

Agenda
Residential Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration (HVACR) Career Education Industry Advisory Committee

Tuesday, October 28th, 2025 3:30 PM – 5:00
PM SRJC Petaluma Campus 680 Sonoma
Mtn. Parkway
Construction Training Center, Building 1400, Room 122 (HVAC Lab)

- Members in attendance: Kimberly Beltran, Joe Henry, John Petro, Amanda Luchetti
- Members attending as proxy: None
- Members absent: Michael Smith
- Faculty, staff, & admin in attendance: Benjamin Goldstein, Gillian Estes
- Invited Guests in Attendance: Kevin Walter, Amy Merkel

Was there a quorum? Yes No (if no quorum, no official business shall be performed)

Meeting Called to Order: Kimberly Beltran, 3:34 pm

Welcome & Intro: Each advisory committee member, SRJC admin, faculty, & staff, and invited guest members briefly introduced themselves.

Public Comments: None

Approval of Minutes of Last Meeting: 4:55pm, approval prior minutes from Monday, May 2nd - motion: John Petro, Joe Henry seconded, all in favor - aye

HVACR Program and Construction Training Center Status Update:

Report from Benjamin Goldstein

- *HVAC 101*
 - Launched: August (fully online via *Interplay Immersive Learning* – videos, VR, quizzes).
 - Enrollment: 120 students (3 sections); now 85–90 after normal attrition.
 - Instructors: Gabe & Kevin.
 - Future Offerings: 2–3 sections planned for next cohort.
 - In-person option limited (facility availability, evening noise, student schedules).
- *HVAC 102 (Spring 2026)*
 - Based on student survey (online, in-person, hybrid preferences).
 - Plan: 1 online (Gabe), 1 hybrid (Kevin).
- *Staffing*
 - New Instructor: Rich Harlin (teaches for Local 38, San Jose, SF CCs).
 - Will teach a new online HVAC 101 section in spring.
 - Plan to add more instructors as enrollment grows.
- *Program Development*
 - Third semester planned.
 - Goal: Prepare students as strong apprentice candidates.
 - Long-term aim: Allow completion of first part of apprenticeship through SRJC.
 - CSLB credit: Ideally, completion may count for 1 year toward required 4 years for journeyman license (with 3 years' work experience).
- *Advisory Committee Discussion Points*

- Request demographic summary (age, gender, ethnicity) across HVAC 101 sections.
- Concern: Apprenticeship backlog — plan to guide students toward residential/non-union work while maintaining partnership with Local 38 to ease transition into apprenticeships.
- Math for Trades:
 - Proposed *noncredit* “Trig for Trades” / “Math for Trades” course
 - Could serve students who don’t pass apprenticeship entrance exams.
 - Current “Math for Business” not popular.

Status of Residential HVACR Industry:

- *Current Market Trends:*
 - HVAC hiring is in a slowdown (“valley”) but expected to rebound by 2027.
 - Tariffs, interest rates, and weather (cool summer) affecting demand; colder winter may increase HVAC work.
 - Local business down, but statewide work growing (e.g., LA fires, smoke remediation). Students could travel to follow demand? Reduced local underbidding.
- *Program Sustainability:*
 - Must plan for long-term stability despite economic cycles:
 - Strong economy → lower enrollment
 - Weak economy → higher enrollment
 - Population decline also impacting enrollment.
 - 40% of the current workforce retiring in 5–10 years; replacements will require 2–3 new workers per retiree due to experience gap.
 - Program should emphasize both knowledge and hands-on skills as technology and building codes evolve.
- *Emerging Technologies & Curriculum Needs:*
 - Refrigerants: Many being phased out; newer options are more efficient but costlier and harder to source. Need to incorporate training on new refrigerant systems.
 - Geothermal Systems: Major growth area — heavy specialized labor at installation, then shifts to smaller, engineering-level maintenance workforce. Approx. 10-year development timeline.
 - Water-Based HVAC Systems (Mitsubishi): Closed-loop systems beginning rollout; understanding these and refrigerant transitions will be critical in the next five years.

Program Promotion and Student Outreach:

- *Enrollment Management:*
 - Strong interest; previously had a waitlist but admitted all—numbers balanced by census due to normal attrition.
 - Ongoing issue with “ghost students” (enrolled online for financial aid). Instructors use guided discussions to confirm active participants. Kevin to send data to Gillian and Benjamin for review.
- *Outreach & Partnerships:*
 - Continue promoting the program (“keep spreading the word”).
 - Active connections with Windsor Build Academy, Santa Rosa High, and Analy High (instructor also enrolled in carpentry program).
 - Growing high school CTE participation; dual enrollment available free to HS students.
 - Plan to follow up with high schools when HVAC reopens for spring enrollment.
- *Scheduling & Curriculum:*
 - Consider staggered evening start times (e.g., 4:30 p.m.) and possibly reducing hours/units for HVAC 101 to improve flexibility.
- *Marketing & Communication:*
 - Collect employment and wage data to include in outreach materials.
 - Share flyer, social media, and 2-minute promo video for recruitment.
 - Distribute materials when the schedule posts online, with committee members and schools helping to share.

SRJC HVACR Equipment and Training Aides:

- *Distribution:*
 - Tool and equipment list provided to committee; quantities TBD based on class needs, labs, and enrollment.
- *Duct Testing/Installation:*
 - Students should learn proper duct installation, including duct leakage testing.
 - Could acquire duct tester equipment or use virtual simulation.
- Potential collaboration with carpentry course for simulated rough-in practice.
- *Committee Review:*
 - Members to review list to identify critical missing tools or preferred brands.
- *Brand Recommendations & Purchases:*
 - Fluke: multimeters, expensive – consider mid-range alternatives.
 - FLIR: thermal cameras.
 - Fieldpiece: common, intuitive, good pricing for practical use.
 - Testo: quality but imported (Germany).
 - Flowhead: duct blaster equipment.
 - Kits: recovery kit, manifold gauges, refrigerant kit (others TBD).
 - Milwaukee: cordless tools.
- *Funding:* Must spend down grant on necessary tools.

Looking Ahead: Timeframe for spring - January; send out Doodle poll after holidays, work with Local 38

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 4:56 PM