



**Truck Driver Training Advisory Committee**

**Meeting Date:** February 10, 2026

**External Participants:**

Terry Johnson — Fleet Safety Manager, Upstaging  
Ryan Engelbarts — Trucking Operations Manager for Illinois, CHS  
Tiffany Belmonte — HR Generalist, Transdev

**Internal Participants:**

Dr. Jessica Berek — Interim Associate Vice President of Instruction  
Jescelynn Gibbons — Associate Dean of Instruction  
Joseph Wisnow — Commercial Driver License (CDL), Lead Training Specialist  
Darryl Nix — CDL Trainer  
Tricia Troyer — Truck Driver Training Coordinator  
Laura Gregory — Employment & Job Placement Services Coordinator  
Catherine Macias — Administrative Assistant

- I. College Updates
  - A. Cost to Kish Students
    - i. The Board received a proposal to keep tuition flat for fiscal year (FY) 2027. Beginning Fall 2025, the college eliminated all student fees and plans to incorporate book fees into the tuition structure pending board approval.
- II. Program Updates
  - A. 060 Course Updates
    - i. FY24 — 160-hour class (42 students).
    - ii. FY25 — 160-hour class (60 students).
    - iii. FY 26 — 160-hour class (projected 37 students).
  - B. Contractor Training
    - i. FY24 — ComEd (93 students).
    - ii. FY25 — ComEd (60 students).
    - iii. FY 26 — ComEd (projected 97 students).
    - iv. Additional small cohorts for local companies and area farmers.
  - C. Diesel Power Technology (DPT) Cohorts
    - i. In FY25, 15 DPT students obtained their Commercial Driver's License (CDL).
  - D. Recap/Status Update
    - i. One CDL instructor is on leave.
- III. Program Goals
  - A. Increase proficiency through continued training on the manual and ultimately evaluate performance using the manual.



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- i. The transportation industry is expected to continue shifting away from manual transmission over the next three to five years.
    - ii. Currently, fleet operators maintain an approximately 50/50 mix of manual and automatic trucks.
    - iii. Based on recommendations from industry partners, the College should consider leasing or renting a manual truck rather than purchasing one. This approach would still allow the College to meet the needs of the local agricultural community while remaining aligned with industry trends.
  - B. Purchase the simulator and have it fully operational by year end.
    - i. Troyer will evaluate simulator options within the \$75,000 grant budget while following College purchasing requirements, share demo videos with business partners, and consider advisory committee and instructor feedback before making a final recommendation.
  - C. Enhance program marketing through improved messaging, outreach, and promotional channels.
    - i. Troyer will pursue creative outreach and marketing efforts for the program by exploring community events and local venues and will report on the effectiveness of these initiatives.
- IV. Partnership Questions & Updates
  - A. What would the employers like to see added to the CDL program?
    - i. Business partners report that the program provides students with essential foundational knowledge before they receive company-specific training.
  - B. Is four weeks long enough? Do employers feel the students are well prepared?
    - i. Johnson noted that Upstaging hires drivers with at least two years of nationwide experience, and business partners emphasized that while the program teaches essential basics, most advanced skills are developed on the job.
  - C. Hiring/Labor Market Needs
    - i. Gregory shared Illinois Cooperative Work Study Grant information with business partners, highlighting a potential 50% wage reimbursement up to \$16 per hour for 300 hours when hiring Kish students, offered to post job openings on the College's job board, and invited partners to contact her with questions.
    - ii. Business partners indicated that most candidates prefer local routes with 4-6 hour driving days, show limited interest in long-haul work, and that the median driver age is 60-65 due to fewer younger workers in the industry.