

Forging a Blockchain-Ready Workforce: Preparing Technicians for Success

Year Two Evaluation Report – July 2026

National Science Foundation Award Number 2349967

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Acknowledgments

This year two evaluation report is made possible with the collaboration of Mrs. Angel Fonseca, P.I., and Ms. Dianne Hill, Co-P.I. This leadership team met with the external evaluator during bi-weekly meetings to review activities, metrics, tools, milestones, and impediments, all of which have informed the evaluation of *Forging a Blockchain-Ready Workforce: Preparing Technicians for Success*. P.I. Fonseca was instrumental in providing timely and thorough project records that reflect the year two implementation of this ATE grant. Appreciation is also shown to the internal and external project stakeholders who shared their experiences, recommendations, and insights during one-on-one interviews with the external evaluator.

National Science Foundation

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List of Acronyms and Initialisms

ATE – Advanced Technological Education

CBE – Competency Based Education

CCE – Corporate and Continuing Education

CIP – Classification of Instructional Programs

ED – U.S. Department of Education

GBBC – Global Blockchain Business Council

HLC – Higher Learning Commission

MSU – Michigan State University

NSF – National Science Foundation

SEC – U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In August 2024, Jackson College was awarded a three-year National Science Foundation Advanced Technological Education (NSF ATE) grant in the amount of $349,846 to support *Forging a Blockchain-Ready Workforce: Preparing Technicians for Success*. This project aims to serve the national interest by developing a new academic program that prepares students to work as blockchain technicians.

The objectives, deliverables, and framework of this project are detailed herein. The findings, recommendations, and commendations that comprise this second annual evaluation report are based on grant-related activities and accomplishments occurring between July 2025 and June 2026. This ATE grant aligns with Jackson College's vision: to be a world-class institution of higher education where learners succeed and community needs are met. Coupled with ongoing horizontal and vertical support within the institution, this project is gaining momentum to meet its stated outcomes by the conclusion of the performance period.

With the input of its industry stakeholders, the project's leaders have developed four new courses and two stackable certificates (micro-credentials) that align with industry standards and address the demand for blockchain-capable technicians. At the time of this report, the four new blockchain courses had been designed, approved, and adopted. They include: *Blockchain Fundamentals & Cryptography* (BLC110), *Smart Contracts & Solidity* (BLC120), *Web3 Applications* (BLC130), and *Blockchain/Web3 Capstone* (BLC255).

The curriculum received all internal approvals before being submitted to the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). In May 2026, Jackson College received confirmation that the two blockchain certificates were approved by HLC. This step was essential in establishing the certificates' eligibility for federal financial aid. The final step (currently underway) is to secure approval from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) for Title IV funding.

In the approved framework, the Blockchain Foundations Certificate (BLCF.CERT) and the Blockchain Web3 Technician Certificate (BLCW3.CERT) each require five courses totaling 16 credit hours. This particular structure for the micro-credentials was chosen based on recommendations from the Blockchain Industry Advisory Committee, and best practices identified during professional development engagements. The project's leaders were pleased to report that the new blockchain credentials to be offered at Jackson College will be the only programs of their kind in the region.

Students majoring in Business Administration or Software Engineering can take the blockchain courses as electives. The project team is seeking to have these new courses designated as electives for students majoring in Networking, Security, & Cloud Computing, too. The first of the

new courses, *Blockchain & Cryptography*, will be piloted in fall 2026 during the second seven weeks (10/28/26-12/19/26).

In program year two, the project's leaders maintained the website created for *Forging a Blockchain-Ready Workforce: Preparing Technicians for Success*. Once HLC approval was granted, a formal digital and print marketing campaign for the new blockchain credentials was launched. The marketing strategy includes flyers, social media posts, campus TV promos, and website enhancements. The blockchain certificates have been added to the current academic catalogue (as an addendum), and the Student Success Navigators (academic advisors) have been informed that the new blockchain courses are available for enrollment.

F*orging a Blockchain-Ready Workforce: Preparing Technicians for Success* was most recently spotlighted in *ATE Impacts 2026-2027*. A press release about the new blockchain certificates is to be issued in the near future. The P.I. will be featured in a "video spot" to air on JTV (the local PBS affiliate). Efforts to create a pipeline of students for the new certificates will focus on high school students in dual enrollment courses, recent high school graduates enrolled at Jackson College, and local practitioners looking to upskill.

