Course Name: Introduction to Solar/Photovoltaics

Lead Faculty: Christopher Miller

School: Heartland Community College

Delivery Mode(s) for Intro to Solar Course (i.e. face-to-face, online, hybrid, etc): Face-to-face

Course Duration (semester, trimester, quarter, short-course, etc.) 8 week

# of credits for the Intro to Solar course 3

Program Name: Certificate of Renewable Energy in the AAS of Industrial Technology

When did the program start? 2009 first class 2010

What geographic area do your students come from? Central Illinois

Number of Students in Program: 23 for 2016

Demographics: Percentage distribution

Gender: Male: 87% Female: 13% for 2016

Ethnicity: American Indian 4.3% African American 8.7% Caucasian 78.3% for 2016

What percentage if known - Veterans: unknown

Degree(s)/ Diplomas(s) / Certificate(s) Offered: Certificate of Renewable Energy. The students can sit for the ETA-I PV Installer or NABCEP Associate.

How Many Faculty teach solar courses at your college (note if FT or PT)? 1 FT

Description of Your Facilities (be sure to note any special lab facilities used for hands-on training): There is a student built outdoor training structure to perform installations. In the indoor lab, there are two 8x8' training structures that are used in the classroom. During the class, we install both string and microinverter systems.

What do you think makes your program successful? When we developed the program in 2009 we decided on providing fundamental understanding of renewable and sustainable technologies. Our focus

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is on entry-level skills to help students enter the photovoltaic installer / solar technical sales career path, the building automation / sustainability career path, and the wind turbine technician career path. Central Illinois has great employment opportunities working with a wide variety of renewable and sustainable energy technologies. We want to produce graduates that will be successful in most of the areas. Another strength, as a smaller program is that we have good communication with local employers and are well known to local industry.

What are your industry ties? (If you have an industry advisory board, please describe its size and composition). We have a small core group of local companies in the renewable / sustainable field. We have a small but nimble group of local employers that includes firms such as Straight Up Solar, Ruyle and Aero Tek. These organizations have been very helpful in getting students into the field.

Do you offer internships? What is your placement rate? We offer internships. However, it can be challenging, and the student typically has to have some personal initiative to help make it go.

The school has had a difficult time tracking students after they graduate to get an accurate assessment of placement rates. We do not have a very reliable measure of how many actually go directly into solar careers. Anecdotally, we do know of at least 5 students that are currently employed in our local solar industry. The most recent is Dustin Fox. He is now at Underwriters Laboratory (UL) working as a solar technician.

Program Link : http://www.heartland.edu/catalog/industrial/

Any additional information you would like to provide: The solar education world at the college level is a small group of dedicated programs and individuals making it happen. Over the years working with Joel Shoemaker at Madison College, we have taken students to Belize to install solar. It has provided great opportunities for service learning, and is a strong resume booster for the students.

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