Planning and Feedback Session

The purpose of this session was to obtain feedback from employers who have shown interest in hiring BSC students/graduates (Employers were taken from Jay Meier’s Job Seekers software). Submitted by Sandy Fried and Kim Luptak.

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1. What led you to recruit students/graduates from Bismarck State College?
   - Opening of our new branch in Bismarck
   - I am alumni of Bismarck State College.
   - We find the candidates that come to us after graduating from the Process or Power Plant Technology Programs or the Mechanical Maintenance Technology Program are very well educated and very knowledgeable.
   - As a Graduate of Bismarck State College 1985 (aka BJC), I am fully aware of the kind of quality Technical Education that the graduates receive at BSC. The school is able to assist the FAA with recruitment of candidates that may have the background the FAA is seeking.
   - It was one of the few schools in the region to offer the Generation Operator program.
   - I was looking for a new way to recruit for my staff. So I called Job Service and told them what I was looking for and they gave me a contact number for BSC.
   - Classes offered at BSC seem to be flexible enough to allow a student to work with our scheduling needs.
   - knew of a student attending that may fit our needs
   - People we have hired have had great work ethics. Their knowledge in the field has been good what they have been taught for the field.
   - Halliburton hired a previous graduate of the Electronics/Instrumentation course offered by BSC. The knowledge he gained was closely related to what we use and he was a valuable asset to Halliburton.
   - We look for individuals who meet the minimum qualifications of each open position. BSC helps many individuals meet college requirements in our job postings.
   - The wide range of individuals.
   - We are a public school, so we really haven’t openly recruited from Bismarck State College.
   - It is a great opportunity. We typically do recruitment within our region and North Dakota has always had great graduates.
   - Location/proximity to our program in Fort Totten, ND.
   - We have not recruited directly from BSC.
   - A few years ago I was told about the oil and gas classes that you all offered. I thought that those particular students would be great candidates.
   - Near to Billings geographically.
   - We were wanting to recruit individuals wanting a flexible schedule and were looking for experience in their field.
   - I have not hired any recent grads but I think your basic 2 year degree program needs to stay in line with the big 4 year colleges. Now with the cost of school becoming outrageous, you are in a position to capture allot of the local students as a way to increase enrollment.
• Bismarck State College is one of the colleges in the state that offers course work in areas that are applicable to our industry.
• Students and graduates from BSC have filled a void for NISC by bringing the ability and skills necessary to be successful in certain positions. We have found that the technical and the administrative area have benefited.
• Career Orientated and Responsible Individuals Education Meets Needs/Requirements
• We hire college students while they are in school to work part-time and upon graduation to fill our professional positions. The BSC/DSU education students have been better equipped, more mature, and more committed than students from other schools. The career fairs at BSC have been more productive for us too. Students come more prepared, they look like they are ready to talk to employers and more students had their resumes ready to share at BSC than other schools we attended last year. Even though companies ask for online resumes/applications, many employers still like to return to the office with a stack of resumes after a career fair.
• The fact that you have some ag related programs, specifically the ag parts program.
• Need for candidates located in remote area near Bismarck.
• The primary interest is to find students that are interested in staying within North Dakota for Coop and Fulltime opportunities. I was recruiting for Bobcat's Coop program and was looking at the Pre-Engineering program as a source for Coop students and to find high potential future fulltime employees.
• In need of 2-yr/technical/service employees
• Just include as a broad range of University's to select students from.
• Actually, have not recruited anyone from Bismarck State College. Our company joined the TeamND website. Bismarck State College is part of the consortium. The reason for joining the consortium was to attract Engineering students who like the northern, more remote locations. Our company is located in northern Minnesota.
• We have some sales career openings in W. ND
• Lack of workers in western, ND. Provide on-the-job training in the hope to retain student after graduation.
• Specific programs the students have completed required by our clients when recruiting. Some examples include Graphic Design, Power Plant Management, GIS/Site Surveying.
• I have not at the present time
• You offer an Agriculture program, specifically Custom Applicators and Agronomy.
• BSC is part of the TEAM ND for posting job openings.
• Education/Course of Study Academic Achievement
• Widening geographic parameters of our typical search for specific positions.
• I do not recruit at Bismarck State College.
• The location, nursing program, and CNA courses.