The design of *Forging a Blockchain-Ready Workforce: Preparing Technicians for Success* incudes a robust professional development component to train faculty on the evolving blockchain regulations, standards, and innovations. Throughout program year two, the P.I. and Co-P.I. participated in a customized series of online, asynchronous trainings offered by The Blockchain Academy. They will earn two of the same credentials, and two that are unique to each party. The P.I. also participated in the six-month Michigan State University (MSU) Blockchain & Cryptoasset Learning Community.

Eleven representatives from academia, industry, government, and non-profits are currently serving on the college's Blockchain Industry Advisory Committee. In June 2026, the committee met virtually to discuss curriculum, industry trends, dissemination, marketing, and networking. They offered their point-of-view on programming languages, and technical and soft skill development.

The project team was commended for its forward-thinking approach to curriculum design, which emphasized blockchain applications across industries and not solely within the financial services sector. The advisory committee members were encouraged by the interdisciplinary focus of the blockchain curriculum, and spoke about the significance of embedding AI-related content within the curriculum. Several of the committee members in attendance offered to make introductions between the project team and other blockchain professionals; namely, Stand With Crypto, and the Global Blockchain Business Council (GBBC).

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation of this ATE grant is based on *The Program Evaluation Standards* developed and approved by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation to ensure that it is both purposeful and comprehensive, and promotes the strongest evidence to guide educators and their industry partners. The cornerstone of this evaluation is capturing the project's contributions – projected and unanticipated – to the body of knowledge on introducing interdisciplinary blockchain education at a community college to prepare students for in-demand careers in this rapidly evolving technology field.

Jackson College is partnering with Dr. Blake Urbach of Preferred Program Evaluations, an established firm that has managed the design and execution of dozens of evaluations of ATE projects throughout the nation. The external evaluator's duties and responsibilities include evaluation oversight, alignment of data to project goals, and meaningful reporting on impact and outcomes. The evaluator will serve as an accessible resource to the college for the duration of this grant by functioning as a sounding board for questions about project implementation, instrumentation, performance tracking, data interpretation, and mid-course correction.

Central to the evaluation of *Forging a Blockchain-Ready Workforce: Preparing Technicians for Success* will be monitoring the implementation of project activities; the provision of feedback to inform project improvement (formative evaluation), and assessing the effectiveness of the project in achieving its three goals and sustaining programmatic capacity (summative evaluation). By the conclusion of its three-year performance period, *Forging a Blockchain-Ready Workforce: Preparing Technicians for Success* is expected to meet seven interrelated objectives.

1. Create four new Blockchain technology education courses
2. Create two new stackable blockchain certificates
3. Integrate blockchain courses/certificates into an existing STEM program
4. Deliver new courses
5. Develop recruitment and outreach initiatives to increase awareness of the benefits and opportunities in blockchain education among student groups
6. Ensure P.I./Co-P.I.'s continued blockchain proficiency in evolving and emerging standards
7. Improve cross-discipline knowledge of blockchain application in industry

The evaluation activities and deliverables of *Forging a Blockchain-Ready Workforce: Preparing Technicians for Success* will expose and communicate: 1) the structure, progress, and performance of the project; 2) the project's impact on students' blockchain engagement and literacy; 3) the

project's impact on faculty development and technical depth in the discipline; 4) the establishment of an industry-approved curriculum and micro-credentials; 5) external collaborations that contribute to the knowledge and application of blockchain; 6) the dissemination and utilization of project-generated curriculum and supplementary materials, and 7) changes in organizational capacity. Findings will be reviewed with the project's leaders and the Blockchain Industry Advisory Committee, and the parties will strategize the most effective ways to address identified challenges to meeting the objectives of *Forging a Blockchain-Ready Workforce: Preparing Technicians for Success*.

As this project evolves, the evaluator will continue to work closely with the project's leadership team to manage the data collection and monitoring protocols, design culturally competent instruments for the target audience, and secure approval for evaluation tools from the college's Institutional Review Board. In program year two, evaluation activities included routine correspondence, ad hoc monitoring, biweekly project team meetings, one-on-one stakeholder interviews, participant surveys, and document and artifact review.

Participants of the Blockchain Industry Advisory Board were asked to complete an electronic survey after the June 2026 meeting. The purpose of the survey was to better understand how the college can best serve the interests of students and employers with curricular and co-curricular opportunities in blockchain technologies, and uncover in what capacity the participants would like to be involved in this blockchain grant. The results dashboard begins on page 14 of this report.

