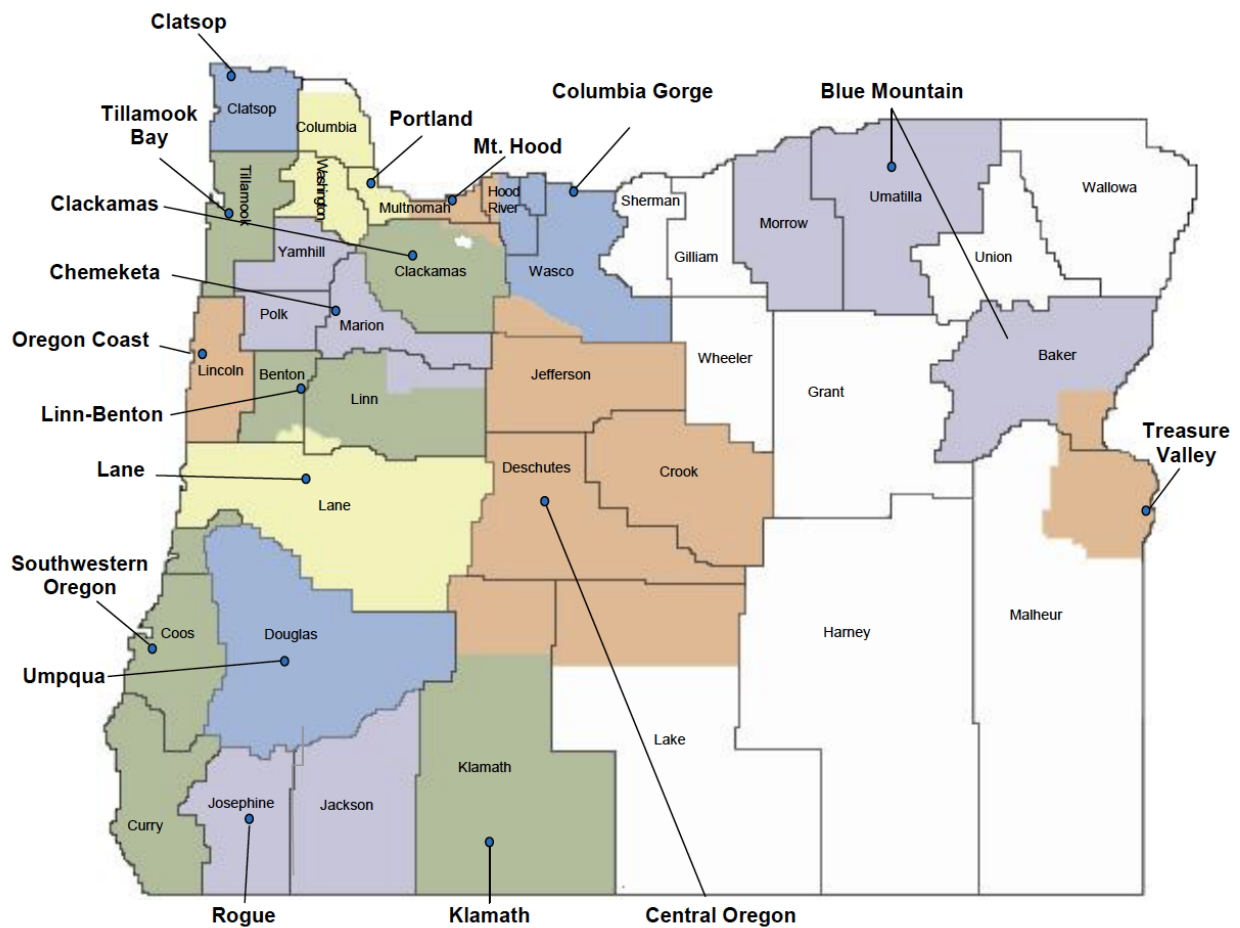**Oregon Community Colleges and Community College Districts**

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# Acknowledgements

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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| SWOCC | D. Anthony Collins & Diana Kaljumagi | Internships, Advising, Learning Resources Faculty / Native American Student and Internships Coordinator |
| TBCC | Lauren Yokum | Tillamook WORKS Coordinator |
| OCCC | Larry Boles | Faculty Director, Aquarium Science |
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| CGCC | Jarett Gilbert & Siri Olson | Vice President of Instructional Services & Office Skills (Business) Faculty |
| Umpqua CC | Teresa Rivenes | Vice President of Academic Services |

# Preface

The following is a report on the state of Oregon community college cooperative work experience (CWE), cooperative education (Co-op) and associated programming through interviews and surveys conducted with representative professionals over the course of the Fall 2022 academic term (9/27/22–12/9/22). The results of my interviews with each institution are presented in the order they were conducted, and include impressions of my visit, an overview of each institution's programming, and the key quotes and takeaways. Links to a spreadsheet including the qualitative data of the interview questions and responses can be found in the title heading for each institution. An aggregate summary of the key findings follows the institutional reports, along with some final reflections and photos from my visits. This research is *not* focused on answering questions about the value or importance of cooperative work experience, but is rather predicated on the significant extant body of research that lends evidence to the value and importance of *intentional*, *supported* and *well-designed* CWE programs in Higher Education. Neither is this report intended to provide subjective advice or recommendations about CWE programming at Oregon's community colleges, but rather to provide a snapshot of where things stand at present.

## Recommended Background Reading

In order to understand and make the most meaning of this report, it would benefit the reader to have certain background information that the following links to relevant documents and web pages will provide:

Sabbatical Application (Purpose, Goals, etc.)
Definition and History of Cooperative Work Experience - National
History and Purpose of Cooperative Education - LCC
Co-op Models (George Knox, PCC, 2006)
DACUM - A Professional Inventory for Co-op Coordinators

# [Southwest Oregon Community College](#)

Tuesday, September 27, 2022, 10AM–12PM; SWOCC campus, Coos Bay; D. Anthony Collins—Internships, Advising, Learning Resources Faculty; Diana Kaljumagi—Native American Student and Internships Coordinator

## Impressions

SWOCC's campus is much larger than expected given the size of the coastal community and service area. It reminded me greatly of LCC with its lush, green campus, coniferous woodland habitat, and brutalist architecture of the 1960's, with the exception of newer buildings--Health Professions, Culinary Arts, and Performing Arts Center. SWOCC is one of three Oregon community colleges with on-campus housing for ~400 students. It has a large recreation center and great athletic facilities. The gem of the campus is its location on the shores of Empire Lake, which includes hiking trails around its perimeter. I met with D. Anthony Collins (Internships, Advising, Learning Resources Faculty) and Diana Kaljumagi (Native American Student and Internships Coordinator) in Anthony's office in the Counseling and Advising Center.

## Overview of CWE Programming

SWOCC uses a hybrid CWE model whereby most CWE instruction happens by faculty in their individual departments, mostly CTE, while some CWE centralization and instruction is conducted by designated college faculty (D. Anthony Collins) and staff (Diana Kaljumagi). While there is a designated go-to person for students and employers starting the CWE process, there is no centralized oversight of CWE at the institution. Each CWE instructor does things their own way. There is also very limited support for ancillary CWE activities such as marketing, employer outreach and connection, and employment services for students.

## Key Quotes & Takeaways from Interview

### Technology Solutions for CWE / Employment Services—1

"I would love to have the resources to get Handshake." —D. Anthony Collins

"Things have changed since the pandemic. There used to be a person dedicated to jobs / internships who had a physical job board outside their office. Now we have 2400 unduplicated headcount across Curry Campus, online, and Coos Bay. It's a commuter campus. They don't come in to see a physical job board. We can't get employment service funding in the budget. That's going to require a leadership change. Management asks: 'Why we gotta throw money at that? There's another entity that does that' (i.e., Worksource). Our student government representative / president is dying for someone to coordinate student employment." —D. Anthony Collins

Diana is developing a jobs / internship website, but that work is outside of her scope and pay, i.e., pro bono. SWOCC needs dedicated financial resources for an online job board.

"A lot of my contacts are community members / employers looking for employees, and that's not what I do." —D. Anthony Collins

## Workload / Compensation—1

**Discussing workload with the VP: The VP asks, "What do you think your workload should be for CWE?" Anthony responds, "Half?" The VP responds, surprised, "Huh?" Anthony: "Do you want something or do you want nothing? Do you want to make something out of this?" This speaks to the need for a cushion of time to account for networking, site visits, site monitoring, site development, employer relations. In terms of faculty / coordinator workload, CWE ought not be thought of in the same terms as classroom / lab instruction.**

**SWOCC FT faculty earn a flat $100 per section of CWE. This is the lowest rate among Oregon CCs!**

When there is a lack of faculty redundancy for CWE work coverage, e.g., when specialty CTE program faculty are out for summer, *management* may step in to cover CWE coordination / instruction.

## Site Visits / Site Development—1

Anthony's position morphed out of the pandemic. On top of his teaching load, it is difficult to "chase down" faculty to do site development if they receive an inquiry from a potential industry partner. Anthony has received requests from Business faculty to develop sites / internships, which speaks to the general need for faculty support in site development.

**"It's a big problem in the Union. It's a big problem for CTE faculty. We keep losing Fire Science faculty. There's a big expectation of cultivating the professional community, but then they've got to be in the classroom. There's a big challenge to get the manager and to get that [CTE] faculty member to agree on workload. Same in Culinary. We just lost the person who did it [CWE]. There's no resources and it's on the faculty to make it work."** —D. Anthony Collins

## Other

"Students, the community and the (SWOCC) Board (of Education) love CWE. It's high profile. But it's low FTE for the institution outside certain (HP) programs." —D. Anthony Collins

Compared to models that employ a dedicated coordinator who manages all aspects of the CWE course (LCC, LBCC, KCC), the hybrid model can require a lot of back and forth with program faculty between CWE advisors / coordinators re: site referral; site approval; objectives.

# [Tillamook Bay Community College](#)

Wednesday, September 28, 2022, 10AM–12PM; TBCC campus, Tillamook; Lauren Yokum—Tillamook WORKS Coordinator

## Impressions

I enjoyed the drive through the Coast Range to the rolling hills and agricultural fields of Tillamook County on a rainy fall morning in September, full of fall colors popping out among the evergreen trees. Tillamook Bay Community College is one of the smallest community colleges in the state, as evidenced by its lone campus building -- a modern classroom and administration building located adjacent to the county fairground facilities and an OSU Extension building. Tillamook County is geographically unique from many coastal communities in Oregon due to its wide, flat agricultural plain that extends inward from the coast, home to acres of lush, green fields that are perfect for dairy farming.

## Overview of CWE Programming

CWE at TBCC is almost extensively a function of career-technical education, where it is required as a 3- or 4-credit course in most CTE AAS degree programs. Administration of CWE courses is centralized through the [Tillamook WORKS Coordinator](#), a grant-funded Classified staff position, for site development, student intake, and completion of an agreement / contract. CWE course content varies from program to program, instructor to instructor in terms of the exact learning assignments and their contents.

As with many of the smaller, coastal colleges (SWOCC, Clatsop CC), the CWE coordination function of the Tillamook WORKS Coordinator position seems to efficiently handle many administrative and time-consuming tasks required for CWE work (marketing, site development, site monitoring, intake advising, CWE student preparation, employer referral), while leaving curriculum and grading to individual CTE instructors. Given the relatively small number of CTE students in each program, this model makes sense. One person, the Tillamook WORKS Coordinator, does similar (CWE) work for a larger group of (all CTE) students in terms of standardization of process and consolidation of efforts as opposed to each CTE faculty doing the same thing for three students.

The Tillamook WORKS Coordinator's additional roles of high school internship coordinator and regional ESD employee would seem to provide synergy in networking and marketing to potential future TBCC students.

