

## **ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES - WELDING**

**November 7, 2022**

**5:30 PM**

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

5:40 pm

- II. PRESENT:** Lance Ganieany, Steve Mahitha, Kim Rogne, Seth Thompson, David Pittsley, Tamra Gilchrist, Mike Anthony, Corry Torppa.

### **III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

The committee reviewed the minutes from the Spring term: on April 6, 2022. Seth Thompson moved to approve the minutes as presented. Kim Rogne seconded. The motion was approved by all present members.

### **IV. INDUSTRY UPDATES**

Seth shared that Local 26 Pipefitters recently onboarded 3-4 new fitter apprentices in August. Overall, hoping for additional jobs but the current talent pipeline/applicant pool is looking strong with approximately 60 on the waitlist. Monitoring emerging trends, hydrogen and nuclear are on the rise again and a likely area of growth within the next five years.

Mike shared that work for the boilermakers is looking up. They were able to bring on 10 apprentices last September and will seek to bring on an additional 10 in December. Optimistic about continued growth with a new hydrogen plant being developed in Centralia at the former Transalta site. With government funding, expect progress to continue. Overall, the pulp and paper industry remains steady but will not have extensive growth. Agreed that the future will likely include hydrogen and nuclear. The committee discussed potential impacts based on external factors, environmental and political, but conversations continued about a fair amount of work being available in foundational areas such as petroleum, asphalt, solvents, etc.

Topper continues to be very busy. Kim shared that while military contract work is slowing, the private marine and refinery industry is seeing growth. The bidding process is increasing, and challenges include keeping up with supply chain challenges and significant time for delivery. She shared that the company needs additional welders and that they would be able to run another shift if feasible based on available talent/welders to fill positions.

## V. Education (LCC and K12) UPDATES

### K12:

Kelso: The committee welcomed Steve as a new member who is co-teaching with Lance at Kelso High School. Kelso shared that they would continue to move toward a five-period day, but the current model provides time for development with co-teaching and a blend of academic and industry experience. Overall, they teach around 100 students in Welding I and II. Welding I covers stick, mig, oxy cutting, and plasma. Welding II continues to build on those skills but expands for additional project work and includes tig and metal art. Exploring opportunities for students to make fund projects to potentially sell such as fire pits. Enrollment this year was fairly consistent with last year's numbers, but the program is looking to grow and expand.

Kalama: Corry shared that the program continues to grow and recently installed the first tig welding machine. This curriculum was implemented based on input received at a Skills USA meeting. He strives to put ownership on the students to support engagement. They have been pursuing and received several large grants to support the program, as well. Level 2 student enrollment is growing while allowing opportunities to expand the curriculum. The course delivers content on rotation, welding processes, milling machining, manual, plasma, sheet metal, etc. to provide an overview of various processes and technologies. There are also notably more females in the program. For the future, Corry also shared that he may seek additional professional development in additional welding processes; however, David weighed in offering support for continuing to inspire students to find that spark that ignites additional interest and enthusiasm for the trade.

### Higher Education:

Lower Columbia College: David updated the committee on the welding competition which had been on hold since covid. The college will look to bring the event back on a typical cycle in 2024 but may look to host a version of the event in spring 2023. More information will be coming soon for committee involvement and input.

Tamra shared that a tour of the industry and a college visit might be possible again next year and asked the group for input/interest. There was support for this event with input being to engage juniors and seniors more in January/February but younger grades would work fine in the spring. This valuable input is appreciated and will be taken into consideration when planning future activities like this.

David and Tamra discussed cooperative education, where students will obtain employment during their last term of college, whether this is for pay or credit. The idea of also placing students in local districts was also presented and there was interest in this opportunity by committee members. Tamra shared that some initial discussions were occurring with district HR managers to better understand the processes for this to occur. More information will be shared once further developed.

David shared samples of the 'welcome packet' with the committee which included information and provided to anyone inquiring about the program. Information included program flyers, program (certificate and degree) planners, and the Industrial Trades high school CTE class. David and Tamra shared more information about the class, which is offered via Kelso High School as a "skills center" program but available to all districts. The current class is going well, and students are from various districts. These students are engaged with the materials and are very interested in learning the trades. The students are currently learning machine technology and will transition to welding later in January. Corry shared some challenges that arose from the Kalama counseling area regarding enrollment. Tamra will connect to further learn about these barriers and seek to help resolve them for future cohorts and students interested in enrolling. The course will run again during 2024 and will seek to recruit a total of 10 new students next year.

LCC's welding enrollment continues to remain strong with 34-48 degree-seeking students enrolled in all sections. Female enrollment has increased significantly between 5-30% over the past several years. Seth inquired if there were any insights as to the factors contributing to the increase. The committee had a good discussion around possible attributes for the growth in female enrollment both at the college and in the trades overall. While one specific tactic was difficult to pinpoint, years of using diverse images, hiring a female welding instructor (LCC) and an evolving external environment (more commonplace and perhaps comfortable to challenge traditional roles or notions around the profession), and desire for a sustainable living wage, are all likely combined elements leading to the continued growth of women entering the trades.

Tamra shared with Perkins (Federal grant funding) that both the college and K12 would share more data with the committee in the future around enrollment by demographics and ideas to recruit special populations and historically underserved communities. One trend noted to date is that the high school population is much more diverse than those enrolling at the college. This presents an opportunity to help close this gap and attract additional students to the college in the future, especially from a growing Hispanic population in the community.

David and Tamra also gave a brief overview of the BAS degree in Organizational Leadership and Technical management as a pathway for those with professional-technical degrees to continue their education as they seek management opportunities. While we typically encourage students to seek employment for a few years after graduation, the program modality of evenings or online is conducive for many working professional schedules.

David also shared the detailed plans for the new Vocational Building (see attached documentation in the meeting drive for a full overview). He and the other faculty have been working with the new architect team to ensure space, layout, function, and eventually, equipment are all appropriate to the needs of the program. Tamra agreed

this is an ongoing conversation with a new architect team responsible for the design and is a work in progress. LCC appreciates all the work and contributions from the advisory and will ask for additional input where possible as the process continues.

In discussing the next meeting day/time, the model was presented for consideration of meeting at LCC Campus, preferred location in the student center in the Fall, and looking for an external K12 or industry site for the spring meeting. The team agreed this would be a great model to consider. Options will be explored closer to the spring meeting time for the next site/meeting location.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:35 pm.

Minutes prepared by Tamra Gilchrist

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