



Agricultural Sciences Advisory Committee Meeting

Minutes

Date: 05/12/21

Time: 1:00-2:30 PM

Location: Zoom

Attendees

Industry Members:

- Melissa Heise-Swidorski Equipment
- Sly Krautkramer-Swidorski Equipment
- Ed Sabey-ProVizion Partners
- Kristin Matthias-Service Motors
- Renee Schreiner-Athens Vet Service
- Jan-Athens Vet Service
- Marge Gibson-Raptor Education Group
- Josh Schmidt-AgSource Dairy

NTC Team:

- Greg Cisewski-Dean, School of Agricultural Science, Utilities & Transportation
- Bobbi Lee-Learning Coordinator, School of Agricultural Sciences, Utilities & Transportation
- Katie VanDerGeest, Development Manager, School of Agricultural Sciences, Utilities & Transportation
- Stephen Krueger, Faculty
- Don Radtke, Farm Manager
- Sarah Steger, Faculty
- John Tracey, Adjunct Faculty
- Charl VanDerNest, Faculty



Welcome & Introductions

Greg Cisewski, Dean of Agricultural Sciences, Utilities & Transportation at Northcentral Technical College (NTC), welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending. Everyone in attendance introduced themselves.

Update and highlights from last Meeting

- No updates or corrections from last meeting.

College-Wide Initiatives

- WIGS-Increase 2-year graduation rate for all WTCS approved program from 42% to 50% by 6/30/22. Increase full time enrollments from 2,799 to 3,058 by 6/30/22. Streamline collegewide processes to increase the safety, sophistication and efficiency of learning and work environments by 6/30/22.
- We will return to normal scheduling wherever possible for the 21-22 school year. Also launching NTC Connect. Students can take courses in a way that suits their needs: face-to-face, Zoom live or online, or a combination of the three.
- NTC has been meeting with local legislators and included the following requests: amend WI Statute 36.31 to expand equity, access and opportunity. \$11.8 million investment in WI Grants to address rising student debt. \$12 million targeted annual investment for WTCS colleges to provide education enabling 2,000 under and unemployed individuals each year to earn a short-term credential. \$50,000 annual increase to the WTCS firefighter training state operations to support new fire certification software. Matt asked about the issue with Statute 36.31, does it affect the partnerships with Madison or Michigan Tech? Greg explained it would actually help students-we can offer another level of Gen Ed classes-200 level classes taken here can save the students some money if they take a higher level class here at NTC.
- New programs coming Fall 2021: Veterinary Technician AD, Data Analytics AD, Law Enforcement in the 21st Century AD and Medical Assistant Apprenticeship
- NTC received a 2nd round of federal emergency relief grants for 2021 under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriation Act (CRRSAA). NTC received a grant of \$3,250,463 that must be used to defray college of student expenses associated with COVID-19.
- NTC has been chosen as the designated large scale vaccination site by the Marathon County Public Health Department. The clinic is located at the NTC Center for Business &

Industry and is operated by AMI Expeditionary Healthcare. Registration must be done through the DHS registry system online at Wisconsin COVID-19 Vaccine Registry.

- NTC District Board of Trustees approved the hiring of Dr. Jeannie Worden as the next president of NTC. She will begin her new role on Thursday, July 1, 2021, succeeding President Dr. Lori Weyers who will retire on June 20, 2021.
- NTC has many different programs to support our students including Timberwolf Table, Peaceful Solutions Counseling, Timberwolf Learning Commons, CRRSAA Grand direct student funding, “It’s In Our Jeans” employee giving campaign and student scholarships.

Industry Trends

- Jan-They have been unable to attract CVTs to the area and are happy that we are starting the Vet Tech program. It will be nice to have people that want to stay in the area. They are so busy with COVID, it is hard to keep up. Renee-equine vet clinics in the area have shut down from Stevens Point. Local dairy clinics have been cutting back on number of veterinarians. Need CVTs to jump in with more exams of the small animals and help with equine.
- Sly-The demand for technology has sky rocketed. Precision tech, the need for technicians with an expertise in the hydraulics and tech world. They cannot keep up with the demand. They have a precision farm department and they cannot keep up. Melissa-Tech and service driven positions—critical thinking needed. Younger employees are quicker to give up if they don’t have an immediate solution. Communication skills are still a challenge. Being able to write a story about what you did with equipment. Recruiting is a challenge in general-technicians are the hardest. Even entry level is becoming difficult to find applicants. There are not enough students in trade schools. How do you fix that?
- Josh-There is a lot of consolidation and partnerships in dairy tech labs due to cost. Agrees with Sly-it hard to find people that can think for themselves. Being willing to ask questions, to ask for help and self-starters. Hard to find people that want to work outside the 9-5. Just hired a student from NTC about 6 weeks ago.
- Kristin-On the equipment dealer side, they have had a strong spring, very busy working with farmers out in the field. Having challenges with the younger work force as well. Pace of work, being able to make decisions, making deadlines. Have had a robust group of retirements and lost a lot of experience. Struggling with the work/life balance young