# Key Quotes & Takeaways from Interview

## CWE: If It Ain't Broke, Don't Fix It—1

Re: CWE course materials / process: **"If it's worked for them (CTE faculty instructors of CWE courses), and it's worked for them for years, they're probably still doing it that way."** —Lauren Yokum

## Technology Solutions for CWE / Employment Services—2

**Regarding the implementation of Handshake, Lauren stressed the importance of IT Department and staff support and involvement, as well as the collaboration of various stakeholders.**

# [Oregon Coast Community College](#)

Thursday, October 28, 2022; 9–11AM; OCCC campus, Newport; Larry Boles—(Faculty) Director of OCCU's AAS degree program in Aquarium Science

## Impressions

Oregon Coast Community College in Newport is located 10-minutes drive east of Hwy 101 on a shore pine-covered hillside in thick coniferous woods. I arrived on a cloudy, misty morning, and the campus was wet, green and lush. The campus consists of a main campus building, including student services, administration, faculty offices and instructional spaces, as well as a separate building dedicated to the Aquarium Sciences program. The main building houses a community education center and outdoor pollinator garden. For my interview, I met with Larry Boles, the faculty Director of OCCU's Aquarium Science AAS degree program. Larry provided a short, 20-minute tour of the Aquarium Science building, after which we returned to his office for a discussion about the student work-based learning experience in his program, including the practicum and internship courses.

## Overview of CWE Programming

The AQS program includes required two-credit practicums in the second and third terms of the first year, and a term-long, 12-credit internship experience in the final term of the second year. Practicums are taken concurrently with 14–16 credits of other coursework, and require 60 hours of work at a site off campus under the mentorship and supervision of an industry professional. What OCCC's AQS program calls "practicum" is, in fact, seemingly identical to an LCC Co-op Ed course. Students work at work sites under the supervision of an industry partner without a College instructor present. What OCCC's AQS program calls "internship," is a 12-credit course that requires full-time work over the course of a term, and is often fulfilled through incumbent work. Larry mentioned that certificate students don't need and often don't complete the internship component because of its cost and the fact that they're already working. Internships are more valuable for students with no or less previous industry experience or credentials.

The AAS in Early Childhood Education requires two rounds of practicums (ECE 133 / 134) and seminars (ECE 130A / B) in the first and second year. Like many "practicums" in ECE programs around the state, including Lane's, this is an observational experience with the ECE program faculty present in an ECE work site.

Per the OCCC online catalog, for Business Administration students, there is a BA 280A - Business Experience Cooperative Education course for 1–12 credits with a required 1-credit, concurrent seminar course (BA 280B). According to OCCC faculty member Dr. Alberto Flores, this will be a part of the proposed Business Management AAS degree program, if approved.

Per the OCCC online catalog, ED 290 - Education Practicum is offered for Elementary Education transfer students. This requires a minimum of 60 volunteer / work hours and a concurrent seminar to reflect on the experience, connecting learned theory to observed and performed practice.

OCCC provides little to no support for non-credit internships. There is no system by which local employers can post jobs. There is a physical job board in the student services area of the main campus building.

# Key Quotes & Takeaways from Interview

## Indelible Value and Importance of CWE

**"[I don't think we would ever consider getting rid of or replacing the practicum courses because] the skills students pick up in the practicum component are vital to the reputation of the program." "I cannot imagine trying to do this program without practicums." —**Larry Boles

(It is important to clarify that what Larry's program refers to as a "practicum" is indeed a traditional CWE experience that, for whatever reason, does not use the 280 numbering. It is, however, supervised, off-site, work-based learning for academic credit where the student is operating independently under the supervision of a designated site supervisor and not under the regular supervision of a college representative. This is different from "practicums" often used in Early Childhood / Elementary Education programs.)

## CWE As a Barrier to Credential (Certificate) Completion

The AAS in AQS program requires a 12-credit, full-time internship course in the last term of the program. "In many years, 75-80% of students aren't doing 'internships,' they're going straight into a job. They still need to complete the course and pay for the (12!) credits to earn the degree. We've had students who've done really well in the program not finish the program / degree because they've said, "I've got a job. That's what I wanted." This is particularly problematic in the 1-year certificate track. **For students with no other academic credentials aside from a high school diploma, completing the internship, and thus, the degree, is more of a priority.**" —Larry Boles

## What CWE Employers are Looking For / Evaluating

"No potential employer has ever asked me what a student's / prospective intern's GPA is. They ask, 'Do they work hard?' 'Do they show up (on time)?' 'Do they work well with others?' If you've been a straight-A student, congratulations. No one cares anymore. If you're in my office arguing for two points on an exam, I'm just going to give it to you because I don't care. But if you're arguing for those points, you're missing the whole point of the program." —Larry Boles

## Workload / Compensation—2

**"Finding someone to coordinate practicum / internship programs is non-trivial. And even if there are partnerships that exist, the maintenance of those partnerships is non-trivial."**
**—**Larry Boles

"They [administration] wanted to define workload for this CTE faculty position the same way they define a (faculty) position for someone who teaches general biology. I have slowly, but, I think, successfully made the case to redefine the position to be more like what a Nursing faculty program coordinator [does]—things like external mentorship relationships and off-site partnerships that have to be negotiated or maintained, and things that, frankly, neither my faculty nor I are getting credit for. The last person in my job was here for 4.5–5 years and left 100% because of the frustrations around those things. They felt like it wasn't a 40-hour / week job. I think this is a CTE problem, not just an AQS problem. We lost a welding instructor. The salaries in the industry are so much greater than what you can get teaching." —Larry Boles
(See: Columbia Gorge Community College)

Pay for AQS faculty practicum / internship is *less* for AQS faculty in contract language. This makes sense for a 12-credit internship, but not for (two-credit) practicum.

# [Linn-Benton Community College](#)

Monday, October 3, 2022; 12–2PM; LBCC campus, Albany; Amy Burbee—CWE / Apprenticeship Department Chair and (Faculty) CWE Coordinator

## Impressions

Linn-Benton Community College is the closest community college to Lane. Like Lane, it is highly accessible from I-5. Its campus is in a flat, agricultural belt between Corvallis, Albany and Lebanon. The campus resembles Lane in its many concrete structures, breezeways, and stairs --  a labyrinthine institution, seemingly built in the 1960's. Also like Lane, it is one of few community colleges with a dedicated CWE office and dedicated CWE administrative staff. The CWE / Apprenticeships office is also located conveniently next door to the Applied Industrial Tech. & Transportation building, whose programs heavily incorporate CWE.

I met with Amy Burbee in her office in the CWE / Apprenticeships office. LeAnn Schamp, the CWE Program Assistant, was located in the adjacent office and contributed to our interview and conversation. We met at the lunch hour, and Amy kindly treated me to lunch from the LBCC Culinary Arts online order and take-out food program, which we ordered and picked up during our interview time. It was an unscripted pleasure to watch Amy field and answer questions about CWE from a Culinary Arts student while we picked up lunch.

## Overview of CWE Programming

LBCC's CWE program supports a centralized CWE office, a single faculty coordinator who acts as the chair and administrative lead for the CWE program, and a dedicated program assistant. Occasionally, additional funding allows for a CWE student worker position in the CWE office. The centralized office provides marketing materials, standardized CWE forms, and CWE learning assignments with standardized CWE outcomes, and gives students, community partners and campus staff a place to go or contact for all things CWE.

CWE is heavily embedded into CTE AAS degree programs at LBCC, with a majority of programs requiring at least one course. Another measure of LB's strong CWE presence is its high availability in transfer areas. The CWE Department is also responsible for offering a one-credit career exploration course open to all students and a ("0-credit") non-credit course for certain students in sponsored CWE programs. LBCC and its CWE program have created incredible partnerships through relationships with large, local employers (e.g., ATI) and school districts, through successful grant-writing efforts, and through having the local STEMHub administered by LBCC. Such partnerships fund paid CWE and professional development training (credit course) opportunities for students.

# Key Quotes & Takeaways from Interview

## Advantages of Hybrid CWE Model

One of the advantages of the hybrid / decentralized CWE model is that faculty get direct feedback from industry when visiting work sites and corresponding directly with industry representatives. This can result in curriculum updates informed directly by industry and not requiring the intermediary of a CWE / co-op coordinator.

## Unique Faculty Classifications at LBCC

The LBCC faculty MOU divides "faculty" classification into "professional" and "instructional" faculty. Professional faculty include specific academic program academic advisors and the CWE Coordinator. The contract / pay structure differs from that of instructional faculty.

## Consequences of Lack of Workforce / Employment Representative

"LB doesn't have a workforce person. I think this position has turned into a workforce connection person. They have nowhere to send them [employers, industry partners]. They want us [CWE / Apprenticeships] to be the concierge for the college. Employer X wants to connect with students, do a presentation in a class, join an advisory committee, be a part of the foundation and be a donor… Where do they go?" —Amy Burbee

LBCC was in a position to lose $180k in federal funding due to not having Federal Work Study administration staffed. It now has a student services, career / employment position.

## Workload / Compensation—3

Regarding summer CWE work: LBCC adds 25 paid work days to the annual faculty contract for the CWE Coordinator. "I am not going to do that again. The money was absolutely not worth my time. If they're going to do an overload, they should just pay it like other faculty who work and get paid overload in the summer."

"I get paid extra to be the department chair. Lane should be paying you to do the administrative and leadership work you do." —Amy Burbee

"Grading takes forever!" —Amy Burbee

"The (LBC) College pays a lot of overloads"—8–12 CWE faculty each term.

"It would be cheaper for LB(CC) to do the Lane model [and have full-time CWE / Co-op coordinators]" —Amy Burbee

Top of faculty salary schedule at LBCC is 10% higher than that of LCC.

LBCC pays CWE Coordinator for additional 20 days to cover breaks. (Lane does not, but we work anyway.)

## Lack of Standardization / Oversight of Faculty CWE Instruction

Regarding how LB CWE instructors (faculty) feel about overload pay for CWE: "Some go above and beyond. For others, it's about getting the students out in industry. Maybe they have the students get the coursework done..." —LeAnn Schamp

"For some faculty, it's easy money. For others, they are super engaged." —Amy Burbee

# Mt. Hood Community College

Tuesday, October 11, 2022; 10AM–12PM; MHCC Gresham Campus; Dawn Loomis—Dean of Workforce, Apprenticeship and Community Education; Jennifer McNeil—Career Development Coordinator

## Impressions

I visited the MHCC Gresham Campus on a sunny early October fall day. The MHCC campus is a beautiful suburban campus set in a mixed woodland, with a pond, large athletic fields, and a variety of buildings seemingly built between 1970–1990. It has a central entrance and courtyard leading to many of the "front-end" student services departments. Overall, the campus is larger than I expected. Its mid-late 20th-Century brutalist (concrete) architecture, like that of LBCC and SWOCC, reminds me of Lane.

## Overview of CWE Programming

MHCC incorporates cooperative education courses in most of its CTE programs, and in a number of transfer programs as well. MHCC is one of few Oregon colleges (LCC, MHCC, CGCC) to refer to 280 courses as "Cooperative Education" rather than Cooperative Work Experience (CWE). MHCC's co-op model is highly decentralized, with no central administration or administrative support beyond the Career Development Advisors in the Career Center and a certain degree of industry / employer outreach and marketing of work-based learning opportunities by the Dean of Workforce, Apprenticeship and Community Ed. Many responses to my interview questions boiled down to, "It depends on the individual department, program and faculty member overseeing the co-op work."

While many CTE programs require co-op at some level, typically at least 2-4 credits in the final term of study, many programs also list co-op courses in their program map as "Cooperative Education Internship (recommended) or any [program elective] course(s)". (If you're a student looking at your final degree requirement, what are you going to choose: any elective course in your major, or a course that requires a significant investment of time and effort to secure? This reminds me of a quote I've often heard used in my career in community colleges: "Community college students don't do optional.")

## Key Quotes & Takeaways from Interview

### You Prioritize What You Are Measured On

Dawn Loomis: **"Colleges are measured on FTE, somewhat on completion, not on employment… If that's not something that we're graded on… what's that saying…"**

("Perhaps what you measure is what you get. More likely, what you measure is all you'll get. What you don't [or can't] measure is lost." —Accounting historian H. Thomas Johnson

## Forces of Entropy Tend Toward Decentralization, Potential Risk

**"Everybody's doing their own thing…and they're doing it out of desperation basically because they want to offer CWE to their students, but nobody's come up with a centralized system, so they're like, 'we'll just do this 'til we figure something out, and then nobody's ever figured it out.'" —**Dawn Loomis

**"And there's some hesitancy in combining and forming some sort of centralized, formalized program from certain programs… they like to do their own thing… change is scary, and they don't necessarily want to move toward a different model than what they've been doing. What they're doing works for the individual department, which I get, but I think the need overrides what we're currently doing."** —Dawn Loomis

"Without a formalized, central system… someone overseeing this process, it's going to be easy for students to be taken advantage of in an internship. There are a lot of assumptions like, 'I'm *hoping* the X department is doing site visits and has formal agreements with their work sites'…" —Dawn Loomis

"Having that consistent paperwork and paperwork in general would help from a business' perspective (to formalize CWE)." —Dawn Loomis

## Alignment of CTE Programs, CWE and Industry Demand

"Cybersecurity faculty have struggled to find placements and have asked for assistance from Career Services in growing placements." —Jennifer McNeil

## Internal Support of CWE Can Make a Difference

MHCC IT Department offers four paid, on-campus internships per year for its students

Career Center has reached out to internal MHCC departments asking if someone would take a Business co-op student and heard nothing back.

