



Helena College Mission:

Helena College supports our diverse community by providing the paths and tools necessary to assist learners in achieving their educational and career goals.

Diesel Technology Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

February 11, 2025 1:00 p.m. APC Room 205

Attendees:

COMMUNITY MEMBERS:

Jim Dusenberry – J and D Truck Repair
Tye Harrington – J and D Truck Repair
Christina Houlihan – I-State Truck Center
Tanyr Patt – Torgersons Equipment
David Engle – Floyds Trucks
Ethan Auch – Rocky Mountain Contractors

HELENA COLLEGE MEMBERS:

Derrick Hauer – Diesel Instructor
Rick Purcell – Diesel Instructor
Stephanie Hunthausen – Executive Director of Career Technical Education
Kelly Turner – Executive Director of Operations
Kathy Mortimore – Skilled Trades Advisor
Melissa Mousel – Program Manager of CTE

Program/Department Updates

Student Success Story:

- One of our students was awarded the Mike Rowe scholarship.
- Some of our advisory board members are aware of additional scholarships for our students and would like to promote.

- We plan to move DST 255 (Brakes) to fall of the first year and DST 142 (Hydraulics) to the fall of the second year. Advisory board noted:
 - More important for students to have brake knowledge when they start working in area shops while they are completing their education.
 - Having hydraulics in 2nd year makes sense, as students are more vested in program and will retain more knowledge.
- Diesel program just completed a 5-year program review. Program data shared with advisory board.
 - Job placement is based on W-2 information and is staying fairly steady.
 - We are hopeful that retention rates will improve with changes to program requirements.
- From last meeting: Skills USA updates
 - We hosted this competition the last 3 years. This year it is being held in Great Falls on April 3-5. If any of our advisory board members would like to sponsor a student, please let Derrick know.
- Upcoming event: Manufacturing & Mechanics Night, February 26 @ 5:30pm. This is a well-attended event by middle school and high school students and their parents to learn more about skilled trades opportunities. Students also get the opportunity to tour around the campus.
- We are having a career fair on this campus for our students on April 2. If anyone would like to come, please reach out to Kathy.

Topics for Discussion

Student Performance:

- Do you employ any Helena College graduates? How are they doing?

Advisory members stated the following:

- One member stated they have one student from 3 years ago and states that he is a good asset.
- Another member currently has 4 former students, 3 of those are out as field mechanics.

- Have you identified any gaps in the knowledge or training of new hires? If so, can you please expand on the identified gaps?

Advisory members stated that students can benefit from even more instruction in the following areas:

- Electrical focus
- Hydraulics
- Computer applications
- HVAC
- Emissions

Student Preparation:

- Are any changes needed in our curriculum or program offerings? If so, what do you suggest?

Advisory members stated the following:

- Focus on fully electric trucks which are appearing in Montana. Possibly combining with automotive electrical instruction.
- Add a variety of equipment. A tractor could be used to better learn hydraulics, etc.
- Possible internships at shops. In the past Helena College had tried this and ran into an issue in the internship process is having the employer complete the assessment part for a grade. There may be renewed interest in bringing this back.
- Knowledge of parts, sales, “truck 101” , terminology class might be beneficial.

Wrap up and Summary of Takeaways

1. The diesel program should explore an opportunity for internships, utilizing advisory board partnerships.
2. More students could be applying for scholarships. This could be incorporated into classes and requirements (such as the COMX 106 class).
3. Continue to explore acquisition of equipment to meet the instructional needs of students.