



**Welding Advisory Committee Meeting**

**Meeting Date:** May 1, 2025

**External Participants:**

Erika Davis – Talent Acquisitions Specialist, E. D. Etnyre Co.

Ed Aldis – Shop Manager, Condor-Lift

Justin Gustafson – Apprentice Coordinator, Boilermakers #1

**Internal Participants:**

Barbara Leach – Vice President of Instruction

Dr. Jessica Berek – Dean of Career and Technical Education

Jescelynne Gibbons – Associate Dean of Instruction

Laura Gregory – Coordinator of Employment & Job Placement Services

LaCretia Konan – Associate VP of Student Outreach

Zachery Caccia – Welding Faculty

Mitchel Meares – Welding Instructor

Tricia Troyer – Coordinator of Truck Driver Training

**I. College Updates**

**A. Costs to Kish Students**

- i. Reviewed changes that were implemented in the 2024-2025 academic year and discussion of proposed changes for 2025-2026 academic year.
  1. In 2024-25, the College completed the elimination of student fees and provided clarity to students in billing; easier for students to prepare for the costs of college.
  2. Textbook costs and affordability have been a high priority. In 2025-26, the College proposed a tuition increase that would cover the costs for textbooks and digital materials for students. This would simplify the process of acquiring books and save students money during their time at the College.
    - a. Summer 2025 semester "All In" program will be implemented. Increased tuition by \$8. The final cost is \$160 per credit hour and will include students' textbook(s) for the semester.
    - b. Tools and scrubs will still have fees but possibly funds will be available to help with those.



II. Program Updates

A. Spring 2025 Enrollment

- i. College-Wide Growth: Enrollment has increased by 11.3% over Spring 2024.
- ii. Welding: The Welding Program (WT) program recorded 406 credit hours in Spring 2025, reflecting a 37.2% increase over Spring 2024 which recorded 296 credits.

B. Program Facilities and Modalities

- i. New addition of a second full-time instructor, Mitchel Meares.
- ii. Curriculum Updates
  1. Streamline courses for our students and staff to ensure the Basic Certificate builds into the Advanced Certificate.
  2. Offer night courses to meet student accessibility.
  3. Courses were wait-listed one hour after registration started.
  4. Pipe simulator – 4” and 6” pipe has been mounted on the wall so that faculty can put a weld outlet in the fixed pipe on the wall which will offer unique positions for students to learn to weld. This is a common request from students and feeds directly into the Pipeline field.

III. Employer and Industry Update

A. Industry Update/Employer Needs

- i. Skills
  1. The committee proposed incorporating training on paychecks and overtime in the curriculum as well as including an explanation of benefits.
- ii. Condor -Lift
  1. State expectations have pushed college in prior years, which resulted in a decline of workers.
  2. Condor-Lift works with Kish students to assist them with working part-time and gives them the opportunity to use and develop those skills while making money. Condor-Lift offers flexible schedules for the students.
- iii. Etnyre
  1. The welding field is not struggling yet, but several positions will be available soon as welders are retiring and positions need to be filled.
  2. Etnyre offers part-time and full-time work and flexible scheduling for students.
- iv. Boilermakers
  1. New employees have a difficult time adhering to work schedules.
  2. Soft skills are critical to the field. Continue to embed soft skills into Kish's Welding program.



B. Open Discussion

- i. Blueprint reading is a critical skill in the field.
- ii. Employers were excited about the use of the Oxyacetylene torch in class. Usually, they must teach the new employees.
- iii. Employers were very positive about the program and the instructors and stated that students from Kish are being very well prepared for a career in welding.
- iv. This spring we had a tour of 100 8<sup>th</sup> graders in the welding area. Employers stated that any opportunity to expose students to the field early is very beneficial.