

East Los Angeles College Automobile Technology Department

Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

May 1, 2026

11:30 am to 1:00pm

Purpose of Advisory Committee

The advisory Committee assists the Automobile Technology Department in education and employment requirements. The committee's input is most important in justifying purchase of equipment and software, facility improvements, and developing/revising the courses offered in the department.

Industry Members present:

Maximiano Anguiano, Bell High School, Auto teacher
Rob Lee, South Bay Tools, Owner
Hedi Kim, Puente Hills Ford, Manager
Paul Brow, All-Car Specialist, Owner

Industry Members unable to attend:

Henry Gelb, Nick Alexander Imports, Shop Foreman
John Frala, Professor, Program Coordination / Automotive Technology, Rio Hondo
Luis Cabrera, DTLA Mercedes Benz, Shop Foreman
Tim Saurwein, SAS Forensics
Joseph Lutz, Felix Chevrolet Service Director
Gary Takamine, Service Director / Camino Real Chevrolet
Roger Spencer, Technician / Mercedes Benz Specialist
Neal Goldman / DTLA VW Service Director
Victor Razo / City of San Gabriel
Eddie Cabrera, Nick Alexander Imports, Service Manager
James Horton, Mark Keppel High School, Auto Instructor
Emilio Rodriguez, Snap on Tools, Account Manager
Frank Paton, Paton Group Education Equipment and Training, President
Oscar Garcia, Homeboy Industries, Employment Counselor
Richard Helm, LAUSD, Dual Enrollment Counselor/CTE Coordinator
Jaime Carrillo, Instructor, Garfield High School
Ever Garcia, Transmission Shop Owner
Julian Wright, Tesla, Tech
Julian Djajadi, Lucky Star Auto
Shirley Yip, Lucky Star Auto
Brian Fortune, Tom's Transmissions, Owner
Trey Grindley, Homeboy Industries, Representative
Anthony Zuñiga, MBRDNA, Engineer
Marvin Velasquez, Nissan North America, District Manager

East Los Angeles College participants:

Adrian Bañuelos, Professor, Dept. Chair / Automobile Technology, ELAC
Oswaldo Soltero, Full-time Instructor / Automobile Technology, ELAC
Jesus Melendez, Instructional Assistant-Adjunct Instructor/ Automobile Technology, ELAC
Reed Galloway, Instructional Assistant-Adjunct Instructor / Automobile Technology, ELAC

At 11:30 a.m. on May 1, 2026, faculty member Oswaldo Soltero welcomed all participants, expressing appreciation for their time and commitment to the Automotive Technology Department at East Los Angeles College. Oswaldo acknowledged faculty, staff, and industry professionals in attendance and provided time for individual introductions.

Oswaldo provided a demonstration of the Electude e-book platform to Hedi Kim and Maximiano Anguiano, highlighting its features, including animations, simulators, and interactive learning modules. Hedi expressed appreciation for the platform, noting how far educational technology has advanced and stating she was impressed with the e-book. Adrian commented that Electude continues to improve and evolve over time. Maximiano also shared that he was impressed and noted that the platform appeared more advanced than resources he had previously used. Oswaldo further explained that Electude's subscription-based model benefits students financially, as it reduces the need to purchase multiple textbooks and results in overall cost savings.

Oswaldo then discussed the Snap-on Industry Student Certification program, reporting that the automotive program trained and certified 279 students during 2025. He emphasized that the majority of certifications awarded were in the Snap-on Multimeter Certification, reflecting the growing importance of electrical diagnostics as vehicles become increasingly electrified. He also noted that multimeter certification training is integrated into all introductory automotive courses.

Reed Galloway added that the certification has positively impacted student employability, noting that several Automotive 101 students have secured employment in part due to earning the Snap-on Multimeter Certification, which demonstrates foundational electrical diagnostic skills valued by employers.

Oswaldo next discussed the ASE Entry-Level Certification, which serves as a pathway toward full ASE Technician Certification. He explained that the exam is proctored by ELAC Automotive Department faculty and offered each semester.

He highlighted that, unlike ASE Technician Certification, students are not required to have two years of industry experience to earn the Entry-Level Certification. This allows students to demonstrate technical knowledge early in their careers and become more competitive for employment. Oswaldo reported that approximately 80% of students who took the exam in the previous semester passed, noting that the credential helps employers recognize foundational automotive knowledge even without extensive industry experience.

Department Chair Adrian Bañuelos asked whether Ford recognizes ASE certifications similarly to other manufacturers such as Toyota. Hedi Kim confirmed that Ford does recognize and value ASE certifications.

Maximiano Anguiano shared that he is exploring implementing ASE testing at Bell High School. He also noted the value of ASE certifications from personal experience, stating that they helped him secure employment at a Ford dealership early in his career.

Oswaldo then provided an update on program enrollment, noting steady growth over the past several years. He reported that the automotive program now serves more than 700 student course enrollments annually. He also noted that the number of Certificates of Achievement awarded has increased.

