

**SRJC Ag & Natural Resources Department**

**Advisory Committee Meeting**

**Wednesday, May 7th, 2025, 9am-11:00am**

**In person at Shone Farm. Pavilion rm 2**

**Minutes**

**1. Welcome:**

**In Attendance:**

**Committee Members Present:** Andrew Smith, Kerry McGrath. Stephanie Larson

**Proxy:** Lauren Liotta for Kelly Schmieg,

**Absent:** Amber Bowen, Jake Dunn, Dayna Ghirardelli, Bill Traverso, Brandon Jewell, Melanie Parker, Brooke Pippi, Amelia Shapiro, Evan Wiig

**Staff:** Joel Grogan, Johnny Campbell, Victor Tam, and Janet Stribling, Makenzi Galindo, Joanna Chu

**Guest:** Donna Murphy, Lauren Cartwright

**2. Approval of Minutes from Nov 2024**

**3. Department Update**

**a. Enrollment numbers across the department**

i. The discussion then shifted to department updates, with a focus on enrollment numbers. The district's enrollment was reported to be flat, but there was a significant increase in non-credit enrollment. The district aims to hit a target of 17,500 full-time equivalent students by the end of the 27-28 academic year to sustain their budget. However, they are currently at 15,000 and are dipping into their reserves to maintain operations. The district is also trying to make ongoing cuts, with a focus on non-instructional staff. The conversation ended with a question about the cuts that have been made and a mention of discussing the financial situation of the farm in a future call.

ii. Discussed the challenges faced by the non-instructional areas of the institution, including budget cuts and the decline in enrollment. Highlighted the importance of infrastructure in supporting students and faculty, and the need to grow enrollment despite declining pipelines. also mentioned the challenges of tracking student data, particularly for transfer students, and the need for better reporting systems. She discussed the new associate degrees for Transfer (ADTs) and the challenges of getting them approved by the state. The discussion also

touched on the need for more discipline-specific transfer degrees and the challenges of aligning certificates with these degrees.

b. Plant sale

- i. discussed the success of the plant sale, which generated \$20,000 in sales, with \$1,500 from farm products and the rest from plants. The horticulture program sold around \$9,000. They plan to have a fall plant sale, focusing on perennials, landscape, and natives.

c. Financial situation of Farm and College (Victor)

- i. Victor discussed the financial situation of the college of the farm, which is facing a difficult time due to the wine industry's downturn. The winery has decided to skip the 2025 vintage to assess the economics of running a commercial winery. The wine studies program is still moving forward, and changes are being made to certificates. The district has a 35-step action plan to address various issues, including student support, inclusive culture, and finances. Monthly in-person counseling has started, and a financial aid fair was held in February. The district is also working on providing more fresh food to students and addressing inclusive concerns. Curricular changes are being made, including the elimination of two wine study certificates and the revitalization of the animal science program.

d. Dual enrollment/CCAP

- i. Discussed the challenges and benefits of integrating college courses into high school curricula. Highlighted the need for qualified teachers and the importance of providing equitable access to these courses. The discussion also touched on the limitations of the current system, with suggesting the need for more resources and flexibility in scheduling. The committee also considered the role of the high school in integrating these courses and the potential for proactive scheduling.

e. Summer and Fall Schedule

- i. discussed the need to integrate animal production classes with other subjects, such as sustainability and equine science. It was suggested that the college could offer classes in animal science, such as sheep or goat production, and potentially partner with local producers. also proposed the idea of offering a

degree in animal science that could be completed in a shorter time frame, allowing students to transfer to a four-year institution more easily. The team agreed to consider these ideas and explore potential partnerships with local producers

f. Staffing

- i. We highlighted the staffing challenges, noting that several full-time faculty positions have been vacated in the last year, leaving the programs with only half of their original staff.

g. Update on District Response plan (Victor)

- i. Discussed the need for a response plan to address individual complaints, such as sexual harassment and gender discrimination. Emphasized the importance of mandatory sexual harassment training for employees. It also raised concerns about the financial situation and the district's decision to separate farm revenue from instruction, which she believes contradicts the goal of using the farm as a living laboratory. It is suggested that the board of trustees should be informed of these issues to ensure the farm facilities are utilized effectively
- ii. Victor continues working on addressing the 35-step action plan, including transportation solutions for students.

4. Discussion

a. Committee discussion on new Plant Science degree/certificate (combine HORT/AGRI/SUSAG) do this offline

- i. If in support, a vote should be held
- ii. Discussed the potential for combining horticulture, agriculture, and sustainable agriculture into a single degree or certificate, aiming to reduce the number of separate disciplines for students. It was proposed a general agriculture degree or certificate, which would be a low-stakes option allowing students to take a variety of classes. The goal is to provide a path for students to complete degrees or certificates fully online. also mentioned the resignation of Amy, which was related to the district of bond plan and concerns about HR effectiveness.

b. Committee discussion on new General Ag degree/certificate

- i. If in support, a vote should be held

c. Future direction of Animal Science Program

- i. discussed the need to integrate animal production classes with other subjects, such as sustainability and equine science. Suggested that the college could offer classes in animal science, such as sheep or goat production, and potentially partner with local producers. Also proposed the idea of offering a degree in animal science that could be completed in a shorter time frame, allowing students to transfer to a four-year institution more easily. The team agreed to consider these ideas and explore potential partnerships with local producers
    - ii. Victor to gather input from industry representatives on the relevance of dairy science classes for the next generation in Sonoma County. Victor to start a group of animal science discipline people, industry representatives, and faculty to discuss the future of the animal science program.
    - iii. Joel to explore the possibility of bringing in temporary livestock (e.g., sheep) for specific classes.
  - d. Faculty requests – which positions should we request and what information should
  - e. guide our decision?
5. Adjourn: 11:05am