Jennifer attended a focus group on having MHCC be "the college that works." (See, Work College initiative.) This would include a dedicated internships / CWE position. This initiative was under different leadership, so its current status is unknown.

MHCC used to have an Employer Partnership Coordinator that coordinated the "employer partnership committee" to allow different areas to collaborate, but that position was grant funded and the grant ended.

## Challenges of Staffing Summer CWE—1

Regarding summer term, "Employers / students get a lot of emails back saying, 'Call me in the fall.' … It's not good customer service." —Dawn Loomis

## Lack of Community "Concierge" for the Institution

MHCC seems to struggle with employer / industry outreach and education about CWE / Co-op. An example was provided of an employer who was given four campus contacts and sent to four different places to address their inquiries instead of having their inquiry addressed in one place. "It was embarrassing." —Dawn Loomis

## Requiring CWE for Students Requires Commitment & Oversight

**"If it's [co-op / CWE] required, they're [faculty] probably more apt to help them [students] through it; if it's an elective, or if you can take another class, then it's totally on the student to go and find it [the co-op opportunity]."** —Dawn Loomis

Career Services will assist in internship placement when a student is having a hard time. "It's pretty much all on the student to find"[a CWE site for certain CTE programs / areas]. —Dawn Loomis

## Tracking Advisory Committee Work—1

CTE advisory committees present, but little oversight or consistency. Some advisory committees are averse to new membership or have met with resistance at the suggestion of new members. Tracking advisory committee work college-wide has happened in the past, but was described as a lot of work by a former staff member doing that work.

# [Portland Community College](#)

Thursday, October 13, 2022, 9–11AM; Zoom; Jennifer Poinar, George Knox, DeAnne Hardy, Haydee Goldenberg, Aimee Bosland

## Overview of CWE Programming

PCC is Oregon's largest community college in terms of student population and number of campuses. Not surprisingly, it has the largest variety of CTE programs, most of which include at least one Cooperative Education (Co-op) course. Until recently, PCC was administered separately by campus, having presidents and administrators for each campus. Co-op responsibilities were covered by Cooperative Education / Student Employment Specialists and Cooperative Education Placement Coordinators, and were divided primarily by campus and the programs offered at each. Coordinators / Specialists can be responsible for up to 20 areas, which raises the question of why they are titled "specialists." An institutional reorganization—the "one college" approach—is currently underway and moving toward centralized administration of the college as well as Co-op work, and will likely lead to assignments based more on experience, expertise and interest than location.

PCC's model would be best described as "hybrid," with a great deal of centralized administration of paperwork and coordination of co-op courses, but with co-op instruction occurring separately within CTE programs as well. Co-op Placement Coordinators and Specialists are classified uniquely as "Administrative Professionals," a hybrid faculty / administration classification. Some Co-op Placement Coordinators may also act as an instructor for co-op courses, and are typically paid an additional sum per student for this work.

## Key Quotes & Takeaways from Interview

### Strengths & Weaknesses of Hybrid Model

The decentralized or hybridized model has the strength of being able to customize the co-op elements to the program, but the weakness of having oversight, accountability and assessment responsibilities dispersed to multiple managers for a course that is used by multiple programs.

### Workload / Compensation—5

"In previous decades, PCC had many problems with co-op, so they put together a task force of a diverse group of stakeholders to figure out 'how do you teach co-op?' This determined that faculty are supposed to put in **five hours** of work per student per term, and that the five hours would comprise specific tasks: developing and approving sites, learning objectives, monitoring sites and grading." —George Knox (George notes here that "PCC also determined the work that Co-op specialists should do. This is important, as *our faculty are not asked to do all Co-op support, just the instructional piece*.")

The workload factor is calculated by dividing 1 by 12 weeks, multiplying the quotient (.083) by **five hours**, then multiplying the product by .038, which yields a .016 workload factor for each student. This is lower than any other classification of instruction per the faculty contract.

**"Some faculty don't like to do co-op because of the pay structure…"** —George Knox

## Challenges of Staffing Summer Co-op—2

"When we have a lot of changes with faculty and staff, it can be hard to be consistent for both staff and students. At times, we would hear that pay was not consistent even and instructors would be asking us about their pay when they should have been asking their department chairs / deans." —Jennifer Poinar

## Efficiency of Continuity in Co-op Coordination

"In terms of whether having that continuity [of Co-op Coordinator / instructor) is important… it absolutely helps to have one [same] person… doing it… in terms of what employers want and because students benefit from it." —DeAnne Hardy

"Because X program (that I work with) alternates Co-op instructors each year, I can say that I much prefer having the same Co-op instructor." —Aimee Bosland

"Adjunct faculty doing co-op may not understand the process when it gets handed to them… I'll get a lot of forms where learning objectives aren't clearly defined… It might require a bit of back and forth with the instructor to fall within the requirements of the course." —George Knox

## Value of Faculty Identity and Connections

"I do notice that some programs are offering an early-program, career-focused class, e.g., BA 100, where, as part of the course, students are required to meet with Co-op Coordinator / Specialist… And several of our technical programs have a course called 'Professional Practices,' where they will bring us in… sometimes we are subject-matter experts teaching resume-writing, but sometimes we are just invited to come in and introduce ourselves and Co-op Ed." —George Knox

## Technology Solutions for CWE / Employment Services—3

PCC uses Simplicity for job board and other career development services. It has not yet implemented the "Experiential Learning" module due to staffing shortage and required investment of time and energy needed to stand up the module.

# Central Oregon Community College

October 18, 2022, 10AM–12PM, Central Oregon Community College campus, Bend; Michael Fisher—Instructional Dean, CTE

## Impressions

On a crisp October morning, I enjoyed a still-smoky drive up the McKenzie Highway, over Santiam Pass, through Sisters and the west side of Bend to the beautiful Central Oregon Community College campus, located in a hilly ponderosa pine, juniper and aspen woodland. The buildings of the campus seem newer, built of more diverse materials, and don't reflect the brutalist concrete architecture of schools like Lane CC, Linn-Benton CC, Mt. Hood CC and Southwest Oregon CC.

## Overview of CWE Programming

I conducted my interview with Michael Fisher, Instructional Dean for the majority of COCC's CTE AAS programs, who has been involved with CTE and CWE there for well over a decade. Central Oregon is an example of a highly decentralized cooperative work experience model where CWE courses are embedded as a degree requirement or option in most CTE programs. CWE work is done exclusively within academic departments by faculty, typically program leads, sometimes by adjunct faculty, and in some rare cases, by department chairs / deans. As in many other community colleges, CWE in traditional CTE areas is distinguished from other work-based learning courses such as clinicals and practicums.

## Key Quotes & Takeaways from Interview

### CWE: If It Ain't Broke, Don't Fix It—2

"One of the good things about … the world of CTE is that until something's broken or something … good is happening, we roll along and do our thing, and the College is completely happy without us bringing up more issues to them like CWE." —Michael Fisher

Regarding CWE and professional development: "Because we've had these CWE courses on the books for so long, people [faculty] just run them like they run them, rather than going, 'Gosh, what could I be doing to be doing this better?'" —Michael Fisher

### You Don't Know What You Don't Know

"I don't know that it (CWE) works well. I think that it functions. And I don't know what I don't know. And I'm in one of the positions that I should know. So if I don't know, who does? We're somewhat blind to it. And we are because we're complacent in it. It's there. It exists. It seemingly works. To do anything different takes work, a new lens, and a desire to do something different." —Michael Fisher

## Forces of Entropy Tend Toward Decentralization—2

Trying to centralize and standardize practices and expectations around CWE when the culture and precedent of CWE have been so autonomous and decentralized for a long time would be daunting… an uphill battle.

COCC's career services around employment and internships are scarce with little dedicated support out of the general fund. Internship coordinators out of Bend and Redmond, funded by a combination of groups (Chamber of Commerce, regional economic development, COCC grant funds) and with a historically high turnover rate visit COCC regularly to advertise opportunities to students / programs. The VP of Student Services has proposed filling the former career services position, and CTE dean has encouraged this to include internship coordination.

## Alignment of CTE Programs, CWE and Industry Demand—2

Tech programs have challenges finding sufficient CWE opportunities in the Bend area because many companies' bar for entry is bachelor's or higher and are filled from higher-qualified candidates relocating or finding remote workers from elsewhere. **The cost of living in Bend is a barrier for two-year, entry-level students**. Ironically, **COCC has a hard time graduating CIS students because many are stopping out and going to work.** Only ~1-2 completers (and therefore CWE students) graduate per year.

## Tracking Advisory Committee Work—2

Advisory committees are also highly decentralized. A committee handbook exists, but institutionally, committee work is varied from program to program. The institution's Strategic Plan included oversight of advisory committees, and some (Automotive, Manufacturing) are in the process of overhauling theirs.

# Clatsop Community College

Wednesday, October 19, 2022; 9:30–11:30AM; Zoom; Kristen Wilkin—Dean of Workforce Education and Training

## Overview of CWE Programming

To learn about Clatsop Community College's CWE programming, I spoke via Zoom video conference with Kristen Wilkin, Dean of Workforce Education and Training, who has been involved with CTE and CWE since 1997. Due to an unfortunate chain of staffing events before and during the coronavirus pandemic, at the time of this interview, there is currently no dedicated CWE position at Clatsop CC. CWE programming was decimated by the coronavirus pandemic in many aspects, from employers not taking students or moving out of the area, to students not wanting to do in-person CWE, to the former CWE Coordinator leaving the institution.

Traditionally, the CWE model has been relatively centralized at Clatsop CC through an administrative professional position sometimes designated as the CWE Coordinator who typically has shared other student services or administrative duties. The CWE Coordinator would carry out many of the CWE support functions for the 280 CWE course, enter grades for the course, and would run the concurrent CWE seminar course (281). Faculty members would work with students to identify sites, assist students with the development of learning objectives, do some level of site monitoring, and review supervisor evaluations.

## Key Quotes & Takeaways from Interview

### Importance of Dedicated Administrative Support for CWE—1

Regarding prioritization of the position and turnover: "Prior to the pandemic, a hybrid CWE Coordinator / Academic Advisor position had less time for CWE, and CTE programs began to list CWE as "optional" in their curriculum, partially because students / faculty were unable to get a high level of CWE support from the hybrid CWE Coordinator / Advisor position. The most recent CWE & Clatsop Works (summer high school paid internship program) Coordinator position left in 2021 due to pandemic-related issues. In 2022, CWE work has been shared between grant-funded staff positions and a willing faculty member. Clatsop is now planning to house CWE Coordinator under Economic Dev. / Small Business Development." —Kristen Wilkin

### Site Visits / Site Development—2

"Depending on the faculty, and I will say that… it depends on their interest level and ability to have the time to go, but I'd say about 50% of my faculty go out to [the site] to see employers …" —Kristen Wilkin

# Klamath Community College

Tuesday, October 25, 10AM–12PM; KCC main campus, Klamath Falls; Christopher (Chris) Stickles—Dean of Career-Technical Education; Michelle Horne—Career Counselor (via e-mail)

## Impressions

On a cold, clear late October morning, I arrived at the campus of Klamath Community College on the southeast side of Klamath Falls, surrounded by agricultural fields and the foothills of Hogsback Mountain to the east. As with each of my previous in-person visits, the campus struck me as unique, this one through its architecture and modernity. Construction of a new CTE building was underway on the northwest side of campus. I met with KCC Dean of Career-Technical Education, Christopher (Chris) Stickles, who, after giving me a brief tour of the relatively new Automotive program's building and labs, invited me to his office for the interview. After the interview, I was able to walk the 2-mile health and wellness trail around the perimeter of the campus.

