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*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.*

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## **Advisory Council Agenda**

### **Industrial Welding and Metal Fabrication March 7<sup>th</sup> 2024, 1 p.m. – 2 p.m. AP106**

#### **I. Attendees:**

Stephanie Hunthausen – Executive Director of Career Technical Education  
Sandra Bauman – Dean/CEO  
Glen Zeigler - Welding Technology Instructor  
Cody Torres – Welding Technology Instructor  
Kathy Mortimore- Trades Advisor and Career Coordinator  
Melissa Mousel- Administrative Assistant for CTE  
John McClernan – AFFCO Construction and Fabrication  
Dave England – Boilermakers Local #11  
Austin Brooks – Sletten  
Casey Howery – Applied Materials

#### **II. Program/Department Updates**

- Enrollment update and discussion of the recruitment/promotional events –

First year enrollment is full at our 15 student cap. Second year currently sits at 9 of our 15 seat enrollment. Those numbers have been consistent for the past 5 years. In the past we have had two 1<sup>st</sup> year cohorts running at the same time, staggering the classes. The 2<sup>nd</sup> year class had an application process at that time. We are discussing bringing back a second cohort, working within funding and personnel parameters.

- Updates to the equipment –

Purchased a new horizontal band saw and 2 Syncrowave 300 GTAW/SMAW welding machines with school funding. Per our agreement with Miller electric they have cycled out the older training equipment and replaced it with new equipment including 4 Deltaweld with Intelx smart feeders, a XMT with

arc reach technology and field pro smart feeder, 5 new Dynasty 300 multiprocess welders, a Multimatic 220 and a Millermatic 355.

- Student success story –

Gavin Wheeler from the graduating class of 2023 is currently working in Bozeman operating a waterjet cutting machine cutting marble countertops and related items making over \$30/hr. This is a representation of how the training he received with CNC equipment can cross over to other facets of manufacturing. It was something that interested him so he decided to pursue a career in that field.

Cody commented that he has 4 out of his 15 first year students already working in the industry using the qualifications they earned during fall semester to get their current jobs.

### **III. Topics for Discussion**

#### **A. Student Performance:**

- Do you employ any Helena College graduates? How are they doing?
- What do our recent graduates/new people in the industry seem to struggle with most?
  - Trainability to learn more specific skills (past college training level).
  - Willingness to travel.
  - May not be willing to put in all of the hours (over 40 hrs/week).
  - Dependability of showing up consistently .

#### **B. Student Preparation:**

- What non-technical (soft skills, 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, employability skills, etc.) are most important to you?
  - Writing skills for communicating with the next shift coming on.
  - Basic computer skills, email communication, and oral communication, including talking to supervisors no matter of the mood.
  - Reading in metric.
  - Learning to read blueprints and weld symbols.
- Glen has students write out directions for him as if he was the one that needed to make the project.
- Cody does job safety analysis with the students. He commented that writing legibility is an issue.

### **C. Upcoming Needs:**

- What trends, in technology or other areas, do you see in your industry that may require new skill sets for workers?

-Orbital welders, maybe laser...but not a lot of market.

-Robot welders

-Analog to digital technology - welders, etc are getting more computer based.

-Welders that have been in the industry for a while get set in their ways. and do not want to learn new stuff.

-Welders still need to know the “why” behind the fundamentals of what they are working on despite the upgrades in technology.

- What are your anticipated workforce needs? In 1 year, 3 years, 5 years?

-Sletten is looking at significantly increasing employees by the end of the year.

- How do you advertise for/recruit new employees? How can we connect you with our students?

-Glen has invited all to come and talk to the welding classes.

-Sletten does internships in the summer for college students.

### **D. Key Takeaways:**

- Welding instructors should continue finding ways to incorporate communication strategies into welding classes (talking to managers and co-workers, describing processes and steps through writing, etc.).
- Employers are invited to come and visit classes; welding instructors would like to spend more time visiting shops and engaging with industry partners.
- New industry technology includes robotic welders..
- Evaluate whether there is enough demand to bring back a second cohort of first-year welding students.