



HVACR Business Advisory Group Meeting Minutes

June 12, 2014 – 4:00p – ETA 131

1. Introductions and Purpose of the Group

Associate Dean Rick Reeder greeted the advisory group and thanked them for their participation. He explained that business advisory groups are essential for the HVACR program to function effectively. The program needs to ensure that businesses are supplied with workers they need, and the students have the training to meet those needs. Rick emphasized that no answer is wrong in this meeting; what the program needs is the honest input and opinions of the advisory group members.

2. Status Report on the Program

Rick gave a summary of the highlights of last year for the HVACR program.

- The June 10, 2014, presentation to the college's District Board of Trustees has given the Board a new understanding of what we do in Trade & Industry. T&I is changing the perception that trades are a place to go if you can't make it anywhere else.
- The HVACR program has begun using Blackboard as a course management tool. This allows instructors to do homework assignments in a new way. Blackboard is linked to the program's library website, which has all the major training journals, an online copy of the textbooks, vocabulary building exercises, and other tools to supplement learning.
- The Curriculum Committee approved changing the grade scale from Pass/Fail to assigned letter grades. Great performance is rewarded in that students now have the GPA to tell prospective employees how well they did in the program. It also allows for constructive feedback when a student gets a "C" in a course.
- The program has acquired significant lab equipment. The program just acquired a heat-pump trainer. Also in the lab is a Hampden trainer with glass tubes in the heat exchanges

so students can see the condensation and evaporation processes. This equipment is also available to those who teach the HVAC apprenticeship courses.

•The program continues to raise standards. 40 students graduated in the past year, and 90% are working in the trade. Rick acknowledged the hard work of the instructors, Donald Laurent and Pete Goodman, which produced those high outcomes.

•The program received just under \$10,000 in funding so that NATE (North American Technical Excellence) testing is now conducted during the program. Students receive prep instruction for the Core Service and AC Service tests. These two certifications result in the AC Service Certification. This initiative is just getting off the ground, so there is still some refining to do. The goal for this initiative is a 75% passing rate.

•Rick screened the video presented during the June 10, 2014, District Board of Trustees meeting. (source: <http://media.palmbeachstate.edu/wmroot/Trade-N-Industry.aspx>)

3. Plans for Upcoming Year.

a. Shortening the program to 12 months from 13 months (but maintain the same number of program hours).

Currently, the daytime program is 13 months in duration. This has caused issues where financial aid does not cover all modules of the program. The program will be 1,350 clock-hours regardless of how many months it spans. Rick would like to submit to the Curriculum Committee a plan to revise the schedule so the program can be completed in 12 months. This would potentially involve lengthening the day and extending the program into July. The result is expected to be increased completion rates and the ability to send students to work more quickly.

The group was supportive of this change since it gets students trained and into the field more quickly. Pending changes in how financial aid funds PSAV programs may mitigate the issue of modules not being covered by FA. Concern regarding potential for burnout was raised but is not expected to be an issue at the college level where students join the program with the intention of completing training and securing a job. This change would also lessen the “brain drain” that happens during the summer break.

Also suggested by group members is an establishing alliance with businesses to have students gain work experience during their breaks, either as a mentoring program or OJT. Early exposure would give students an accurate sense of the job and would improve the quality of students produced. Students without certifications would not be appropriate as paid employees but could gain experience in an unpaid internship. Input from Safety & Risk would be needed in designing this component. Rick will add establishing mentoring as a goal for the program.

b. Developing closer curriculum alignment to NCCER.

The program is accredited by NCCER; however, currently the program uses multiple curricula to teach the program. A portion is NCCER (Tools, Safety, and Math) is employed; also used is the Cengage text, Smith Electricity, Carrier training, and home-grown curriculum for drawing residential split systems. The program is looking at aligning itself more strongly with the NCCER curriculum. Residential service is the #1 opportunity for an entry-level worker, followed by helper for a mechanical contractor. Rick feels that the program could do a better job at entry level and mechanical work. He would like to see NCCER full core, Level 1 and Level 2, supplemented with residential service. NCCER does an excellent job of structuring content so students experience it in multiple ways – theory learning, practical application, view a demonstration in lab, and then hands-on practice.

Committee members currently using NCCER curricula discussed its benefits. It is well laid out, gives a predetermined timeframe, and helps students get here they need to go. Students coming into the program with NCCER Core and Level 1 certifications would be able to join the program starting at Level 2. Credentials are easily verifiable in NCCER's database. Rick will develop an articulation agreement with Palm Beach County Schools to move those students in to Level 2. Which books would be replaced was also discussed with the intention of finding texts that are good supplements to NCCER and not a financial burden for students. The program will get input during the selection process.

c. Possible realignment of student cohorts.

At current, Pete Goodman teaches the first part of the HVACR program and Donald Laurent teaches the second half. If the program switches to the NCCER curriculum, it makes more sense for the same instructor to take the cohort through the entire program. Students become accustomed to the way their instructor teaches; it is anticipated that this change would minimize the disruption experienced when moving to a new instructor, both in the students adapting to another instructor's style and in instructors assessing the students' levels.

The group is supportive of this proposal and offered suggestions on what to include in the program, such as more training on ice machines and fieldwork/ride-along/internship opportunities for students.

4. Items to discuss-

What do you think:

a. The idea of a short run set of evening classes in Marine HVACR?

Multiple former students are working on yachts and for refrigerated shipping businesses. The maritime business advisors suggested a need for an HVACR program specific to the marine industry. This would entail approximately 750 clock-hours and would run as an evening program lasting two years. It would run as controlled access and students would need to have some sort of background in HVACR with their EPA Universal or be a graduate of the 1350 clock-hour HVACR program. Demand for this skill set will be growing over the next three to five years because of the growth of Rybovich and Viking. This is something for the committee to mull over and talk with colleagues. Rick will send a survey to the advisory group members later on.

The advisory group was split in terms of the need for this program. Some have had requests from clients for this type of service, but not all. A discussion ensued regarding the knowledge-base needed for this type of work; can students from the traditional HVACR program go into this industry if they have a strong base knowledge, or do students need specific training for the nuances of the marine industry and international standards?

b. The idea of teaching short run evening classes in building automation and BACnet?

The program is considering running classes in non-brand specific energy management systems. This would allow students to perform hands-on setups of these systems.

The advisory group was overwhelmingly supportive of this idea. Many members get requests for this service often. A disconnect exists between technicians who don't know how to program a system but know enough to butcher it and IT technicians who don't know the inside of an air conditioning works.

Note: Any of the above ideas would be potentially implemented without disruption to any of the existing apprenticeship classes currently scheduled.

c. What else should we be doing?

The committee gave no additional suggestions.

Rick thanked the members for their time and announced the next meeting would be held in October.

Attendance:

Arturo Alba, Arco Supply

Pete Goodman, HVACR Instructor

Kent Hartwig, Program Director

Pete Hockenbury, Excel Refrigeration

Adam Johnson, Keystone Critical Systems

David Knopp, Associate Dean of Business and Computer Science

Donald Laurent, HVACR Instructor

Kelly McCann, CMI Services

Patrick Rainey, Royal Palm Beach Academy

Rick Reeder, Associate Dean of Trade & Industry

Steve Sparks, TWC Services

Erin Sullivan, Workforce Assessment Advisor

Submitted by:

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