

Construction Advisory Committee**Meeting Minutes**

Northland Pioneer College, Community & Technical Education

Location: Silver Creek Campus, Snowflake, AZ

Date: March 15, 2012

Attendees:

Ken Wilk, NPC, Construction Chair
Jason Carter, Whiteriver Construction
Mike Marr, Whiteriver Construction
Steve Nicoll, Owner, Arizona Structural Lumber
Ed Wilson, ADOT, Holbrook District
Tom Poscharsky, Snowflake City Council, Economic Dvlt Committee, RADC
Homero Vela, Navajo County, Director of Public Works
Leslie Collins, NPC, Academic Advisor
Mark Vest, NPC, Vice President
Jennifer McDowell, NPC, Apache County Coordinator
Elizabeth Flake, NPC, Business and Industry Training Coordinator
Newell Peterson, NPC, Faculty
Joe Costion, Former Coconino CC faculty, Solar & Energy
Steve Sims, General Contractor, Owner of Creative Green Homes
Chuck Marsh, Show Low HS, Construction tech instructor
Kenny Keith, NPC, IMO Coordinator
Peggy Belknap, NPC, Dean of Career and Technical Education
Matt Weber, NAVIT, Superintendant
Curt Casey, NPC, Welding Chair
Paul Ramsey, St. Johns, Interim City Manager

1. Ken Wilk, Construction Chair, convened the meeting
2. Self-introductions
3. Potential Members:

Tom Poscharsky suggested representation from the power plant. The plants are aging and upgrades and new construction will be needed. The potash industry should be represented, but it may be about 6 months before any appropriate personnel are in place locally. A representative from the wind farms – Tom will provide Ken with contact information.

Peggy explained that the power plants are actively involved through other advisory boards.

4. Program Comparison:

Ken provided a handout with three program comparisons: UAA (Alaska), NAU (first 2 years of 4 year program), and previous incarnation of NPC program.

Alaska's program has ACCE accreditation (American Council on Construction Education). Some general education requirements of the program are accounting and science (physics, or chemistry, or geography).

Our new program could have a greater market than just Navajo and Apache Counties. Some courses could be offered online.

Ken introduced three possible tracts, starting with the NCCER modules (National Center for Construction Education and Research). There is a green component built into each, module, Ken would suggest adding a separate green module.

Discussion followed regarding individual elements and proposed changes:

- $\frac{3}{4}$ of a credit may be too much for "basic stair layout"
- Too much coverage of concrete and masonry. Perhaps just one credit intro needed for each.
- NCCER modules would be geared to students seeking skills to lead to direct employment.
- NCCER offers a certificate of completion for each module, but will not give a construction technology certificate for the full program if we don't follow their modules specifically.
- Ken suggested that we use the NCCER curriculum as a guideline, not necessarily to follow exactly.
- Value of NCCER certificate discussed. Employers would know exactly what curriculum was covered. Listed online.
- Site Layout Course is an important module and will be valued by employers.
- Maybe add specialty tract to NCCER.
- NCCER offers a well-rounded base that can be scaled up to commercial.
- More emphasis should be placed on electrical safety and training. Even when construction industry suffers there is still demand for electrical.
- Photovoltaic demand will continue to grow.
- Perhaps more time should be spent on plastic piping than copper, because more plastic is used. Copper still needs to be taught for remodels, etc.

General discussion:

- 60% of new construction is commercial. Other construction areas are heavy civil, specialty, residential. Construction is less influenced than residential by market fluctuations.
- Emphasis should be on commercial, but many of the skills crossover.
- This program should focus on the trades, skills, and certifications, not residential.

