



Agriculture Advisory Meeting Notes

Date: May 6, 2024
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: Jose Chang, Marc DeBernardi, Kevin Dwyer, Tom Gulliver, Guillermo Guerra, Miguel Guerra, Ron Labastida, Lacy Litten, Jerry Mahoney, Christine Ready, Nic Tasca, Dr. Terry Vassey, Montse Zarate

Council Members Absent: Dr. Sean Abel, Dr. Rita Abi-Ghanem, Mitch Ardantz, Dylan Bognuda, Teri Bontrager, Emma Chow, Rosemary Cummings, Tom Durant, Brenda Estrada, Jim Glines, Dr. Christopher Greer, Hector Guerra, Eryn Gray, Larry Lahr, Yeni Martinez, Holly Nolan-Chavez, Andrew Rice, David Rice, Danilu Ramirez, Luis Valdez, Jill Vink, Claire Wineman

Guests Present: Kimberley Clark, California Farmworker Foundation
 Tyler Dickinson, Pioneer Valley High School FFA
 César Guerrero, Santa Barbara County Farmworker Resource Center
 Alyssa Stovall, Allan Hancock College Career Center
 Faith Vander Voort, Agricultural Workforce Development Program
 Marina Washburn, Workforce Development Center

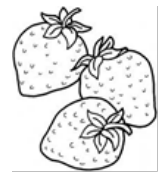
Agenda No. 1 Guest Presentations

Discussion:

- Faith Vander Voort explained the Agricultural Workforce Development Program (AWDP) is implementing a USDA grant to align workforce needs with California Community Colleges to assist in securing internships for students specifically in specialty crops. The program assists with connecting community college students with employers for internships, support recruitment efforts, setting up internship programs, and also can provide funding to cover up to 2 paid interns per semester.
- Alyssa Stovall explained the Learning Aligned Employment Program (LAEP), a California state program, that is designed to connect underrepresented students from Allan Hancock College with employers who offer work experience/internship opportunities within the students' area of study. There is a brief application process for employers who wish to participate and there is funding available to cover some of the costs associated with hiring a student intern. The program seeks to specifically support businesses that have the infrastructure to convert the internship into full-time, permanent employment if the student is a good fit for the company. For-profit businesses are able to be reimbursed up to 50% of the intern cost, while non-profit businesses may be reimbursed up to 90% of the cost of hiring an intern. Alyssa clarified that the funding cannot be used for county government employers, such as the Agricultural Commissioner.

Action: Follow-up with the advisory committee to share the information regarding the two paid internship programs discussed.

Deadline: ASAP **Responsibility:** Erin Krier



- Discussion:**
- Erin shared updates about the two NSF grant projects for which the college had been seeking funding:
 - NSF ATE IMAGINE: Innovative Mechanized Agriculture Growing Inclusive Networks Education – this grant was to support the creation of a mechanized/automated ag program, revitalization of the existing Mechanized Ag course to become an Ag Mechanics course that would be offered to students, collaborating with the AHC Electronics Technology and AHC Machining & Manufacturing programs to add classes to a new certificate that already exist in those programs, to create a “calculus for ag applications” class, and to enhance internships and work-based learning. The grant was denied approval but the reviewer comments were very positive regarding the concept, need, and approach. There were minor issues the reviewers suggested AHC change and we were encouraged to resubmit the proposal for the next round of funding.
 - NSF ATE National Ag Center: The AHC ag program was asked to partner with Parkland College in Champaign, Illinois on an NSF ATE National Ag Tech Center grant proposal. This was designed to support community college agriculture faculty in developing additional NSF ATE programs in agriculture technology. This grant was denied approval, but the many community colleges across the country who were partners in the proposal continue to meet monthly to share curriculum ideas for ag tech and to consider resubmitting for the next round of funding.
 - Additional grant partnerships are currently in discussion with the Workforce Development Center, California Farmworker Foundation, and Western Growers Association all centered around upskilling existing farm laborers to both improve their socioeconomic status and to help fill gaps in workforce training and availability for industry. Marina Washburn provided a summary of the work she is involved in partnering with AHC agriculture to develop academic and CTE pathways tailored to meet the needs of the farmworker community.

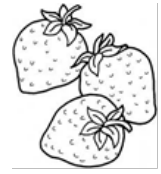
Action: None

Deadline: n/a

Responsibility: n/a

Agenda No. 5 Program and Course Updates

- Discussion:**
- Erin informed the committee that the first graduating class will earn the AHC Agricultural Science certificate from the Lompoc Federal Prison program that she implemented two years ago. Six students will complete the certificate and their accomplishment will be celebrated with a graduation ceremony later in the month.
 - Erin explained that there will be a new program offered the week after graduation called the CTE Summer Career Academy. This will be a 1-week program where students will meet with Erin each morning for agriculture-specific curriculum and hands-on activities and then the students will spend each afternoon with the other discipline cohorts working with the AHC Career Center to receive soft skill trainings. This weeklong program will culminate in students earning non-credit Workforce Preparation certificates with the intention of being placed in a paid internship in their area of interest – this may be production, business, food safety, animal science, etc. Erin reminded employers about the LAEP program presented earlier in the meeting by Alyssa Stovall, which can help offset the costs to businesses of hiring paid interns. Montse Zarate mentioned there are annual internship openings at Driscoll’s, Tyler Dickinson



informed the committee that his students have had good internship success working with Alejandra Mahoney, and Nic Tasca suggested Farm Supply has interest in hiring interns.

