

**Santa Rosa Welding Technology**  
Advisory Committee Minutes  
Spring Semester  
April 23, 2025, 5:00 -6:30pm  
Meeting Minutes

- **Call Meeting to Order-**
- Members Present
  - Nate Williams, Dave Cass, Zane Cullen, and Johnny Fruit (Proxy for Luis Lara)
  - Danny Aschwanden, Tom Gutsch and Rachel Smith
  - Absent- Luis Lara, Joel Lopes, Dave Wiggins

Was there an Advisory Quorum- YES

- **Welcome & Introductions**
- **Previous meeting minutes approved.**

**Welding Program Updates:**

Danny, the Welding Program Coordinator, discussed the current state of the welding program. He mentioned that they are offering 7 introductory courses, 1 stick, 1 flux, core, dual shield, self shield, split class, 2 thermal cutting, and 2 fabrication classes. They plan to split the beginning and advanced fabrication classes next semester. He also mentioned that they are over-enrolled, with a 105% enrollment rate. They are also looking to hire another part-time instructor to fill the gap left by Chris Diaz's retirement. Nathan was encouraged to provide feedback or suggestions for new courses to be added to the program.

Danny discussed the significant purchases made for the program over the last 12 to 14 months, highlighting the role of Rachel and the SWP Grants in expanding and growing the program. He mentioned the acquisition of scrap metal hopper bins, strong hand layout tables, a cutting saw, fabrication tools, a hypertherm 105 Sync with a machine torch attachment, a Kowiki plasma torch, three new Dynasty Tig welders, and a burking parts tumbler. These purchases have allowed for the expansion of offerings, particularly in the Tig welding class, and have provided students with exposure to various fabrication tools and techniques.

Danny discussed the importance of preparing students for the workforce, highlighting gaps in their skill sets and the need for training in fundamental skills. Nathan shared his experience with new employees struggling with basic tasks, emphasizing the need for blueprint reading skills. Dave emphasized the significance of blueprint reading and welding symbols in determining job pay. The team agreed on the need to improve students' skills and knowledge, with Danny suggesting the integration of new equipment and machinery into the program.

Danny discussed the recent application for a \$50,000 grant to purchase equipment for the welding and fabrication classes. The proposed equipment includes a handheld laser welder, a laser booth, a drill press, portable fixture tables, hand tools, a larger sheet metal break, and electrical improvements. The grant also includes funding for registration and travel to attend the Fabtech conference. He also mentioned the possibility of taking over part of the Diesel lab to accommodate the fabrication classes. Nathan expressed interest in the laser welding technology, noting its growing popularity and effectiveness in stainless steel welding.

Danny discussed the success of the AWS D1.1 certification program in the welding class, with half of the students passing the visual inspection and bend test. He mentioned that some students have already secured interviews and jobs due to this certification. He also mentioned the integration of the program into the current semester and the possibility of incorporating certifications for other materials like aluminum or stainless in the future. Nathan shared that their company uses AWS 1.3-89 for light gauge metal and conducts all certifications in-house. Danny expressed interest in having a third party administer the test for added pressure and to provide different feedback.

### **Industry Update:**

Dave and Zane discussed the challenges of finding young, qualified workers in their industries, particularly in metalworking and fabrication. They noted that many manufacturers have lower operating costs in other states, making it difficult to compete. Both emphasized the importance of focusing on quality and appearance in their products. Nathan added that the stainless steel industry is also experiencing slow times, but pricing is relatively stable. The group agreed that the shrinking number of young people entering the trades is a significant issue for their industries.

### **New Business:**

Welding would like to scheduling two advisory meetings for the next school year, suggesting October or November for the first one. The group discusses preferred days and times. A Survey Monkey will be sent out to determine the best days/times for the next advisory meetings.

Nathan recommends that Danny and Tom attend the Fab Tech or SEMA trade shows.

Danny and Tom would like to plan industry tours of the Welding shop during the summer and plan to visit Moose Boats after the semester ends.

### **Adjourn**