

MINUTES (Draft)
Carpentry Program Industry Advisory Committee Meeting

Monday, April 28, 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM
SRJC Petaluma Campus
680 Sonoma Mtn. Parkway
Construction Training Center Carpentry Lab, Building 1400

- Members in attendance: Eileen Russell, Leslie Biagini, Dan McCulloch, Larry Richmond, Jr., Keith Christopherson, Kevin Merritt
- Members attending as proxy: Tom Starke (proxy for William Goosief)
- Members absent: Angel Grassi, Nicolette Weinzev, Chas Fetherolf
- Faculty, staff, and administrators in attendance: Frank DeNiro, Benjamin Goldstein, Larry Arrington, Melia Pavloff
- Invited guests in attendance: Jessica Hewitt

Was there a quorum ___**X**___ **Yes**___No (if no quorum, no official business shall be performed)

Call to Order: Benjamin Goldstein called the meeting to order at 10:38 AM.

Welcome/Introductions: Each advisory committee member, SRJC faculty & staff member, and invited guest briefly introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes of Last Meeting: Motion by Larry Richmond, Jr.; Second by Dan McCulloch; MSA (unanimous)

Public Comments: None

Elect Committee Chair

1. Nomination for Eileen Russell, Mendocino Companies: Motion by Dan McCulloch.; Second by Tom Starke; MSA (unanimous)

Status of Carpentry Program:

1. Benjamin Goldstein shared preliminary results and impressions of the April 26th Building Futures Fundraising Event which benefitted CTC programs:
 - a. 150+ people attended and \$100,000+ in donations were raised, including large donations from NorCal Carpenters Union, Exchange Bank, and Clover Sonoma. Net proceeds still being tallied up at time of the meeting. Funds will help cover consumable expenses.



2. Benjamin Goldstein provided an update on the status of the Carpentry Program's progress, with Spring semester ending May 18th:
 - a. 88 students in the program currently (retained 85% of students from August program start); started with 3 sections of the tools and safety class (Adult Ed 739) in August; continued this semester with 3 sections of framing (Adult Ed 747A) and 2 new sections of Adult Ed 739;
 - b. 70% of Carpentry students are Latinx, and the dedicated Spanish-language section that meets on Saturdays was the quickest to fill. The limiting factor is finding bilingual instructors who meet the State of California minimum qualifications to teach.
 - i. We are hoping for a possible approval and start date in Fall for a dedicated Classified Staff position to anchor the Carpentry Program (see motion below)
 - ii. Tom Starke raised the question of volunteering his time in classes as a possibility to meet some of this need, and this is possible with a signed volunteer agreement
3. **Approval to request a dedicated Classified Staff position to help anchor the Carpentry Program:** Motion by Eileen Russell; Second by Keith Christopherson; MSA (unanimous)
4. Benjamin Goldstein toured the group through the framing lab, containing two different, full-sized houses built by program students; in the third semester, they will install ceilings, roofs, and stairs.
5. Benjamin Goldstein explained the equipment operator training is being built out within the Carpentry Program, which will drive enrollment. A new course and potentially a new certificate in construction equipment operations is being developed. The group discussed equipment operations and toured the yard, where Benjamin shared that a large Bobcat piece of equipment was purchased with Strong Workforce Program grant funds. Additional instructors will be needed for teaching skills with this equipment, also including a telehandler, mini-excavator, and scissor lift.
6. Larry Richmond, Jr., a construction industry safety trainer, mentioned the importance of training on an articulating boom lift and aerial lift, both commonly used in residential construction.
7. Keith Christopherson shared that the students who possess the skills being taught in this program are the recession-proof employees of tomorrow. "The more they can do, the more their value in the marketplace." The group concurred how important diversity of experience and training is across the industry and how having these additional skills commands higher wages.
8. Benjamin Goldstein toured the group briefly through the rest of CTC, where instructor Larry Arrington was working on tool safety skills with a visiting high school class.

Status of Carpentry Industry:

1. Benjamin Goldstein shared the prompt with the Advisory Committee: What trends and industry partnership are we seeing? Are we building, and how are we building?
 - a. Advisory Committee Discussion:
 - i. Benjamin Goldstein shared that, in partnership with SRJC, 50 high school students have been accepted as part of a cohort with the North Coast Builders Exchange
 - ii. Keith Christopherson: framing crews are now in-house (which they used to sub out, but have brought within to contain soaring costs). Planning on recruiting framers for rebuilds in Pasadena area following L.A. fires. Though there is a high volume of work, it's only 0.04% of the housing stock that was lost in L.A., compared to 5% of Sonoma County housing stock lost during the Tubbs Fire.
 - iii. Kevin Merritt: one of our manufacturers, Huber Engineered Wood, is interested in bringing their traveling trade show to the SRJC Carpentry Program at CTC. "Win win win" from a marketing perspective, good opportunity to promote the program more widely and drive enrollment; job fairs on the horizon as well, and they can put on an event for 150-200 people for the promotional opportunity with industry folks.

- iv. Tom Starke: market is slower in his area with union carpenters looking for work; DSA specialists are needing to shift into more residential work to stay competitive and pipeline needs to be fed. Market has been slow in Northern California; commercial sector hasn't completely recovered from COVID-era with some lingering vacancies.
- v. Keith Christopherson: reluctant to hire too quickly, so supplementing with some subcontracting; residential is not booming either with higher interest rates, tariff uncertainty, stock market volatility.
- vi. Leslie Biagini: just added an Indigenous cohort to Next Gen program; Pivot Charter School cohort, with two more cohorts by September; program requires OSHA 10 and integrates VR tools into classroom with leadership module and a broad introduction to carpentry, HVAC, plumbing, tools, and a full set of tools upon completion of the program; graduates are going into internship or employment training/placement opportunities depending upon age; just hired a full-time Career Navigator
- vii. Jessica Hewitt: Lumber industry started out strong early in the year but has slowed in the past month; ADUs are keeping industry busy, often stick-built; next two months are uncertain due to tariff uncertainty;
- viii. Eileen Russell: community engagement is key to keep the lumber industry in business.

Industry and Community and Partnerships

- 1. Keith Christopherson: "This Carpentry Program is one of the best-kept secrets in the North Bay, and we need to drive promotion and exposure."
 - a. Group discussed: holding an open house, newsletters, social media placements, Builders Exchange Magazine ads, email distribution list, job fair to boost enrollments, guerilla marketing at industry hotspots, the possible Huber event, outreach to local Latino student demographic via flyers to Corazon Healdsburg, La Luz, and similar organizations to drive enrollment in this FREE program for Fall 2025 and beyond. Group agreed that marketing efforts to promote this program need to be constant and consistent.

Equipment Operator Training Program

- 1. Benjamin Goldstein shared the prompt with the Advisory Committee: Are there additional important pieces of equipment for carpentry and construction students to be trained on?
 - a. Advisory Committee Discussion: Larry Richmond mentioned an articulating boom lift as a need; scissor lifts and forklifts/telehandlers are in daily use and very important; pickup trucks are important and used for tools, equipment, and hauling; smaller residential contractors building ten houses or more per year will have their own articulating boom lifts, telehandlers, and Bobcats.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:07 PM