



Agriculture Advisory Meeting Notes

Date: December 7, 2020
Meeting Place: Remote via Zoom

Called to order: 6:00 -7:30 p.m. **Chair(s):** Erin Krier **Note Taker:** Erin Krier

Council Members Present:

Emma Chow, Tom Gulliver, Ron Labastida, Lacy Litten, Guillermo Guerra, Dr. Anjali Misra, Mark Powell, Dr. Sean Abel, Rosemary Cummings, Dr. Jodi Jacques, Marc DeBernardi, Dr. Rita Abi-Ghanem, Montse Zarate, Holly Nolan-Chavez, Christine Ready

Council Members Absent:

Mitch Ardantz, Teri Bontrager, Tom Durant, Brenda Estrada, Cathy Fisher, Eryn Gray, Jerry Mahoney, Andrew Rice, David Rice, Claire Wineman, Gregorio Casillas, Jim Glines, Les Graulich, Dr. Christopher Greer, Miguel Guerra, Danilu Ramirez

Guests Present: None

Agenda No. 1 Advisory Feedback Solicited for ESL Courses for Farm Employees

- Discussion:**
- Holly Nolan-Chavez asked for industry feedback regarding the potential for AHC to offer English classes to Spanish-speaking farm employees. Holly asked the committee if this would receive industry support, if there is a known need for this service, if the courses should be offered at the work site or another location, or if there were any other suggestions on the matter.
 - Lacy Litten mentioned that she is aware of a grower who offered Spanish courses to their employees in upper management to assist them with communication among the workforce. She said that many farm employees are learning some English from their own children, especially now that those children are being schooled in the home as a result of covid-19 school closures.
 - Lacy also wondered how likely people would be to add one more thing to their schedules, especially if it requires they go to another location after a long day at work. Ron Labastida was not sure that there is much demand from the grower community for this type of class. Tom Gulliver cautioned about hosting this type of class at the work site, citing concerns that if the class is offered at the work site there might be some issue with employees thinking they are still on the clock, which could cause issues with overtime pay, work hours, etc.
 - Additional comments were provided over the phone following the meeting by Claire Wineman, who said that she brought the concept to the Grower-Shipper Association and they would be glad to help promote this type of offering among their growers. She agreed with the concerns and hesitancy expressed by the industry partners in the meeting but also sees some value in continuing the conversation. Holly will follow up with Claire for further discussion.

Action: Email will be sent to advisory committee to gauge interest among those who were not in attendance.

Deadline: None **Responsibility:** Erin Krier

Agenda No. 2 Update on Emergency Remote Teaching

- Discussion:**
- All agriculture courses are being taught remotely via Zoom. Lectures are taught synchronously and Erin has been hosting in-person lab meetings out at the student farm.
 - This modality is challenging for students with internet connectivity issues, difficult for engagement with other students and teacher, not ideal for learning new material.



- Students find relief and joy in the option to attend labs in person and student engagement, learning, and success have been improved by the ability to offer this in-person option.
- Erin informed the committee that Spring 2021 classes will be held using these same methods and she requested that advisory committee members consider joining a Zoom class meeting as guest speakers for the various agriculture courses in the upcoming semester. Guest speakers add rich, contextualized content to the course material and are very beneficial for student learning – even over Zoom.

Action: None

Deadline: n/a

Responsibility:

n/a

Agenda No. 3 Field to Table Week of Welcome

- Discussion:**
- Erin Krier discussed the Fall 2020 Field to Table Week of Welcome event for incoming students in any of the “field to table” disciplines: agriculture, viticulture, enology, food science & nutrition, culinary arts & management.
 - The event was held over Zoom this year with robust attendance – providing incoming students with the chance to meet the program coordinators, their instructors, other new students, to hear from successful current and former program students, and to learn about the many services available to them at AHC.