## Overview of CWE Programming

Klamath Community College recently successfully implemented a Title III Grant that called for the creation and staffing of a comprehensive career center. Due to the great burden of work that CWE coordination adds to CTE faculty lead work, it was suggested that the 3.5FTE Career Center staff take over and centralize CWE coordination. **Furthermore, one year ago, the President of KCC called for a praiseworthy new accountability measure—*employability*—to be added to the College's Strategic Plan that previously included the community college standards of access, retention and completion.** This plan is reviewed yearly with the President. As a result, a new TEX 280 seminar course, including content on job skills, taught by Career Center staff, was created and embedded into many programs. Thus, KCC's CWE program can be held up as a model of a highly centralized, but still hybrid, CWE program, with degrees of faculty involvement in the CWE process depending on the individual program and its faculty lead.

## Key Quotes & Takeaways from Interview

### Value of Centralization via Career Services Center

The former VP, President and Dean of CTE wrote the Title III grant two–three years ago to create the Career Services Center, and inclusion and centralization of CWE was included.

Regarding the Career Services Center staff and the value of having a hub / concierge for receiving inquiries from industry: "They are one of the most important hires I've made in the last 10–15 years. And, it doesn't always show because [College officials} they're like, 'What are they

doing over there [in the Career Services Center]?' *You cannot fathom* the amount of phone calls that I no longer have [to take / deal with]:

> 'Hi, I'm employer X from BLANK Farms, and I need a student…I have this opportunity…'
> 'OK, would you like to hire interns? Do you want to hire someone right now? Do you want to visit campus and interview our students?'
> 'Yes, all of the above.'
> 'Excellent! Here's where you go now…' " —Chris Stickles

**"And, as an administrator, it was always tough for me [before the Career Services Center centralized model] because I would give that to the faculty lead knowing full well that they've got four grants, 41 students… they would get to it, but if they didn't get to it in time, and my President or Vice-president heard about it in some club / organization they're in, then I had to … spend more time explaining how busy faculty are instead of connecting the employer with the appropriate college representative... That's why bringing it into that [Career Services Center] hub is so precious for me because now I do have an accountability model. You can still get the faculty leads involved, but you [the Career Services Center / staff] should be having the job postings, you should be connecting and communicating with this employer…"** —Chris Stickles

Regarding continuation of grant-funded Career Services Center and staff at the end of current Title III grant cycle: "Yes, we'd like to try and maintain the CSC once the grant has ended. We're talking about how they are adding value to the campus… The unseen value they're adding… they do other things. The CSC organizes the Career Fair of 60+ employers here wanting to hire on the spot. I organized CTE Day the same day for high school students and CTE programs put on workshops. We invited all area high schools. They did hands-on work: went in a simulator, built a wall, etc. Then they went over and interviewed at the Career Fair. High school students were getting hired. In the afternoon, our KCC students attended the Career Fair. There's an example of a current KCC Federal Work Study student who attended that CTE Day / Career Fair as a high school student and is now a KCC student working on campus and attending CTE program full-time." —Chris Stickles

## Smaller Institutions May Have More Flexibility

The KCC Career Advisor who coordinates CWE courses can assign grades for CWE 280 courses. In response to my statement that I'm sure there would be faculty union issues around this at LCC, Chris says, "I've been in state meetings where the Lane administrator's response to something is like, 'I'll need to seek board policy change approval,' and I'm like, 'I can probably get it done on Wednesday.'"

## Internal Support of CWE for Student Success & Talent Development

KCC offers four paid IT Help Desk internships for Networking / Cyber Security students; one of those recent interns was hired as IT lab coordinator.

# Chemeketa Community College

October 26, 2022; 11:30AM–1:30PM; Zoom; Robin Taylor—Dean of Business and Technology; Gary Khun—CWE / Internship Coordinator; Rebecca Salinas-Oliveros—CWE / Internship Coordinator

## Overview of CWE Programming

Chemeketa Community College's mostly-centralized, faculty coordinator-led CWE model is, along with Linn-Benton Community College, the most similar to the Cooperative Education program at Lane Community College. It includes two, full-time faculty CWE Coordinators and, until recently, centralized administrative support through a dedicated, full-time CWE administrative assistant. CWE is well-integrated into nearly all CTE areas as a degree requirement. Chemeketa's CWE program also includes, along with PCC, the most veteran staff in Oregon, with Gary Kuhn celebrating 25 years as faculty CWE / Internship Coordinator and his counterpart, Rebecca Salinas-Oliveros, marking 22 years in the same position. Their current administrator, Robin Taylor, has been in her role for over 10 years, giving Chemeketa's CWE team 57 years of combined experience. Not surprisingly then, the Chemeketa CWE team provided some of the most telling, perceptive and meaningful quotes from my entire sabbatical experience, and if I were to recommend one college's report to read, it would be this one because it speaks to so many of the issues: a supportive, experienced and engaged manager, the need for administrative support, the importance of faculty status and organization in academic affairs, and the flexible, "make-it-work" attitude that so many CWE practitioners around the state embody for the benefit of students and employers in their service area.

The CWE / Internship Coordinator position at Chemeketa typically carries out student preparation, employer relations and administrative tasks for 280 courses. In some cases, the CWE/Internship Coordinator faculty will also assign and grade assignments, evaluate student performance and enter grades. Typically, a CTE faculty member (or Sociology instructor for GenEd 280s) will evaluate student learning assignments and evaluations and assign the final course grade. 280 courses include a concurrent seminar course (or, sometimes, an Independent Study) where CWE students meet weekly or regularly with their faculty member to process and reflect on the CWE experience. CWE / Internship Coordinators also teach FE 205A / B / C seminar courses including job search and employability skills from 1–3 credits.

## Key Quotes & Takeaways from Interview

### Organization of CWE as an Academic Unit

**"Personally, when it  [the question of whether Chemeketa should move, reorganize or change CWE] comes up, and it does come up, what I keep saying is… maybe we should… but don't move it until you have a good reason… because I do think it can be an area that sort of gets moved around. And my reason for not wanting it to get moved is that we have some academic clout in our area… And we've even talked about it. Would it**

**be better [if CWE were organized] in Student Services? I don't know that the answer isn't 'yes,' but I'm holding on [to my support of CWE in this academic unit] until someone has had that conversation with me in a way that satisfies me."** —Robin Taylor

"We used to be under Student Services, and it wasn't always a great experience. We were on the backburner. When it came to cuts, we were the program that was looked at for cuts… And we were pushed out to make room for more advisors… I had a conversation with the then-VP for Academic Affairs on why we needed to be in academic programs… We had good relationships with faculty and advisory committees. Advisory committees wanted our courses and course content in degree programs. They saw the value of what we were doing in preparing students… And the VP at that time agreed and put us in academic programs." —Rebecca Salinas-Oliveros

## Importance of Dedicated Administrative Support of CWE—2

"We had an administrative assistant dedicated to CWE, doing all of the things you're talking about [building courses, processing releases, troubleshooting registration], *and* being that connector for students and employers… I think it's been 3 years… Chemeketa has had the approach of when it needs to make cuts and there is a retirement, that is where the cuts happen, so we lost that position from the general fund. So now, we do have a department admin. who does that [academic admin. tasks, e.g., building courses, processing releases, etc.], but not the program support the way that the other [former] position was… I just continue to see it as a huge, huge loss because [the position / role] was so much more global than the current admin. support… That connection piece [for students, employers, campus, community]… we have simply lost it and / or CWE / Internship Coordinators have picked it up. But frankly, we've lost that… there's always somebody answering the phone, there's always somebody reaching out… We literally don't have it." —Robin Taylor

"We had a full-time administrative assistant for most of my [25-year] career [as CWE Coordinator]. With the pandemic, she went down to part-time, and then she was released when we didn't have the immediate need. We do have some administrative assistance, but not for marketing—we used to do a lot more marketing: creating brochures and marketing of specific program CWEs. All of the maintenance of forms and paperwork has come to us [CWE Coordinators] to do, whereas we used to have someone who did that, and did it very expediently. It's [a slower, more inefficient process] on top of other things for *us* to do it. Answering the phones, setting our appointments, directing students to let them know who to meet with: that's gone." —Gary Kuhn

"The major difference in terms of experience was that, with a [dedicated] assistant, they knew exactly what to do, when to do it, how to do it, why it's done, and could do it immediately. Now we have to go through [other department admin.], and she's got other duties, she doesn't know the flow, she's not in our office, physically, she's not there to monitor, acknowledge, and do all those kinds of things… it's different." —Gary Kuhn

## CWE Under the Radar

"**CWE to me is one of those unfortunate areas where, if it runs smoothly, no one is really looking. Even with great results, it's easy to assume that it just runs itself. I think it's a massively missed opportunity to not use it as more of a PR / outreach / employer connection / industry interface piece. And as we lose people… It's happening on an individual basis, but it's not happening globally in the way that it could and should, frankly. "** —Robin Taylor

## Importance of Having CTE Faculty Accountable to CWE Program / Dean

"One of the challenges for us is that right now a program could choose to do their own CWE [not utilizing or going through CWE / Internship Coordinator]. We don't think they should do that. We think they should connect [go through] the CWE office for a variety of reasons, including legality [ensuring contracts are completed, stored] and otherwise. But it does put Gary and Rebecca in a real difficult situation. There is a subset of CTE faculty… they are receiving workload credits… some of them could probably be doing a little bit more… some of that does fall on Gary and Rebecca… and we're in this somewhat sticky situation in that we don't really want to say, 'You have to do it this way, you have to do this or that.' And so, I think sometimes, there is a… I don't want to say 'taking advantage' because that might imply intentionality, but a lack of awareness or something that it should be a shared responsibility, and Gary and Rebecca have picked up for people who have elected not to share. And partially because our College does allow programs to do it on their own, there's always this underlying 'They could take their toys and go home,' and move the whole [CWE] thing to their programs. So, for me, I really want to push on this, but what happens if we push on this?" —Robin Taylor

## Importance of Faculty Role

- Ability to quickly and effectively pick up CWE students when CTE faculty are otherwise unable or at capacity with their workload.
- Ability to teach or co-teach CWE (280) concurrent seminar course when faculty are out or otherwise unavailable.

## Difficulty of Data-Driven Decision-Making—1

On whether the CWE program can track the percentage of paid versus unpaid internships: "Agreement form data goes into a deep dark hole—a digital hole. Even when we've asked to get it integrated into assessment or by our Institutional Effectiveness team, they're like 'Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's a good idea.' And then it doesn't happen. The answer is 'no,' other than what we have ourselves." —Gary Kuhn

"It goes back to that [institutional] commitment that I was talking about… We've been wanting this data, and for some reason, it just can't happen… Even when we're doing our Program Review, we had to scrape for our own data because, for some reason, they couldn't disaggregate the 280s or… whatever it might be… And so, that is a really missed opportunity by

our college where we could have really great data that could shape the directions we're going."
—Rebecca Salinas-Oliveros

# Clackamas Community College

Friday, October 28, 2022; 10:30AM–12:30PM; Zoom; Armetta Burney—Dean of Technology, Applied Science and Public Services; Jodi Stapleton—CWE Seminar Instructor and Academic and Career Coach

## Overview of CWE Programming

I conducted my interview via Zoom with Jodi Stapleton, CWE Seminar Instructor and Academic and Career Coach, and Armetta Burney, the new Dean of Technology, Applied Science and Public Services, many of whose CTE programs require a CWE course(s) in their curricula. Jodi began the interview by recounting her long career and involvement with CWE at Clackamas Community College. She recalled that, in the past, there had been a strong statewide association of CWE practitioners who met regularly, shared ideas and resources. Lane Community College was a leader in that work, about which I was made aware by my predecessors and mentors in LCC's Co-op Ed program.

Clackamas Community College's CWE program can be described as a hybrid model, with each CTE program running its own 280 courses, but with a certain level of centralization of documentation through the Career Center and instruction of the zero-credit, non-graded, concurrent CWE seminar, which, in some cases, is taught by Career Center staff.

Clackamas' CWE Coordinator position, a portion of a Classified position out of the Career Center, had been recently vacated at the time of my interview and write-up. There is hope that it will be filled soon and may include more dedicated duties related to CWE support.