In line with the evaluation plan, the external evaluator conducted one-on-one interviews with multiple internal and external stakeholders in summer 2026. Stakeholder interviews are valued for generating a candid, in-depth dialogue about project implementation and management processes unobtainable through traditional surveying methods. The participants were asked to respond to a set of questions about their perceptions of and contributions to the project, and the status of grant-related activities and accomplishments taking place during the second year of this ATE grant. Ideas for strengthening programming, partnerships, and processes were solicited from the interviewees and are provided herein under the relevant objective.

- Mrs. Angel Fonseca, P.I., and Professor, Business and Computer Technology – Jackson College
- Ms. Dianne Hill, Co-P.I., and Professor, Computer Information Systems – Jackson College
- Mr. Zakary McNitt, Registrar – Jackson College
- Dr. Dar Meshi, Associate Professor – Michigan State University
- Ms. Holly Weckler, Director of Partnerships – Detroit Blockchain Center
- Mr. Adam Zientarski, Head of Product – PayPath AI

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND LEADERSHIP

With the intent of addressing the demand for skilled technicians holding credentials in blockchain technologies, Jackson College began implementing *Forging a Blockchain-Ready Workforce: Preparing Technicians for Success* in summer 2024 upon receiving an award notice from NSF. This grant is designed to increase the institution's capacity to train traditional and non-traditional students in blockchain technologies, thus tackling the burgeoning talent gap identified by industry. Strategies employed during the performance period that are shown to promote and reinforce blockchain competencies, credential completion, and workforce preparedness will inform subsequent changes in pedagogy and practice.

The *Forging a Blockchain-Ready Workforce: Preparing Technicians for Success* project team includes Mrs. Angel Fonseca, P.I., and Ms. Dianne Hill, Co-P.I. P.I. Fonseca noted that blockchain intersects with the technical and business programs at the college, making her and Co-P.I. Hill well-suited to lead this project. The project's leaders have worked collaboratively on finding suitable training opportunities, reporting to college administrators and NSF, coordinating outreach to community stakeholders, and developing the Blockchain Industry Advisory Committee whose members have played a key role in shaping curriculum development. Both P.I. Fonseca and Co-P.I. Hill were granted nine hours of release time in program year two P.I. Fonseca also received a stipend to conduct outreach activities.

The project is also supported by Ms. Lauren Kroa, Grant Coordinator, and Dr. Blake Urbach, external evaluator. Ms. Kroa was hired in spring 2025 to oversee post-award grant management for the college's portfolio of grants. The project coordinator who assisted *Forging a Blockchain-Ready Workforce: Preparing Technicians for Success* in program year one is no longer serving in this role. As such, P.I. Fonseca has shouldered the administrative responsibilities of the project coordinator position. She is hopeful that the college will fill this vacancy in the coming months to provide the necessary level of support and resources to meet the demands of this project.

Biweekly project team meetings have been the main outlet for the members of the project team to share their contributions, accomplishments, and recommendations, and remain apprised of the latest project-related developments. The project team also engages in frequent ad hoc conversations. Each team member has been asked to keep a log of their activities, milestones, and next steps related to their role in the implementation of this grant. These records double as an archive of the project's evolution, and will be a great resource to draw on for annual performance reports, presentations, and publications.

A robust dissemination plan will ensure project materials, artifacts, and results are shared with two-year colleges, industry stakeholders, and the ATE community at large. F*orging a Blockchain-Ready Workforce: Preparing Technicians for Success* was most recently spotlighted in *ATE Impacts 2026-2027*. P.I. Fonseca and Co-P.I. Hill attended the 2025 ATE PI Conference in Washington, D.C, and followed up with multiple individuals met during the engagement.

Members of the project team completed multiple professional development engagements in program year one to further their content knowledge, pedagogical techniques, and teaching credentials. These included attending the 2025 Blockchain Furturist Conference in Miami, FL. P.I. Fonseca described the experience as a "three day pep rally" for blockchain. Both P.I. Fonseca and Co-P.I. Hill are enrolled in multiple training modules offered through The Blockchain Academy. P.I. Fonseca participated in the six-month MSU Blockchain & Cryptoasset Learning Community facilitated by Dr. Meshi (a dedicated member of the college's Blockchain Industry Advisory Committee).

