

# MINUTES

## Welding (WELD)

March 2, 2023

Texas Township Campus, Room 3560

Members Present: Chair, Erick Martin, Heather Hageman, Charles Heidelberg, Andrew Ryan, John Neiboer, Ken Willcutt, Ryan Gaul, Joel Schmidt

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1. Call to Order: Erick Martin

2. Minutes approval

- Motion to approve by Ken Willcutt, Second by Andrew Ryan. The minutes from March 2022 were approved as written.

3. Program updates

- The department is now able to use video cameras. A tripod has been used to position the camera exactly where it is needed. Recorded video is also possible. We can record students to allow them to see where they may be able to improve skills such as speed and angles. We look forward to doing quick recorded demos in the future as well.
- A lift table has been purchased. This is a much safer set up.
- Next year, we have a possibility for bringing on some high-end aluminum mig Pulsed technology.
- We will begin to look at cobot systems. This is one of our capstone programs. These are not robots but a person guided system that is an emerging trend. These are mobile, compact and these can be used for different works.
- A new welding lathe has been purchased. A TIG welding lathe that should be around for some time. Replaced obsolete system.
- Valley's administration and Technical department met with legislators in order to discuss a plan for the future of the facility that includes a remodel and re-design of the Welding area. Part of this is due to future plans for the Auto lab moving. The state will furnish 50% of the money. We now wait for the state to give us approval. KVCC will undergo a capital campaign to raise the remainder of the funds.

#### 4. Perkins indicators –

- Graduate data collected via surveys was approximately 2 respondents. The data set was not a valid cross section.
- The graduates that we know of do find jobs and have been successful.
- There are 10-12 women in the program this year.
- COVID recovery is still happening. The face to face courses vs. online for welding is having a positive impact.
- There is a focused effort to help students sharpen their soft/social skills as well as hands on skills. For example, learning how to represent the company and interacting with coworkers. Learning handshake greetings and how to make eye contact. Accepting coaching and feedback.
- Some personal/social, family issues impact our students as well and our job is to help. We often have private conversations with students to connect them to resources.
- We are also teaching what it means to be a college student. For example, being able to meet a deadline. And how to ensure that attendance is consistent and to be accountable.

#### 5. Needs assessment –

- Board members indicated that they “train students up” with the welding skills. The students are trainable. The students come with a good baseline skill set. Andrew Ryan and John Nieboer indicated.
- Math gaps are noted. Organizational skills and sequential processes could be improved.
- Advisory members indicated they are pleased overall with the quality of the students. However, echoing the need for continued soft skill training.

#### 7. Industry trends

- Shortage of workers and lack of manpower is still a problematic trend.
- The industry is trending toward finding simpler ways of doing things. For example, highly skilled workers setting up those who may be less skilled and not requiring the more complex skills for the entire team.
- It was noted that current workers have trouble reading filler metal identifications appropriately. Erick described an exercise carried out in the

program testing students on this particular skill. To ensure their skills were up to par. The larger industry has same issues.

- All of the machine manufacturers are jumping on board with automated processes. Like cobots. Manufacturers are investing in automation. Robotic training may become more necessary. For example, cobots could take up to a year to set up and program in order to run. You still need to be an expert welder in order to program a cobot, however.
- Power sources and wire feeders have been improved. Not necessarily new technologies. But how the humans interact with the machines.
- Of note, KRESA is building their new career center soon. That will affect the welding program enrollment.

#### 8. Other:

- Faculty member, Joel Schmidt is currently working his CWI License. Erick is looking at potential retirement in 2024.

#### 9. Adjourn

Minutes Prepared by Cathy Colella. March 7, 2023.