

Kishwaukee College
Horticulture
Spring 2022 Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: March 7, 2022
Time: 12:30pm-1:30pm

External Participants: 15

Kelsey Minalga – Ball Horticulture Co. – Production Development Manager
Olivia Lake – Midwest Groundcovers – Purchasing Coordinator
Chris Bausman – Crimson Valley Landscaping – General Manager
Susan Booker – Pizzo Native Plant Nursery- Nursery Propagator
Stephanie Pinkons – Pizzo Native Plant Nursery – Production Manager
Tyler Smith – Tyler’s Landscaping – President
Larry Hubbard – Pepper Creek – Owner
Vicky Hubbard – Pepper Creek – Owner
Jill Barczak – Blumen Gardens – Operations Manager
Joel Barczak – Blumen Gardens – Co-owner
Allyson Hoffmeyer – Hoffie Nursery Inc. - Vice President
Torben Hoffmeyer – Hoffie Nursery Inc. – Sales Manager
Meegan McCarthy – Oswego High School – Horticulture Instructor
Matthew Fredrickson – Midwest Groundcovers – Production Manager
Peter Samek – FTD LLC – Quality Service Representative

Internal Participants: 8

Rich Alde – Horticulture Faculty
Jessica Berek – Associate Dean, BTE
Chase Budziak – Dean, BTE
Terry Lynn Funston – Director of Curriculum & Program
Janet Gallagher – Horticulture Faculty
Amanda Kost - Coordinator of Employment & Job Placement Services
Katie Macias – Minutes
Catherine Marsh - Adjunct Horticulture Faculty

Meeting Summary

I. Program Update

- Equipment and Facilities: Horticulture received a \$75,000 grant from Compeer Financial that was used to acquire a Flat Filler, Germination Chamber, irrigation system for hanging baskets, and two dosing systems for hydroponics. Mobile benching was also purchased. These technologies will be embedded in course curriculum next fall after they are installed. Equipment will be utilized in

- greenhouse management, propagation, and bedding plants. Renovations of the Head House are almost complete.
- Plant Sale: The 2022 Plant Sale will be held in-person and online on May 5th and May 6th. The department is implementing a new E-Commerce platform, Prestashop – which will be an improvement over the Google platform used in 2021.
 - Other: Cannabis and hemp production course is currently in progress and the program will have several students eligible for graduation in May. Students will be licensed as Agents through the Illinois Department of Agriculture. The program is one of three in the state currently being offered.

II. Industry & Employer Discussion

- All employers indicated difficulty filling positions. Several of them have many job openings available. The College is willing to promote open positions through Workforce and Continuing Education as well as in the Horticulture Department.

III. Curriculum & Student Outcomes

- Reviewed recently approved changes to several Horticulture degrees and certificates to reduce credit hours and improve acceleration and time to completion for students. Because of this, students will be able to earn and stack several credentials as they work in the industry. Many of the new pathways were developed for students to complete certificates within one year.
- Employers shared input on the annual Interview Day which took place the morning of the advisory meeting. Reviewed the purpose of Interview Day as a prep to gain employment/internship, filling out job applications creating a portfolio, resume, and is a one credit course. Employers expressed that they enjoyed the new venue. Employers also expressed a desire to meet students earlier in their programs and conduct interview day earlier in the spring. As a result, the department suggested hosting a Horticulture industry fair in the fall and moving Interview Day earlier to February.

IV. Work-based Learning

- With the reduced credit hours employers stressed the importance of continuing to offer field studies opportunities to students. The suggestion is to maintain field studies courses to provide students with exposure to facilities like greenhouses, conservatories, and gardens so they can experience all facets of the Horticulture industry.

V. Next Meeting: After Fall Employment Fair, TBD