

WELDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

WINTER QUARTER 2025
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12TH, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

5:06pm by Don Sheperd

II. ATTENDEES:

Don Sheperd, Central Welding - CHAIRMAN
Abby Fabian, Central Welding
Steve Mahitka, Kelso School District
Kirk Harris, Wellons Inc
LJ Kruckenberg, Castle Rock School District
Andrew Gross, ITW Welding Products
Ron Gross, ITW Welding Products
Ryan Fabian, JT Marine
Adam Newton, Nucor Skyline
Doug Moore, Western Fabrication
Kevin Shaffer, Vigor
Mike Anthony, Boilermakers Local 502 – Via Zoom
Jennie Bergman, LCC, Workforce Education Manager
Nathan Shepherd, LCC, Machine Technology Faculty
Natasha Allen, LCC, Welding Faculty
Tamra Gilchrist, LCC, Dean of Instruction
Tyler Baldwin, LCC, Welding Student (year 2)
Daniel VandenBerg, LCC, Welding Student (year 1)
Kalisha Harris, LCC, Admin to Dean Gilchrist - RECORDER

III. INTRODUCTIONS

Tamra Gilchrist welcomed attendees and introduced herself as the Dean of Instruction overseeing industrial trades programs at LCC.

Tamra shared she just returned from touring Texas A&M's Robotics Lab and is looking forward to sharing more information about that very soon.

Attendees introduced themselves, detailing their professional backgrounds and roles in industry.

Tamra Gilchrist expressed excitement over the strong turnout and the opportunity for industry collaboration and emphasized the importance of regular advisory committee meetings to maintain alignment between education and industry needs.

Jennie Bergman introduced herself and provided an overview of advisory committees and as well as her role in guiding workforce education – managing apprenticeship partnerships, internship opportunities as well as co-op internship and CDL classes. Jennie is the contact for anyone interested in hosting students in co-op or internship capacity.

IV. BUSINESS/INDUSTRY/LABOR EMERGING TRENDS (ROUNDTABLE)

Discussion focused on skill gaps in the industry, particularly in automation and robotics.

Don Sheperd shared his experience at FabTech and the trend of the show was in robots, co-bots, lasers and various forms of automation making it clear that the industry is going to replace people with robots if they can't find people to do the jobs.

Discussion around the need for people to still be able to run the robots, perform maintenance and programming, creating additional areas of expertise in the industry.

Employers highlighted the need for graduates with hands-on experience and soft skills.

Suggestions included integrating more real-world problem-solving activities into coursework.

Industry Trends Discussed:

Increased adoption of automation and AI in manufacturing and industrial sectors.

Growing demand for skilled workers, not just in advanced welding techniques, but people who are good with doing the same thing, day-in and day-out. There will always be menial jobs like tacking small parts together and clean-weld environments for those not interested in being dirty or out in the elements. There are jobs for every skill-set.

Expansion of programming roles within industrial settings to protect, operate and maintain automated systems.

The need for interdisciplinary training that merges mechanical, electrical, and software skills.

V. PROGRAM REVIEW: CURRICULUM AND OUTCOMES

Updates on leadership initiatives and workforce-related programs at LCC.

Discussion on expanding partnerships with local businesses for internships and apprenticeships.

Consideration of new certification programs to meet evolving industry standards.

Employers were encouraged to provide feedback on curriculum design and training modules – local industry perception is that LCC is a training program for certain companies – other partners in the community need to show up to the discussion and express specific needs for workforce.

Current Welding program at LCC has 30 students registered in 3 “shifts” – 90 students total learning the Welding trade, not to mention the CTE programs through the high schools.

K-12 is bursting at the seams. CRHS has 29 students with only 10 booths

Interdisciplinary Training Programs in Development (As Discussed in the Meeting):

A focus on integrating industry partnerships to provide students with hands-on experience.

Efforts to update existing courses with input from industry professionals to ensure relevance to current job market needs.

Exploration of opportunities for cross-training in related disciplines to enhance workforce adaptability.

Attendees raised concerns about workforce shortages and the need for targeted recruitment efforts.

Questions were addressed regarding funding opportunities for students pursuing trade programs.

Discussion on integrating emerging technologies into training programs.

