

MINUTES

Welding

Advisory Committee Meeting

April 29, 2021, 6:00 PM | Meeting called to order by Chase Budziak

In Attendance

Members Present:

- Ryan Butzman-President, Cresswood Shredding Machinery
- Rachel Hofer-HR Manager, Woods Equipment/Blount International, Inc.

KC Members Present:

- John Szeluga-Adjunct Faculty, Caldwell
- Mitchel Mears-Adjunct Faculty
- Zachery Caccia-Faculty
- Ami Irmen-Faculty Teaching Chair
- LaCretia Konan-Dean, Workforce Development & Continuing Ed
- Chase Budziak-Dean, Business and Technical Education
- Dr. Laurie Borowicz-President
- Cathy King-Administrative Assistant to the Vice President of Instruction, note taker

Review of Last Semester Minutes

- FA20 Minutes Approved

SP21 Enrollment & Financial Information

- 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.
- Welding department program credits up 55 credits, from spring 2020 to spring 2021.

Department Update

- Fall 2021
 - Embridge donated a crane truck, mobile welding machine, and a \$5,000 student scholarship to be awarded for Fall 2021.
 - Lab classes will be primarily face-to-face.
 - New advanced curriculum is up and running. Classes are filling up for fall 2021.
 - Advanced curriculum includes Advanced MIG, Layout, and Fabrication.
- ideas focused on increasing enrollment in the Welding program.
 - Suggestions included giving high school talks to expose students to the program.
 - Consider giving tours of the Welding lab at Kishwaukee, so high school students can see campus and our equipment, was also expressed.

- What are your current or projected employment needs of your organization over the next 2-3 years?
 - All committee members agreed that the employment needs will continue to grow as experienced workers age out of positions.
 - There is no anticipation that there will be a reduction in needs over the next 5 years, only that industry growth and an aging workforce will create a much larger demand for skilled labor moving forward.
- Are the majority of your Welding program provide the level of training that you require of new employees? Entry level positions filled by individuals with previous training or candidates you are training in-house?
 - Hofer: Requirements are wide open right now. Applicants do not need to be certified, if a candidate can pass the company's welding test. Her company is struggling to get candidates, but thought the issue may be the geographic distance from colleges offering welding programs.
 - Konan: Mentioned that some employees offer sponsorship. Paying tuition in exchange for working for them once the certificate is complete for an agreed amount of time has the potential to make positions more appealing to students.
 - Szeluga: Within his company, all welders have to be certified. He believes that employees are compensated better financially for the certification. John noted that there is an employer in Rockford looking for 17 people with welding skills. Fabrication is the big thing that Kish has that Rock Valley does not have.
 - Caccia suggested a career fair day. This fair would bring employers to the Kishwaukee campus and have students complete applications.
 - Konan: College does this in other areas, and would be willing to assist Welding with this event.
- Does the Kishwaukee college Welding program provide the level of training that you require of new employees? Too much or too little?
 - Is there anything in industry now that would be a benefit to add to the program, such as robotic welding?
 - Butzman: Robotics are not a good fit for his company. They are looking for basic skills. His company has several 20+ year employees. Training is primarily on the job. Stressed the importance of students learning print terminology, safety training, having good character qualities, a positive attitude and a love for welding, as well as a passion for fabrication.
 - Szeluga: Company will be buying a second robot. They have had the first for over a year. It is difficult to find someone passionate, as robotics is not a lot of actual welding. Candidates for employment need MIG, TIG, Stick, and Fabrication skills. The starting wage is \$20, possibly up to \$30, depending on skill. John stated that Kish teaches everything that Caldwell needs/wants. The company is paying for knowledge.
 - Hofer: Company has 10-15 robots. With regards to skills, she is looking for someone who knows the basics of welding. Current challenges she faces in HR involve issues with character and work ethic (come to work stay off cell phone). Soft skills are lacking in the current workforce.

- Kishwaukee will continue to incorporate soft skills and help students understand what is needed to be successful in the industry. There is a class that addresses this issue on the transfer side. It needs to be emphasized more on the career and technical side.
- Is the equipment used in the programs at Kishwaukee are meeting industry standards?
 - Szeluga: Some of the equipment is better than what is in the field. He believes the equipment at Kishwaukee is great.
 - The department is switching out last 2 machines for pulse MIG welding. It was noted that Swenson is a big pulse welder.
 - If needed, College may be able to utilize resources to retool some facilities, with the intention to get people back to work. If specific equipment would help, Kishwaukee wants to provide what is needed to keep program up to date.
- Do you have any recommendations for guest speakers, field trips, teaching resources, potential instructors, new technology?
 - Do we bring in people during the program to talk about what is needed?
 - Trade unions have come to talk to students. Some employers have also come to speak to students. If there is an interested expressed, he will be more than happy to make that happen.
 - Field trips that would introduce students to someone currently doing the job can be influential. Several would love to have the students visit his facility. Important to help students connect the dots - how to get into the program, good entry job, moving up from there.
 - KEC, Rochelle and DeKalb will all have welding classes next year. Can we increase the pipeline with these schools?
 - Kishwaukee have a career day for high school students in general
 - Dean summarized the key action items from the committee meeting as:
 - Explore a Spring Interview Day. The idea would get to bring employers to campus to meet students.
 - Welding Career Fair targeted to high schools, especially KEC, Rochelle and DeKalb.
 - Expand the capacity in courses that will be beneficial to industry partners for an apprenticeship model.

Next Meeting

Fall 2021 | Location: TBD