

Clean Energy Technology & Entrepreneurship
Advisory Committee Meeting
Shoreline Community College
Zoom Session
5/21/2021

In Attendance:

Renee Gastinaeu, Louise Petruzzella, Guy Hamilton, Chris Spurlock, Reeves Clippard, Ryan Bradt, Brian Young, Lindsey Virdeh, Sharon Vik, Alisha Turpin, Steph Gowing, Tamás Bencsik, Kelly Griffin (note taker)

Louise greeted the committee and handed the meeting over to Renee. She welcomed everybody to the third virtual meeting of the committee. Minutes for the 2/2021 meeting were approved. The 11/2020 minutes were approved with minor edits.

Louise announced the need for instructors to teach two classes:

NRG 162 (Spring, 2022) Large Building Assessment: Building Technology
NRG 163 (Fall quarter, 2021) Large Building Energy: Methods and Measurements

The immediate need is for NRG 163 this fall quarter which starts Wednesday, September 29, runs 10 weeks, and the teaching material is ready to go. Louise can provide a syllabus.

Louise said there's been fluctuation in enrollment: Up last fall, really dropped winter, ticked up in spring and hoping for an uptick in the fall. She asked Guy to talk about general trends and he said campus-wide enrollment is down 10% from last year and that was down 10% from the previous year. It is also challenging to get workforce students in programs due to extension of benefits. He doesn't see the decrease as indicative of the program – covid is just a real challenge right now. Flat enrollment is projected for next year and then an increase.

Louise mentioned that Shoreline is entering a partnership with Solar Energy International (Colorado), licensing the curriculum for two classes, for three years: Intro to Solar Design and Advanced Solar Design. Alisha is excited about teaching the curriculum and said having the textbook will benefit the students. SEI is recognized throughout industry and Reeves gave positive feedback. Guy mentioned the idea of having Reeves' comments about SEI (how this training is related to industry) placed on the Shoreline website.

Guy Hamilton (on behalf of Lauren Hadley) introduced the discussion around the college-wide program outcomes review process for our national accrediting body. Shoreline graduates have had coursework to fulfill general education requirements in communications, multicultural understanding, and quantitative symbolic reasoning (math). The discussion was to help determine ways to ensure that general education is being integrated into the program outcomes. Questions to consider:

1. What do you want students to know and be able to do outside of the technical skills they learn in the program?
2. Can you provide specific examples or scenarios in which employees live up to expectations related to that outcome and when they do not?

Soft skills needed to be successful:

- Are they listening to client and responding to the questions the customer is asking?
- Here's the instructions, are you actually following them?
- Here's the answer for the customer, and why.
- Editing skills, not just writing skills.
- Verbal communications: Hearing customer, pausing, and similar to Renee's example, asking, "if I can summarize, this is what I heard, is that correct?" And giving customer opportunity to respond.
- Technical skills and soft skills and how to connect both.
- Being able to contextualize the work they are doing.
- Balance of technical and process/communicate information.
- Have technical skills in a specific area but also ability to think and connect with sustainability. Wider issues of sustainability and why important. Common language has been a challenge.
- Understanding how solar fits into the bigger picture and where to go to find answers.
- When Louise was an instructor, her classes included team projects, communicating, and collaborating with one another.
- Sharon said her students struggle with basic physics. They get better with soft skills over the course. She's found soft skills are their "easy out" (instead of the technical skills that are hard).
- Figure out ways to do both the technical and integrate the soft skill of explaining the technical. An example from biotechnology is where students need to talk about the science – students get up in front of class and explain their experiments and what happened.
- Technical writing class with a creative writing component to tailor to different audiences.
- Lindsey had students in her Sketch Up class record their final presentation - it was a way for them to improve their soft skills in their presentation and explain some things.

Ideas shared: Give students feedback on the soft skills portion of presentations; pitching/articulating a favorite project; present to industry; sign up days related to apprenticeships; elements of Louise's previous capstone class; graded poster session within small teams and industry come through and listen to presentations; articulate to various audiences to help them get a portfolio to help them get a job; make sure students know who their audience is: Potential employer? Another technical expert? Customer? Synthesis within context of a larger project; bring back seminar class with mock interviews; partnerships with other programs to bring students together.

Internships

Renee and Louise recently talked about what internships look like today versus what they were when some of us did internships. Renee said after students first year of learning, it would be wonderful to help get them into internships to both reinforce what they are learning in the classroom, and also make professional connections to get them hired once their coursework is completed.

Questions asked: How does your organization utilize interns? What are the roles? Formal or informal program? How often do you utilize interns? How are they getting hired?

- Usually posted and successful: 1-2 hires a year.
- Informal, based on needs. It would be nice if more formalized to get students into those opportunities.
- Have had research interns that turned into employment.

Challenges mentioned:

- Lack of resources to guide someone so that it's useful to an intern.
- How to make it so internship is not "busy work" but valuable exposure to the industry.
- Paid vs. unpaid.

After some general discussion, Guy talked about the differences between traditional internship and job shadow and asked if there is something in the middle. Work experience is what our students need. It might be a bigger discussion for next year to think about re-envisioning of what an internship is and what are the different possibilities that would make it more accessible to your company?

Renee said those were good points and also mentioned how flexibility on times of the year could be considered (historically summer) and mentioned the term "returnships".

Gratitude was expressed for the great discussion and the next meeting will be in October 2021. (Location to be determined.)

Adjournment: 11:08 a.m.