

Mr. Chair and members of the committee. Thank you for allowing me to speak in front of the committee today on SB 2145. My name is Blaine Booher and I am the Program Director of Emerging Digital Academy (“EDA”), which is an immersive 20-week career training program that teaches students the skills necessary to gain access to entry level software engineering jobs in North Dakota. I’m joined today by my colleague Matt Wendel.

Since beginning operation in late 2019, EDA has graduated 55 students over 8 cohorts. Our students have achieved a successful outcome rate of over 90% within 6 months of graduation. The median starting salary for full-time jobs after graduation is \$52k which is an average increase of over 200% compared to income prior to enrolling.

Our students by and large find opportunity in North Dakota, working for local technology teams at companies such as Scheels, Bushel, Perficient, Microsoft, Signum, Project Phoenix, Codelation, Cota Logistics, Heat Transfer Warehouse, 701x, and more.

I am here today to testify in support of SB 2145 which seeks to fix a constraint in current law relating to the requirements needed to achieve a licensure for authorized operation as a private career school in North Dakota.

Under current statute, software coding bootcamps, such as EDA, are overseen by the North Dakota Department of Career and Technical Education (“CTE”). In order for these programs to graduate from a temporary provisional license to a full license to operate, a program needs to meet all requirements set by CTE including accreditation.

Accreditation is extremely difficult and unclear for this type of program. Out of the dozens of software coding bootcamps in the country only one similar program has achieved accreditation. It is unclear if most coding software bootcamps would even qualify for this type of accreditation due to the non-traditional structure and continually updating curriculum

Accreditation, if possible, will take significant time and resources, and would require the freezing of curriculum development during the process. The ability to tailor curriculum quickly to industry needs is one of the main benefits of such programs. The nature of this program is hands-on technical training with direct feedback from industry and as such the curriculum is not based around progress towards a specific degree or college credits.

We have been working in cooperation with the CTE board since the first Authorization to Operate A Private Career School application was submitted by our team in January 2020. Over the past 3 years, we have successfully gained provisional licensure status each year, and worked in good faith with the CTE board to understand the constraints and exemptions from the

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BUILDING OUR**TECHNOLOGY****COMMUNITY**

Why Choose Emerging Digital Academy?

We benchmark our students against industry standards and craft personalized experiences that sharpen or build new skills. Our graduates know how to build web apps from the ground up, but learning to code is just the beginning. They also have knowledge of databases, source control, backend servers, frontend frameworks, task prioritization, and public speaking.

With the growing workforce needs in Fargo, EDA has been a tremendous asset in training talent for our business needs. The instructors and staff are incredible to work with, and the caliber of students they produce is fantastic!

- Teri Winkelman // Talent Acquisition Manager, Bushel

Upon graduation from this 20 week program, each student has spent over 800 hours studying, coding, presenting, communicating, and working alongside teammates. Major portfolio pieces include a solo project and a real world team-built client project.

Because Emerging Digital Academy graduates three cohorts a year, organizations can build a diverse team of skilled candidates by leveraging our talent pipeline.

Emerging Digital Academy thrives when the regional technology community supports it. There are many ways for your business to get involved with EDA.

- 1 Hire our graduates for full-time employment.
- 2 Create internship opportunities for graduates.
- 3 Become a guest speaker in our classroom.
- 4 Become a mentor to our current students.
- 5 Provide scholarships to future students.
- 6 Join our employer network to participate in career days or mock interviews.

(701) 484-0003

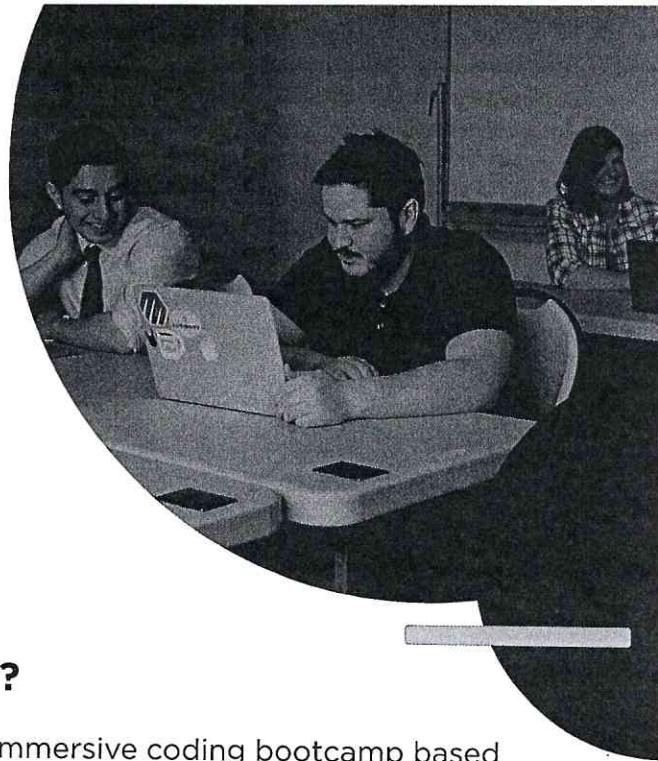
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BUILD A

NEW CAREER



What is Emerging Digital Academy?

Emerging Digital Academy (EDA) is a 20-week immersive coding bootcamp based in Fargo, ND. This program prepares students for entry level software development positions. We teach a Full Stack course where students learn to understand, design, and work with software at all layers of the modern web “stack”, including both frontend and backend. Students learn modern technologies like HTML5, CSS, JavaScript, git, React, and Node.js and are able to grasp foundational web concepts and techniques.

Why Choose Emerging Digital Academy?

Software is changing the world. Individuals with the skills to create and build technologies are now essential in every industry but there aren't enough of these professionals to go around. EDA is here to change that by graduating students for entry level positions in just 20 weeks.

90%
of students graduate the program.

90%
of graduates secure a career within 6 months.

\$50,000
is the average salary for our graduates.

“Prior to EDA, I had no coding experience at all. I loved technology; however, I had not written a single line of code. Now I'm able to create gizmos and gadgets from nothing. To go from no coding experience to joining the Agtech community in 20 weeks has been amazing.”

*Dustin Cote
Babbage Cohort Graduate
Full Stack Developer, 701x*

This program empowers students from diverse backgrounds to begin their new careers in months, not years. Working directly with

local tech employers, we've created a program that equips emerging engineers with the skills they need to make immediate contributions to the industry. Contact us to learn more about the program, explore your financing options, and apply to be part of our next cohort.

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