

Workforce challenges and outlook

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WSU Tri-Cities



Realities of higher education - Strengths

A higher education degree has never been more valuable:



- **College graduates earned 56 percent more** than high school grads in 2015 – a new record (Economic Policy Institute)



- **College graduates are 24 percent more likely to be employed** than those with just high school diploma (Economic Policy Institute)



- Washington state public university **students graduate with less debt than most people think:**
 - Average \$20,000's
 - Half of students graduate with no debt



- **Bachelor's degree = heightened job security** – as evidenced by most recent recession



- **Growth in number of local graduates:**
 - Last spring, WSU Tri-Cities celebrated its largest graduating class

Realities of higher education - Challenges



- **Fewer individuals attend college locally compared with state, national averages:**

Vocational / Associate's:

8.9 % Benton/Franklin
10.1 % State

Bachelor's:

15.9 % Benton/Franklin
22.2 % State
19.7 % National



- **Despite benefits, value often not recognized or education postponed:**
 - As economy improves, students may wait to pursue higher education
 - Universities need to do a better job of communicating the value of a degree
 - Students value one-on-one connection - we need to pay attention
 - Students want direct connections to industry



- **State funding / cost to run programs**
 - Washington state has increased support, but is still down from pre-recession



- **More diverse students**
 - Greater resources
 - Meeting needs of diverse populations



WSU Tri-Cities at a glance:

- 1,841 students
- 42 percent minority
- 41 percent first-generation

Most popular degrees:

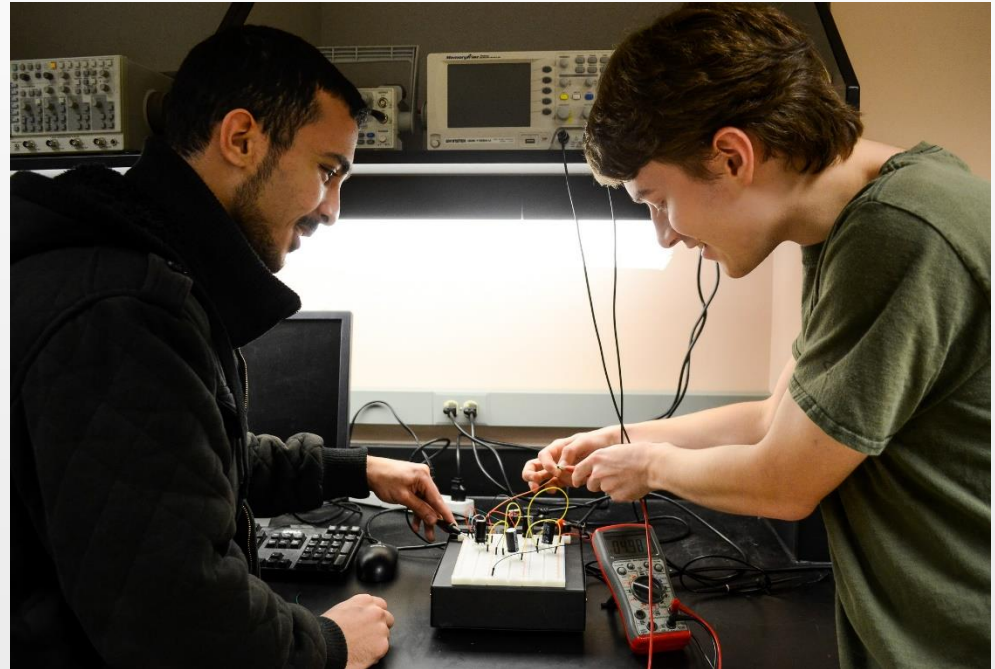
- Nursing
- Mechanical engineering
- Psychology
- Education
- Biology
- Computer science

20 bachelor's degree programs

33 graduate degree programs

Industry partnerships with higher education are key to future of Tri-Cities

- Beginnings of WSU Tri-Cities rooted in Hanford
- Hands-on opportunities that tie back to the real-world
- Variety of hands-on, group-based projects meant for problem solving
- Close partnerships with local industry for for internships, co-ops



Partnerships/engagement with local industry



Industry engagement:

- Industry tours
- Meetings with Tri-Cities employers
- Networking events
- Semester/final projects in partnership:



Help in finding a job:

- Career Fairs
- Internship coordinators
- Career development resources
 - Etiquette dinner
 - Interview & resume prep
 - 21st century workforce
 - Professional dress



Mentorship:

- Partners in Career Development
- Million Women Mentors



Career experiences:

- Internships
- Co-ops
- Shadow opportunities
- Course projects



Committees, boards and other



Research:

- Industry research
- Product development



Industry funding

- CH2M sponsor of our STEM Tutoring Center

Local academic program needs from a university perspective to support future workforce



- Agriculture
- Agriculture technology/engineering
- Food processing/packaging



- Criminal justice



- Communication
- Science writing