



Agriculture & Resources Center of Excellence

By Lindsey Williams, lindsey.williams@wwcc.edu

1. How long have you been with your Center? Have you been in more than one role?
 - a. I started with the Agriculture Center of Excellence in 2014 on a part time basis, as Marketing and Communications Coordinator. After learning how much the mission of the Center aligned with my values, I knew I wanted to stay. When Bill Griffith, the former Director, retired, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to step into the Director role in 2018. Since that time, we've been excited to expand our title to include Natural Resources, which play a big role in our natural world here in Washington.
2. What does your Center specialize in?
 - a. ANR specializes in providing access and information to those interested in agriculture and natural resources. Of course, our first and foremost goal is connecting industry partners to the community college system. This looks different for every school and each facet of the industries we serve. Sometimes it's helping to identify advisory committee members, and sometimes it's connecting with industry partners to develop new programs. We also work hard to provide exposure to what agriculture and natural resource careers look like, and to communicate that opportunities are in every corner of our state. I think it's important to note that our specializations and priorities can change as needs change, and our skill sets adapt as needed as well.
3. What are your current priorities for Agriculture and Natural Resources?
 - a. We have a number of projects right now that are taking up our brain-space. We were fortunate to be selected as the Career Connect Washington Agriculture and Natural Resources Sector Leader. In this work, we're connecting with employers in specific subsectors to identify workforce needs, and create a sector specific strategy. We're continuing this work, identifying more subsectors, and finding creative ways to implement strategies. If you're interested, our report is available here: https://agcenterofexcellence.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/ANR-Sector-Strategy-Report_Final.pdf
 - b. We're also prioritizing CTC campus visits this year. COVID certainly made in-person visits a problem, and we're excited to be back to connecting with faculty and leadership to learn about what *they* are prioritizing and how we can be a supportive entity.
 - c. Program inventory is also a big focus for us right now. Part of providing exposure to career opportunities in these sectors is providing information about where you can pursue education that readies you for those careers. Our Pathways to Excellence Program Guide (<https://agcenterofexcellence.com/program-guide/>) and Job Board (<https://agcenterofexcellence.com/job-postings/>) are two ways that we do this. We also have a Scholarship page on our site (<https://agcenterofexcellence.com/washington-scholarships/>) .
4. What do you love most about your work at the Center?

- a. I love the entrepreneurship required of a Center. We get to connect with industry, connect with educators, pursue funding opportunities, develop new projects – all in support of students earning credentials that lead to great jobs. Access to education is our north star, and it pushes us to find creative solutions and opportunities. Washington is a leader, globally, in these spaces, and we love being a part of this community.
5. Any other highlights or information you would like us to include for our industry partners?
 - a. Agriculture and natural resources are critical to the success of our state, and the opportunities for collaboration with other sectors are robust.
6. How do you see your Center's connections with the construction industry?
 - a. I see significant potential for collaboration with Construction. We share similar transportation and workforce pipeline issues, and what serves one likely serves all. Something I know only a little about is Cross-Laminated Timber (CLT) products. We would love to explore the potential of supporting forest health by removing small diameter timber, and the potential of using those products to support our friends in construction.
7. If our readers would like to connect with you and learn more about your Center, how do they reach out?
 - a. We would be thrilled to connect! Please email or call anytime – lindsey.williams@wwcc.edu; 509.520.6963