Hedi Kim asked faculty what they believed was contributing to the program's growth. Drawing from her experience with other schools and advisory boards, she shared observations from students across the region. She noted that ELAC's Automobile Technology program stands out due to its engaged instructors, strong hands-on instruction, and active student car club, all of which contribute to the program's positive reputation.

Department Chair Adrian Bañuelos agreed and emphasized the importance of the student car club, noting that it fosters community, engagement, and a sense of belonging that supports student success and retention.

Oswaldo then discussed the proposed Automotive Business certificates, noting that the Automotive Business Management Certificate received overwhelmingly positive feedback from advisory members at the previous meeting. Following that discussion, the Automobile Technology Department worked with Business Department Chair Frank Aguirre to further evaluate industry needs and career pathways. As a result, the department is proposing two certificates: Automotive Business Management and Automotive Business Entrepreneurship.

He explained that while both certificates include business fundamentals, they serve different career pathways. The Management Certificate prepares students for leadership and supervisory roles within existing automotive organizations such as dealerships, repair facilities, and fleet operations. The Entrepreneurship Certificate is designed for students interested in starting and operating their own automotive business, with emphasis on business planning, marketing, financing, and small business ownership.

Advisory members supported the proposal, recognizing the growing demand for both management and entrepreneurial skills in the automotive industry. Faculty noted that offering two distinct certificates provides greater flexibility and clearer career alignment for students.

Oswaldo then discussed the new Hybrid and Electric Vehicle Technology Certificate, scheduled to be offered in Fall. He provided an overview of the required coursework and explained its alignment with industry standards and workforce needs in the rapidly growing hybrid and electric vehicle sector.

Hedi Kim, manager at Puente Hills Ford, supported the proposal, stating that the certificate is a valuable addition for students entering the workforce, noting that hybrid and electric vehicle knowledge is an increasingly in-demand skill set in the automotive industry.

Oswaldo explained that the Hybrid and Electric Vehicle Technology Certificate was intentionally designed to include Electrical/Electronic Systems, Engine Performance, and Light Duty Hybrid/Electric Vehicle coursework. These courses provide students with the foundational diagnostic and electrical knowledge necessary to work on modern hybrid and electric vehicles. He noted that this course sequence mirrors the progression recognized by ASE, where Electrical/Electronic Systems and Engine Performance serve as prerequisites for the ASE L3 Light Duty Hybrid/Electric Vehicle Specialist certification. He also noted that many automotive courses in the program are stackable, allowing students to apply coursework toward multiple certificates and career pathways.

Oswaldo then announced that the Automobile Technology Department will implement a Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) process. He explained that CPL allows students to earn college credit for skills and knowledge gained through industry certifications, work experience, military training, or other prior learning, without completing the full course sequence. The goal is to recognize existing competencies and accelerate progress toward certificates and degrees.

He explained that students may qualify through three primary methods: (1) ASE industry certifications, (2) documented work experience evaluated through a portfolio assessment, and (3) credit by examination. ASE certifications are the most common pathway, and students may receive credit for courses aligned with certification competencies.

The advisory committee expressed support for these methods. Paul noted that all three are strong measures of competency and recommended adding an interview process to further validate student knowledge and experience.

Department Chair Adrian Bañuelos provided a faculty update and announced that Maximiano Anguiano will be joining ELAC as an adjunct instructor. He explained that Mr. Anguiano will teach an automotive course at Bell High School as part of a dual-enrollment partnership. Students who successfully complete the course will receive credit for Automobile Tech 101, creating a seamless pathway into the program.

Oswaldo requested recommendations regarding equipment and instructional needs. Jesus Melendez identified the need for a new tire machine, noting that the current equipment is due for replacement. Oswaldo added that the Mustang dynamometer software requires an update, as current coverage only extends to 2012. Paul noted that the alignment machine targets are deteriorating and should be replaced due to wear and age. Following discussion, the advisory committee agreed that all three items represent legitimate program needs and supported their replacement or upgrade as funding becomes available.

Oswaldo also presented Snap-on's Trade-Up Program for diagnostic equipment. He explained that the program allows a 1-for-1 trade-in of discontinued Verus diagnostic platforms for new Zeus Intelligent Diagnostic units. The replacement includes a full Zeus+ Certification Kit

(excluding roll carts), updated hardware, leads, connectors, foam inserts, and instructional materials. The program also includes access to advanced instructor development training through NC3 at an additional cost.

Department Chair Adrian Bañuelos stated that the department will review the program and explore potential cost savings or discounts before proceeding.

Oswaldo asked if there were any work-based learning opportunities or industry partnerships available from the committee. In response, Hedi Kim discussed workforce development efforts with the City of Industry, highlighting an initiative connecting students to apprenticeship opportunities at Puente Hills Ford. She explained that graduating students may complete up to 250 hours of work-based learning through internships or apprenticeships, which may also count toward college credit through a cooperative education arrangement.

Adrian Bañuelos stated that the department will explore the opportunity further and requested additional information for evaluation.

Hedi Kim also emphasized the importance of expanding work-based learning opportunities and industry partnerships to support student career placement and skill development. She noted that apprenticeships and cooperative education help bridge classroom instruction with real-world experience.

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.