

Drone Technican Certificate - Program Advisory Committee

Date: July 7, 2021

Time: 9am

Facilitator: Tim Vaughan

In Attendance (via Zoom):

Tim Vaughan (MJC Computer Electronics Faculty), Jeff Tolhurst (Instructor - Earth Science \ GISArts, Sciences), Steve Amador (Dean, Career Technical Education), Jarek Swan (California Highway Patrol Officer and Drone Specialist)

Tim Vaughan start by presenting the model he has developed for the Drone Technician Certificate as an extension of the Computer Service Technician Certificate, currently being implemented as part of the MJC Computer Electronics program. It will also be part of the Computer Support Specialist Program which is rebranding of the MJC Computer Electronics program. It is a partnership with Stanislaus County Office of Education, the Stanislaus County Workforce Development, and with a grant from the Google.org foundation, with the Google IT Support Professional Certificate Program.

Jeff Tolhurst runs a program at Columbia College which trains students for drone applications involving Real time internet controlled drones are being developed for wild fire control, surface mapping, 3-D mapping, and agricultural applications. Jeff's courses include Intro to GIS, GIS Raster based image processing, Remote Sensing, Drone Mapping Course and FAA Remote Pilot Certification. Jeff employs mini drones which cost the students only \$30 and can be flown indoors so the students can practice flying without damaging more expensive drones.

Jeff stated that he has been seeing an increase in interest from local employer wishing to hire students with the FAA Remote Pilot Certification. Recently, Courtney Aviation and Sierra Overhead Analytics has been looking for employees with the FAA certification.

Steve Amado is Dean for Career and Technical Education at Columbia College. Steve was in agreement that combining drone remote pilot certification course with IT support specialist program would be a great idea. We will also be able to refer students to the drone program at Columbia College. Steve also made a point that having multiple skill is more attractive to employers and you have seen examples of that with companies in the area.

Jeff Swan said "I think it's a great idea for a class, due to the fact many people do not understand how the FAA and law about airspace work. Also, it ties into the other classes that I have taken as drones use microcontrollers and a lot can use the raspberry pies. My recommendation would add a sub-section on non-flight ROV'S like boats or submersible and bomb robots...(stuff to send where you don't want to go)".

A vote pole was taken. The question asked was "Does combining the Computer Support and Drone Certification make sense"? The vote result was a unanimous confirmation.

Conclusion

[1] There is a general consensus that combining the four fundamental Information Technology (IT) core courses of the Computer Service Technician Certificate with training for the FAA Remote Pilot

Certificate makes good sense because it provides the students with very marketable skills in both Information Technology (IT) and Drone Technology.