

Horticulture Advisory Council Minutes
Oct 9 2014

Present:

Carol Cloud Bailey, Ballen Isles Landscape Manager
Whitt Lacey, Valley Crest Landscaping
Tim McColgan, Valley Crest Landscaping
Sueann Nelson, Austin Outdoors
Tim Osborne, Ibis Golf
Tim Whelan, Art by Nature Garden Center
George Rogers, PBSC
Robert Van Der Velde, PBSC

The meeting began with George making a “state of the program” presentation with data on enrollments, class schedule, activities, and personnel.

This turned into a discussion of the college’s Occupational Projection Data, which all committee members agreed unanimously are erroneously ominous.

The group discussed the program’s enrollment survey demographic data, attached below.

The action portion of the discussion centered on internships, as follows:

Activities/Initiatives agreed upon:

1. Develop a mandatory Spring Term formal structured internship, with a few details to figure out. This internship will be the top priority of the Spring Term.
2. Reconfigure the Fall Term (only minor adjustment needed) so that students with a full load can take all of the absolute-core Horticulture classes (Plant ID, Irrigation, Pest Management, and one more to be selected) and possibly to be able to earn our first-level certificate.
3. Launch an annual mandatory late summer (including this coming year) workshop (or short course, or substantial event of some sort) to provide thorough, rich awareness of the real world of careers in the Green Industry, perhaps coupling this somehow with a aggressively publicized recruitment effort/event. Lots of detail to work out.
4. Gather quantified data on the regional green industry. I think we all agreed (let me know if I'm wrong), the data in the Occupational Projects report is severely wrong, perhaps exponentially, despite being an important instrument in college decision-making.

A big outcome of the meeting last week was to beef up and formalize our internship program. We've always had internships, but all present, including me, see them as maybe too informal as they exist relative to present circumstances--which have changed, including a

substantial downward shift in the ages of our students, and a shift in their needs. The formalization is driven largely by Tim McColgan, but all interested parties including my boss are on board.

The main points are to:

1. Make the internship "the" core of the 2nd semester
2. To place all interns outside, no longer able to work at the college nursery or grounds unless disability, age (we have some very senior students at time), or inability to drive forces in-house or indoors.
3. To stop giving exemption on internships to students working in the Green Industry, or with relevant landscaping experience.
4. To adjust the schedule so that first-term students can have as many pre-internship classes as possible.
5. To use internships as a recruiting (and filtering) device

Thank you all again---you will receive follow-up soon, George

Horticulture (including Botany) Student Demographic Survey (conducted Spring Term 2013)

Summary from 50 responses:

Employment

22 employed but not in Horticulture

12 employed in Horticulture

10 working toward Horticulture Job

6 working toward jobs not in Horticulture

Future Job Interests (adds to > 50 due to multiple responses)

Any decent Horticulture job (or any decent job at all): 18

Nursery or farm: 15 (!?)

Landscaping, self-employment, including pest control: 9 + 5 = 14

Education: 9 (!?)

Job requiring plant/horticulture knowledge but not straight Horticulture: 9

Arboriculture: 9 (our Arboriculture class had just run)

Landscape Design: 7

Property Management: 7

Institutional or Municipal Landscape Maintenance: 7

Retail: 6

Golf or spray tech: 4

Education Objective

AS Degree in Horticulture: 22

Certificate(s) in Horticulture: 14

Advanced degree: 17 (but only 8 listed AA degree as goal)

Other: 8

Age

Under 20: 2

20-30: 24

30-40: 8

40-60: 7

Over 60: 1 (this is a big change)

Willing to relocate?

Yes: 17

Maybe: 13

Scheduling preferences:

More night classes: 17 (we have classes every weeknight)

More day: 7

Saturday: 8

More summer: 14

More on-line: 10 (vs. 5 votes for fewer on-line) (note: all on-line classes are taught also in the classroom different terms)

Other:

Plenty of interest in Internships

Strong interest in hands-on

Very little interest in outside certificates (2)

Note. Scattered and unrealistic job goals. Mandatory job-orientation workshop (with dinner, picnic, etc.) or class session or all students

Discuss real job data

Discuss realistic and unrealistic expectations

Discuss compensation

Discuss relocation

Develop a much stronger “track” from entry to specific job

Note. We cancel small classes. Solutions:

Live with it?

Narrow our menu? (= narrow our enrollments)

Make the program more sharply defined and lockstep? (= diminished enrollments)

Adjust the menu? (we do that constantly)

Broaden our menu? (traditional criticism is that it is too broad)

Broaden our demographics (always has been “too” broad)