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*Monday April 12, 2021 | 8:00am | Meeting called to order by Chase Budziak*

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**In Attendance**

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**Members Present:**

Lucas Allen – Agricultural Education Program Advisor, FCAE  
Chris Bausman – General Manager, Crimson Valley Landscaping  
Luke Cella-Hiring Manager, Illinois Turfgrass Foundation  
Dan Davis – Weed Man  
Catherine Marsh – Development Assistant & Horticulturalist, Anderson Japanese Gardens  
Mike Krueger – Midwest Groundcovers

**KC Members Present:**

Joanne Kantner – Vice President of Instruction  
Chase Budziak – Dean of Instruction  
Rich Alde – Faculty - Horticulture  
Janet Gallagher – Faculty – Horticulture  
Laurie Hoecherl – Faculty – Business and Technical Education Teaching Chair  
LaCretia Konan – Director of Workforce and Community Education  
Katie Macias – Administrative Assistant – Minutes

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**Review of Last Semester Minutes**

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- FA20 Minutes Approved

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**Enrollment & Financial Information**

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- SP20 to SP21 enrollment 14.4% decline
- Dramatic redistribution of credits from F2F to Online format.
- Student Head count declined by 10.1%, less of a decline in continuing students compared to new.
- Horticulture department program credits are down 98 credits (-25.2%), from spring 2020 to spring 2021.
- Discussed historical financial information.

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**Department Update**

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- a. Plant sale this year will be conducted as a drive-up with e-sales in advance.
  - i. Orders will be taken 4/24-5/5 with pick-up on 5/7.
  - ii. Students from Rich's plant production and sales course are working on this together with students from Janet's special events course.
- b. Virtual interview day went very well with 12 employers participating and 72 interviews conducted.

- c. While there was no work week or field studies due to COVID, floral did have an artist in residence presentation via Zoom.
- B. Fall 2021 Courses & Schedule
  - a. Classes have been face to face instruction model with reduced number of students in each class to maintain social distancing.
  - b. With adjusted guidelines from the state, we may be able to increase the number of students and still maintain social distancing.
- C. Facilities
  - a. College is exploring relocating Horticulture classes currently in the B1400 wing to a different location on campus.
  - b. The greenhouse renovation project has been delayed due to COVID. We are waiting on state funds.

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#### Industry Update from Membership

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- A. Crimson Valley: There is a positive industry trend. Last year had highest sales ever. They can't find staffing for some jobs. They want the right people more than trained people. Employees needed are in sales, customer service, middle management. They have jobs with no applicants.
- B. Weed Man: Middle and upper management employees are hard to find. These would be people with a degree who can manage a team. Their jobs are up a lot from last year with people spending more on landscaping.
- C. Midwest Groundcover: It's been a strong spring. Concerned about fall. Need staffing to fill the entry pipeline and are also looking for interns. Virtual career fairs haven't worked well for them because they don't have the time or resources to set up all the technology. They use internships to vet employees. It helps if they are horticulture students, but if they fit the culture people will be hired even if not. It's also nice if they are local. Employees work in small teams so it's good to have management skills as well.
- D. Illinois Turfgrass: Last year was positive for the golf industry with many people having more leisure time. Spring continues to be good. There are many job openings for trained employees such as assistant superintendents, turf equipment techs, etc. Some are entry level and some higher. Many university programs are declining or ceasing, though.

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#### Curriculum Update

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- A. Department is working on a curriculum redesign to tighten existing certificates in specialized areas and offer pathway options that all stack into one general Horticulture AAS degree.
  - a. Discussed proposed AAS planner with the specialty elective pathways.
  - b. Some courses will also be revised.
- B. The department sought the input of the members present about the draft revision of the turf certificate: Should we require a fall internship or the HOR 168 Land Management course?
  - a. Recommended we keep this as "OR" statement allowing students the flexibility to select either, but suggested it be a 3-credit hour internship since then both options will be the same number of hours.
  - b. Fall internship is viable since golf courses staff year-round and it could be good for students to see fall/winter work, too.

- c. HOR 168 covers useful knowledge.
- d. This certificate would be an asset for students seeking employment and could lead to an increased wage.
- C. The department also asked the committee's opinion of a proposed new Plant ID certificate.
  - a. They liked the idea of this type of credential.
  - b. It is a good opportunity for someone from the outside who is looking to join the industry.
  - c. The 5 proposed courses make a comprehensive identification program.
- D. An update on the status of the cannabis certificate was given by the College:
  - a. The Illinois Department of Agriculture is behind in approving permits due to COVID.
  - b. We are still interested and are hoping to hear soon.
  - c. Our Cannabis & Hemp Cultivation certificate and the new Cannabis Biology & Production course have been approved to be offered.
    - i. The Cannabis course will be taught off-site by our industry partner.

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### Strategic Planning & Discussion

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- What are the current or projected employment needs of their organization for over the next 2-3 years?
  - Are the majority of your new entry-level positions filled by individuals with previous training or candidates you are training in-house?
  - Does the Kishwaukee College program provide the level of training that you require of new employees? Too much or too little?
  - Recommendations for getting more students into this training pipeline?
  - Recommendations for guest speakers, field trips, teaching resources, and technology?
- A. Many of these questions were addressed during the Industry Update discussion (see above).
  - B. Members once again stated the need for qualified employees to hire and that there are many unfilled positions currently.
  - C. The right fit is more important than industry experience when seeking employees.
  - D. Management skills are an advantage.
    - a. Discussion of BUS/MM courses that may meet this need.
    - b. It could be a benefit to include some HOR elective options in the MM degree.
    - c. Gallagher indicated that a MM management course could be substituted for the Floriculture Management course in the HOR program.
    - d. Davis: It might be a good idea to invite MM students to be involved in the plant sale. Additionally, there could be internships for MM students at landscape companies.

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### Next Meeting

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- A. The group indicated that a Zoom virtual meeting format is best.
- B. Late October is a good time.
- C. Avoid meeting on a Monday.