2. How prepared are Bismarck State College students to enter the workforce?
• Have not hired any as of yet
• BSC students are prepared as well as if not better than other community college students that I hire.
• Frankly, we require experience so we've never seen one of the candidates straight out of college.
• I do not have any first-hand knowledge of the HVAC graduates and their knowledge but I am aware of the Electronics Department and the background it provides.
• No issues. Well prepared in our experience.
• I have BSC students working for me right now and in the past. I believe they are very prepared to enter the work force. I have had employees that went to Power Plant school and Lineman school and
they were ready to go into the field by the time they were done with school. Also I had employee's
that were just taking their generals to move on to four year schools and they also were ready.

- I find them to be responsible for our jobs. Our jobs are more suited for the student going to school,
not necessarily for post college career option.
- the student seemed to be quite prepared as far as education. Possibly a little unprepared in
interoffice communication skills. This may also be a personality issue
- I have great luck with knowledge these young men have good knowledge.
- I didn't have much discussion about this topic with students. They seemed informed of opportunities
and were actively seeking future employment options.
- We have not specifically noticed the amount of preparation BSC students have to other college
institutions. All of our recent college graduates seem prepared for the workforce.
- Well, some are, some aren't. The generation coming into the workforce needs to understand that
you need to start at the bottom & work your way up the ladder.
- Well, my daughter is a graduate, she seems to be doing well at the 4 year school where she
transferred.
- They are prepared like any other new grad. The clinicals are a huge piece in practical preparation.
- N/A
- Of those students we hired who were graduates of BSC, we felt they were prepared to enter the
workforce.
- I am not sure. I do not currently know of any who have come to work for us.
- Unsure
- I believe they are just as prepared as any other institution.
- The problem I see with college students is not unique to your college. Students lack in basic reading
and writing skills and basic math problem solving. And as such, we as employers are now asking for
exceptional skills when I feel all we need is good solid writing, reading, and math skills. It is getting
more common for applicants to submit a sample of a writing skill for a position they are applying for.
- Our organization has interviewed a limited number of students from BSC, but feel (overall) they are
relatively prepared to enter the workforce. Key aspects of preparation for interviews, resume
writing techniques, etc. are good subjects to review however.
- The students are prepared to enter the workforce and bring necessary skills and knowledge.
- That is a case-by-case basis. Some are great!
- BSC has come a long way in the last 10 years. At one point, it seemed there was a lot more hand-
holding of students. Now, it seems that BSC is expecting their students to transition to adulthood
and take ownership of themselves and their careers which is great. Every college we hire from has a
handful of students that were not prepared or emotionally mature and ready to handle the
workforce. That is going to happen but I do think BSC is getting better. I would highly encourage
BSC to encourage working during college in their chosen field (if possible) or taking a semester off to
do an internship. Real world experience cannot be gained in the classroom. The emotional maturity
and commitment from the students that have actually spent time in their chosen profession before
graduation is much higher. This makes them much more attractive to potential employers.
Writing skills are critical and seem to be lacking. Mistakes on resumes and in emails seem to be
more the norm than the exception. Students need to be able to communicate in written form in
proper English, not abbreviations like you do when you text.
- I have no idea, have not hired one as of yet.
- Unknown.....candidates from your institution were not considered, nor selected for hire.
- The ideal time for a Coop opportunity is within the Junior year of an Engineering program.
Occasionally a student is ready for a Coop after completion of a Pre-Engineering program or
Sophomore year. Of the few resumes that I have reviewed and interviews that I have performed
with BSC Pre-Engineering students, they typically need to get into their Engineering programs further to be successful in a Coop placement.

