

Horticulture

Meeting Date: March 7, 2023

Time: 12:30pm

External Participants: 12

Brooke Heinsohn – Agricultural Teacher – Sycamore High School

Chris Buasman – Crimson Valley Landscaping – General Manager

Adam Hanson – Facility Manager – Pan American Seed Company

Matthew Fredrickson – Hampshire Farms – Director of Greenhouse Operations

Carmen Lainez – Hampshire Farms and Mariani Nursery – Director of Human Resources

Josh Pepping – Midwest Groundcovers – Production Supervisor

Patricia Cortes – Midwest Groundcovers – Human Resource Generalist

Joel Barczak – Blumen Gardens – Co-Owner

Jill Mandeville – Blumen Gardens – Operations Manager

Matthew Ewert – Western DuPage Landscaping, Inc. – Associate Landscape Architect

Larry Hubbard – Owner – Pepper Creek

Vicki Hubbard – Owner – Pepper Creek

Internal Participants: 8

Chase Budziak – Dean of Instruction

Rich Alde- Horticulture Faculty

Janet Gallagher- Horticulture Faculty

Catherine Marsh – Adjunct Horticulture Faculty

Kim Rotella – Greenhouse Specialist

LaCretia Konan – Dean of Workforce & Community Education

Terry Lynn Funston – Director of Curriculum & Program

Catherine Macias – Minutes

I. Program Update

a. Spring 2023 Enrollment

b. Program Faculty & Staff Update – *Chase Budziak*

- Rich Alde will retire fall of 2022 after over 25 years of service.
- The Horticulture program is currently staffed by two full time faculty members, one part-time adjunct in Horticulture, one part-time adjunct in agriculture and one greenhouse specialist.
- At this time, the college will not be replacing Rich Alde's full-time position.
- Committee expressed concerns with the college not planning to replace the full-time faculty member. The concern stems from the diversity of horticulture, the importance of being immersed in the field, and the increase of students at the high school level that will be moving up into college courses.

- Budziak discussed the college staffing and budgeting processes that include evaluating program needs and expenses as well as determining whether existing FT faculty and adjunct faculty are sufficient to support the program.

d. Illinois Cannabis Vocational Pilot Program Update

The college had a partnership with a grow site located in Rockford in 2022 which the college decided to end. Students were provided tuition refunds and were able to complete. The college is pivoting away from cannabis and steering towards hemp production and holds a license for Illinois Department of Agriculture for Hemp Production. Currently the college has applied for processing through the IDOA so hemp can be handled. The hemp courses are being held on campus taught by our Agricultural Adjunct Instructor Dr. Sean Walters.

e. Student News – *Catherine Marsh and Janet Gallagher*

- Horticulture student Christine Poltz received 4th place Excellence in Landscape Award at the ILCA Design Contest.
- American Institute of Floral Designers (AIFD) is the accrediting body for floral design and through membership, the college is a part of this Arts and Residence program. AIFD funds a volunteer to visit the college once a year to work with the students. Last week a guest designer came in from Detroit Michigan and designed floral dresses with the students.

f. Facilities, Equipment, and Supplies

Over the past year there has been challenges to plants in the greenhouse. Diagnostic work has included:

- Testing media, water, vegetative growth, and fertilizer
- Replacing dechlorinator
- Identifying two small gas leaks
- Adding a stack on rtu unit in greenhouse to lift exhaust away

Fredrickson made a recommendation to look and age of furnaces and check for proper combustion.

Moving forward with plans for the spring 2023 plant sale as long as the plants maintain healthy growth. A thank you to all the members that have helped in trying to remedy and trouble shoot issues in the green house. Committee is invited to take a tour of the green house.

g. Upcoming Events

- Career Technology Open House – April 5th 5p-7p
- Plant Sale – Online: 5/6-5/9; In-Person: 5/11 & 5/12

II. Employer Feedback & Discussion

a. Industry Update

Committee members state retail is up, sales are stable but general labor is still needed. Companies are promoting from within, but staffing middle management and sales staff is a struggle. Equipment has replaced some of the labor shortages.

b. Interview Day Debrief

Committee states the event produced quality candidates, event was run well and employers are looking forward to next year.

c. Internships

Committee agrees that internships are important for employers to find long term employees as well as students to get to try positions in the industry. It's an opportunity for the student and employer to figure out their wants and needs. It's an investment in the student's pathway. Internships provide opportunities that students may never look for on their own.

d. Curriculum & Skills

Problem solving, resilience, accountability and critical thinking are the qualities needed in employees.