



### Faculty Interview Columbia Gorge Community College



**Jim Pytel**

Jim Pytel's interest in renewable energy stems from the time he served as a Captain in the U.S. Army. "Our nation, unfortunately, depends on foreign oil," he says. And if we can end that dependency with renewables, it'd be in our best interest. It's in this way that renewable energy and homeland security are entwined.

To Jim, renewable energy is the perfect embodiment of the "uniquely American concept of getting something from nothing."

Fast forward to today, and Jim's the lead faculty member for the Electro-Mechanical Technology Program at Columbia Gorge Community College where they place a great emphasis on electronics. They rebranded the Renewable Energy program as Electro-Mechanical Technology in 2017 since an increasing number of graduates were finding jobs in advanced manufacturing and avionics – not just wind turbines and solar.

To future students or people looking to enter the industry, Jim says to "go get yourself a big bag of math and eat out of it every single day."

"It's inevitable. You need math," he says. "if you start a technical program and have weak math skills, it is going to be a challenging row to hoe."

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