



Agriculture Advisory Meeting Notes

Date: December 8, 2025
Meeting Place: B-102 with Zoom Option

Called to order: 6:00 -7:30 p.m. **Chair(s):** Erin Krier **Note Taker:** Erin Krier

Council Members Present: Natalie Baldwin, Jose Chang, Emma Chow, Tyler Dickinson, Kevin Dwyer, Brenda Estrada, Guillermo Guerra, Tom Gulliver, Emily Guzman, Larry Lahr, Hailey Liles, Jerry Mahoney, Holly Nolan-Chavez, Brian Ray, Nic Tasca

Council Members Absent: Dr. Sean Abel, Dr. Rita Abi-Ghanem, Teri Bontrager, Rosemary Cummings, Marc DeBernardi, Dr. Christopher Greer, Hector Guerra, Miguel Guerra, Jenna Huebner, Danilu Jelderks, Ron Labastida, Yeni Martinez, Christine Ready, Andrew Rice, Dr. Shehbaz Singh, Luis Valdez, Dr. Terry Vassey, Jill Vink, Stephen Waldron, Claire Wineman, Montse Zarate

Guests Present: None

Agenda No. 1 Student Update

Discussion:

- Erin Krier opened the meeting by sharing recent stories about her Introduction to Agribusiness class Student Farm Stand and fall course field trips
- Student Representative Emily Guzman summarized her fall semester and some of the events the Young Farmers and Ranchers Club has engaged in during the semester.
- Student Representative Hailey Liles reported about her connection to AHC Student Government, Young Farmers and Ranchers Club activities, and planning for the AHC FFA Field Day.

Action: n/a

Deadline: n/a **Responsibility:** n/a

Agenda No. 2 High School Partnerships

Discussion:

- Erin informed the committee of the upcoming AHC FFA Field Day on February 14, 2026 and requested volunteers to assist with judging activities associated with the contests: B.I.G., Nursery Landscape, Soil and Land Evaluation, Vegetable Crop Judging, and Veterinary Science. Erin shared the QR code for registering to volunteer and requested advisory members to share the need with their networks.
- Erin explained about the CCAP (College and Career Access Pathways) program that allows high school teachers who meet the college's minimum qualifications for teaching to offer college classes to be taught within the high school bell schedule. This allows students to earn college credit for introductory courses while in high school. These classes are often called "concurrent enrollment".
- She explained that when she was first hired and building the new Agriculture program, she was encouraged to approve high school CCAP requests in order to build a pipeline from the high school, where students can start taking AHC Agriculture courses, to Allan Hancock College, where they can complete their certificate or degree. Erin informed the committee



that to date she has signed over 32 agreements with all of the high schools in the college's service district.

- Erin explained that there has been recent discussion regarding which classes should be reserved for teaching at AHC. She shared that currently, laboratory classes are not approved for CCAP. She explained that two of the program's lab courses - plant science and soil science - are the only classes in two degree programs that students must take at the college, while every other required course can be found at multiple high school sites. She explained that retaining those courses at the college is critical for program vitality so that local high school students still have to take at least a couple of their agriculture classes on the college campus.
- Tyler Dickinson confirmed that most elective courses at Pioneer Valley High School are concurrent enrollment classes.
- Jerry Mahoney supported the model of keeping certain courses offered only at the college in order to adequately challenge students.
- Holly Nolan-Chavez noted the importance of the lab experience students get in a college classroom which is essential for career preparation.
- There was a discussion among all committee member who collectively agreed with the unmatched experience students have when taking college classes in the college classroom rather than at the high school site. The committee supported the decision to retain agriculture laboratory classes for teaching only on the college campus.

Action: A spring meeting to discuss course details and program expectations will be scheduled with CCAP partners.