- Haven't hired on yet
- Have not actually received or hired anyone to date from BSC, so unable to answer.
- For the most part, many did little or no research into our company prior to visiting our booth.
- Don't know.
- Some have had on the job experience from their classes, some just have the basic knowledge/theory. It's all dependent on the level of experience that is required by our clients - their potential employer.
- unsure
- We are just starting to recruit at Bismarck State College and have not hired anyone yet.
- N/A......I have not hired a BSC graduate at this time
- Well Prepared
- have not hired; no reference to answer.
- The students we get that are coming from the CNA courses seem to be very well prepared.

3. Describe the characteristics that make for an ideal employee?

- Dependable  Integrity  Ability to learn and grow
- Motivation. The ability to problem solve makes for an ideal employee. We can train on job duties, however, either they can problem solve or they can't.
- Team player Knowledgeable Confident Conscientious
- An employee that has a desire to never stop learning.
- Solid foundation of knowledge, with flexibility to learn new/unique systems. Open to learning and dependable.
- A person that has an outgoing and fun personality. Someone that is willing to work for what their getting paid. Also to be on time and leave all of life's problems at the door when you get to work.
- Flexible, willingness to get along with others, patience, knowledge of how to navigate on the computer through web browsers, word....
  o Well trained with the required skillset  2. Able to communicate well with coworkers and clients 3. energetic and able to be self-motivated  4. Does good follow through
- Attitude is big for me. We can teach them the trade but attitude is something they have to have.
- I see an ideal employee as someone who is a go-getter and willing to take initiative. I value a hard-work ethic, dedication, and logical thinking skills.
- honest, confident, a decision maker, dependable, reliable, self sufficient
- on time, team player, willing to accept guidance, willing to overcome limitations
- Enthusiastic Excited to learn Team driven Self-motivator/driven
- Personable, work ethic, dependable/reliable, trustworthy and caring.
- Reliability Promptness Good communication/people skills Problem solving skills Ability to learn new skills Able to interact with others
- For us, it would be someone who enjoys the outdoors and physical work. We also offer a career with the opportunity to move up.
- We hire addiction counselors, so we need graduates with degrees in human services, psychology, sociology, counseling, or drug and alcohol studies to ensure that they will be licensed in Montana. Knowledge of addiction in college coursework is helpful.
- dedicated, honest, caring, on time.
The ability to learn, adapt and understand the company's goals and objectives and the true test of that is how they communicate it. I think the trend for college graduates is to stay with one company and try for some stability in their jobs. Job jumping is not quite as popular as it was. Therefore teaching the students the basic skills needed to succeed and possibly advance in that particular company in all businesses and the ability to continue to learn. Students and Adults will adjust to what interest them. And it is not uncommon for an employee wanting to try a different position in that company.

Loyal individuals who demonstrate their dedication through their work ethic. Employees should be effective communicators with the ability to do so in a professional manner. We strive to hire for life and look for individuals that demonstrate longevity in the career path they are entering, while demonstrating the knowledge, skills, and abilities that the position requires.

NISC looks in two areas for an ideal candidate. First, we stress our shared values, which we feel are such an important part of who we are. We realize that we can teach specific skills in a job, but you can't teach the shared values. Second, we look for individuals that are willing to learn and have some basic background to get them started. We look for initiative, dedication, and the desire to provide excellent customer service. We look for team players. We believe in professional growth and look for those wanting to expand their career.