VI. FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING

a. Update on CTE Building and visit to Clark College Center

- Provided an update on the new building for new committee members. The project is expected to break ground in Fall, with a list of new equipment and plans to be shared in Spring
- The new CTE building will retain much of the existing equipment to ensure students gain hands-on experience with industry-relevant tools.
- A large group from LCC will visit Clark College's new facility in two weeks to gather insights.
- Tamra recently visited Texas A&M and established a potential partnership for program development, including feedback and input on curriculum.
- The new facility will make machine and weld shops more visible, increasing student interest in the program. The new welding shop will be three times larger than the current one.
- Some outdated surplus machines, such as the break press, will not be used due to safety concerns. Booth sizes in the current building are too small; the new facility will offer more space, allowing for real-world welding training.

b. Review recent equipment purchases and make recommendations for future equipment

- There is no fixed equipment budget, but a \$3M capital campaign has been successfully completed for purchasing new equipment.

c. Training/Professional Development suggestion

- Recommended Training Programs:
- FabTech Conference.
- Miller, AWS, and local/online training opportunities.
- ITW Instructor Training in Wisconsin:
- Recommended by Ron and Andrew.
- Offers an industry-relevant instructor course.
- Scheduled for mid-June, registration in April.

- Cost: Approx. \$600 (includes over \$700 in PPE).
- ITW facility in Portland is open for tours and potential class hosting

VII. EXPLORING STACKABLE CREDENTIALS

Of specific interest to K12 and building pathways/best practice for engagement, Tamra shares that LCC is working on a structured approach to help students gain confidence, employability, and continued training opportunities.

Tasha polled the committee attendees to see who was currently using stick welding in their shops (No one). Most local employers are focusing exclusively on wire welding, and training should be adjusted to meet industry demand in order to make students more valuable as a hire.

Kevin stressed the importance of safety and print reading skills.

Adam shares that his company (Nucor Skyline) hires entry-level workers and offers a mentorship program. Employees can potentially earn \$100K in nine months of progressing through the certifications.

Ryan adds that the best team members are well-rounded in both stick and wire welding, WABO and machine skills.

Ron mentions the necessity for math skills. It is needed in industry whether people realize it or not.

Mike says that WABO credentials are a top hiring priority.

Minimum coursework for WABO

Other short-certs recognized/valuable for industry - Nathan

VIII. K12 Partner Updates

a. Sharing updates on CTE Dual Credit

- LJ (CR HS): 19 students have successfully completed dual credit courses, a significant milestone. Students are enthusiastic about learning in the shop.
- Steve (Kelso HS):
 - Teaches welding all day across six different classes (Tig, Metal Art, Welding 1-4)
 - Some students take welding for two blocks per day (75-minute blocks)
 - Students currently receive certification through JH Kelly, but there is interest in transition certification to LCC.
 - Introduces students to blueprints and welding symbols.
 - Hosts a Skills USA Welding competition and participates in other regional competitions.
 - FFA and Skills USA programs are integrated into the welding shop.

b. Tamra shares that LCC previously hosted Skills USA and is open to revisiting the idea once the new building is complete.

c. Nathan (LCC)

- Runs the Industrial Trades Program, which transitions students into welding after six credits.
- Class cap has been at 15 students but increased to 18 this year due to increased interest.
- The younger generations is highly interested in hands-on skills, often influenced by TikTok and social media content.

IX. LCC GENERAL UPDATES AND UPCOMING EVENTS

a. OLD BUSINESS:

- Follow up from the last meeting. Below is the draft Pipe Welding related curriculum from 2019:
- SMAW – Pipe Welding
 - Stick E6010 root with stick E7018 fill/cover
 - Positions: 2G, 5G, & 6G
 - Learn to cut, prep, fit, & weld.
 - Homework from API & ASME (code books that cover pipe & pressure vessels nationally)
- GTAW/SMAW – Pipe Welding
 - Tig ER70S-2 root with stick E7018 fill/cover
 - Positions: 2G, 5G, & 6G
 - Learn to cut, prep, fit, & weld.
 - Homework from API & ASME (code books that cover pipe & pressure vessels nationally)
- GTAW – Pipe Welding
 - Tig ER70S-2 root/fill/cover
 - Positions: 2G, 5G, & 6G
 - Learn to cut, prep, fit, & weld. d. Homework from API & ASME (code books that cover pipe & pressure vessels nationally)
- OTHER
 - Ryan suggests including additional curriculum related to pipe, valve, and fitting training.
 - Tamra shares that Seth had raised concerns about pipe welding in the last meeting; discussion can continue in the Spring meeting.

b. NEW BUSINESS:

- Apprenticeship opportunities – students would work on-site for 33 hrs. If interested in more info, reach out to Tasha and Jennie.
- Don highlights that there are industries needs beyond welding, including sales, that still require skilled workers.

c. UPCOMING PROGRAM OR COMMUNITY EVENTS

- Welding Competition (April 25th, 2025)
 - Information will be sent out to the committee
 - Seeking sponsors, judges and swag donations

X. NEXT MEETING (DATE/TIME/PLACE):

Spring 2025

XI. MEETING ADJOURNS:

6:35PM, Tamra Gilchrist

RESOURCES

[AdvisoryCommitteeHandbook2024.pdf](#)

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