Action: None

Deadline: n/a

Responsibility:

n/a

Agenda No. 4 NSF ATE Grant Update

- Discussion:**
- This is the final year of the 3-year National Science Foundation Advanced Technological Education grant, which funded the significant expansion of the AHC agriculture program.
 - Erin shared two student success stories with students who were able to receive the new degrees offered thanks to the curriculum development funded by this grant and went on to transfer to Cal Poly in both Agricultural Business and Agricultural & Environmental Plant Science.
 - Grant-funded curriculum development accomplishments include:
 - Development of A.S. and Certificate in Agricultural Science
 - Development of A.S. degrees for Transfer in Agricultural Business and Agricultural Plant Science
 - Stackable Certificates in Crop Protection and Pest Control Adviser Preparation
 - Creation of new courses in: Agricultural Plant Pathology, Economic Entomology, Weed Science, Qualified Applicator Training, and Introduction to Precision Agriculture
 - Two additional precision agriculture courses have been drafted and Erin sought input from the committee on the industry relevance of the content in each course. They are AG 108 - Agriculture Computer Applications and AG 117 - Control & Sensor Systems in Agriculture. AG 117 appears to be a more advanced continuation of material covered in the introductory course, although content relevancy needs to be reviewed by committee members not present in this meeting who have more experience with precision technologies employed in local industry. There was general consensus among the committee members that AG 108 may be duplicating information that is already available in other AHC courses and might not be necessary for workforce preparation.



- Erin shared the language of one of the grant objectives that remains to be met: “meet with collaborating ag businesses to create high school field experiences”. The activities that are to be completed under this objective are: (1) outreach to ag businesses that represent varying components of the agriculture industry, (2) create field day plans for student participation at business sites, and (3) calendar field days for high school capstone classes. Erin requested suggestions from the advisory committee on interpretation of this objective and how best to accomplish it. Lacy Litten suggested that perhaps the work being done by SEEAG in the county could be a point of collaboration as they are working in middle and high school classrooms bringing ag education to those student populations. Holly Nolan-Chavez noted that industry tours which include high school and college students could help meet this objective. Christine Ready mentioned that Modesto Junior College hosts an ag experience day where high school students from that region do a job shadow day in which ag businesses within the community host students. Holly also suggested that Dr. Erin Gorter at Cal Poly would be good to collaborate with as she hosts a lot of industry tours and is collaborating with Holly in March to host a virtual career exploration event to connect high school students with AHC programs.

Action: Follow up with absent advisory members who have knowledge of and experience with precision technologies for input on new precision ag course content. Reach out to Dr. Paul Robinson, CTE director for Santa Maria Joint Union High School District, to discuss projects that could meet the goals discussed in the as-of-yet unmet grant objective. Collaborate with Holly Nolan-Chavez and Dr. Gorter on a virtual career exploration event.

Deadline: June 2021

Responsibility: Erin Krier

Agenda No. 5 USDA Food Safety Grant Update

- The Allan Hancock College agriculture program is a sub-recipient of a USDA Food Safety Outreach grant, working in collaboration with a team of Cal Poly professors in the following disciplines: agribusiness, food science, and agriculture communication.
- This grant paid for Erin Krier and the food science professor from Cal Poly to attend the Produce Safety Alliance Train the Trainer training in December 2019. They hosted their first grower training workshop for small and very small growers of the Santa Maria Valley along with selected AHC agriculture students in January 2020.

Discussion: • The team of Cal Poly professors, along with Erin recently conducted their first on-site evaluation and training for a grower who participated in the PSA grower training earlier this year. Use of paid student workers, who were initially intended to assist in this project, has had to be delayed due to travel restrictions resulting from covid-19.

- Additional work on this project will continue in 2021, with another free PSA grower training to be hosted later in the spring. This training will be in both English and Spanish and is designed to help very small and small growers meet FSMA compliance.

- Advisory committee members will be asked to help spread the word to these oftentimes underserved and isolated growers about this valuable opportunity once it is scheduled.

Action: Share grower training information with committee members to solicit attendees