Honest  Hard-working  Good Work Ethic  Dependable  Willing to Learn
Ready to show up every day and work. Committed to the organization  Life-long learner (you're not done learning just because you finished your degree...you're just starting!) Willing to work your way up (you will not be CEO day #1) Collaborative  Self-motivated  Empathetic to others (co-workers, customers)
Integrity, honesty and the willingness to learn.
Promptness, responsibility, attention to detail.
A good understanding of the core engineering principles, good communication skills and a willingness to learn.
Understands the work environment basics e.g. show up on time to work; when work time is slack, look for something or ask for something to do; don't be afraid to ask questions (as a new employee, they are not expected to know everything).
Bring behaviors in the following areas that match what we are looking for in the desired position:  Verbal Skills  Verbal Reasoning  Numeric Ability  Numeric Reasoning  Energy Level  Assertiveness  Sociability  Manageability  Attitude  Decisiveness  Accommodating  Independence  Objective Judgment
A student possessing some or all of the following competencies: Leadership  Team Player  Decision maker  Accountability  Time Management  Detail Oriented  Safety Awareness
We look for candidates who have strong interpersonal skills, who have a natural market to sell to, some sales/customer service experience, competitive, entrepreneurial, active in their community, and who exhibit leadership in the organizations they are involved in.
Commitment, assertiveness, organized, follow-thru.
Self-starter, good work ethic
Integrity, honesty, strong desire to succeed and good attendance.
Someone who has the background we are looking for and is willing to come in and learn our business.
Well-rounded education and internship.
Good communication skills  Dependable  Responsible  Initiative  Self-starter  Professional appearance  Respectful  Team player
Hard working  Willing to learn  Strong verbal and writing skills
- Must possess strong problem solving skills, strong critical thinking skills, excellent verbal and written communication skills. Must have at least a 3.0 gpa in the major we are recruiting.
- Reliable, trustworthy, hardworking, honest, and driven.

4. What are your views about distance (online) education and why?
- Online works for some and is a great tool in my opinion. It allows another option and flexibility for those who may have otherwise been able to attend school.
- I have mixed views regarding online education. It is great for students that without it would have a long commute in order to be sitting in class. However, the main drawback is the face-to-face communication skills that are lacking in this style of learning. the student does not have to provide face-to-face communication skills in a online environment. However, when they get a job with us, they are then required to have the face-to-face communication with customers. Their customer service skills do suffer for it.
- I think on-line education is a great opportunity for the students who are unable to attend on a full time basis for whatever reason.
- Can be distracting, and expensive. However, it does require an additional measure of dedication since one is in a "at home" type of atmosphere.
- No issues. Potentially not as thorough as traditional education, however we've found no issues with graduates of the online programs. It allows greater flexibility and a larger, more diverse trained workforce.
- I believe it’s a great way for students to get an education when their schedule with work or other things in their life are conflicting.
- Seems like a win-win.
- Distance learning provides a wonderful tool for "book" learning, however; it does not allow the student to engage in the "experience" education factor. Sometimes discussions within the classroom environment give the student an educational point of view that only experience with a given situation can offer.
- I think online education may work but still isn't like being in class and these young being on time and sitting in class.
- I believe online education is a great benefit for appropriate courses and degrees. From the standpoint of a technical education, hands-on is what is preferred and what I as an employer am looking for. From the stand-point of generic classes such as history, mathematics, etc., those classes are probably just fine online. As a hiring manager for a technical position, I value hands-on experience and troubleshooting skills that only classroom and laboratory-type environments offer.
- No problem with online education for some classes in an earned degree.
- I wish I would have had this opportunity.
- GREAT! It is the hurdle between rural and city...we offer everything the big school's offer now.
- Education in general is great. I think having the desire to pursue a college education is admirable. However, for classes that typically require hands-on experience, I can't say enough about classroom learning.
- Great way to enhance education! Especially for those that are not able to access on on-site program.
- Distance education is a great tool; however, one on one or classroom style teaching is good because you have the interaction of others.
- Acceptable as long as the program is accredited and the degree is accepted by the State of MT for licensing purposes.
• I am all for it. It gives individuals the opportunity to further their education when they may not have any other options to do so.
• I do like learning from afar. I think if we continue to raise the cost of college and offer no stay at home options you will lose good potential students because of lack of money. Let me ask a questions... Is it fair to put a North Dakota citizen in debt $20,000/2 year 60,000/4 year with a majority of that cost in housing/food on the hopes that he/she will get a good paying job? At one time statistics proved it was a good investment to go in debt and go away to college, Now I am not sure. Therefore learning from home may be the solution. At least some of the basic classes could be achieved without paying for per diem cost.
• Online education can be a significant tool for many individuals. It provides an avenue for individuals to further their education in a non-conventional manner. Living in rural North Dakota, many people may not have the time or resources to attend college courses in the conventional manner. Online education can provide a means for individuals to further their knowledge skills and abilities when conventional college courses may not be an option.
• Being a technology company, we support distance and online education. We have multiple offices and have the necessity to work across the miles absolutely every day.
• Online learning is a great way to reach students that would not be able to pursue education because of family, work, etc. I believe you can learn just as much from an online class as you can sitting in a classroom taking in a lecture. Where online learning falls short is if you have classes that are highly interactive. If a professor can get his/her students to talk, engage, debate, etc. in the classroom, students can learn a lot from each other. But if a professor is simply lecturing, online learning is really no different. It really depends on the student's learning style. They need to pick what best suits them. I am very excited that the ND universities are working together to provide online degrees. I think we need to do this to remain competitive and also to engage students that otherwise may not be able to pursue higher education. It's also very helpful for the professional who wants to continue their education while working full-time.
• I believe as long as the process is well measured it is a very valuable method.
• Distance education lends itself very well to certain disciplines, but the one area that is missing in today's Engineering students is the ability to work hands on and the gained knowledge from working with cars, on the farm or in a shop atmosphere.
• Students have to be organized and disciplined for the responsibility for online study. Many right out of high school are not.
• It works for some students but not all, so many avenues of learning must be provided. Some students strive on interaction with others, while others strive on independence, so ask the students how they learn best.
• Online education is all right for some courses but should not replace classroom learning.
• It does enable some who have time/distance constraints to further their education.
• It works.
• I feel the students gain valuable knowledge from distance learning. Ideally, a combination of both online and classroom is best. But, I feel with the right student and online instructor, the online courses can benefit as much as classroom courses.
• No problem with this type of education for classes that do not need labs or other hands on training.
• I believe it's a good thing for those who cannot make the commitment to move to attend school. However, how do you know it's the student taking tests, completing the assignments instead of someone else?
• People skills are a must and online education does not allow for the human interaction that is needed. I think there is some benefits to online education too but there needs to be a "happy medium".

