
Helena College Mission:

Helena College supports our diverse community by providing the paths and tools necessary to assist learners in achieving their educational and career goals.

**Aviation Advisory Board Agenda
Tuesday, February 6, 2024 1:00 p.m. APC Lecture Hall**

I. Introductions

Stephanie Hunthausen- Executive Director of Career Technical Education
Sandra Bauman- Dean/CEO
Tod Dumas-Aviation Instructor
Wes Walker-Aviation Instructor
Daniel Tripplehorn-Aviation Instructor
Austin Feiss-Aviation 2nd year student
Kathy Mortimore- Trades Advisor and Career Coordinator
Melissa Mousel- Administrative Assistant for CTE
Brian Walker – AvMax Group
Derrick Olheiser – State of Montana Aeronautics Division
Brent Vetter- Vetter Aviation

II. Program/Department Updates

- New Purchases (using Perkins grant funds):
 - Set of load cells for weighing of aircraft. Our old set of load cells had the computer go bad and was not repairable.
 - Jacks for Citation and for use with new load cells
- Aviation Maintenance Competition update:
Last year's students did well. The five students came home with 2 first place in individual categories.
- Program enrollment:
Aviation enrollment is at max cap first (20) and second year (19)
- Hanger purchase updates:
Received funding from the Montana State Legislature of \$3.6 million towards the purchase and renovation of an additional hanger. Helena College is working with State Architecture and Engineering to remodel for our needs. There is a large workforce demand so the Legislature was willing to invest. Helena College is looking at adding Avionics with the additional space. Time line is to complete the purchase hopefully by end of school year. Current owners are going to lease it back for 2 years. Then we can start the renovation. The space is estimated to be ready and operational the Fall of 2027.

Some additional items that will be addressed during this transition are as follows:

- Does three-phase electrical need to be installed, or is it already in the building?
- Part of the renovation plan is to add parking and pave it.
- Helena College will need to look at securing access to the airport property.

- Last year's meeting follow-up- Avionics program and possible grant funding:

-Helena College has applied for a FAA grant to help fund an Avionics Program. The grant is for \$500,000, however we have not heard back. If we are not selected this year, we can reapply every 2 years.

-The Avionics will be a separate series of classes, but integrated into the aviation maintenance program.

- At this time, businesses are missing this skill set and are having to train their own employees.

III. Student Performance:

- Do you employ any Helena College graduates?

-All three business partners in attendance currently have Helena College graduates employed.

- Have you identified any gaps in the knowledge or training of our graduates? If so, can you please expand on the identified gaps?

-Students aren't ready for all of the paperwork/documentation that is required.

-New employees need more access to manuals. They need more practice on how to read and interpret manuals. Employees should know how to use the manual's glossary and index. This is just not an issue with our students. Many employees struggle with this.

-Students need to be getting enough hands-on experience.

-Businesses are selling time (labor) and can't afford to just let employees read and learn on the job.

-Employees need to have attention to detail and not miss steps in process.

-Employees need to have standard practices knowledge.

Student Preparation:

- Are any changes needed in our curriculum or program offerings to meet current changes/needs in the aviation industry? If so, what do you suggest?

-Mobile units are becoming more prevalent. There is a need to send service people out to the airplane to get it back in operation. NDT rates are going through the roof. Those that are certified in NDT are making significantly

more. It is suggested that we need to look at adding Phased Array, as it is replacing the Eddy current and the ultrasonic.

-Borescope certification is also needed for inspections. Students can get the training through the manufacturer or Par 65 training sources to get certifications. Helena College does a bit of borescope training, but it is will older testing equipment.

-Olympus borescope equipment is expensive. They do sell refurbished equipment.

Other:

- Do you have any interest or know of someone who would be interested in teaching or helping to train for a specific skill set in our program? Or be part of the advisory board? Other suggestions?

-Especially looking for someone experienced in Avionics.

-Student suggestion: Provide opportunity to get add on certificates.

IV. Wrap up and Summary of Takeaways

- Continue to plan and develop an avionics program, which involves partnering with industry to provide training and equipment needed. Due to the demand for this skill and student interest, we can continue to plan for this program in coordination with the hangar purchase and program expansion.
- Explore ways to provide more employer-valued certifications to students.