MTX -MINUTES
May 20, 2025, at 5:00 PM
Zoom

Members Present: Todd Harroun, Fields Robotic Engineer, Top Tier; Nathan Pierce, BMS Controls Engineer, Innotech Controls America; Alyssa Joyner, Sr. Project Manager -MFG, Workforce SW WA; Margarita Marochkina, Business Navigator, WorkSource; Jon Pfister, Controls Engineer, Innotech Controls America; Silviu Spiridon, Director of Equipment Engineering & Line Maint, Analog Devices; Robert Toppel, CEO & Cofounder, Electron Robotics; David Peterson, Director of Engineering Content, EETech Group/Peterson Brothers Automation; Ivy Quach, President, QB Fabrication & Welding INC;

Guests: Warren Montgomery, Principal, MWM Strategic Development Solutions LLC; Brian Taylor, Dan Walen

Members Absent: Will Kitchen, Principal, Executive KPI, LLC; Neil Burglund; Jim Malinowski, Assistant Program Manager, Clark Public Utilities;

Clark College: Monte Gantka, Instructional and Classroom Support Tech 2, Clark College; Carl Douglas, WA Semiconductor & Electronics Center of Excellence, Clark College; Will Zander, AM Professor and Department Chair, Clark College; Tina Jenkins, Mechatronics Department Chair, Clark College; Justin Stokes, Associate Director of Development and Partner Engagement, The Clark College Foundation; Theo Koupelis, Dean of WPTE & STEM, Clark College; Wende Fisher, Academic Advisor, Clark College, Elizabeth Flores, Advisory Coordinator, Clark College

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The meeting began at 5:02 PM, and a quorum was met.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The committee will meet next on October 28, 2025, at 5:00 PM.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes from the previous meeting on October 8, 2025, were approved.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Afternoon Cohort Change: Tina reported that the afternoon cohort now begins at 2:00 p.m. instead of noon to better accommodate industry classes.

Graduating Class: The program will celebrate a graduating class of four students on June 11, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. Committee members are invited to attend. Students recently built a robot with a lift station.

Outreach: The program has conducted significant outreach to local high schools, including hosting an open house. Approximately 315 high school students attended Clark College, with about 20 students specifically previewing the Mechatronics program.

Community Partnerships: Ongoing collaborations include SCH, Silicon Forest, and WorkSource, providing students with career-boosting opportunities.

Cohort Structure: Tina explained the afternoon cohort structure and its adjustments. Current enrollment is 81%, reflecting an increase compared to previous cohorts, which had historically experienced lower enrollment.

New Proposed Degree

Tina presented the proposed MTX degree, developed from community and instructor feedback, incorporating the Clean Energy curriculum.

The college received a $1 million grant for Mechatronics and the Automotive programs.

Key Discussion Points:

- **Safety Class**: Proposal to drop the 1-credit safety class but integrate its protocols into other courses, while also considering adding CPR/First Aid certification.
- **Clean Energy Content**:
    - Focus areas include hydropower, wind, and solar equipment trainers, with exploration of hydrogen and building control systems.
    - Tina showcased solar/wind trainers, troubleshooting stations, and hydro power generation equipment.
    - Work is underway with Innotech on clean building trainers and measurement systems.

Committee Questions/Comments:

- Brian asked about the focus of clean energy; Tina explained that it aims to create well-balanced clean energy technicians able to work across multiple markets.
- Robert asked about CPR certification timelines; Todd noted it varies by provider (1–2 years). Robert raised concerns about certification lapsing during student enrollment.
- Brian suggested a survey to assess employer needs in the wind/solar sectors.
- David asked about course outcomes and CET course outlines; he emphasized the importance of clear descriptions and industry alignment, especially for evaluating equipment.
- Theo welcomed all feedback, stressing the importance of committee input at any stage. He also encouraged members to offer student tours, classroom talks, or internship opportunities.
- Todd recommended offering students a range of elective pathways (e.g., wind, robotics) and more internship experiences to address gaps he noticed during his time in the program.
- Carl highlighted the value of preparing students for multiple industries.

- Ivy inquired about incorporating Artificial Intelligence; Theo explained AI could be integrated into existing courses, but capacity limits prevent adding entirely new courses.
- Robert questioned the depth of solar/wind coverage in the current curriculum and suggested focusing on applied problem-solving. He also noted challenges with an outdated FANUC robot controller; Tina confirmed the robot is now operational.
- David raised the importance of industry data collection/analytics, noting challenges of fitting it into a 2-year program but expressed interest in collaborating with companies that have successfully implemented such curricula.

Chairs' Election for the Committee

Chair Election:

- Todd volunteered; Jon seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Vice Chair Election:

- Jon motioned for Nathan; Nathan accepted, seconded, and all voted in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 6:01 pm

Prepared by Elizabeth Flores