## Key Quotes & Takeaways from Interview

### History of Required CWE in Clackamas CTE Programs

"For the most part, I think we're all on the same page at Clackamas that we want to provide these experiences for students. That's why it [CWE] exists in every program, program by program.… Twenty years ago, there was a push within that grant [that centralized administration of CWE in Career Services] to get the word out to share that this [CWE] is what we want to do at Clackamas, and they made a move to put it into every degree program." —Jodi Stapleton

### Technology Solutions for CWE / Employment Services—4

"Years and years ago we looked at a computerized solution to manage all components of CWE. We haven't done anything. We didn't invest in it at the time, which is probably a good thing. I don't know if any colleges are using those... We were able to do it [CWE] well using just the systems that we have. For the number of students we have, it didn't make sense to invest $20k. We brought in our IT Department and looked at a variety of solutions, but didn't land on anything." —Jodi Stapleton

## Difficulty of Data-Driven Decision-Making—2

Tracking employer data is a gap. "In my dream world, I would love to have a database that we would be able to use to add all our employer partners to, and that way it is tracked and we feed information to [it]. Right now, each department is tracking their own, and is that the most efficient and effective way? I would say, probably not.… Many students and industry partners are not utilizing the tool [Career Central Network] that is available." —Armetta Burney

## Lack of Standardization / Oversight of Faculty CWE Instruction—3

**"It's a challenge. What I'd love to do is assign that work to someone else. Hire a position for that. Maybe seek out some grant opportunities or Perkins funding (on a temporary basis). In my dream world, it would be great to have a dedicated person to build those relationships, do that site monitoring… because that is a heavy lift for our faculty. Right now, I don't have an answer. Faculty are doing it. It is becoming challenging."** —Armetta Burney

"It's the time factor. Especially if you're kind of reestablishing and rebuilding partnerships. That takes an extensive amount of time." —Armetta Burney

## Relationship Between Faculty Investment in CWE and Enrollment

**"While CWE was required in all CTE programs previously, there are some programs (Business) where it has been changed to be optional, an elective. This may have to do with the retirement of previously dedicated faculty who had a passion for CWE. CWE is an elective for transfer areas, and that is an area where there is work [to improve volume of CWE] to improve that. Some [newer] faculty may not see the value of CWE in transfer areas where a four-year degree will be necessary. We just don't see CWE as much [in transfer areas]."** —Jodi Stapleton

## Requiring CWE Earlier in Program Curriculum Rather Than Capstone

Clackamas' Automotive program revamped CWE to require it in the fourth (fall) term of the AAS program, some in the fifth (winter). This seems to be a trend in programs where employment demand is very high and students are often hired by their last term, reducing the value of work-based learning later in the program or in the final term.

# [Rogue Community College](#)

Tuesday, November 1, 2022; 11:30AM–1:00PM; RCC, Table Rock Campus, White City; Kim Freeze—Dean of Instruction, Art, Science and Technology

## Impressions

The average November temperatures in 2022 were eight degrees (Fahrenheit) colder than those of November 2021, and that was evident on my visit to Rogue Community College's Table Rock Campus in White City, as I crested the snow-covered Canyon Creek and Sexton Mountain passes on November 1, 2022. By the time I arrived at campus, the rain had given way to sunbreaks, but temperatures still hovered around the high 30's. This was my first visit to the seemingly newer (2005) Table Rock Campus, and its modern, new (2020) Health Professions Center (HPC) building immediately jumps out to visitors. With a few moments to spare before my 11:30AM meeting, I walked through the main campus building across the road, which featured a display in the entryway for Día de los Muertos, and two campus representatives to receive visitors and explain a bit about the culture and history of the holiday, widely celebrated in Mexico, parts of the US and Latin America. This main campus building houses student support offices, classrooms and faculty offices for a variety of CTE programs. After my interview, I enjoyed a walk on the wellness trail around and in the fields surrounding the new HPC.

## Overview of CWE Programming

Rogue Community College has traditionally had a high presence of CWE offerings, particularly in its CTE programs, and for its large service area and industry landscape comprising primarily small and medium-sized businesses, has done well in supporting CWE opportunities for its students. At times in the past, RCC has employed a dedicated CWE coordinator who helped with program marketing, employer relations and outreach, site development, and administration. Some CTE programs wanted localized control over CWE, and this may have led to a diminished role for the centralized coordinator. During and since the coronavirus pandemic, the number of degree programs in which CWE is required has diminished. Currently, centralized, administrative support for CWE courses is provided by Jennifer Burkes, who shares some (traditionally 15–25%) of her 1.0 FTE Administrative Assistant III position with CWE and multiple other areas. Oversight is provided by Kim Freeze, Dean of Science & Applied Technology, who does a great deal of employer / industry relations work in her role as well as referral to faculty and CTE programs. Together, Kim, Jennifer and RCC CTE program faculty make CWE work for students and the community to the degree it does.

## Key Quotes & Takeaways from Interview

### Forces of Entropy Tend Toward Decentralization, Potential Risk—3

When CWE administration is decentralized, procedures that ensure compliance with CWE administrative requirements (e.g., receipt of complete and signed agreement form prior to

student registration for CWE courses, completion and tracking of pre-employment screenings) may be circumvented, and expected campus-wide compliance may become fragmented. Are all departments that have the ability to release students to register for CWE courses collecting and delivering required forms?

## Value and Need for Dedicated CWE Coordinator

RCC has not had a dedicated CWE coordinator since before the pandemic started. Some CWE faculty may not have necessary resources or understanding to dedicate to CWE. A coordinator could help "steer" CWE in a positive direction, including updating the web page, digitizing forms (Agreement / Learning Objectives / Evaluation packet) and workflows, marketing and industry relations, and guiding administrative support staff in their work.

## The Language of CWE is Confusing

Many stakeholders—community members, industry partners, students and institutional representatives such as faculty, staff and administrators—do not understand the language used and differences between internship, practicum, work-based learning, CWE, clinicals, etc. Even within the state of Oregon, "CWE" and "Co-op Ed" are not used uniformly.

## CWE as a Retention Tool

Research done by Kim at a previous institution highlighted the positive relationship between student engagement in CWE and retention to completion (see High-Impact Practices [Kuh, 2008] research on internships and work-based learning).

## Other Themes and Topics of Note

- Pressure on CTE programs to reduce credits (often, those of CWE…)
- CWE numbers low in CTE / Trades due to early employment
- Capstone as an alternative to CWE for certain students
- Value of CWE earlier in curriculum

# Columbia Gorge Community College

Tuesday, November 29, 2022; 8:30–10AM; Zoom; Jarett Gilbert—Vice President of Instructional Services; Robert Clark—CTE Administrative Support / Manufacturing Faculty, and; Siri Olson—Faculty and Co-op Instructor for AAS in Office Systems program

## Overview of CWE Programming

Columbia Gorge Community College is one of Oregon's smaller community colleges in terms of enrollment and population of service area. Its CTE AAS degree offerings are limited, and within those, the only true CWE courses are embedded as requirements in its Business / Admin. and Office Systems AAS degree programs (BA 280A / B; OS 280F / G). Columbia Gorge is one of very few community colleges in Oregon that, like Lane, refer to their supervised, work-based learning courses for academic credit as "cooperative education" rather than "cooperative work experience" (CWE).

Robert Clark, Manufacturing faculty and CTE management support, began by providing an overview of all of the work-based learning opportunities at CGCC, including clinicals for Nursing, practicums for ECE and Education, co-op ed, paid internships offered as part of a Title 1B grant, and On-the-Job Training (OTJ).

## Key Quotes & Takeaways from Interview

### Vision, Oversight and Support as Precursors for CWE in CTE

**"All of us (CTE instructors) would probably prefer to have CWE. Yes, it's a very valuable thing to have. We've got a lot of things going on. It's probably outside of the bandwidth of the College to successfully implement with fidelity. It (CWE) feels like a lot of it comes back to (CTE) instructors because there's not a structure or system in place at a higher level, because there's not the scale to justify a position at that level to oversee it, and because that position doesn't exist, that means that (CWE) falls to instructors. [Construction, Aviation, and many CTE programs have one instructor, some full-time, some part-time.] When you look at the staffing we have and how thinly spread CTE faculty are, I think that working on adding that CWE experience as credit-bearing, at least, is a step that we're not well-equipped to take without some sort of additional (e.g., grant) outside funding. The reason that the paid internships and OTJ (on-the-job training) that we have exist is because of grant funding, it's not because it's something the College / instructors have stepped out to do on their own. Getting a program started and getting your foot in the door is one of the important steps. Someone has to establish the pathway before you can walk on it. If you ask our (CTE) instructors, I think they would all say, 'Yeah, we want our students to be in the workforce while they are training because it is impossible in the CTE classroom, or in any classroom, really, to fully replicate what a job is going to be like.'" —**Robert Clark

## CWE is the Pinnacle of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs for CTE Programs

**"If you take the idea of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and you apply it to a CTE instructor, while CWE is important, you're getting up toward the top of that triangle (pyramid)… towards enlightenment (self-actualization). But if you're struggling to get the equipment in order to train your students with the skills they're going to need…"** —Robert Clark

## CWE is Expensive and Time-consuming

"My experience with CWE was largely when I was working at Clackamas Community College… one of the things that I had noted… it (CWE) can be pretty expensive to the institution if you haven't bargained or decided upon an appropriate workload calculation for that. It's a pretty expensive use of a faculty member's time *even if you consider it as a part of their load*." —Jarett Gilbert

# Umpqua Community College

Friday, December 2, 2022; 8:00–10AM; UCC Campus, Roseburg; Teresa Rivenes—Vice President of Academic Services

## Impressions

For the last interview of this sabbatical project, I drove 60 miles south on I-5 on a frosty, December morning to meet with Teresa Rivenes, the new Vice President for Academic Services at Umpqua Community College. Once again, I was struck by the unique impression each campus has had on me, and Umpqua, like all the other colleges I had visited, has a unique combination of oak and mixed conifer forest landscape and stone-and-wood-walled architecture that makes it a beautiful place to work and study. As usual with my eight in-person visits, after my interview, I took some time to observe the avifauna of the campus environment and to walk around the nearby vineyards, forest and riverside trails, campus grounds and river overlooks. In my opinion, UCC has the nicest campus grounds of all of the community colleges I visited for this project. In that respect, I unwittingly saved the best for last.

## Overview of CWE Programming

UCC has a completely decentralized CWE model. Most CTE programs require CWE (Administrative Assistant; Administrative Medical Assisting; CIS; Cybersecurity; Civil Engineering / Surveying; Human Services; Paralegal Studies), while some others do not (Business Management, Marketing; Welding) or offer it only as an elective (Criminal Justice). Some programs, such as Human Services and Paralegal Studies, require multiple terms of CWE and encourage additional terms as a directed elective. A CWE 161 seminar course is required in at least one CTE program and is recommended as a directed elective in a number of other CTE programs.

## Key Quotes & Takeaways from Interview

### Forces of Entropy Tend Toward Decentralization—4

"It's really pretty decentralized. I would very much like to change that because I find that when it is done that way, some people (faculty CWE instructors) are doing it really well and others are doing it really poorly. And I don't think that we measure as much as we could. I'd like to see where an outside employer measures the program learning outcomes. It could be helpful for program improvement." —Teresa Rivenes

### Marketing CWE

"We need to do a better job of telling our (CWE success) stories. The businesses don't know that we're putting people out there that way." —Teresa Rivenes

# Blue Mountain Community College*

*After multiple invitations to participate in this study and with no responses to date, I was unable to conduct interviews with CWE representatives from Blue Mountain Community College. The abstract below is based on cursory research done through their respective websites.

## Overview of CWE Programming

Blue Mountain Community College has subject-specific (AGR, BA, DSL, ECE, FS) variable-credit (1–8) Cooperative Work Experience (CWE) courses numbered as 280 and embedded and required in many CTE Association of Applied Science (AAS) degree programs, including Precision and General Agriculture, Agriculture Business, Agriculture Production, Business Administration, Diesel Technology, Early Childhood Education, and Fire Science.

BMCC offers the ED 280 CWE course in the transfer area of Elementary Education, which can be applied toward the AAOT degree in Education. While currently inactive in the catalog, there may have been MTH 280 and PE 280 courses once active and offered as lower-division transfer electives.

BMCC also offers a 2-credit BA 284 - Pre-Employment Seminar course, which is a required course in the Industrial Systems Technology AAS degree. This degree subsequently requires a capstone course in lieu of a CWE 280 course.

BMCC's Nursing AAS degree program uses a separate course number for its required integrated practicum (clinical) course.

