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**WCC and WWU Partner to Offer New Bachelor's Degree
in Computer and Information Systems Security**

Bellingham, WA, June 10, 2013 – The rise of cyber-attacks coupled with a shortage of trained cybersecurity professionals is creating serious consequences for individuals, corporations and government agencies seeking to protect sensitive information. In response to the emerging demand, Whatcom Community College (WCC) and Western Washington University's College of Sciences and Technology are working together in one of the nation's few community college-to-university cybersecurity collaborations. As a result, students may enroll at Whatcom to begin a pathway to a baccalaureate degree in Computer and Information Systems Security (CISS) from WWU.

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WCC will offer a new two-year Associate in Applied Science – Transfer degree in Cybersecurity, which will allow graduates to apply to Western for the Computer and Information Systems Security (CISS) baccalaureate degree. When students successfully graduate with the AAS-T from Whatcom, they will have mastered the technical knowledge of today's information systems. The benefit to continuing through to the Bachelor's degree is they will have the technical skills and the education requirements of the vast majority of potential employers; specifically larger businesses and local, state and federal government positions. The CISS articulation is the first between Whatcom and Western that will accept transferring professional technical program students from WCC as WWU juniors.

This new applied program is designed to provide students and IT professionals the opportunity to continue their education to the bachelor's degree level in the emergent field of computer information security. The CISS degree will prepare graduates for high-demand professional roles such as computer network security administrator, secure software development specialist or digital forensic practitioner.

The program is a result of a \$500,000 grant from the National Science Foundation. It is a collaborative effort involving WCC, WWU, the University of Washington and Bellingham Technical College. A group representing each of the partners is developing innovative curriculum and course articulations for the new program. Course work will focus on developing knowledge and skills in security management, threat analysis, computer and software forensics, and security tools and techniques. Graduates of the WCC program who choose to continue on to WWU and are accepted into the program will begin coursework at Western in fall 2014.

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According to Dirk A. D. Smith, of *Network World*, "83% of federal hiring managers in a recent survey said it was extremely difficult to find well-trained cybersecurity professionals and a projected shortfall of 20,000 to more than 40,000 people is expected in the years to come."

Interested students should contact Dave Knapp at WCC's Entry & Advising Office, (360)383-3080 or advise@whatcom.ctc.edu.

Whatcom Community College is an accredited, comprehensive two-year college serving more than 11,000 students annually. On its 71-acre campus in Bellingham, Washington, and through online courses, Whatcom offers transfer degrees, professional and technical training programs, as well as basic education, job skills, and Continuing and Community Education classes. Whatcom is one of only 24 community colleges in the nation to be recognized as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Information Assurance Education by the Department of Homeland Security and National Security Agency. For more information about WCC, visit www.whatcom.ctc.edu.

Western Washington University is a four-year, public master's granting university located in Bellingham, Washington, near the Cascade Mountains, San Juan Islands and the Canadian border. With an enrollment of 15,000 students Western is the third largest university in the state. It is the highest-ranking public, master's-granting university in the Pacific Northwest, according to the 2012 *U.S. News & World Report* college rankings. Western also ranks among the top 100 public colleges and universities in the nation that offer the best "combination of outstanding academic quality and an affordable price tag," according to Kiplinger's Personal Finance magazine.