Deadline: Early spring semester **Responsibility:** Erin Krier

Agenda No. 3 Community and Industry Partnerships

- Discussion:**
- Erin shared an update on the many valuable ways industry partners, particularly those members of the Agriculture Advisory Committee, improve student experiences in the agriculture program by providing field trips, serving as guest speakers, and providing guidance on the direction of the program.
 - Erin mentioned that there are two sectors of the agriculture industry that are missing from the current Advisory Committee, which she thinks would be beneficial to add to the membership roster. In particular, Erin would like a representative who works in the laboratory/diagnostics sector of the industry and a representative who works specifically in machinery/technology/autonomous vehicles/drones/etc.
 - Holly Nolan-Chavez mentioned that her son works for Primus Labs and Erin requested that she ask him for a recommendation of someone from the company who might be willing and able to serve on the AHC Agriculture Advisory Committee.
 - Natalie Baldwin mentioned that a current AHC student who was her former student, Antonio, works in agriculture machinery and may be a good representative on the committee.
 - Jose Chang offered to connect Erin with the Santa Barbara County Agriculture Advisory Committee for potential additional industry representatives.

Action: Identify and reach out to potential new committee members to fill sector gaps, following up on Holly, Natalie, and Jose's suggestions.



Deadline: Prior to Spring 2026 Advisory meeting

Responsibility: Erin Krier

Agenda No. 4 Grant Proposal Updates

- Discussion:**
- Erin recapped that the college has applied for multiple grants that would support the development of a mechanized ag/ag technology program but each request has been denied. During the previous Agriculture Advisory Committee meeting, committee members agreed that, given the direction of the industry, it remains an important goal for the program to pursue development of this type of program.
 - Erin shared that an application was recently submitted to the U.S. Department of Education for the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) grant, which was written for multiple AHC programs and included a proposal for the AHC Agriculture program to develop an agriculture technology/mechanization program.
 - Erin mentioned that funding the purchase of the needed equipment continues to face the challenge of not having a dedicated space in which that equipment can be stored or effectively utilized. The lack of dedicated instructional space for the Agriculture program continues to prevent expansion of program offerings.

Action: Continue to pursue funding to develop an Ag Tech/Mechanized Ag program, bringing in strong industry partners and successful community college programs to collaborate on a proposal.

Deadline: n/a

Responsibility: Erin Krier

Agenda No. 5 Program and Course Updates

- Discussion:**
- Erin requested committee help to promote spring and summer classes. Most particularly she is looking to inform the community about the summer classes: Qualified Applicator Training and Ag Production Enterprise. The Qualified Applicator class prepares students for state certification and the Ag Production series offers hands-on experience at the student farm.
 - Erin explained that she has been approached by the AHC Non-credit/Community Education program to discuss the possibility of developing non-credit courses related to agriculture. Erin requested input from the committee for ideas of what types of courses and programs would be most beneficial for the industry to create that could be offered via the non-credit program. These programs are beneficial for meeting community needs and also for creating accessible pathways to credit programs.
 - Jose Chang suggested that basic computer skills, English language courses, citizenship, and possibly a train-the-trainer for pesticide applications classes could be valuable.
 - Brenda Estrada recommended a course that would be an introduction to agriculture, where students could learn a little bit about the diverse agriculture industry with its many pathways and career opportunities.
 - Emma Chow said that courses in transitioning to organic certification and erosion control would be beneficial.
 - Natalie Baldwin mentioned that an agriculture safety training course could be helpful for the industry.
 - Jerry Mahoney discussed the value of equipment operation training, such as forklifts and tractors.



- The committee agreed that establishing a non-credit certificate covering these crucial topics would be valuable for the industry and for students wishing to enter and/or upskill in the local workforce.

Action: Share spring and summer course flyer with committee for distribution to networks. Follow up with committee on progress of non-credit discussions and request review of any potential new courses and programs.

Deadline: Share flyer within 1 week – additional follow-up as needed
Responsibility: Erin Krier

Agenda No. 6 Facilities Update

- Discussion:**
- Erin provided an update on the transformation of the old STEM center (W-22/24) into a new shared space for Agriculture, Viticulture, and Veterinary Technology. The newly refurbished space is now in use, which includes a small classroom (28 seats) currently used primarily by Vet Tech. The new classroom is too small for some of the larger-enrolled agriculture courses.
 - The adjacent lab has been approved for new furniture, lab counters, and storage. This lab is intended for plant science, plant propagation, and microscope-based activities in addition to use by the Vet Tech program. It is not suitable for soils or chemical labs due to lack of specialized equipment. The bid has been received and is undergoing the approval process for installing lab furniture, counters, and cabinets.
 - Erin shared that there is a possibility of an Agriculture program space being included in the Allan Hancock College Facilities Master Plan.
 - The committee inquired about the Lompoc Valley Center campus, which may have more available space for an “agriculture center”. Erin agreed but also pointed out the limitations of not having the on-campus student farm (which is located on the Santa Maria campus) and also the barrier of transportation to Lompoc for the large percentage of students who live in Santa Maria or even southern San Luis Obispo county.