BMCC uses a 33-work-hours-per-credit formula for CWE courses. CWE instructors may utilize the Canvas LMS for course administration. There is a MS Word CWE Training Agreement, including a section for Learning Objectives / Tasks, that *may* be uniform across all BMCC CWE courses. BMCC provides workers' compensation insurance for unpaid CWE opportunities per the CWE Training Agreement.

Per the Business Administration's CWE information page, the process for students to complete a CWE course includes: Meet with the CWE coordinator to discuss options; Document goals (i.e., learning outcomes) for the experience; Register for the CWE course; Update the resume; Interview with the potential employer; Submit completed CWE contract to the coordinator; Start working weekly hours; Record daily hours on the CWE time sheet; Record experiences in an online journal; Reflect on individual goals and the experience; Submit a monthly time sheet to the CWE coordinator during the first week of each month; Complete the self-evaluation and submit it to the coordinator; Submit the final time sheet by Wednesday of finals' week.

## Key Takeaways

BMCC appears to be yet another small Oregon community college that does a lot, in terms of required CWE offerings, especially in CTE AAS degrees, while having few programs and faculty. Aside from the CWE Training Agreement form, which is assumed to be uniform across all BMCC CWE courses, and a small bit of administrative support from the institution's business office for processing workers' compensation insurance coverage for unpaid CWE hours, CWE instructors are, apparently, on their own, and BMCC's CWE model can, therefore, be assumed to be highly decentralized. How each 280 course is run, how many hours each CWE instructor is investing, whether site visits are done each term, any marketing, employer relations or new site development, specific course learning outcomes, and many other factors would likely depend on each CWE instructor.

While information on the BMCC website is sparse, there does appear to be some level of in-person and online student support for career exploration and [employment](#) via an office of [Student Success, Careers, Student Services, and JOBS Program](#).

# Treasure Valley Community College*

*After multiple invitations to participate in this study, and with no responses to date, I was unable to conduct interviews with CWE representatives from Treasure Valley Community College (TVCC). The abstract below is based on cursory research done through their respective websites.

## Overview of CWE Programming

When one searches the TVCC website for "cooperative work experience," the first search result takes you to the "Academic Offerings" page, where, under "Career Technical Degrees & Certificates" and "Associate of Applied Science," one finds the following: "Our AAS degrees include an on-the-job training requirement – called Cooperative Work Experience – which will give you practical experience in your chosen career field while also earning college credit." This indicates to the reader that CWE is included in all AAS degrees, is an indelible element of career-technical education, and may be an attractive selling point to prospective students.

TVCC has subject-specific (HSER, AG, BA, OA, CJ, CS, NATR, etc.) variable-credit (1–6) Cooperative Work Experience (CWE) courses numbered as 280 and embedded and required in many CTE Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree programs, including Addiction Studies, Agriculture Business / Crop Studies, Agriculture / Machine Technology, Business Management, Business: Accounting, Office Administration: Medical Office, Business Office: Administration, Criminal Justice, Crop Science, CyberSecurity & Network Administration, Equine Business, Horse Training, Industrial Manufacturing and Automation Controls, Natural Resources and Ranch Management. Of all of its AAS degree programs, only Welding does not strictly require CWE, but instead suggests it as an optional elective.

Aviation Technology (Fixed Wing & Helicopter) appear to be the only non-Health Professions AAS degrees that do not require or suggest CWE, and this is likely due to a heavy requirement of supervised, hands-on flight training hours under the supervision of a licensed pilot as well as the extremely strong industry pipeline and high demand for graduates of these programs.

TVCC also offers a 2-credit INED 157 - Employment Strategies course ("This course prepares students to create a resume and cover letter, research internet job sources and job search techniques, prepare a portfolio of work examples and contact potential employers. Provides practical experience through mock interviews - via a variety of methods. Discusses appropriate preparation for interviews - including: phone interviews, Skype interviews, appropriate dress, portfolio building. Includes strength based career seeking and working with varied personalities in the workplace…"), which is a required course in the AAS in Agriculture Business / Crop Studies, Agriculture / Machine Technology, Crop Science, Equine Business, Horse Training, Industrial Manufacturing and Automation Controls, Natural Resources, Ranch Management, and Wildland Fire.

As with many other Oregon community colleges, Early Childhood Education includes a EDUC 210 - Theory & Practicum course that is not a true CWE course.

## Key Takeaways

Like Blue Mountain, Treasure Valley seems to value CWE in its CTE AAS programs, requiring at least one 280 course in all but one. Also noteworthy is its inclusion of a 2-credit employability skills course in nearly all of its CTE programs. These two colleges, along with LCC, are among the few that require a 2-credit employability skills course in addition to the CWE 280 course.

TVCC seems to have some level of career exploration, development and employment support through a  Career Resources web page and personnel. As of December 6, 2022, the "Job Openings for Students" link on the Career Resources page is a dead link, but this hints at the fact that TVCC may have supported an online job board for students in the past.

# [Lane Community College*](#)

*The following is based not on interviews, but rather 10 years of experience as a Co-op Coordinator in the LCC Cooperative Education Division and my many conversations with former fellow coordinators, staff and managers.

## Overview of CWE Programming

LCC's Cooperative Education program and faculty-centered, manager-led division can be held up as a model among two-year colleges in Oregon. From the document linked in this report's [Preface](#) on the history of LCC's (CWE) Co-op Ed program, one can see that it tallied 2000+ students annually enrolled in a co-op course in the 1980s—enough to be called the largest two-year co-op program west of the Mississippi at that time. A dedicated and centralized administrator and administrative support, along with faculty coordinators embedded in academic departments who are beholden and accountable to Cooperative Education while maintaining office presence, connection and identity in the academic department(s) they serve create a system where "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts."

According to the LCC model, all co-op courses (280) are taught by faculty co-op coordinators who are certified to teach those courses by the Cooperative Education Division and its dean. Some coordinators are full-time while many others have a part-time assignment on top of other faculty roles (e.g., Human Services faculty, Criminal Justice faculty, etc.). That faculty identity as co-op coordinators is part of how LCC centralizes co-op work and holds faculty responsible for their co-op coordination duties. CTE program faculty are able to focus on teaching and / or program coordination while co-op coordinators take care of all of the employer outreach, site development, site monitoring, student preparation, time tracking, evaluation and grading of student work. Coordinators act as the liaison between industry and teaching faculty, attending program advisory committees and sharing information on the latest industry trends, techniques and technologies. Co-op coordinators are also the primary career and employment specialists in CTE programs, and the required employability seminars that they teach provide many services traditionally associated with career center but as requirements rather than optional (and, traditionally, highly under-utilized) services. This is a way that institutions can and do take responsibility for ensuring that career-technical education students are prepared for the transition to work after graduation. LCC's broad range of transfer co-op courses ensures that the benefits of co-op are not limited to CTE students and that, if it works with their schedule and academic plan, transfer students can engage in career exploration and development earlier on in their academic careers.

LCC Co-op Ed was a national and even global leader in the field of academic credit-bearing supervised, work-based learning among two-year colleges. It sent regular contingents of Co-op Division representatives to the Cooperative Education & Internship Association's (CEIA) annual conferences, and the program's founder, Bob Way, was elected president of CEIA in the early 90's. His successor, Andrea Newton, was the Region 7 (West Coast) vice-president for many years while serving as the Co-op Ed Division dean and, later, vice-president for career-technical

education at LCC. LCC Co-op Ed marketed its program locally, nationally and internationally, regularly having a full-page advertisement in the International Journal of Work-integrated Learning.

Statewide, LCC was a model institution for many programs across Oregon. Whether they know it now or not, many of the schools represented in this report owe some aspect of the co-op / CWE programming they do have to LCC's program, which was instrumental in the foundation and leadership of statewide professional associations for CWE on either side of the turn of the century.

The Co-op Ed Division was also the hub of CTE work in the community, hosting the Career-Technical Education Coordinating Committee, a multi-party community advisory committee with representatives from the Lane Education Service District, area K-12 partners, the High School Connections program director, select CTE advisory committee members, and the Director of LCC Institutional Research, among others, and chaired by the Co-op Ed Division dean. Until ~2018, the LCC Co-op Ed Division was also entrusted with administration of Perkins funding for the entire college, giving it great status and an indelible connection to CTE programs. The influence and respect that LCC Co-op Ed garnered from internal and external stakeholders was on display every year at the annual Cooperative Education Gala Dinner, an event held at the LCC Center for Meeting and Learning that brought hundreds of co-op employer partners, supervisors, CTE advisory committee members, educational partners (K12, ESD), LCC faculty, Foundation staff and administrators together for a night of fine dining and recognition, speeches and awards.

Co-op's emphasis at LCC resulted in a high level of requirement for co-op courses, including the highest number of required co-op credits—18—in any Human Services program in the state, and many other CTE AAS programs requiring 6–12 credits of co-op. In fact, until recently, the only CTE programs that didn't require co-op were those where employability and demand are so high that instructors feared including co-op would have adverse effects on degree completion rates due to students stopping out after securing gainful, full-time employment. In ~2016, the LCC Curriculum & Degree Requirements Committee included a required signature from the Co-op Division dean for any new proposed AAS degree so that its co-op requirements could be ensured and vetted.

From its inception to ~2019, Lane's College Now / High School Connections program was organized under the Cooperative Education Division and its dean due to its strong association with CTE programs. LCC Co-op Ed developed a GWE (General Work Experience) 180 course to be offered to Lane students as a lower-level, less technical work-based learning course, but also to area high schools as an articulated co-op course accessible to high school students, particularly those in CTE programs.

Beginning in the 1980's, LCC's Co-op Ed Division developed an Occupational Skills AAS degree and certificates, which included a large volume of required co-op credits. Fees attached to this program's courses were enough to purchase and build up a fleet of vehicles for the

exclusive use of co-op coordinators and High School Connections liaisons for their work site and school visits.

## Areas for Growth

In the past decade, LCC Cooperative Education has seen an unprecedented reduction in all aspects of its operations -- co-op course enrollment, a dedicated manager, administrative staff (2.0FTE → <.5), coordinators (5, 1.0FTE faculty → 2), its vehicle fleet (5 cars → 2), office space, budget, status, advocacy and visibility. Financial Aid reforms of the early 2010's combined with the subsequent Guided Pathways initiative have severely reduced the number of transfer student enrollments in co-op courses. Cuts to CTE programs and AAS degrees requiring co-op courses have further reduced enrollment and FTE. AAS degree programs such as Energy Management Technician and Culinary Arts that used to generate significant numbers of co-op enrollments each year are now gone. Tuition increases combined with, fair or otherwise, an increased expectation for pay in work-based learning courses, contribute to students' hesitation in enrolling in CWE courses. Continued contraction in cooperative education work will reduce student and community access to a powerful recruitment, retention, career development, marketing and employment functions of the college. **Most notably, the lack of knowledgeable, dedicated, *engaged* management and oversight increases risk to the institution and reduces engagement and sense of satisfaction of its faculty and staff.** This is the glaring and greatest area for improvement in LCC's Co-op Ed program at present.

# Summary of Key Themes

## CWE in Oregon's Community Colleges—Everyone's Doing It!

My overall and positive takeaway from this project is that all 17 Oregon community colleges value experiential learning in the form of credit-bearing, supervised work-based learning courses generally referred to as "cooperative work experience" (CWE) or "cooperative education" (co-op). CWE courses are offered at all 17 community colleges, most typically in career-technical education Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree programs, and most typically as a degree requirement. A minority of schools also offer CWE to students in transfer areas as an elective. When required, CWE courses are most commonly required once, with a small selection of CTE programs across the state requiring multiple terms of CWE. With very few exceptions, CWE courses are expected to be taken concurrently with other courses during the school year or as stand-alone courses in the summer.

Due to a great many variables, including the size of the institution; the size of the service area; the size, health of the economy and business community in the service area; the financial stability and health of the institution; the level of prioritization and investment of faculty and staff responsible for CWE; and the institutional priorities as determined by upper administration, CWE may be a function of the institution established decades ago that is running on whatever steam a small group of CTE faculty leads can muster, or a purposefully structured, well-staffed, centralized, supported and regularly-assessed department whose work is directly tied to institutional strategic initiatives. Most find themselves somewhere between these two poles.

