

## **Industrial Technology Advisory Committee**

### **Spring Meeting Minutes**

**May 13, 2025**

**5:15-6:45 PM**

LCC Student Center, Room 120

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#### **Present**

- **Lower Columbia College (LCC):** Jennie Bergman, Tamra Gilchrist, Natasha Allen, Nathan Shepherd, Crystal Heitz
- **Industry & Education Partners:**
  - Seamus Horgan – Nucor
  - Robert “Bob” Koenig – Longview Parks & Rec Robotics Club/Retired Weyerhaeuser
  - Kirk Reinbold – Toutle Lake CTE Teacher
  - Ed Longosky – Westrock
  - Casey Blanchard – Smurfit Westrock
  - RJ Bennet – Smurfit Westrock
  - Will Zander – Advanced Manufacturing Teacher, Clark
  - Carl Douglas – WA State Center of Excellence
  - Tyler Salvig – Ranco
  - Jim Peters – Waite Specialties
  - Ryan Sinclair – USNR

**Recorder:** Kalisha Harris

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#### **I. Call to Order**

- **Chair:** Richard Leu
- **Time:** 5:29 PM

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#### **II. Introductions**

- Round-the-room introductions with each attendee sharing their organization and role.
- Gilchrist thanked everyone for attending and provided a brief overview of agenda topics.

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### **III. Curriculum Review**

#### **A. Automation, Instrumentation, and Robotics (AAS)**

- Program updated after Fall Focus Group to address the diverse needs of the community and multiple industries.
- **Industrial Maintenance (COP):**
  - Newest program addition.
  - Appreciation expressed to industry partners for hosting tours; further visits planned.
  - Conversations with partners helping shape degree development.
- Hiring process underway for a new full-time AIR faculty member to improve industry networking and liaison efforts.
- This is the first time AIR will have a dedicated FT faculty; adjunct roles will still support instruction.
- C. Douglas: Washington faces shortages in welders, machinists, and safe, floor-ready workers. Professional/soft skills are equally important.
  - Even with other colleges offering similar programs, demand is high enough for all to succeed.
  - Advanced manufacturing and robotics (“cobots”) training is needed to ensure machines have skilled human operators.
- N. Allen: From her role at Rightline, the curriculum is encouraging—many costly mistakes in industry occur due to gaps in these same skills.
- LCC is seeking guidance and program balance from industry partners.

#### **B. Machine Trades (AAS)**

- Enrollment is strong, often requiring waitlists due to single instructor teaching six different classes simultaneously.
- Adjunct recruitment remains a challenge.

#### **C. Machinist and CNC (COP)**

- Built into the AAS degree; typically completed in one year.
- Students often transition from COP to AAS or take the program to advance within current employment (e.g., millwrights moving up).
- Welding AAS includes six credits of machine trades; machine trades also allows for welding electives.

#### **D. General Curriculum Notes**

- State Board caps most degrees at 90 credits, but trades programs can exceed this to include critical skills. Gen Ed and professional skills are state-mandated; all other credits are program-specific.
- R. Koenig: Asked about Tech Prep; Gilchrist explained it is now called CTE Dual Credit. HS students earning a “B” or better can receive both HS and college credit (“skills center

without walls”). This is especially valuable where HSs lack facilities such as machine shops.

- K. Reinbold:
  - Aims to expose students to a variety of skills early.
  - Offers mechatronics in middle school, robotics teams in high school, and soft skills training for workplace communication.
  - Promotes local training opportunities to keep students in the area.
- T. Gilchrist: Recently toured Perry Tech—excellent programs and partnership for OLTM. Not a competitor, but LCC will offer a more local option. Perry Tech offers \$1,000 scholarships for CTE completers; LCC has an anonymous donor funding up to \$5,000 for trades students, awarded based on need, merit, or effort.
- Dual credit can significantly reduce student costs.
- E. Longosky: Potential for scholarships, partnerships, and donations of equipment/materials from Westrock for training.
- N. Allen: Industry engagement at career days and in elementary schools (e.g., Augmented Weld demonstrations) helps plant early interest. Urging others to consider participation in these opportunities.
- R. Sinclair: Industrial Maintenance program will greatly benefit his company.
- T. Gilchrist: Credit for Prior Learning allows experienced workers to receive credit for internal or prior training, accelerating degree completion.
- S. Horgan: Encouraged by broad exposure of trades to younger students.
- C. Douglas: Emphasized early outreach to middle and high schools, and bringing industry reps to share real-world perspectives. Noted that of 34 WA colleges, only 18 offer anything similar to LCC’s programs. Warned about industry “poaching” students before completion—partners should support retention.

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## IV. Industry/Labor Updates

- Employment Security Department Demand/Decline list is outdated (by ~2 years); new version expected in September. Current list doesn’t reflect real demand for machine trades.
- For unemployment assistance, positions not listed as high demand can still be validated via other job posting data.
- N. Allen: Disagrees with list accuracy based on industry experience.
- Committee Consensus: The current list underreports demand; many employers are actively struggling to fill skilled positions.

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## V. Alignment with K-12 Programs

- Discussed earlier in curriculum section, but key takeaways:
  - Industry presence at STEM nights, trades fairs, and career events is impactful—students remember these experiences.

- K. Reinbold: Will connect CTE Director with Tamra Gilchrist for collaboration.
- R. Koenig: Lego robotics teams operate like Little League; 3–4 months per season, require parent coaches, and always need sponsors/donations (\$500–\$800 per team).

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## VI. CVTS Building Updates

- Current facilities outdated; new 3-story building planned to break ground in Fall.
- Equipment needs list distributed; feedback encouraged.
- Nucor can donate three spare hydraulics setups.
- R. Bennet: Noted local manufacturing companies that may also donate.
- Anticipated construction timeline: 18–24 months.
- Temporary parking challenges expected; CDL program will need alternate driving/backing space.
- Clark College, similar project took just under 2 years; Carl Douglas suggested exploring shuttle services with local transit during construction.

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## VII. Planning for Next Year

- Advisory Committees are a formal process, meeting twice yearly (Fall/Spring), with in-person or Zoom options.
- Membership should represent both leadership and workforce roles; proxy attendance allowed.
- Approved members by the President; variety of roles within a single company welcome.
- Engagement outside formal meetings (e.g., events, student outreach) is encouraged.

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## VIII. Next Meeting

- Scheduled for **Fall 2025** – exact date/time TBD.
- **Adjourned:** 6:49 PM

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