people would like to see, lack of volume of talent, lack of talent. Would love to see enrollments moving in the higher direction.

- Ed-The biggest struggle is seasonal help with agronomy for co-op. Work is part time, so you can still go to school or have a different part time job as well. Average age for seasonal help is mid to upper 60s. These positions will probably to go unmanned equipment.

Greg was recently at a meeting and an economist talked about how Wisconsin population is continuing to grow but our workforce is continuing to shrink. Businesses need to keep moving toward technology to fill the gaps. Ag is a place where technology can grow. Ag education might need to start in middle school, it seems that by the time they are in high school they are already set in their career.

Committee questioned hands on education outreach. Do we go to the younger students, mobile units or anything? Yes, we have done a lot of that in the past. Machine tool and diesel have trailers. We also have dual credit classes in high schools. NTC gives the high school faculty one of our classes to teach. Then students have one credit to come to NTC and are able to try out one of our classes to 'plant the seed' in the minds of the students. Simulators-do we have? Yes, we have a cow simulator to do bovine reproduction. We had 100 students from Marathon in the last few days come out to the farm for the "farm experience" so they can see our farm and our programs and hopefully return in the future. We are partnering with high school guidance counselors as well.

The committee asked when are things going back to normal. We are planning this fall to be fully back to regular schedule. High school and middle school classes have started to come back to the farm for programs and we have numerous summer camps scheduled for this summer.

Workforce Development & Training

- Workforce development has short term credentials available. NTC can package courses together to fit the needs of your company. Eliminating the barrier of tuition with the CRRSAA funds.
- NTC Connect-regional Technology centers. In person, livestream, and/or on-demand library. Upgrading campuses in the region with new technology-pandemic has pointed out that technology is hard to access in rural areas. Will be setting up pods where people who need wi-fi can work at NTC regional campuses.
- Leadership development pathway. Classes to put together a technical diploma.



- Greg mentioned the meat processing training through DATCAT funding. Working on putting together a new program or certificate.

Instructional Area/Program

- Student Club-Professional Agriculture Students (PAS), similar to FFA-Charl-the students did PAS this year virtually and did pretty well. Had 22 students compete in different events in state competition. NTC had 16 students move on from state to nationals. We did really well with our Dairy teams and NTC swept the Dairy competition. Team 1 scored 1st place as a team and individual 1st, 2nd and 3rd place. Team 2 placed 4th and one of the students on that team placed 5th individually. Dairy employment interview we received 2nd and 3rd. Normally over 600 students compete. Hope to continue to grow our PAS club, when students participate in organization in school they are more involved in their program. Looking to add the Vet Tech program into this as well, and it is a requirement of the AVMA the students be in a student organization.
- Alex Brzezinski-WTCS/NTC district ambassador and in the Agri-Business program. He is currently running his own business while he is going to college. He builds chicken coops, called AI's Custom Chicken Coops. Outstanding ambassador.
- Enrollment-Crop Science-Enrollment has not been good and it is tough to find students. Finding unless we can get the high school Ag teachers excited about soil science, we can't get the kids, but it has been hard to get out to the high schools. There is a lack of understanding about what someone in the industry does and lack of push in that direction. Do we change the name of the program to something different do draw more students in? Charl-Agri-Business and Dairy Science-had some really good students this year that were extremely into agriculture. Currently have enrollment for fall of 18 in Dairy and 8 for Agri-Business. Hopefully we can get some students to double major and up the enrollment on the Agri-Business side. Vet Tech-Sarah-Enrollment in spring was a smaller number for Vet Science and this will be the last Vet Science cohort. For fall we will have 24 for the new Vet Tech program. They will need to go through the HESI test which is a skill test with math, reading, biology and A&P. Students must petition to the program. Adding steps due to certification-we have to have 50% of our students pass the Vet Tech exam on the first try in order to stay accredited.
- Ag Youth Apprenticeship-students in high school are matched with an industry person and take classes that are associated with that career. Students work in industry while



going to high school. This is a great opportunity for high school youth to try out different things. If you are interested we can get you involved with different high schools.

