

# MINUTES

## Horticulture Advisory Committee Meeting

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*Date | time 2/21/2017 1:00 PM | Meeting called to order by Janet Gallagher, Instructor*

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### In Attendance

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Janet Gallagher—Horticulture Instructor, Kishwaukee College  
Richard Alde—Horticulture Instructor, Kishwaukee College  
Matthew Ewert—Horticulture Instructor, Kishwaukee College  
Matthew Feuerborn—Dean of Career Technologies Division, Kishwaukee College  
LaCretia Konan—Director of Business and Training Partnerships, Kishwaukee College  
Brianna Hooker—Administrative Assistant to Instruction, Recorder, Kishwaukee College  
Joyce Grattoni—Owner, Flowers by Grattoni  
Laurie McGhee—Sales, Mariani Plants  
Mark Toms—General Manager, Western DuPage Landscaping  
Matthew Fredrickson—Production Manager, Midwest Groundcovers  
Amanda Mathey—Assistant Grower, Midwest Groundcovers  
William Rose—College and Career Coach, Rockford School District 205  
Chris Bausman—General Manager, Crimson Valley Landscaping  
Dawn James—Design/Sales, Crimson Valley Landscaping  
Dan Davis—Co-Owner, WeedMan  
Larry and Vicki Hubbard—Owners, PepperCreek

### Approval of Consent Agenda and Minutes

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Janet reviews enrollment data and provides rationale for items being crossed out which is curriculum changes.

Curriculum update later in Agenda. Janet also explains difference between Declaration Data which has been presented in the past and Enrollment Data from the 10<sup>th</sup> Day report. Declaration Data shows the number of students who have declared they are working toward a specific degree/certificate but it does not necessarily mean those students are enrolled in any specific course this semester, whereas Enrollment Data represents number of student actually enrolled in classes in the Horticulture Department.

Laurie McGhee moves to approve consent agenda and minutes from Fall 2016 meeting.

Joyce Grattoni seconds.

Unanimously approved.

### Industry Updates from Committee Members

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Larry and Vicki Hubbard from PepperCreek report that business is good right now, especially with this warm weather. The Christmas season was decent and Valentine's Day was busy but manageable.

Dan Davis from WeedMan reports that business is great. Each of his branches have grown 30-40% each year and is currently looking to hire help.

Chris Bausman from Crimson Valley Landscaping reports that overall revenue was slightly down last year and the company is attributing that to lack of scales support. There are currently two sales positions open.

Matt Fredrickson from Midwest Groundcovers reports that things are looking optimistic for this spring. Nursery expansion is now complete. Lack of skilled help in the industry is of great concern right now; 4 positions are open.

Mark Toms from Western DuPage Landscaping reports having a good year last year. Construction has been good and looks optimistic. However, maintenance has had a tough winter due to lack of snow. The company will be hosting a job fair in March.

Laurie from Mariani Plants reports the overwhelming industry concern from the seminars she has been attending is the need for skilled labor in the industry. There is lots of work upcoming as people are optimistic for it to be a good season.

Joyce from Flowers by Grattoni reports the floral industry had a great Valentine's Day. As for weddings, many people seem to be booking last minutes (3 weeks out) which is a transition from several months as seen in the past. She is not sure what this transition is attributed to.

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## Student Representation

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Janet reports there are no current students attending this meeting.

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## Curriculum Update

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Janet reports all curriculum changes made at the Fall 2016 meeting were approved by the college as well as by ICCB and will go into effect Fall 2017. Special thanks to all of the members who contributed to these curriculum changes.

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## High Tunnel Grant Request

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Matt Feuerborn reports a submission has been made for a grant that would fund the building and installation of a High Tunnel on campus. Rich explains that the High Tunnel would allow for a longer growing season, into late October/early November possibly.

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## Hydroponic Course Development Update

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Matt Feuerborn reports request for using half of a \$25,000 donation made to the Horticulture Department to be used for renovation of Bay 4 of the Greenhouse for hydroponics. Matt is currently working to develop a course for hydroponics.

Laurie expresses many students interested in pursuing horticulture and specifically interested in hydroponics and less landscaping but there is still an industry need for landscaping so encourages the school to not forget about that aspect or horticulture.

Chris is curious if there are any existing partnerships between the college and the Rochelle businesses (Bright Farms and Mighty Vine). Matt Ewert replies positively which is important because there is a concern over space with regard to introducing hydroponics at the college that we are currently working through.

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## Marketing and Recruitment

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Janet seeks ideas/suggestions for committee members of how, as a college, we can attract more people into the program. Blumen Gardens pushed for offering an evening trees course, which had sufficient enrollment but was not necessarily successful and encouraging people to pursue the program.

Rich thinks visiting/ hosting evening courses at area high schools may attract more non-traditional students. Rich also discusses the option of auditing classes, where someone could take the class without earning credit and not having the pressure of passing exams. Auditing courses serves the students hoping to explore an area of study.

Matt Fredrickson seeks clarification on what the college's goal is of offering night classes. Faculty reports the goal is to accommodate the needs of current students as well as hoping to attract new students (esp. non-traditional students). Janet reports the current class structure meets the needs of a traditional student, however, our student population is changing and the weekday only schedule is not ideal for most non-traditional students. Matt thinks we may be having trouble by trying to market the same way to so many different demographics of potential students.

LaCretia expresses importance of utilizing her position to ensure people already in the workforce are aware of the resources available to them in terms of alternative schedules/auditing courses for example.

Chris explains that he often markets to and hires people outside of the industry (sales positions), so offering courses that these people could take to get them up to speed on the industry would be useful.

Dan suggests offering courses that people could take as a review before taking a test to renew a license.

Matt Feuerborn explains to committee that the college needs students enrolled in credit courses.

Joyce considers idea of offering some 1 credit hour courses to address the needs of the college yet also take into consideration some ideas mentioned above.

Dawn, Chris, and Matt E. report seeing an art/landscape design integrative interest. Matt E. explores idea of offering an art elective as a landscape design course; committee takes strong interest in this idea.

Matt Fredrickson has heard from several students who took Intro to Hort as an elective and then decided to pursue a horticulture degree so we could capitalize on that. Rich explains that many students are likely cautious about what electives they choose to take due to ensuring they can transfer to universities; Intro to Hort generally does not transfer.

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## New Business

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Matt Ewert proposes a way to more widely introduce Interview Day as a marketing event so people can see how many jobs are available in the industry. This would hopefully help improve perception of the industry. His thought is to keep Interview Day as it exists in the morning and then transitioning the event into a "Green Jobs" fair in the afternoon.

Chris likes the idea because it would help attract more students to the industry and would also attract possible employees to employers. Matt Fredrickson expresses concern turnout to these events is relatively low because employment is pretty strong right now. Wililam likes the idea; since Rock Valley college does not offer Hort many Rockford High School students do not even have Hort on their radar and he would be able to bring students here for this event.

Matt Fredrickson inquires about program outlook. Janet reports that our numbers prove to be one of the strongest programs in the state. Matt Feuerborn reports the program itself is on the best footing it has been in a long time especially with the curriculum changes that were just made. Matt Ewert also explains that we have really been building up our dual-credit offerings and next year we will be offering dual credit between high school Ag classes and Kish hort classes. Matt Feuerborn explains how, with dual-credit, it can sometimes take a few years to really see the impact it has since it starts in the high school.

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## Next Meeting

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10/11/2017 3:00 PM, Kishwaukee College, Room TBA

Motion to adjourn made at 2:30pm by Matt Fredrickson. Second by Matt Ewert. Unanimously passed.