

**MECHATRONICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE - MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, October 10, 2017 \* 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.**

**Columbia Tech Center, Room 202**

**Members Present:** Zeb Hallmark, Committee Chair, Analog Devices; Silviu Spiridon, Analog Devices; Dan Wahlstrom Simonds International

**Members Absent**: Chris Taylor, Vice Chair, Daimler Trucks North America

**Clark College:** Chris Lewis, Department Head/Mechatronics Professor; Instructors Ken Luchini , Anne Koering, and Larry Smith; Genevieve Howard, Dean of WPTE; Cathy Sherick, Assoc. Dir. of Instructional Planning & Innovation; Nichola Farron, Advisory Coordinator

Committee Chair Zeb Hallmark called the meeting to order at 6.10pm and introductions were made, including new committee member Dan Wahlstrom.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

*The minutes of April 11 2017 were presented: Zeb made a motion to accept, which was seconded by Silviu and passed by all members present.*

Next Meeting Date

The committee will next meet on Tuesday April 17 2018 at 6.00pm

Office of Instruction Announcements

Cathy Sherick made the following announcements:

Welcome back to 2017-18 we are excited to be rolling up our sleeves and delving in to the second year of work of our **Academic plan.**

The new **“Areas of Study”** have been adopted and approved these will provide the framework for organizing the different degree paths for students. The link is [here](http://www.clark.edu/academics/programs/index.php)

Advisory Committees will begin to see how they fit in to the implementation work of **Pathways**. The goal is to improve rates of completion, transfer and attainment of jobs. The American Association of Community Colleges (ASCC) has developed a model that articulates the implementation process. Advisory members are encouraged to review the model for understanding.

Academic plan Goal 6: *Infuse the study of* ***Power, Privilege and Inequity*** *throughout the curriculum.* Last year advisory members asked why this was happening at Clark. To answer that question, we have been working with the Office of Diversity and Equity to put together some basic information that can help frame the issue for further discussion. Watch for it on meeting agendas.

The new **McClaskey Culinary Institute (MCI)** is open and teaching students this term! The link to information about the program is [here](http://www.clark.edu/academics/programs/culinary/). We are looking forward to being able to provide our advisory members with menu items from the cuisine and baking programs.

Clark continues to see enrollment declines, which may have budget impacts. We do not anticipate further program cuts at this time, but cannot rule out the possibility of changes in the future should this trend continue. Your help in letting community members know about the great programs at Clark is appreciated!

As programs are taught out, we have terrific Advisory volunteers we hate to lose. Often we need to infuse current committees with new members, and sometimes new programs are developed that will need new advisory committees. We are working this year on the development of a **Master Advisory Committee** that will help us with three tasks.

1. Visiting current committees to talk to members and get an idea of how things are working.
2. Planning and hosting annual Advisory event.
3. Reporting to the Board of Trustees every year on the great work of Advisory Committees.

Let us know if you are interested by contacting Nic. You can be on two committees, or if you want to step away from your current committee work that is fine too.

We also wanted to thank everyone who was able to attend the **annual recognition** event held on July 13 at the new STEM building. We had beautiful weather, many cold beverages and a great time. We look forward to planning the event next year with our new Master Advisory Committees.

We will be undertaking an updated Ethics training at the spring advisory meetings.

The annual Clark College Career fair will be held in April. Advisory Committee members will be provided additional information from the career center in upcoming meetings.

Cathy also provided information about the forthcoming insert being planned for The Columbian newspaper to coincide with professional-technical day in February 2018. Businesses can support the initiative through purchasing ad space. The insert will focus on outreach to parents to better inform about the prospects of a career in the technical arena.

Committee Elections

The committee decided to defer elections until the spring meeting. In the interim it is hoped that the committee will be able to recruit some additional members. This may also lead to a discussion to revise the quorum for this committee.

Department Updates

RAMP Project – Chris provided a brief outline of the Rural Access Mechatronics Project for the new committee member, including the background of the project. The first lab is scheduled for Saturday October 14. The impetus is to provide outreach to some of the poorer parts of the Clark College service area.

Enrollment Concerns – Chris outlined that the first year is capped at 16 students as equipment is limited and expensive. The initial investment in the program came with the understanding that the class would be of a fixed size. With the structure of the program as it is now, there are often 7 to 11 graduations to every 16 starters: the persisting attrition can be attributed to a number of factors. These include issues such as students wanting to attain some skills for a job without needing to complete a degree, the demands of the program and family circumstances. As such, after seven years in the existing format, Chris outlined how he would like committee feedback on the potential for a ‘Mechatronics 2.0’ as an opportunity to take a look at the program and possible new strategies.

Chris provided some materials for the committee to review (attached to hard copy of minutes), including catalog descriptions, the current degree and certificate constructions and an outline of the general education requirements.

Chris asked how the program could potentially be realigned to increase enrollment; but he also posed the question as to whether there was an ‘ideal size’ for the program that would work best.

Ken also shared some ideas as to how certain courses could be realigned or amended.

Zeb spoke about the trend for mechatronics students to take both the available degrees to cover both instrumentation and mechanical aspects. However, Chris and Genevieve noted that there were obstacles from financial aid as that isn’t supported by the current funding model. Genevieve continued that the trend for 2 degrees also worked against the program, as by the second year there are low student numbers: instead she proposed opening the pipeline to focus on one degree path.

Chris proposed the following ideas:

* Option 1: Get rid of one of the degree tracks: however, he noted that this was not necessarily the best option
* Option 2: Look at existing courses with a view to restructuring, whilst recognizing the limitations in terms of lab space and set amount of faculty instruction
* Option 3: separation of lecture and lab components to increase enrollment.

Ken proposed some course adjustments, for example combining the MTX 153 curriculum with MTX 225. In addition, both pneumatics classes could be combined together with the vacuum instruction.

In addition, there has been mixed feedback from students to the entrepreneurial MTX 295 course. Silviu noted that, as a business course it was superfluous to what he would expect in an employee. Dan also noted that it would not be an attractive course for a student to have.

Chris reminded the committee that it was important to remember that any combining or changing of credits would still need to result in a 12-credit minimum per quarter load for financial aid qualification. And as such, he would like future planning to be done around credit increments of 2, 3 and 4 that were easily divisible into 12. He also noted that summer classes are a good way to ensure veterans keep their eligibility for financial support.

Other options discussed included moving away from the cohort model and considering an open entry, or having 6 quarter instead of 8.

Chris will summarize the discussion points and send in an email with an invitation for feedback and input from committee members. This is the beginning of the conversation, and he hopes to continue discussion at the Spring Advisory meeting.

Equipment

Chris outlined that the department received $11k which they will be investing in building more trainers.

In response to a question from Zeb, Genevieve outlined that the Boschma Farms expansion is still focused on advanced manufacturing, but that the delay in confirming a budget at the legislative level means the project is somewhat behind.

Zeb adjourned the meeting at 7.43pm

Prepared by Nichola Farron