- Vet Tech Program update-Sarah, program director, on the transition from Vet science to Vet Tech. Sarah has worked primarily with small animals. Dr. Elizabeth is the program veterinarian and came from a mixed animal practice. She built up the equine part of that practice and is very comfortable with dairy cattle as well. They will be bringing more small animals into the program, but don't want to lose the dairy niche we have. With the Vet Science degree students could be entry level vet assistant, but this position has no education requirement and doesn't pay as well. Program wasn't giving the students and area employers with they needed. With the new program graduates can sit for state and national licensing exam. Clinics are looking for Certified Veterinary Technician's (CVT). They have redesigned some of the Vet Science classes and also added new classes. The new curriculum is on the NTC website. Students will need to complete Medical Terminology and Vertebrate Anatomy & Physiology as pre-program classes. Students will then need to take the HESI test-top 24 are admitted into the program. Goal is to enroll only those students most likely to succeed. Anyone that does not test well can remediate the HESI and re-petition. Applied for accreditation from the AVMA. They will visit once the first cohort is in the 3rd semester. On site visit, talk to everyone involved. Facilities are in the planning stages-repurposing current structure to make it function like a vet clinic. Classroom, digital radiology, surgical suite, animal housing, treatment w/ surgical prep, clinical laboratory, space for dental treatments. Dairy barn is right here, will be off site for equine. Goal-best training for students so they can be employees you can utilize on day one. Primary source of animals will be shelters and rescues. Our pressing need is animals and we are working on agreements with local shelters and rescues. We want the students to also have interaction with people that are stressed out about their animals and be able to talk with clients on how to pay for a procedure in Vet clinics. We need places for students to practice and learn, mentors and time spent in clinics. Students will have an internship, total of 240 hours minimum, after their first year. We are developing structure to this internship, it will be very outlined. Internships will be starting summer 2022. We will need to form an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). This committee makes sure we are doing what we need to do with animals on campus. One community member, one professional member (DVM, CVT or another animal professional) Sarah, Dr. Elizabeth and Greg. Regular meetings every 6 months. The committee establishes animal use protocols for every class. Vet Tech is specialized and needs to have its own advisory committee to help develop curriculum, industry trends and needs, skills acquisition,



partners for student internships. Need to hear what people in industry want. Ag Advisory committee members thought it would be best to separate the advisory committees and let Vet Tech have their own. We will send out a survey to the rest of the group to see what everyone thinks.

- Ag Insurance class-Steve-this is going to be a new class and is in its infancy right now-he has met with instructional design. Shooting to put this together by the end of December for the Spring 2022 semester. Huge opportunities in the industry with insurance. Looking for input from people in the industry.
- Facility for Vet Tech-going to use the building that we were using for ag equipment. This doesn't mean the end to ag equipment. The college is looking to add to our diesel program, maybe combine the two programs somehow. This might be a great way to bring this back. Precision agriculture might be a bigger draw to students. They have a different skill set to some degree, standard tech vs. precision ag, but both are needed in the industry.
- Virtual field day-trying to get a field day activity through our grants. Set up different stations to bring people to the farm. Cover crops, apple orchard, pollinator plot, water quality, robots, etc. The farm is interested in getting back to face to face field day, but recording lessons and have time lapse video cameras to share with people.
- WATEA wheels to work-there is not a lot of diversity at the farm. More females in the vet tech, not many southeast Asian population. NTC main campus is the northern most stop for the Wausau city bus. WATEA has vans that they can transport employees or students to industry or school and is very economical.
- NRCS cooperative agreement-partnering with C2A3- nine colleges over seven states promoting agriculture. Field cover crops studies to get better soil health. NTC is applying for new Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) through NRCS for water quality. NRCS loves our farm location. We have great opportunity for field runoff studies. Applying for both state and national grants.

Next meeting schedule & agenda items discussion

Next meeting-doodle poll. Hoping to do an in person meeting along with zoom offering. Any future agenda items reach out to any NTC employee to add to next agenda.