The project's leaders were in agreement that this grant is giving prominence to their work both college- and community-wide. In September 2025, the project's leaders presented about blockchain at the college's Silent Revolution Trade Show organized by Corporate and Continuing Education (CCE). This project was also showcased at the Remaking Manufacturing Event in spring 2026. Co-P.I. Hill noted that the blockchain certificates were featured in the college's magazine-style booklet, *Jackson College Inspire*. This publication will be mailed to the residences in Jackson County.

Forging a Blockchain-Ready Workforce: Preparing Technicians for Success is the college's first NSF grant. Some of the early growing pains persisted into program year two as a result of turnover in college leadership, and select internal protocols being amended. P.I. Fonseca and Co-P.I. Hill are continuing to work with stakeholders from various departments to ensure internal operations are supporting this grant in an efficient and holistic manner.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Goal 1: Develop an innovative and comprehensive curriculum for blockchain education that aligns with industry standards and emerging trends.

Objective 1.1: Create four new Blockchain technology education courses

Creating a comprehensive, industry-informed blockchain curriculum is a flagship activity of this project. With the input of its industry stakeholders, the project's leaders have developed four new courses and two stackable certificates (micro-credentials) that align with industry standards and address the demand for blockchain-capable technicians.

In program year two, much of the curriculum development coincided with P.I. Fonseca's coaching hours earmarked for CBExchange. She noted that an emphasis on competency-based education (CBE) enables us to "mold it into what industry wants" while creating simulations that reflect workforce needs. After attending the Blockchain Futurist Conference in 2025, the project team determined that the four courses originally proposed in the grant were too theoretical. From there, their efforts became focused on creating content that is more applied (than theoretical), and likely to yield a highly specialized, in-demand skillset among employers.

A total of four new blockchain courses have been developed, approved, and adopted.

- *Blockchain Fundamentals & Cryptography* (BLC110)
- *Smart Contracts & Solidity* (BLC120)
- *Web3 Applications* (BLC130)
- *Blockchain/Web3 Capstone* (BLC255)

The curriculum was first approved by the Dean of Business and Digital Transformation & Technology. Next, it was presented to and approved by the college's Curriculum Committee. After all internal approvals were secured, the curriculum was submitted to the HLC. In May 2026, Mr. McNitt, Jackson College Registrar, reported that the HLC approved the two new blockchain micro-credentials. This step was essential in establishing the certificates' eligibility for federal financial aid. Per Mr. McNitt, the final step is to secure approval from ED for Title IV funding. He explained that with permission from the ED liaison, the college can "self-certify" this new program for up to one year.

Mr. McNitt noted that the blockchain courses are so unique that the college had to create a new Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code. The blockchain certificates have been added to the current academic catalogue (as an addendum), and the Student Success Navigators (academic advisors) have been informed that the new blockchain courses are available for enrollment.

Objective 1.2: Create two new stackable blockchain certificates

In the approved framework, the Blockchain Foundations Certificate (BLCF.CERT) and the Blockchain Web3 Technician Certificate (BLCW3.CERT) each require five courses totaling 16 credit hours (Figure 1). This particular structure for the micro-credentials was chosen based on recommendations from the Blockchain Industry Advisory Committee, and best practices identified during professional development engagements.

P.I. Fonseca clarified that the students need exposure to building a blockchain; they must have a working understanding of the logic behind it. They will not, however, be expected to build a blockchain outright. She stated that three questions guided the development of the new blockchain certificates: 1. What is this technology and how does it work? 2. How do I program on this technology? and 3. How do I build real-world solutions with this technology?

Blockchain Foundations Certificate Courses	Blockchain Web3 Technician Certificate Courses
Blockchain Fundamentals & Cryptography	*Blockchain Fundamentals & Cryptography*
Smart Contracts & Solidity	*Smart Contracts & Solidity*
Advanced Information Technologies	*Advanced Information Technologies*
Writing Experience	*Web3 Applications*
Quantitative Reasoning	*Blockchain/Web3 Capstone*

Figure 1.

The project's leaders were pleased to report that the new blockchain credentials to be offered at Jackson College will be the only programs of their kind in the region. Per P.I. Fonseca, the Center for Blockchain and Digital Innovation at the University of Wyoming is one of the only other institutions with a blockchain curriculum accredited by HLC.

Per Co-P.I. Hill, the Blockchain Foundations Certificate will be marketed to dual enrollment students, and enable them to enter the workforce with a highly marketable skillset. The Applied Blockchain Web3 Technician Certificate, meanwhile, will be attractive to incumbent workers who are looking to upskill and advance in their career.