- Erin shared the summer and fall 2024 agriculture class schedules and asked the committee to help promote the low-enrolled courses (AG 165 Qualified Applicator Training, summer and AG 163 Economic Entomology, fall). Flyers were distributed to committee members to share and/or post to assist with encouraging enrollment. Montse inquired about requirements to take the AHC PCA preparation courses. Jose Chang pointed out that the DPR Laws and Regulations study guide has had some changes and cautioned that the most current version will need to be used in the AG 165 class. He also mentioned that the PCA license is not necessarily the only route to a good career path and in his professional experience, an applicator license is incredibly valuable and for many growers, it is all that is needed since not everyone involved in pest control on the farm needs to be a PCA.
- Erin shared the history of and some current issues with the three very specific courses she created in response to the advice of the California Association of Pest Control Advisers (CAPCA) board when she was developing the Pest Control Adviser preparation program: AG 162 Agricultural Plant Pathology, AG 163 Economic Entomology, and AG 164 Weed Science. These courses provide essential information for students preparing to take the PCA exam categories for pathogens, insects, and weeds, but they do not transfer to universities because they are upper division courses. Since these courses serve a very niche student population, they tend to have low-enrollment issues. In an attempt to get sufficient enrollment, these courses have only been offered every other year or even every two years and yet the enrollment is consistently too low for the college to keep the class. While these classes are not specifically required to take the PCA exam, they do provide helpful information for students to pass those exam categories. The units can come from other DPR-approved courses, but those other courses won't adequately prepare students for the exam. Independent studies have helped students in the past but are limited in scope and availability. Erin requested input from advisory on various options that might help address enrollment issues: (1) combine AG 162, AG 163, and AG 164 and concentrate heavily on exam content, (2) remove the lab portion of the classes so they only have to meet once per week, (3) change the courses to hybrid, with an online lecture and an in-person lab so students only have to meet in person once per week, or (4) any other ideas. Nic mentioned that incorporating the three classes into one could be beneficial because there are ways each topic interacts with the others, such as insects as disease vectors. Montse inquired about the time the classes are offered and Erin informed the committee that they are evening classes (4:30 – 7:30 pm). She thought that the online lecture with an in-person lab sounded viable for working people. Jose Chang reiterated that not everyone needs a PCA license and they are costly to take and maintain with continuing education classes. He suggested offering the classes less often might be sufficient to meet the demand of the program. The committee agreed that the information is heavy and complex and although it would be difficult to cover all of the topics in one class, students would at least be introduced to the topics and learn what and how to study deeper for the exam. Jose Chang encouraged us to consider teaching for the new license category of soil fumigants for soilborne diseases and nematodes. He thinks this content should be added to the new combined class rather than taught as a separate course. Soil fumigants are essential in Santa Barbara County and will be valuable and essential to teach.

Action: Share course flyers, internship/CTE academy information, and proposed new course information with committee for distribution and/or review.

Deadline: June 1, 2024 flyers; August 1, 2024 new course review

Responsibility: Erin Krier


Agenda No. 6 Facilities Update

Discussion: Erin informed the committee that there appears to be a space available in Building W that was the previous space of the STEM Center before the construction of the new MESA STEM Center on campus. Dr. Abel has helped advocate for that double classroom space to become a dedicated classroom/teaching lab space to be shared between the agriculture, viticulture/enology, and vet tech programs. This use of the space appears to have been approved by facilities and there is hope that by spring 2025 these programs will have access to the space for use with classes. The committee was pleased to hear there is a possibility of the agriculture program finally having some dedicated instructional space, as they see the need for modern facilities for this important program.

Action: None

Deadline: n/a

Responsibility: n/a

Agenda No. 7 Student Clubs

Discussion:

- The Young Farmers & Ranchers club, thanks to funding support from AgWest Farm Credit, spent three days in Sacramento over spring break attending the California Farm Bureau Capital Ag Conference. Club leaders Erin Krier and Teri Bontrager traveled with 7 AHC YF&R students to attend conference sessions, meet with Senators and Assemblymembers to discuss agriculture issues of concern in Santa Barbara County, meet with state Farm Bureau leaders, have a private meeting with CDFA Undersecretary Christine Birdsong, tour Hilmar Cheese, and enjoy an evening of bowling joined by AHC ag program alumni Celso and Eli, who are both currently students at UC Davis.
- The AHC Rodeo Team has had a very successful year with the women’s team securing the title of Champion Women’s Team at the Fresno State University rodeo contest with only 2 competitors earning more points than any other women’s team, which all had 4 competitors earning points. The winners, Paloma and Sutton, graciously gave Erin, team faculty advisor, the buckle they earned for this honor.

Action: None

Responsibility: n/a

Deadline: n/a

Agenda No. 7 • Additional Input, Feedback, Suggestions from Committee

Discussion:

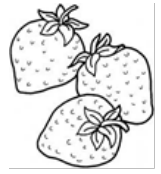
- Marina mentioned that a grant application has been submitted that would help to create a produce safety course at AHC to help students attain their PSA Grower Training certificate.
- Marina suggested that in the fall advisory committee meeting, an update could be added to the agenda regarding the work the Farmworker Resource Center has been doing in Santa Barbara County with the Proyecto Campesino.
- Nic added that hands-on components of the produce safety curriculum will add valuable learning opportunities to the PSA training.

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 fall semester will be Monday, December 2, 2024 at 6:00 pm