## …But Doing It Less, With Fewer People and Reduced Support

Almost all respondents indicated that CWE course enrollment, like every other academic discipline, was reduced or came to a grinding halt during the coronavirus pandemic. During that period, some institutions (LCC, Chemeketa, RCC, Clatsop, SWOCC, TBCC) experienced CWE staff layoffs, turnover or reductions that adversely affected CWE management, support and / or coordination efforts. Some institutions' programs took the step of making CWE optional rather than required during the pandemic, and given the additional work required of CWE coordination, momentum from CTE instructors tends now toward keeping CWE optional or removing it completely rather than investing the required resources, time and energy to require it (again).

## What's the Best CWE Model?

Many participants and those aware of this project wished to know, "What's the best way to do CWE?" "Which college has the best program?" Such questions are likely as effective as asking what the best article of clothing is for living in Oregon? (Are we talking about February or August? And what's your budget?) There is no doubt that having management oversight of CWE instruction can provide a certain level of risk management and accountability of standards and processes. Likewise, it is clear that administrative support for CWE work, including fielding

inquiries from the public and making appropriate referrals to CWE instructors, creating marketing materials, maintaining an institutional CWE web presence, creating and maintaining standardized forms and data reports takes a certain workload burden off of (primarily CTE) faculty who may have at least other teaching, if not program coordination, responsibilities. Along the same vein, dedicated coordinators who do the labor-intensive work of site development, employer outreach, site monitoring, student preparation, and possibly evaluation and grading allow the faculty who would otherwise need to fit that work on top of teaching and program coordination to focus on their primary responsibilities. Most importantly, when these things are done by a central, dedicated individual who is accountable for that work, they tend to be done *efficiently* at a *consistent standard of quality*. An important point to address is that, regardless of the quality of CWE program structure and inclusion of best practices, the important variable of economic strength and industry demand for entry-level professionals in a given service area will have a large influence on CWE enrollment.

However, centralization of any CWE role (manager, administrative support or instructor) requires a certain scale of enrollment to cover the costs of staff and management labor and to be efficient. The scale of an institution's CWE enrollment may not justify fully dedicated staff in one or any of these areas. Some schools (RCC, Clatsop, Clackamas), likely due to low overall institutional CWE enrollment but strong general support for CWE as a discipline, may elect to centralize only some aspects of administrative program support. Others (Chemeketa, PCC) may opt to keep centralized faculty CWE instructors but forgo administrative support. Still others (LBCC) may choose to consolidate management and program oversight roles with the faculty CWE instructor / coordinator who acts as both CWE Department chair and CWE coordinator. Certain institutions (COCC) may forgo any centralization efforts in favor of investing those resources into other aspects of instruction. And finally, some colleges (KCC), due to institutional executive-level support and successful grant funding, may elect to fully centralize both administrative support and instruction of CWE courses. One final takeaway, supported by multiple quotes from this project, is that the tendency is toward decentralization due to the fact that centralized efforts require the efforts associated with change and simply cost more, and that cost is greater for colleges and programs with lower CWE enrollment.

## Leadership and Advocacy

The [DACUM](#) document referenced in this report's Preface provides a clear rubric for evaluation of best practices in terms of the duties and responsibilities of an effective CWE administrator (director). Where there is *dedicated*, *invested* leadership of CWE in the form of a manager or department chair responsible for CWE oversight, CWE structuring tends toward centralization, visibility, institutional and community recognition. LCC's Dean of Cooperative Education, through ~2020, was an excellent example of a CWE director whose duties encompassed most, if not all, of those described in the DACUM. Current, local noteworthy examples include, but are not limited to, the visibility and status of the combined CWE Department Chair and (faculty) CWE Coordinator position at LBCC; the recent centralization of CWE efforts under Career Services at KCC due to advocacy and a Title III grant spearheaded by the Dean of CTE; and the faculty-led, centralized CWE model at Chemeketa that has withstood efforts to have it moved to student

services due to the advocacy of their dean. In the aforementioned case of KCC, **it was their president's insistence on the inclusion of "employability" in their institutional strategic plan that led to the broad requirement of a CWE employability seminar, in addition to the CWE work-based learning course, in many CTE programs**.

## Administrative Support

Whether CWE instruction is done by a dedicated faculty CWE coordinator, career counselor / advisor, Classified staff member, part- or full-time (CTE) faculty member, department chair or manager -- and *all* of these are the case in Oregon community colleges -- administrative support of CWE work can mean the difference between just doing CWE or doing it well. Administrative support personnel may do one or all of the following: act as a central concierge for CWE employer partners, create and standardize forms, maintain web pages, create / order marketing and branding materials, receive and accurately refer prospective CWE students, build CWE courses, collect and store required CWE forms, assist with student registration inquiries / issues, manage software tools. Any one of these functions can allow CWE instructors or coordinators to focus on the essential functions of their work.

In my interviews, COCC and RCC both mentioned the fact that compliance with CWE-related administrative tasks is difficult to track and enforce due to a lack of centralized administration or sufficient support and oversight of those functions. Even if departments and programs are, in fact, complying with expectations, the institution has little ability or existing processes to verify it. One example given was that if individual departments have the ability to build and maintain CWE courses, registration processes can be decentralized, causing errors and gaps in otherwise standardized processes such as agreement form / contract collection and storage. Some managers overseeing decentralized CWE programs expressed concern over the fact that, for example, agreement forms should be collected and stored for each CWE student, but that they have no regular process for knowing whether that is happening.

## Data, Outcomes and Assessment

While all 17 Oregon community colleges offer CWE (280) courses, none [systematically track regularly collected data points](#) such as percentage of paid versus unpaid CWE, the number of co-ops secured through existing employment or the number of co-ops that result in new employment. For the purposes of workers' compensation insurance coverage, colleges routinely collect data on student work hours spent in unpaid internships, but either are not easily able to or simply do not analyze this data point. Very few institutions standardize CWE course learning outcomes across all CWE courses, which may make assessment of CWE more challenging. And where a common measuring tool such as the worksite supervisor evaluation of student form is standardized across all CWE courses, little is done on an institutional level with the data therein in terms of assessment. CWE tends to be assessed, if and when it is, at the program level through practices such as institutional program review, i.e., "How is CWE working in X CTE program?". However, institutions do *not* seem to have the means to or interest in assessing CWE as a function of the institution, i.e., "How is CWE working overall at this institution?"

## Diversity of CWE Workload Definitions and Potential Disparities

Workload and compensation for CWE across Oregon community colleges is as disparate as its programming. Where faculty are concerned, some colleges pay as little as <$100 per student (SWOCC), while others pay eight (LCC, COCC, MHCC) to ten (CGCC) hours per student times the full-time faculty member's hourly rate, which can average out to be ~$400 / student. In some cases, a full-time faculty member may be paid much more than a part-time faculty member doing the same work. In other cases, there is pay parity. Among faculty CWE instructors, the most common workload formula seems to be .25 ILC per student, which, if we assume a 45 ILC per contract year workload, averages out to ~60 students per term or ~180 students per year and roughly an 8-hour-per-student formula.

One of the most glaring issues with CWE workload and compensation, particularly in decentralized models with little or no administrative oversight of CWE, is the potential disparity in standards and practices among faculty running CWE courses. Some can be doing an outstanding job, while others may be doing relatively little for the same pay. This is where having an administrator dedicated to oversight and accountability of CWE courses and instructors can be of great value to CWE stakeholders.

## CWE & Technology

Technology implementation into CWE programming varies greatly from institution to institution. Just over half (52.4%) of Oregon community colleges have a [dedicated public website or web page for CWE](#), not surprisingly with most programs deemed decentralized not having a dedicated CWE web presence. All institutions have [learning management systems (LMS)](#) available to instructors for CWE course delivery, though not all CWE instructors use them, some opting for analog, paper materials or other technology media. Most institutions also have an office productivity suite available such as Microsoft Office 365 or Google Suite of Apps for Education (G-Suite). Some institutions make required forms (agreement, learning objectives, supervisor evaluation) publicly available on their CWE or other institution web page, many of these being fillable PDFs or MS Word documents. A number of institutions are using modern software tools for a variety of career and employment services functions, the most common of which are Handshake (TBCC, MHCC) and Simplicity (PCC). While some institutions mentioned interest in a third-party signable form workflow tool such as DocuSign, it appears that LCC, which used DocuSign from 2019-2021 and now uses a cheaper alternative, Foxit eSign, is the only Oregon community college to have such a tool at present.

## Site Monitoring

Regular site monitoring is an expectation for cooperative work experience as codified by the [Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission in its Apprenticeship Definitions: Section 17 of Chapter 589](#): "The college instructor or supervisor visits the field work site regularly." Colleges each have their own standards and definitions of what "regularly" means. In highly structured programs, site monitoring may mean two in-person visits per student per term—one at the

beginning and one at the end of the work experience. For others, it may mean a phone call sometime during the term. In any case, site monitoring, particularly when done through in-person visits, is deemed an essential function of CWE instructors in order to ensure a safe learning environment, verify and evaluate student learning, cross-sell other CWE courses / programs, and maintain positive relations with site supervisors. In the case of centralized programs with management oversight, where regular CWE instructor meetings or individual check-ins may be happening between manager and CWE instructor, it may be easier for institutions to track whether site monitoring is happening regularly. When CWE is fully decentralized, it may be completely assumed and rarely verified. A majority of Oregon community colleges offer CWE instructors mileage reimbursement for travel to work sites, but a few do not. While Clackamas' CWE instructors may have had access to a college motor pool in the past, LCC is currently the only program in the state that has traditionally had a dedicated fleet of vehicles and access to institutional gas tanks (or department-owned gas station credit cards) to use for the purpose of site visits. While undoubtedly a best practice that encourages in-person visitation, this requires a significant investment from the institution and by CWE staff in terms of vehicle upkeep. As with technology tools, a certain scale of CWE enrollment is necessary to justify the expense.

## Professional Development

One trend that became clear through this research project is the relationship between status as a dedicated CWE coordinator and the likelihood of engaging in CWE-specific professional development activities. In institutions with dedicated CWE coordinators (LCC, LBCC, PCC, Chemeketa, KCC), those practitioners reported engaging in professional development activities and belonging to professional associations specifically centered around career development and CWE such as attending annual conferences of [CEIA](), [NACE](), [NCDA]() and [CAEL](). In institutions where CTE faculty are responsible for CWE on top of other teaching and program coordination responsibilities, faculty are much more likely to engage in professional development in their area of subject matter expertise rather than CWE, specifically. CWE professionals who are engaged in CWE-specific professional development opportunities are more likely to be aware of and implement best practices in CWE teaching into their work. To this point, Michael Fisher at COCC remarked, "Because we've had these CWE courses on the books for so long, people [faculty] just run them like they run them, rather than going, 'Gosh, what could I be doing to be doing this better?'" Similarly, Lauren Yokum at TBCC noted, "If it's worked for them (CTE faculty instructors of CWE courses), and it's worked for them for years, they're probably still doing it that way."

## Timing of CWE

CWE is traditionally thought of as a capstone-like experience, and is typically required or otherwise offered at the end of a two-year degree program. Some schools have mentioned their support and / or successful examples of including CWE earlier on in the two-year degree curriculum to emphasize its career exploration, exposure and normalization opportunities (OCCC, RCC, UCC). Other schools utilize the summer term space between year one and year

two on their advising sheets and curriculum guides to advertise and recommend CWE opportunities. One idea that came out of this research is to include CWE as an option for summer on advising sheets / maps, particularly in transfer areas, which may be a way to both advertise and market CWE programming to a low-enrollment area and increase transfer student participation in CWE opportunities.

## Internal Support of CWE

College campuses are run by skilled technical professionals—business analysts, accountants, network engineers, landscape architects and executives. Colleges can and do support student work experiences alongside internal partners. Both KCC and MHCC gave examples of multiple, annual paid internships in their IT departments for students in computer-related CTE programs. PCC gave an example of its Presidential Executive Internship program, whereby student interns are able to receive mentorship from the executive team and exposure to executive professional work and skills in a paid, ten-hour-per-week internship for the duration of an academic term. What a way for an institution to demonstrate its commitment to work-based learning and the professional development of its students!