- It is anticipated that several tracts would be offered. Currently considering NCCER (immediate employment), Associates (with broad introduction), and Associates with Transfer intent or construction management focus.
- Subcontractors would have more interest in the individual courses a student takes – any class is a bonus. A general contract would be more interested in a well rounded program.
- Are you focusing on construction management, or individual trade skills?
- Well rounded is better even if not aiming for management.
- New NPC Program Tract 2 is designed as management tract – either for transfer to a four year program or to move immediately into a management role.
- Discussion re: need for all math requirements in general education components.
- Only 16 credits are required under general education. We could decrease some of those proposed courses and increase electrical courses, or some other need.
- Questions re: the need for a public speaking course, or the benefit from just one.
- We need to consider from the perspective of a potential student. The will be seeking something of value, mobile, and that will be recognized by employers.
- Consider target areas of residential v commercial and new v remodel.
- Emphasis on green component of electrical: solar, small wind turbines
- Provide options for specialization.
- Choose one tract to be more focused and second tract to be transfer.
- Weatherization, energy upgrades, energy systems will be very important. Building Performance Institute trains in energy audits.
- Grant \$ exists for retrofitting, efficiency, etc.
- Thought focus might be more to sustainability
- Overall direction needs to be chosen before details
- There is a lack of sustainability options on mountain
- NPC needs to find a niche, then build reputation to build the program
- Demand in residential is sustainable
- Efficiency cost is in certifications. Can be efficient without certifications.
- Many of the decisions we are discussion are made in the design phase – before a project reaches the construction industry.
- Education in green is needed
- Peggy Belknap provided an explanation of the time frames needed to develop college program and curriculum.
- We could have more than 2 pathways
- Internships will be very important.

Needs Assessment

- Several requests for CDL training
- Several requests for internships

5. Curriculum Direction

Each attendee provided their perspective on the preferred direction of the program.

Paul Ramsey – The proposed courses could be a benefit in public works and maintenance. Could lead to a building inspection position, with additional training.

Jason Carter – A broad approach is good but we need to develop a niche. General contractor want training and skills. Sustainability is the future.

Mike Marr– We need to choose between a program aimed at tradesman or management. We should poll the interest of potential students. Perhaps an AA degree with various emphasis options could be developed.

Steve Nicoll - Math skills are very important. And if students are scared off because of high math expectations you are doing the employer a favor.

Ed Wilson – Reemphasizes importance of math. Perhaps offer a general construction math course, so students see value of math skills. There are many areas of possible curriculum – so stay broad and choose one specialization. This gives students an edge in the job market, not expertise.

Tom Poscharsky – Focus on providing a trained workforce. Maintain view of the big picture. Educate employers about the value of these courses or certifications or degrees. Internship (plants, mining), trade skills and experience can be more important than degree

Leslie Collins – Too many options defuses your potential program. Not enough students in any one option makes the program unsustainable. Construction math would be a good secondary math requirement.

Jennifer McDowell – Apache County demand is for jobs now. Sustainability is not important. She sees certificate proficiencies as important in many different areas.

Elizabeth Flake – Sees advantage to being able to create program to meet future demand. Trained workforce will be bring jobs.

Newell Peterson – Math skills are essential. Don't let technology overcomplicate basic skills. Trades can lead to management over career.

Joe Costion – Consider long term goals v short term goals. 2 year program time frame limits what can be covered. A broad, well rounded program is valuable. Exposure to different skill areas through variety of courses can help students identify interest areas. The progression in this field is education, job experience, trade specialization, subcontractor, general contractor. Short term, non-credit can fill the gaps – e.g., weatherization seminar, energy systems. Develop your core and expand offerings over time.

Steve Sims – Agrees that math skills are very important, physics would be nice. Remember, students won't just be HS kids. We will also train older people who have been unemployed. We need a community buy-in. Keep a future focus - and efficiency is the future.

Chuck Marsh – Suggests a general degree with emphasis. His students just want a job, regardless of the field or trade. Those with degrees and certification will advertise themselves, which will spread by word of mouth. Have fewer programs, don't water them down.

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Kenny Keith – Provides example of stages of education in IMO program. Start as an operator, then continue training to become a machinist, electrician, etc. NCCER is very valuable, industry driven and provides good training. Sustainability will only become more important. Doesn't want to see us just bring back old BOC program.

Matt Weber – Believes at least some heavy equipment component is needed. The current heavy equipment program places most of its graduates in general construction.

Curt Casey – Stick to your core program and sustainability, then branch out. Market the program to non-traditional students. Your students will market for you. Educate the public through marketing campaign.

6. Advisory Committee Leadership – Not covered.
7. Next Meeting date: Thursday, May 10, 2012 at 10:00 am
8. Adjourned at: 1:35 pm and follow-up discussion concluded around 2:35pm