• I feel online education is a great way for individuals to obtain or further their education while being in the workforce. I do feel there are better learning opportunities with classroom education.

• For technical fields or for 2nd degrees I think they can be a very efficient way to get a degree. However I do feel there is greater value for most students to experience in classroom interactions and discussions to help them be better critical thinkers.

• For engineering students must be able to work in a team environment and have opportunities to apply classroom knowledge to real world problems. It is very difficult to get this through online or distance learning. We prefer classroom setting.

• Indifferent.

5. What collaborative efforts should Bismarck State College pursue with other institutions or companies?

• Maybe job fairs in the cities (Minneapolis)

• Workplace communication skills. Writing in the workplace skills. The Verbal and written communication skills of the college students entering into the workforce is subpar at best for most students. This is due in part by the evolution of texting.

• Attempt to get more companies to allow student interns. I'm not sure that any companies in the area offer student interns for the Power/Process Plant students. I know they job shadow but I think they should get more than that.

• Stay in communication with industry to update the technology and training.

• Diversity recruiting efforts - particularly in the Hispanic/Latino community. Pursue 2nd generation Hispanics/Latinos. Our local population in Nebraska is changing but we’re unable to hire from this portion of the population due to lack of training/education.

• With the Oil Industry booming in the western part of the state we need more college students taking on part time jobs to help fill the need of companies in Bismarck that are being effected by the loss of employees heading to the Oil field jobs.

• Continue to provide the bachelor degree program through other college institutions.

• Focus on practicums and clinicals. Continue to take what you learned in the classroom and apply it in the real world. There is no better experience.

• Along with the oil and gas classes you may want to pair up with a CDL driving school. Most Service companies require a class A CDL with tanker and hazmat endorsement.

• Online job posting availability.

• At this time keeping up with the 4 year college curriculums by the adviser I feel is the key. Nobody wants to take a college course at BSC only to fine it does not meet the 4 year college curriculum and have to retake a class. At least knowing that in advance gives the student a choice.

• I feel the current collaborative efforts are moving in the right direction. The ability to offer additional educational opportunities is such a plus for the school as well as the community.