Action: None

Deadline: n/a
Responsibility: n/a

Agenda No. 7 Student Clubs

- Discussion:**
- Hailey Liles and Emily Guzman gave an update on the Young Farmers and Ranchers (YF&R) Club:
 - The club has 8 officers and about 20 active members who regularly attend monthly club meetings.
 - The club has hosted several notable events, including hosting County Supervisor Bob Nelson, organizing a study session specifically for agriculture students during finals week, helping with various FFA events, assisting with Santa Barbara County Farm Day, and planning the annual spring break legislative trip to Sacramento.
 - The club continues to receive generous support from AgWest Farm Credit for supporting meaningful club activities, such as the Sacramento spring break trips.
 - On Earth Day, YF&R organized a screening of the documentary "Common Ground," with participation from the regenerative dairy producers at Breezy Hill Farms with fresh milk tasting.



- The club plays a major role in supporting and helping to organize the FFA Field Day event.
- Jose Chang offered to help arrange for the YF&R Club to attend a Santa Barbara County Agriculture Advisory Committee meeting.
- Nic Tasca mentioned the need for additional agriculture industry participation in the AHC Career Exploration Day event.
- Erin provided an update on the AHC Rodeo Team and Club:
 - The second annual AHC Rodeo, hosted at the Elks Event Center, has been renamed to honor the late Jim Glines, who was instrumental in the establishment of the AHC Rodeo Team and whose long-standing goal was to see a college rodeo hosted in Santa Maria.
 - This college rodeo will be hosted on March 28 and 29, 2026 and tickets for the performances will be available soon.
 - Team members have had a successful start to the 2025-2026 college rodeo season.

Action: Share link to rodeo website for the purchase of tickets to support the team **Responsibility:** Erin Krier

Deadline: Within 1 week

Agenda No. 8 Program Learning Outcomes Review

Discussion:

- Erin explained the process whereby learning outcomes for the college courses and programs are evaluated regularly to identify which topics within each program might need improvement in order for students to successfully meet program learning outcomes when they complete a college certificate or degree. She explained that she is working with the college's Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness to establish a more meaningful process for the evaluation of student Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs).
- Erin shared the PLOs for three of the Agriculture degree programs: Agricultural Plant Science, Agricultural Business, and Agriculture and requested that the committee use their expertise to rank the outcomes based on priority and importance of content for students to understand in order to be successful in the industry.
- During a careful and thoughtful review of each program and its learning outcomes, the committee ranked the PLOs and identified several that seemed to be duplicative and should be combined for more effective assessment of student achievement of the learning outcomes.
- Additionally, the committee inquired about the lack of animal science-related courses and programs. Erin explained that the college offers Introduction to Animal Science and did create a course in animal nutrition in partnership with the college's Registered Veterinary Technician program, but that class has yet to be offered due to the concern about sufficient enrollment in such a narrow-topic course. Erin explained that in order to create a degree in Animal Science, the college would also need to create a new species-specific course, which must be from the list considered "Animal Production" such as Beef Cattle Science, Dairy Cattle Industry/Dairy Cattle Science, Equine Science, Poultry Science, Small Ruminant Science, or Swine Science. The committee discussed the significant student interest in animal-related sciences for high school FFA students but Erin cautioned that there are not the significant local employment opportunities in the animal industry that there are in the plant science/crop industry.

Action: (1) Incorporate committee prioritization and



combination
recommendations

- (2) Research and consider the addition of animal science-related curriculum

Deadline: Ongoing

Responsibility: Erin Krier

Agenda No. 9 Additional Input, Feedback, Suggestions from Committee

Discussion: • Natalie Baldwin recommended assigning a local FFA teacher for each FFA Field Day contest scorecard to assist with tabulating the scores on the day of the event.

Action: Follow up will occur with specific committee members as needed.

Deadline: Ongoing

Responsibility: Erin Krier

Reports: Important Dates and Follow-up

- Next advisory committee meeting for spring semester will be the 2nd Monday of May, May 11 at 6:00 pm