



## MECHATRONICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE - MINUTES

Tuesday, November 29, 2022

Zoom

**Members Present:** Zeb Hallmark, Analog Devices (Committee Chair); Noah Wass, Elkhart Plastics, Doug Miller, John Pfiser, Nathan Pierce

**Members Absent:** Jerome Davis, Botecote

**Clark College:** Chris Lewis, Department Head; April Cannon – Advising; Alex Kison – Career Services; SueAnn McWatters, Program Specialist – Advisory Committees, Ken Luchini, Carl Douglas, John McKee – interim Dean, Monte Gantka

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### APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

Did not have quorum, will go out via email for approval.

### NEXT MEETING DATE

The committee will next meet on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 6pm.

### CHAIR NEEDED

Zeb stepped down, so please send nominations or volunteers via email to be elected at next meeting.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE OFFICE OF INSTRUCTION:

John McKee is the new interim Dean of WPTE/STEM.

### DEPARTMENT CHANGES/UPDATES/ASSISTANCE

Ken shared the following items:

- Reviewed agenda and presentation from previous meeting and noted how it has been updated for this meeting.

### MECHATRONICS 2.0

The program added several classes such as adding semiconductor training and a need for more electrical training to be able to better troubleshoot electronic systems. They removed some classes, such as piping, and combined others to reduce the amount of time needed to complete the program. Ken shared a graphic of how the program was taught, including the teach out, and the new courses and schedule alignments. The program has hired several adjuncts to support the students. Ken shared the 2022-2023 academic schedule of classes and the faculty ratio associate with this workload. The faculty need more time for course development, and having three full time faculty and three part time faculty

would best serve this need as well as teach evening courses. Ken shared instructor requirements for the positions.

### **INSTRUCTION UNDER COVID**

The program explored hybrid opportunities but was never moved forward due to a lack of time and access to equipment to make the videos. The instruction mode has changed to now include remote teaching that is online with synchronous zoom lectures and online and weekend labs with online circuit simulators. Hybrid was originally blocked due to protocols and space requirements in the lab. The national science foundation grant to support rural online access made some of this possible. The committee discussed the pros and cons. Such as accessibility of online coursework weighed against no hands on experiences. Loaner equipment, internet access, and other accessibility concerns were shared as well as students lack of preparedness when they do come to lab. Such things as loss to access to printers that utilize student fund accounts to access has made it more difficult for students to participate on campus if they don't bring change or come at a time when the library is not open.

### **INCREASE IN AREA JOB OPPORTUNITIES**

Ken shared some industry partners in the community, noting that where students took internships. He also shared the current job openings with their associated titles, noting there are currently over 2500 jobs in this area lone. Some of the current surge in job openings may be related to recent retirements across the industry as well as industry growth.

### **FUTURE OF MECHATRONICS PROGRAM**

Ken shared there is a high demand in the area and as Clark transition back to face to face, there will be more students seeking hands on training due to the job openings in the area. Due to the loss of experience on the job, there is a lack of on the job support that has historically existed, and often those basic skills that are learned during hands on moments are critical to being a functional employee.

### **INDUSTRY UPDATES**

The retirement waves that are happening are having an impact on the industry in many ways, such as the loss of experienced workforce on the job. Carl noted one partner lost over 400 years of experience from retirement in one year alone. This also means less mentoring is occurring as those with experience retire. Without evening building hours it can be difficult to serve evening populations.

Prepared by Sara Seyller