## CWE & Equity

Kudos to Eric Juenemann for requesting that I include a question in my interviews (Columns A and B, Row 29) on equity in Oregon community college CWE programming. The question was intentionally broad and, consequently, elicited a gamut of responses, some focusing on equity considerations around the identity of the CWE instructor / coordinator, while others focused on student equity concerns around CWE, particularly barriers like transportation and pay. Few institutional representatives could point to a systematic approach to equity in CWE, though, interestingly, one CWE professional noted that local high school internship programs have targeted equity programs to provide paid internships to underrepresented student populations, which may point to a certain inequity of funds between high schools and community colleges to support work-based learning. In two cases, community colleges mentioned (Ford Family Foundation) grant-funded programs that targeted rural student populations, and whose funds go to offering paid CWE in specific fields and work sites, or to specific under-represented populations, e.g., rural men. Rather, many mentioned singular or collective institutional resources for student support that may reduce barriers to student success overall, including in CWE courses. Others cited equity considerations when developing CWE sites, both in terms of advocating for paid CWE as well as intentionally partnering with employers who support underrepresented identities, e.g., women- or minority-owned business networks. Finally, a number of the colleges that include a pre-requisite or concurrent CWE seminar course mentioned the inclusion of diversity, equity and inclusion topics for the workplace in these seminars.

Teresa Rivenes of Umpqua Community College wisely pointed out that one of the essential functions of a CWE instructor is to promote equity of opportunity by assisting students in the development of and placement in (i.e., access to) CWE opportunities. This speaks to the nature

of CWE in community college CTE programs as a leveling feature, particularly when they are required. Many traditional community college student populations lack social capital, and therefore stand to benefit greatly from the advocacy and network connections that CWE instructors can provide. In programs where CWE is required, for this reason, there should be an expectation of institutional support for student placement and equitable access to these opportunities for all students, the latter underscoring the importance of systems such as online job boards or third-party software systems, e.g., Handshake, that make CWE opportunities easily visible and accessible. And where CWE is not required, institutions must consider how traditionally underrepresented student populations lacking social capital will have equitable access to the professional development and employment opportunities CWE can provide.

One societal factor that may be having a negative impact on the perception of CWE by the public is the confounding of terminology and history between CWE and "internship," which does not necessarily have a learning component or bear academic credit, and which is seldom under the control or auspices of an academic institution. Infamous cases coming out of the Great Recession of 2008-2012, such as the Black Swan internship scandal, brightened the spotlight on and scrutiny of internships and highlighted the importance of the role of the CWE coordinator in vetting potential work site compliance with the US Department of Labor's Fair Labor Standards for Unpaid Internships. **Simply put, CWE work sites that do not pass the DoL's test for unpaid internships must pay students, by law, and institutions that don't ensure proper vetting of this may be risking legal repercussions. However, if indeed an academic credit-bearing CWE experience is vetted and created to have significant learning value that aligns with a student's academic program, there should be no more expectations of pay for a CWE course than there should be for a mathematics course.** CWE's state-mandated 30–36 credit-to-hour range ensures that students are spending as much time at a CWE work site per credit as they would be in a standard brick-and-mortar lab class. Transportation to off-campus CWE work sites poses an additional burden for CWE students on top of the standard burden of transportation to often-rurally located community college campuses. In short, in the absence of data on CWE outcomes for employment, it may be short-term thinking based on certain assumptions to suggest that pay in CWE is necessarily an equity issue in terms of value to a student's career development. The cost of transportation to CWE sites in terms of both money and time is something that employers and colleges should continue to attempt to support or offset through setting up stipends to offset transportation costs, offering remote and hybrid work arrangements when feasible, and offering more on-campus co-op opportunities of high quality and learning value. Given the disparity of oversight of CWE in Oregon's community colleges, a more glaring equity gap would seem to be in standardizing the vetting of CWE sites as well as supporting systems for broadly publicizing opportunities.

## Final Words on CWE in Oregon Community Colleges

When speaking about CWE programming at COCC, Instructional Dean for Career-Technical Education Michael Fisher said:

**"I don't know that it (CWE) works well. I think that it functions. And I don't know what I don't know. And I'm in one of the positions that I should know. So if I don't know, who does? We're somewhat blind to it. And we are because we're complacent in it. It's there. It exists. It seemingly works. To do anything different takes work, a new lens, and a desire to do something different."**

Out of all of the wonderful quotes I captured in my ~30 hours of interviews, this one probably best describes the state of CWE in the Oregon community college system. Certainly, some colleges are doing it well. Others, like those overloaded CTE faculty program leads responsible for CWE instruction, may just be happy to be able to offer it at some level, never mind the quality or level of support. And there are plenty that find themselves somewhere in the middle.

Dawn Loomis of Mt. Hood Community College echoes a similar sentiment, saying: "Everybody's doing their own thing…" "...and they're doing it out of desperation basically because they want to offer CWE to their students, but nobody's come up with a centralized system, so they're, like, 'we'll just do this 'til we figure something out', and then nobody's ever figured it out."

For whatever reason, CWE flies under the radar at most institutions and at the state level. To this point, Michael Fisher adds, "One of the good things about … the world of CTE—until something's broken or something … good is happening, we roll along and do our thing, and the College is completely happy without us bringing up more issues to them like CWE."

Could the same be said about CWE in terms of state oversight? To this point, Dean Robin Taylor at Chemeketa Community College says, "CWE to me is one of those unfortunate areas where, if it runs smoothly, no one is really looking. Even with great results, it's easy to assume that it just runs itself. I think it's a massively missed opportunity…"

Community college and Higher Education leaders should take note of the information herein and the abovementioned quotes as an area where we may be missing opportunities to support and showcase student success and fruitful partnership between the workforce, our student community and Higher Education institutions and their successful academic programs. Finally, where do community college CWE programs fit into Oregon's prioritization of workforce development, career-technical education and career-connected learning, recently culminating in the historic $200 million funding of the Future Ready Oregon legislation? Is there a call or opportunity for the 17 Career-Connected Learning Navigator positions to offer administrative support and advocacy for CWE in Oregon's community colleges, perhaps creating systems to help standardize practices, increase data availability or transparency, modernize documents and workflows, and making connections between CWE instructors and potential employer partners? If not, will state educational leaders advocate for additional, separate legislation-based support and oversight of community college CWE programs?

# Reflections

## …on my progress toward stated goals

The overarching goal of gaining an understanding of the current state of CWE programming at Oregon community colleges has been accomplished. I, and any who read this report, should have a much better sense now of the strengths and areas for development of Lane Community College's Cooperative Education program as well as those of CWE programs across the state.

The secondary goal of establishing a network of professionals across the state who are representatives of and subject-matter experts on CWE at their institution has, likewise, been achieved to a high degree. As a bit of a perfectionist and maximizer, I feel a certain sense of failure in not having connected with Blue Mountain Community College and Treasure Valley Community College, and their lack of response and engagement, while curious, can likely be attributed to being preoccupied this fall term with the return to in-person, on-campus instruction. The goal of producing this long-form report, a short-form report, and an oral presentation will have been achieved as of April 2023, when I present on this project at the 2023 Cooperative Education & Internship Association Annual Conference in San Diego.

As a Co-op Coordinator, one of my main responsibilities is to assist my students in their development of learning objectives. It often happens that, due to a variety of circumstances, their ability to make progress on their planned objectives at their work site is hampered. In such cases, sometimes another unforeseen learning opportunity arises, or perhaps they are able to go deeper and further beyond the remaining objectives they set for themselves. This is true of the world of work as well, and it is a beneficial lesson to impart to students—that they should remain flexible and adaptable, maintain a high tolerance for ambiguity, let go of things beyond their control and maximize the opportunities presented to them.

That lesson applies to this project as well in that, initially, I had hoped to incorporate much more quantitative data, specifically on CWE course data at each institution. As much of my students' progress toward their learning objectives depends on their work site supervisor, my ability to obtain these data would depend on institutional researchers in the Oregon community college system. To this end, I contacted LCC's institutional research (IR) representative to make my requests for access to and assistance with obtaining quantitative data. Despite a face-to-face meeting and numerous e-mail communications and requests, including referrals to IR professionals at the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, I was unable to get the assistance needed to obtain this data. This setback is not the responsibility or fault of any one individual in the slightest, but is rather an indication of one of the most common systemic challenges in the community college system: Those with the skills and access are under-resourced and under a constant barrage of requests, and the systems they rely on are at once complex and limited to systems and data available. Reinforcing this point, a recent audit of the Oregon community college system noted a need to "substantially upgrade the community college system's transparency and make data more accessible to [the] public."

Many interview subjects took notes during our interviews, and made comments like, "What a good idea," "I hadn't thought of that," "I'd like to implement that," or "I'm going to follow up on that." I didn't expect or anticipate that this project would be as much of a transactional learning experience, and that my interview subjects would take the opportunity to take notes, ask questions, and learn from my knowledge and experience. I am hopeful that reviewing this report might help add to and reinforce any learning that results from this process. Conversely, I made excellent progress on one of my sabbatical project goals of generating new ideas to improve my own professional practice and cooperative education programming at LCC. Some of those include:

- National Science Foundation REU internship opportunities: https://reufinder.com/programs-for-community-college-students/—SWOCC

- CAEL Annual Conference - Council for Adult & Experiential Learning—LBCC

- Develop a site visit script / rubric—LBCC

- Presidential Executive internship program—PCC

- Toolbox fund idea: Automotive program employers pitch in to a fund that provides student completers $2500 to purchase tools upon graduation—COCC

- The idea of combining CTE Day (Hands-on Career Day) for high school students with Career Fair so that high school students can not only see the programs and educational pathways but meet the employers who would like to hire them—KCC

- On the supervisor evaluation form, include checkboxes: "Was this student employed part- or full-time prior to enrolling in the CWE course?" "Are you planning on extending an offer of employment or have you hired your CWE student?"—Chemeketa

One additional goal for this sabbatical was to determine whether there was interest in forming a formal statewide professional association of CWE practioners. While this project undoubtedly increased the quantity and quality of professional relationships with CWE practitioners and administrators at community colleges around the state in my network, it has become apparent through low attendance at monthly Zoom meetings of Oregon community college CWE professionals, especially after a marked increase in in-person work as of Fall 2022, that there is little ability or interest to form a professional association like those that existed in the late 1990's and early 2000's. Without delving into the likely causes of this lack of interest, it is enough to say that a group of CWE practitioners and administrators will continue to meet via Zoom quarterly during the academic year to provide resources, guidance and support, and to interface with the Oregon Department of Education / HECC's Career-Connected Learning Specialist.

# …on the sabbatical experience

When I looked at the requirements of the sabbatical application to the LCC Faculty Professional Development program's Sabbatical Committee, I was taken aback by the rigor and time commitment. I thought to myself, "I thought the Sabbath, from which the term 'sabbatical' derives, was a day of *rest*. This doesn't seem like a rest to me." Looking back, however, the explanation of project purpose, methodology and goals provided a very helpful structure once my sabbatical began. One of my first takeaways from the experience is an appreciation for the rigorous application process.

Many ask about the best parts of the sabbatical experience. First, let me disabuse any reader of the notion that it's a vacation or holiday. The entire process—umpteen e-mails, scheduling, calendar invitations, soliciting directions, Zoom links, early morning departures, hours driving, developing and refining interview questions, conducting 14 2-hour interviews effectively, reviewing the 14 2-hour interviews, filling out the spreadsheet, writing the report -- that culminated in this almost-60-page report was *a lot of work*. Having said that, here are the best elements of my sabbatical:

- No constant stream of incoming e-mail, 24/7
- No grading!
- Complete flexibility of schedule (outside scheduled interviews and travel)
- Weekends to myself and my family
- Ability to attend leisure / recreational events during the work week within the academic term, e.g., attending the Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival, November 4–14
- A certain freedom from routine (e.g., exercising midday instead of at my usual time of 5AM), which turned out to be almost as much of a challenge for me as a perk
- Decrease in latent stress level and typical feeling of hypervigilance / "always on". Do other community college professionals feel this way? Maybe it's just me?
- Connection with professional community. It was wonderful to meet and learn from so many kind and experienced professionals directly or tangentially involved with my field of work
- Travel, experiencing community college campuses, and birding new places. Would I have visited these campuses otherwise? Probably not
- Ability to engage and get more involved in the community. Call me a "maximizer," but I am now on the board of directors for the South Eugene Neighborhood Association and the Oregon Birding Association; I have joined the Camas Ridge Community School Site Council; and I have accepted a position on the City of Eugene Active Transportation Committee. 2023 is going to be a busy year!

On the other hand, I can say with certainty that I missed my regular interactions with students, my LCC colleagues, and my Co-op Ed employer partners, and being on our beautiful LCC campus each day.

# Travel Photos

Clockwise from upper left: SWOCC, LBCC, OCCC, KCC, UCC, RCC, COCC, MHCC