
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.

Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

**Diesel Technology Advisory Board Meeting
March 12, 2024 1:00 p.m. APC Room 205**

I. Attendees:

Stephanie Hunthausen – Executive Director of Career Technical Education
Sandra Bauman – Dean/CEO
Derrick Hauer- Diesel Instructor
Rick Purcell – Diesel Instructor
Kathy Mortimore- Trades Advisor and Career Coordinator
Melissa Mousel- Administrative Assistant for CTE
Dan Greenberg – Missouri River Contractors
Steve Burch – Missouri River Contractors
Travis Sandau – I-State Trucking
Dave Gardner – Diversified Truck Leasing
Tye Harrington – J & D Truck Repair
Mike Holliday – Tri-State Truck and Equipment

II. Program/Department Updates

- Enrollment is up for this year. 13 first year students. Over half of the class are females. Four of first year (2 women and 2 men) students will be transferring to auto next fall. There are 5 second year students who will be graduating in May.
- Student Success Story:
Austin, a 2023 graduate of our program, works at Bighorn Rental. Recently his supervisor put him in charge of the parts room and the service department.
- Will be purchasing some NC3 by the end of the year.
- Bought four student toolboxes and tools for the lab. They will be used by students that don't have all of their tools yet at the beginning of the year.

III. Topics for Discussion

A. Student Performance:

- Do you employ any Helena College graduates? How are they doing?
 - Missouri River has one graduate and one student that is currently in the program.
 - Tri-State has one of our first year students working currently.
 - Both companies are pleased with the students and both are willing to employ the current students after they finish their degree.
- Have you identified any gaps in the knowledge or training of our graduates? If so, can you please expand on the identified gaps?
 - Some individuals have more “mechanic” sense than others. This is across the board, not necessarily our students.

B. Student Preparation:

- Are any changes needed in our curriculum or program offerings? If so, what do you suggest?
 - Manual Transmissions are being phased out this fall for highway trucks.
 - New trucks will all have Automated Transmissions.
 - ABS on trailers are becoming a problem on the road. Highway inspectors are paying more attention to these components.
 - We use Allison in the hydraulic train class.
- Manual Drive Train – Our Instructors are asking for ideas for updated learning outcomes that can be added to the class.
 - Automated manual instruction needs to be added.
 - Students need to be able to trouble shoot automated transmission issues. In most cases, these transmissions do not need rebuilt, the problems are mostly in the box on top.
 - Customers going automatic because of clutch issues and the cost of repair.
- Do you see the value in keeping the Certificate of Applied Science (C.A.S.) in Diesel Technology? Or just the A.A.S.?
 - CAS does show some initiative of the student. It also gives them proof of the first year classes, if they decided to move to a different program. (ex: the students that are transferring to auto next fall.)
 - CAS is good for performance based funding. Kathy is making sure that students complete a graduation application for the CAS.
 - CDL will now be a stand alone class and will not be tied to the completion of the CAS.

C. Upcoming needs:

- Judges needed for our Skills USA competition on March 26th starting at 7:45 a.m. Anyone interested?
 - Three of our members have volunteered to help judge.
 - Some of our members are interested in sponsoring our students to compete for next year.

D. Other:

- There was a question from a member asking for clarification of our block class schedule. Our block schedule requires our students to take one class at a time, generally Monday-Thursday 7 a.m. to 12:00 for a 5 week period. Each semester consists of three blocks. In the past, several classes were held a day in a more traditional college configuration. Our instructors have found that the more traditional schedule split up the course too much and that attendance was an issue. The block schedule allows our students to focus on one subject at a time, gives them the afternoon to hold a job in the industry for real world experience, and attendance has greatly improved. The hours that the students are in class have remained the same.

IV. Wrap up and Summary of Takeaways

- There is value in keeping the C.A.S. as a way to award students a credential after one year. In a couple of years we will have completion numbers and can compare to previous years when the CDL was required.
- Can we encourage more diesel students to participate in Skills USA next year? Perhaps we can have employers sponsor the cost of entry? If we invite employers to come early on the day of the advisory board meeting (prior to the deadline for registration), they can talk to students about possible sponsorship.