Objective 1.3: Integrate blockchain courses/certificates into an existing STEM program

In fall 2024, Co-P.I. Hill first integrated a blockchain module into the curriculum of *Database Systems* (CIS220). Students majoring in Business Administration or Software Engineering can take the blockchain courses as electives. Co-P.I. Hill explained they are seeking to have these new courses designated as electives for students majoring in Networking, Security, & Cloud Computing, too.

An end-of-course survey will be administered at the conclusion of the fall 2026 term. This tool will help the faculty understand how the content, composition, and delivery of the curriculum could best serve the students' engagement, comprehension, and application of the course material.

Objective 1.4: Deliver new courses

The first of the new courses, *Blockchain & Cryptography*, will be piloted in fall 2026 during the second seven weeks (10/28/26-12/19/26). P.I. Fonseca is expected to be the instructor of record. Enrollment in this online course is limited to 24 students.

Under a new mandate taking effect in fall 2026, Jackson College will require that 50% of courses be offered in person. This shift could adversely affect enrollment in new and existing programs, as the college competes with regional institutions that offer fully online credentials. For many students, the flexibility and accessibility of online education – including reduced needs for childcare, transportation, and changes to work schedules – may be a deciding factor when choosing a postsecondary institution.

Goal 2: Design and implement strategies to attract and engage a diverse student population in blockchain technology education.

Objective 2.1: Develop recruitment and outreach initiatives to increase awareness of the benefits and opportunities in blockchain education among student groups

In program year two, the project's leaders maintained the website created for *Forging a Blockchain-Ready Workforce: Preparing Technicians for Success*. Project postcards were widely distributed at community gatherings and conferences, and the college's marketing team created a custom, full-size foam-core poster to be displayed at events.

Once HLC approval was granted, a formal digital and print marketing campaign for the new blockchain credentials was launched. The marketing strategy includes flyers, social media posts, campus TV promos, and website enhancements. A press release about the new blockchain certificates is to be issued in the near future. P.I. Fonseca will be featured in a "video spot" to air on JTV (the local PBS affiliate). Additionally, CCE at Jackson College provided the project team with "a space to upload the free [blockchain learning] module" to raise awareness about blockchain's use, applications, and implications in the region. Efforts to create a pipeline of students for the new certificates will focus on high school students in dual enrollment courses, recent high school graduates enrolled at Jackson College, and local practitioners looking to upskill.

Goal 3: Engage, create, and deliver professional development activities for faculty to enhance their expertise in teaching blockchain concepts and technologies.

Objective 3.1: Ensure P.I./Co-P.I.s' continued blockchain proficiency in evolving and emerging standards

P.I. Fonseca participated in the MSU Blockchain & Cryptoasset Learning Community between October 2025 and April 2026. This group of educators met each week for 1.5 hours to discuss the latest in blockchain education and review the book "Read Write Own" by Chris Dixon. The learning community was facilitated by MSU Professors Dr. Dar Meshi and Dr. Robby Ratan. (Dr. Meshi is a member of the Blockchain Industry Advisory Committee.)

The project's leaders spent several months searching for a training that is "accredited" but were unable to find a single one that met this threshold. After thoughtful consideration, they settled on two training opportunities that are expected to provide the greatest return on investment. Throughout program year two, P.I. Fonseca and Co-P.I. Hill participated in a customized series of online, asynchronous trainings offered by The Blockchain Academy. P.I. Fonseca and Co-P.I. will earn two of the same credentials, and two that are unique to each party.

P.I. Fonseca is enrolled in the following certifications offered by The Blockchain Academy.

- Web3+ Career Track
- Blockchain+ Career Track
- Certified Blockchain Supply Chain Professional
- Certified Blockchain Project Manager

Co-P.I. Hill is enrolled in the following certifications offered by The Blockchain Academy.

- Blockchain+ Career Track
- Certified Blockchain Project Manager
- Certified Blockchain Security Professional
- Certified Blockchain Smart Contract Developer

Objective 3.2: Improve cross-discipline knowledge of blockchain application in industry

Eleven representatives from academia, industry, government, and non-profits are currently serving on the college's Blockchain Industry Advisory Committee (Figure 2). In program year two of *Forging a Blockchain-Ready Workforce: Preparing Technicians for Success*, the committee met virtually on June 11, 2026. Eight of the members attended and engaged in a meaningful discussion about curriculum, industry trends, dissemination, marketing, and networking. They offered their point-of-view on programming languages, and technical and soft skill development. The committee engaged in a dialogue about what qualifies an instructor (full-time or adjunct) to teach blockchain at the community college level. One of the members shared that having at least a four-year degree in a related field and a minimum of 3,000 hours of related experience in blockchain should be the standard.

