

Minutes

HVAC Advisory Board

November 2, 2023 – TTC 5740

1. Welcome and Introductions – 11:04 a.m.
2. Members present: Robert Terry Anderson, Dwight Coblantz, Jason Garza, Jerry Lentz, Diane Long, Gabriel Maldonado, Jim Penny, Kyle Rogers, Josh Smith, Rob Vander Weele, Luke Vanderhill, Dan Wood, Shaun Wright
3. Call to approve minutes from last meeting: Minutes of March 3, 2023 approved.
Motioned by: Luke Vanderhill Seconded: Kyle Rogers
4. Program updates
 - a. Instructors for the HVAC Department
 - i. New full-time instructor, Jason Garza: currently teaching Core Level 1 courses. Winter 2024: Core Level 2 courses, One of the two EPA courses, along with Customer Relations
 - ii. Two part-time instructors: Evan Gross (sheet metal), Jim Kelly, Winter 2024: Systems Design & Manual D
 - b. Discuss HVAC courses & EFE
 - i. New KRESA EFE Tech Center under construction, anticipated opening in Fall 2024
 - ii. EFE enrollment is above average this year, but will likely be down next year upon the completion of the new Tech Center
 - c. Enrollment for HVAC
 - i. Class size for students in their 3rd of 4 semesters is 12-13
 - ii. Retention – have allowed seats above capacity (18) in Level 1 courses to improve retention rate for Level 2 and graduating level courses
 1. Large factor is students gaining employment after Level 1 courses and not continuing to graduation
 2. While the goal is to get students jobs, the low retention is not seen as a success in college statistics
 - d. Discussion on finding new employees
 - i. Industry partners agree it's tough to find qualified candidates
 1. Not a lot of students entering the trade – May 2023 had around 16 graduates
5. New business and/or projects
 - a. Discuss new and emerging trends in the industry
 - i. Future discussion needed around R-32 and R-454B in regards to EPA phase-down of refrigerant R-410a

- ii. Switching from brazing to pro-press fittings to simplify
 - 1. Industry partners say around 50% of installations are using pro-press fittings instead of brazing. It was noted that there are no refrigerant leak concerns. Saves quite a bit of time, especially when dealing with hydronic systems. Higher upfront cost but fewer call backs with proper installation
 - b. Students use of computer technology/software & soft skills
 - i. Push for more computer and internet use in the HVAC industry
 - ii. Use of Visio – utilized by several classes on the graduating level, students need to learn how to use the software and apply it to various course projects
 - iii. Soft skills – try to emphasize the importance of customer service in every class
 - 1. Some students have great technical skill but poor soft skills
 - 2. Industry partners agree about teaching the importance of soft skills. Most companies provide training to their employees, as each one has their own policy regarding customer relations
 - 3. The average customer is more informed these days – students need to learn how to answer questions confidently
 - c. Capital requests for Hydronics was approved
 - i. Currently installing a Navien boiler and two Burnham boilers
 - 1. The current process for parts ordering needs improvement
 - d. 2023 Capital – approved/received (testing instruments etc.)
 - i. Received many testing instruments, including: refrigerant leak detectors, digital manometers, micron gauges, wet bulb/dry bulb tester, mega ohm-meter
 - e. Field trips
 - i. HVAC 210 (Controls) class to visit AbsolutAire for training on make-up air units
 - ii. HVAC 215 (Hydronics) class to complete a lab in the KVCC boiler room
 - iii. Many field trips go to places that want to hire students
 - iv. Would like to visit the WMed Innovation Center in the future to see the new Lochinvar boilers.
- 6. Updates from around the college
 - a. Possible expansion of the tech wing
 - i. The state turned down the college’s expansion request. Most funding went to colleges on the east side of the state.
- 7. Open discussion
 - a. Oil furnaces
 - i. Currently 8 oil furnaces in the HVAC lab
 - 1. Industry partners recommended reducing to 4 units. Oil furnaces in Kalamazoo County have become less popular

2. Country-wide push for electrification and cleaner combustion for fossil fuels
 - ii. Cutting back on the number of oil furnaces in the lab could make room for other technology like heat pump systems or mini split ACs
 - iii. One 2-credit class in the certificate program is Oil Burners
 1. Consider changing to an elective course
- b. Steam/Sheet Metal
 - i. Steam is an elective course - did not run this Fall due to low enrollment
 1. There are still a lot of steam boilers in old houses in Kalamazoo, so one steam boiler needs to be kept in the lab.
 - ii. Sheet Metal enrollment is 7 this semester, max capacity is 12.
- c. Capital
 - i. Coming up on a new capital request, usually submitted in November or December and approved by the summer
- d. Enrollment
 - i. Still seeing a lot of full-time financial aid students
 - ii. Duct design course is essential to understanding airflow
 - iii. Winter 2023 - Low Temp Commercial Refrigeration (required class) ran for the third year

7. Next meeting March, 2024

8. Adjournment – meeting adjourned at 12:17 p.m.