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Project Title:	Assessment Plan for the Florida IT Career (FITC) Pathways Alliance Project
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The *Florida IT Career (FITC) Pathways Alliance*[1], a five-year project funded by the Targeted Educational Attainment Grant Program (TEAm), aims to examine the Florida State University (FSU), Florida A&M University (FAMU), Tallahassee Community College (TCC), Florida State College at Jacksonville (FSCJ) and select north Florida high schools' information technology (IT) and computing programs' ability to meet student, employer and faculty/administrator needs and expectations to support recruiting, retaining and placing qualified graduates in IT and computing professions. As an unprecedented collaboration between education and community stakeholders, the FITC project will yield benefits for a variety of schools around the state.

To support the strategic goals of the FITC project, the Information Institute (Institute)[2] team will conduct the *Assessment Plan for the Florida IT Career (FITC) Pathways Alliance* project by collecting and analyzing data that seek to document and describe North Florida's IT career pathways including the K-16 education pipeline. This FITC assessment plan is refined and built upon the research design and findings of the Institute's ongoing four-year National Science Foundation Advanced Technology Education (NSF ATE) project. The main goal of the NSF ATE is to investigate the educational and career pathways of individuals working as IT technicians who support broadband deployment in rural communities in Northwest Florida[3]. Preliminary results from the NSF ATE curriculum analysis; job posting analysis; and faculty, student, and employer focus groups form a starting point for the FITC Pathways Alliance study which includes curriculum alignment analysis, employer network growth and potential expansion of career pathway support. The Institute's key assessment tasks for Year 1, August 2014-June 2015 include:

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[1] *FITC Pathways Alliance* available at http://fitc.cci.fsu.edu/

[2] http://www.ii.fsu.edu/

[3] *Assessing Information Technology Educational Pathways that Promote Deployment and Use of Rural Broadband* available at http://broadbandpathways.cci.fsu.edu/current-work/

- Examine the alignment between the FSU and FAMU programs and those of selected local high schools and community colleges;
- Identify North Florida computing and IT industry job needs (Knowledge, Skills, Abilities and other factors);
- Assist the FITC project team with specific data collection and reporting processes as required by the Board of Governors (BOG) and FSU;
- Coordinate with Applied Information Management (AIM) Careerlink a feasibility study of the appropriateness of a modified Careerlink service for North Florida;[4]
- Design a database to integrate and analyze the various assessment data that will be collected; and
- Provide a summative assessment that includes (a) recommendations of key areas to better align IT and computing curricula with employer needs, and (b) strategies to maintain the assessment activities for the remainder of the project.

The Institute team expects to identify critical knowledge and skills for targeted computing and IT students by examining the course curricula, deriving learning outcomes based on relevant technical standards and then obtaining feedback on this data from both faculty and employers.

Most importantly, the curriculum analysis will yield insight into what is being taught and the consistency between academic and job experiences; job posting analyses will surface employer needs and expectations; and faculty, student, and employer focus groups will validate and elucidate of the results of the other data collection activities, as well as the perceived usefulness and impact of the FITC Pathways Alliance project. Moreover, the assessment plan may provide robust formative and summative data that can inform all phases of the project, including curriculum refinement, employer network growth, and potential expansion of career pathway support.

The FITC Pathways Alliance assessment plan provides an approach to satisfy the data collection/reporting requirements for the BOG and FSU, as well as to describe the IT and computing career pathways currently needed in North Florida. Describing the various pathways the students will take as they move into jobs and careers will provide significant insights on how each education tier can develop the academic programs that supporting computing careers, how to create effective workflows with all the various stakeholders. The assessment report to be developed in June 2015 will describe assessment activities completed in Year 1, as well as offer an overview of assessment procedures and activities for Years 2-4.

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[4] http://careerlink.com/