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To Whom It May Concern:

Each participant in Tech Jobs Academy enters having already earned the designation of Microsoft Certified Professional (MCP). Over the course of four months, participants build skills through 1) hands-on practice and 2) traditional study and examination that leads to certification credentials.

With a deep interest in deploying the type of learning environment that would best position graduates for success in the job market, Microsoft surveyed dozens of employers in the New York City area regarding their hiring preferences. A majority of employers expressed either "preference" or "strong preference" for Microsoft Certified Software Associate (MCSA) or Microsoft Certified Software Experts (MCSE) designations, each of which requires that a person pass multiple official Microsoft certification exams.

One employer even noted that as part of his company's business model, all IT employees are required to take at least three Microsoft certification exams each year. This employer's goal is to ensure that his staff transition from being generalists to specialists in specific areas. Under his model, those employees that pass certification exams receive compensation increases. Those who repeatedly fail to pass are at risk of losing their employment. While this particular model is not the norm in the industry, it illustrates the competitive advantage that candidates have if they enter the job market already having MCP, MCSA, or MCSE designations.

Based on the feedback we have received from IT industry employers, we recommend a continued focus on both aspects of Tech Jobs Academy's hybrid learning model: 1) Hands-on practice and 2) Certification in key skills areas.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title]

[Company]