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Allan Hancock College
Agriculture Advisory Committee
Meeting Notes, 23 January 2018
6:00 0 7:30 pm

Attending:

Brandon Cantor, AHC Ag Student
Marc DeBernardi, Santa Maria High School FFA
Jim Glines, Community Bank of Santa Maria
Christopher Greer, UC Cooperative Extension
Tom Gulliver, Farm Credit West
Erin Krier, Coordinator, Ag Program, Allan Hancock College
Richard Mahon, Dead, Academic Affairs, Allan Hancock College
Holly Nolan Chavez, AHC DSN
Mark Powell, Santa Maria High School FFA
Marcos Ramos, AHC Ag Student
Christine (Woodman) Ready, Nipomo FFA/AHC PT Ag Faculty
David Rice, Crop Production Services
Andrew Rice, Reiter Affiliated Companies (strawberry grower)

President Kevin Walthers introduced himself and thanked members of the committee for their support of the committee and the program. President Walthers noted the continuing focus of the college on creating opportunities. President Walthers noted that in past years, young people in the area who wished to study agriculture could go to Cal Poly SLO, but as that campus has become increasingly selective, there were no other options in the region. The community now needs and an alternative pathway into agriculture, and that's what Hancock intends to provide. \

Members of the committee introduced themselves.

Ag Program Coordinator Erin Krier led the meeting and led the committee through the agenda for the evening.

STRENGTHS OF THE PROGRAM

- I. Erin began by describing the recent **history of the program**. While the college has a mature Viticulture & Enology program the college only recently developed a cluster of non-wine agriculture courses. Those have been offered by part-time faculty as the college prepares to launch an agriculture program. Erin noted that the existence of the courses has not always been clear to students, since they are clustered in the middle of wine ag courses. Erin noted that one of the college's priorities will be to separate Agriculture into separate Ag Science and Viticulture and Enology clusters, which will make it easier for students to identify the Ag courses. A few courses (Soils and Plant Nutrition, Integrated Pest Management) will be shared by the two programs. One advisory committee member noted the potential value of a Farm Records course. Another noted that the college should prepare students for the shift toward greenhouse production that is underway. Some of the skills students need—in accounting, business, law, financial assessment—need to be provided in other courses at the college.
- II. Erin described the **resources of the program**, describing current state of the garden, the orchard, and the greenhouse. The garden is on city-owned land within which the college has a large plot. The orchard had been neglected prior to Erin's arrival and it required extensive weeding to allow the orchard to emerge. The greenhouse is fairly large, though lacking in an electrical connection and in need of some repair; Erin noted that it has been difficult to even get a bid on needed repairs for the greenhouse.

Erin described some of the work that has begun with the **support of external grants**. She described the way that AHC students have begun growing and selling produce on campus through a campus farm stand. The Santa Barbara Foundation has provided \$20,000 to support the program. A pending NSF grant application focuses on precision ag and crop protection (the college anticipates learning whether we have been awarded in mid-February). The college has also submitted a grant application for \$1,500 for California Women in Ag to develop the irrigation system for the garden.

Collaboration with industry: Erin noted that she has had many conversations with the local ag community about needs. She noted her own background working with the SLO County Ag Commissioner and the many contacts the college has made in building awareness and support for the program.

CHALLENGES FOR THE PROGRAM

- III. Courses so far are **low enrolled** (enrollments in the teens). This is largely because of the lack of a program in the catalog. Students can take individual courses, but there is no certificate or degree available, and students are uncertain about which courses are potentially transferable to Cal Poly and other four-year colleges. A second challenge is the college's dependence on part-time faculty; these faculty members are often wonderful in the classroom, but as part-time faculty, they do not have structural opportunities to expand the curriculum or engage in planned marketing and outreach of the program.

- IV. Erin described **the proposed Ag Science degree**, noting the required and elective courses. The college anticipates this program will appear in the fall 2018 catalog and that the availability of the program will increase student awareness of and enrollment in the Ag courses. Erin then described **the two Associate Degrees for Transfer in Ag, in Ag Business and Plant Science**. The courses in these programs are prescribed by the California State University System, since students who complete these degrees are guaranteed admission to a CSU campus. There was a question about the difference between certificates and degrees. The college hopes these two programs will become available in fall 2019.
- V. Erin described the development of AG 115, a one-unit Introduction to Ag Education and Careers and Mark Powell noted that he had taken such a course at Modesto Junior College and affirmed how valuable that experience was. Christine Ready noted that Nipomo HS graduates often return to the high school seeking guidance because they have not been able to find direction regarding Ag career possibilities at the college.
- VI. Erin discussed the **Crop Protection Certificate** that would prepare students for PCA licensing. Mounting laws and regulations have made the program increasingly necessary. There was a lively discussion about the appropriate mix of courses that would best prepare students for the PCA exam. Christine referred to Bio Resource & Ag Engineering 340 course at Cal Poly as a possible curricular model for a Hancock course. Chris Greer noted that the exam includes many question on calibration and calculations that would need to be folded into the curriculum somewhere.

There was discussion of the fact that the college has an Introduction to Fruit Science course but no **Introduction to Vegetable Science** course, and the college should develop one at some point.

There was a question about view that animal science and ag education are necessary courses for students coming from high schools who have these are particular as transitional curricula, and Mark noted that SMHS has shifted animal science to veterinary programs. Jim Glines cautioned against discouraging students' passion and Mark Powell noted that even Cal Poly has deemphasized animal science.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS & ROLES

- VII. The college needs to identify **internship opportunities** so that students interested in agriculture can start to get exposure to and experience in the local ag community. This is an area in which the college needs the support of the committee and community in providing opportunities for students to experience the many different work environments in agriculture.
- VIII. Jim Glines urged the view that one lure for students would be the development of a **rodeo club** that would provide students not to need to go elsewhere. Jim suggested that members drive by the Elks to see the number of students actively involved in

rodeo.

NEXT MEETING

- IX. It was agreed that the next meeting would happen in Spring 2018 when later sunset will make it possible for the committee to tour the garden, orchard, and greenhouse.