Several of the members in attendance offered to make introductions between the project team and other blockchain professionals. They even provided leads on adjuncts and guest speakers. Two Michigan government workforce development representatives agreed to coordinate a follow-up meeting for P.I. Fonseca to promote the free blockchain module. Co-P.I. Hill remarked that several of the committee members are "in the trenches." They are immersed in blockchain and offer a wealth of knowledge on trends, compliance, employer expectations, etc.

Ms. Weckler is the Director of Partnerships at Detroit Blockchain Center, a non-profit founded in 2018. She connected with the P.I. and Co-P.I. virtually before meeting them in person at the Blockchain Futurist Conference in 2025. Ms. Weckler provided feedback about the blockchain curriculum and emphasized the importance of students gaining a working knowledge of at least one programming language for writing smart contracts. Specifically, she mentioned Solidity and Rust for Solana. She is encouraged by the interdisciplinary focus of the blockchain curriculum, and spoke about the significance of embedding AI-related content within the curriculum. Ms. Weckler noted that there is tremendous opportunity for blockchain positions within the supply chain and logistics sector. She commended the project team for addressing the "knowledge gap in the technical workforce."

Ms. Weckler offered to connect P.I. Fonseca and Co-P.I. Hill with other potential partners such as Stand With Crypto and GBBC. Stand With Crypto is an advocacy organization promoting cryptocurrency policy and encouraging a public discourse about crypto regulation. This entity hosts community events that may be of interest to the college. GBBC is an international non-profit network that convenes government agencies, academia, tech companies, and blockchain professionals to promote responsible adoption of blockchain and related technologies. Ms. Weckler is of the opinion that GBBBC would be a great outlet for dissemination about this ATE project and the college's new blockchain credentials.

Dr. Meshi is a respected authority on blockchain technology, bringing deep expertise in blockchain applications, digital assets, decentralized systems, policy, and regulation. Dr. Meshi spoke favorably of the curriculum he reviewed for the new blockchain certificates. He noted that "blockchain is a subculture of AI." Students who gain practical experience will have professional competencies that can enhance their competitiveness in the job market. Dr. Meshi encouraged to project team to consider "targeted local advertisements" to spread the word about the new program and generate interest in the micro-credentials.

Dr. Meshi stressed the importance of embedding blockchain ethics throughout the curriculum. This technology is being adopted at a record pace and needs "regulatory rails." He explained that the emergence of blockchain as a new asset class requires thoughtful regulation and the creation of appropriate oversight mechanisms for the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). Per Dr. Meshi, this technology is both useful and good for business, but its application has earned a bad reputation. Crypto has been "vilified" by its association with casinos, gambling, speculative investments, etc. He is excited to see Jackson College on the cusp of offering instruction and a public awareness campaign designed to combat some of the misconceptions about blockchain.

Mr. Zientarski is the Head of Product for PayPath AI, a D.C.-based start-up. In this role, Mr. Zientarski is on the cutting edge of developing payment rails for companies, fixing their auditing software, and "reengineering their tech stack." He is pleased to serve on the college's Blockchain Industry Advisory Committee and help ready students for jobs in the field. Mr. Zientarski shared that "our ecosystem is really fragmented." He recognized P.I. Fonseca's commitment to providing the blockchain certificate students with the necessary foundation to understand various networks. He shared that smart contract development is "how transactions occur," and this knowledge is pivotal for graduates of the program. Mr. Zientarski discussed the potential passage of the Clarity Act during the current legislative session, and stressed the necessity of preparing students to understand future developments in the regulatory environment.

Mr. Zientarski provided a detailed overview of curriculum recommendations to the project team. He commended the project team's forward-thinking approach to curriculum design, which

emphasized blockchain applications across industries and not solely within the financial services sector. Mr. Zientarski mentioned that these new micro-credentials may be particularly appealing for practitioners looking to upskill, and suggested marketing to employees in legacy industries like freight, banking, and capital markets. He expressed that the curriculum could be "extremely valuable to take them out of their bias."