• Learning about job opportunities and basic work ethics. More Internships -

• It would be great to see BSC establish a solid partnership with four year colleges for engineering and IT (computer science). Industry is in serious need of more engineers and programmers and we are falling behind other countries. A solid start at BSC that is more than just "generals" would solidify the students position in these programs and create a more secure transfer to the
larger schools without losing credits, etc. BSC’s partnership with DSU for education is solid. We have been very impressed with the efforts of those involved in the education program. I have an employee who is pursuing a degree in finance through a partnership with BSC and DSU. I’m very impressed with what I have seen with this program too.

- Work with Engineering programs to make sure the core engineering principles are in line with the advanced classes.
- I would like to see a coordinated effort with the other tech colleges e.g. common job opening data base so that I don’t have to go to each one to set up a job posting.
- Talk to the local businesses and find what niche they are missing within their work environment and see if the College can bridge that niche with the students and coursework offered. Ask employers if they would do informational interviews to prepare students with a real workforce picture, that should include expectations regarding culture, dress code, wellness programs, opportunities for advancement, organizational structure. Too many students have a false image of what a business is all about and what they need to do to progress...you need to put the time in before you become the manager.
- Keep information on the companies and who are searching in your area, the open position(s) and a description of the qualifications for candidates they seek.
- Have the students work in the field for one or two days to see what a particular job entails and whether it is something they may be interested in pursuing.
- Add to the automotive technology program to incorporate co-op similar to NDSCS co-ops.
- I work for a staffing/employment agency. We would be open to internships for administration/office type students in our office. Mainly for answering phones, greeting customers, filing, scanning and maybe some MS Office 2010 work.
- internships

6. What is one thing Bismarck State College needs to change that would enable us to be a great institution?
- With my above mentioned comments taken into consideration, I cannot think of anything else at this time.
- I think the College would benefit if they could go in the direction of Engineering/Technology...
- I would like BSC to go to a four year school. With Bismarck in the center of the State I believe that the school would grow immediately and it would have a positive impact on the city. I look at what the impact that UND or NDSU has for each of those cities it's incredible.
- Do as much as you can with hands on.
- Becoming a four year institution would be ideal.
- I believe that it already is a great institution. Just needs to continue to grow and be willing to take chances on expanding their programs and recruiting great professors.
- BSC has already proven themselves in the energy field and some of the technology fields. And now pairing up with the 4 year programs is happening. Also you do have the classes for additional learning in place and are teaching the adults that are in the workforce by having night classes. Some job skills that are missing are the basic communication and logic skills needed to have others understand oneself. It appears we are looking for the brightest students to give scholarship money to. we forget about the needs of the common student. they are the glue that make good companies great. Maybe focusing on those students will continue to make BSC the stand out college in the state.
- I would like to see more interaction with local businesses to pursue the needs of the community. Maybe inviting businesses in more often to give presentations to classes.
• Promotion - What can you do for them? This generation needs to know how this will benefit them in order to consider it.
• Become a four year university! I am a Bismarck native that went to NDSU for undergrad and University of Mary for graduate school. I would LOVE to see BSC become a 4 year university and compete with NDSU and UND. Bismarck is an attractive location for many students. If that isn't possible (I realize there are probably several factors working against this), continue to do what you are doing...partner with the 4 year universities to provide Bachelor's degrees in Bismarck. Very smart and a great work around. I would love to see additional graduate programs for professionals. University of Mary is targeting this group very aggressively and winning but their programs are weak in a lot of areas and not as highly regarded as they may think. Another idea: encourage volunteerism. Students can network, meet professionals, serve their community and build their resumes.
• No recommendations....keep up the good work!
• Don't know the College enough to provide feedback. This is a good start soliciting information on how to attract students and make them ready for today's workforce.
• I have not utilized BSC a lot to assist in this area.
• Add a diesel technology program, demand outweighs supply 10-1, partner with local businesses for funding.
• BSC is always adding curriculum for their students. Keep listening to the market and adapt programs to what sort of jobs are coming, or jobs in the future for ND.