Blockchain Industry Advisory Committee Members - 2026	
Name and Title	Affiliation
Katie Bertke, Business Services	Michigan Works!
Larry Choate, Professor	Jackson College
Sally Clark, Interim Executive Director	Economic Development Partnership of Hillsdale
Amber Collins, Director of Corporate & Continuing Education	Jackson College
Christine Fischer, Faculty	University of Michigan - Dearborn
Stephanie Kristovic, Director of Instruction	Northwest Community Schools
Dar Meshi, Associate Professor	Michigan State University
Tejal Mulay, Assistant Professor	Florida A&M University
Craig Tapley, CFO	Commonwealth Associates
Holly Weckler, Director of Partnerships	Detroit Blockchain Center
Adam Zientarski, Head of Product	PayPath AI

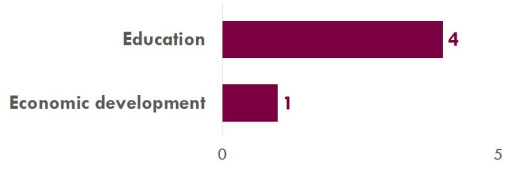
Figure 2.

After the June 2026 meeting, P.I. Fonseca sent a thank you email with a link to the anonymous Blockchain Industry Advisory Committee Survey. The purpose of the survey was to better understand how the blockchain credentials can be developed and delivered to serve the needs of stakeholders from various sectors. Additionally, the survey was designed to uncover in what capacity the participants would like to be involved in this blockchain grant. A total of five members responded to the survey. The results dashboard begins on page 14 of this report.

The respondents were asked to provide recommendations for improving the blockchain curriculum with a focus on industry alignment and career readiness. One member indicated, "I would add class periods on how to find jobs in the industry." The survey takers were asked to describe the three most valuable technical competencies for a blockchain certificate graduate. They cited smart contract programming (Solidity, Rust, etc.), Python programming, cloud computing, blockchain fundamentals, security, and knowing how information is stored. They were also asked to identify the three most valuable durable (soft) skills for a blockchain certificate graduate. The respondents listed networking, public speaking (and presenting), collaboration, problem-solving, coordination, and communicating with a non-technical audience.

RESPONDENTS BY INDUSTRY

Four of the five survey completers represented the educational sector.



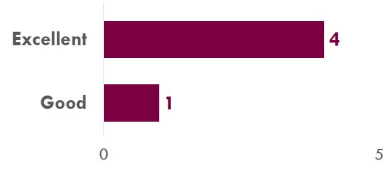
RESPONDENTS BY SIZE OF COMPANY

Four of the respondents work for companies with over 200 employees.



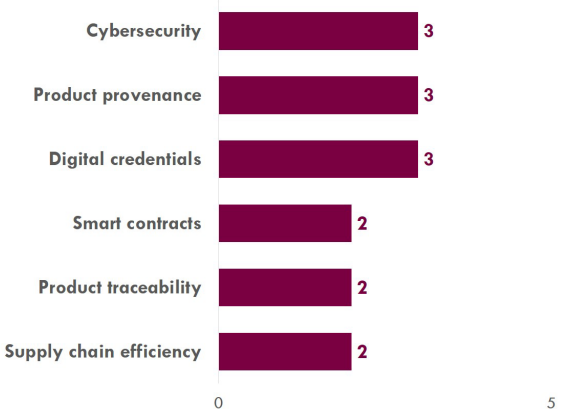
RATING OF THE BLOCKCHAIN CURRICULUM

Based on their expertise, four of the five survey completers rated the quality and relevancy of the college's blockchain curriculum as excellent.



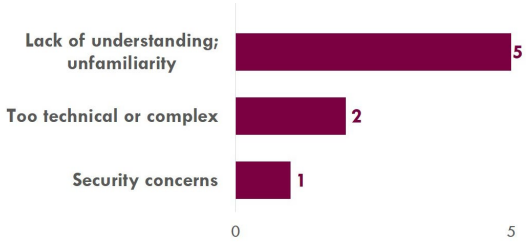
RANKING OF BUSINESS USE CASES

The respondents were asked to select the business use cases that would be of most value to their company.



CHALLENGES TO BLOCKCHAIN ADOPTION

All five respondents identified a lack of understanding/unfamiliarity with blockchain as the primary challenge their companies face in adopting blockchain technology.



INTEREST IN SUPPORTING THIS COMMITTEE

The respondents were asked to identify the ways in which they are interested in supporting the college's Blockchain Industry Advisory Committee.