Deadline: tbd

Responsibility: Erin Krier

Agenda No. 6 NSF No-cost Grant Extension and Supplemental Funding

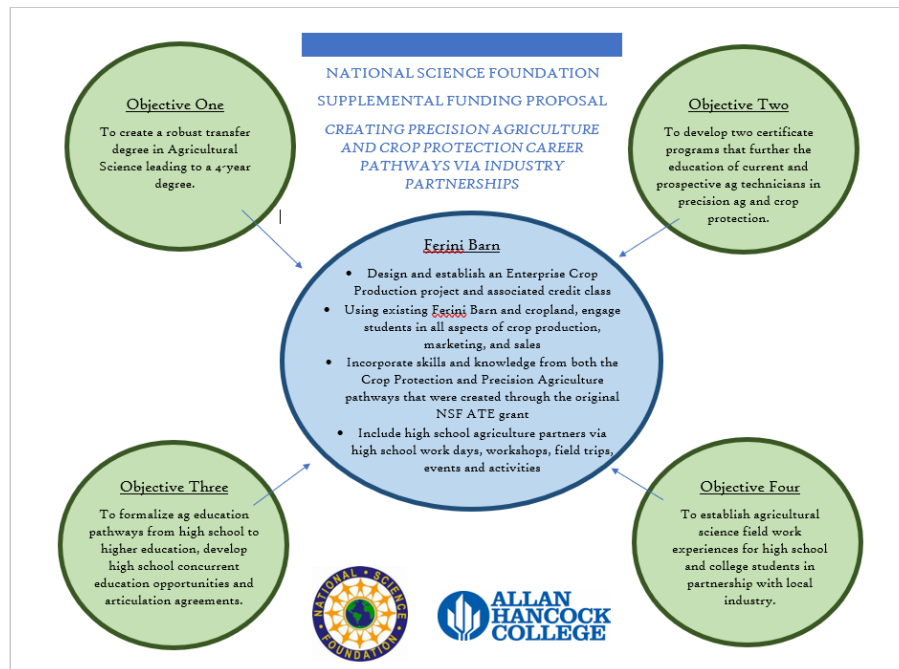
Discussion: • Erin shared a tentative proposal concept for a request for supplemental funding from the NSF during a 1 year no-cost extension.

- The project idea is a result of a suggestion from grower Larry Ferini. He farms a piece of ground



near a big barn adjacent to the 101 between Orcutt and Los Alamos. He had proposed the idea of including AHC agriculture students in the farm production and in running a farm stand out of the barn. This project would present students with an opportunity to participate in larger scale farm production and sales than is possible with the current on-campus student farm and farm stand. It would also provide a location where students could adequately train in the use of the precision agriculture equipment and technologies on a commercial scale.

- Erin presented a tentative Enterprise Crop Production model for feedback, which would incorporate the four existing grant objectives into this cumulative, capstone project:



- Feedback was solicited from the committee. Tom Gulliver wanted to ensure that the location was visible enough to the public for successful operation of a farm stand. Dr. Misra suggested that a specific course should be created as one of the objectives. A conversation then occurred surrounding crop selection. AHC student Montse Zarate indicated that a project such as this would be very attractive to students and would provide a very desirable opportunity. She does not think that transportation to the site would be a challenge for most students but did suggest that if a course was offered it would be important to consider student work schedules when determining the time the class is offered, such as hosting the class later in the afternoon so that students could work during the majority of the day. Dr. Abi-Ghanem sees a great potential for cross-disciplinary learning where students can participate in the production process from soil health to seeding preparation to marketing the commodities. She suggested that the project could be open to students in any of the AHC ag courses where it could be used to demonstrate the course material from a variety of disciplines – from soil and plant science to sales and marketing. Christine Ready initiated a discussion about the use of funds and what the additional funding would be needed for. She suggested funding for transportation for students who need assistance to get to the site. Dr. Misra added that including funding for student stipends could also be helpful. Christine Ready agreed and suggested that the stipends could be reserved for students to be co-managers of the project while we still offer non-paid participation via a credit course. Emma Chow presented an idea to address the interest among local growers in no-till field preparation techniques. This is a sustainable practice gaining popularity for its lower disturbance to soil health. She said that no-till drills are rather expensive to purchase and proposed that Hancock could consider purchasing a no-



discuss the diesel mechanics possibilities at the new CTE center.

Deadline: None

Responsibility: Erin Krier

Agenda No. 8 Hemp Program

Discussion:

- Dr. Misra provided an update on the AHC hemp program. Many industry partnerships have been established as a result of this program and students are exposed to many opportunities through internships and also through working with the advanced genetic analysis equipment set up at the Lompoc Valley Campus. She has submitted an NSF ATE grant proposal to establish an agriculture biotechnology program and has recently partnered with InnovATE Bio to propose a national agriculture biotech hub at AHC. Dr. Misra is also considering adding courses that will prepare students for work in biotechnology, tissue culture, and computational/statistical analysis skills.
- Dr. Misra shared details of a project she recently worked on with students whereby grapes growing in the AHC vineyard were painted with varying concentrations of terpenes, harvested, and sent to the AHC winery to make into wine. This study is designed as a preliminary observation to begin to understand the potential impact of growing hemp/cannabis in close proximity to wine grapes, which is an ongoing issue in the local agriculture community.
- Dr. Misra has partnered with local laboratories to assist in the continued expansion of the program, which in turn has also provided students with internship opportunities and exposure to advanced laboratory technologies.
- Christine Ready reported that she has heard a lot of great student feedback from her AHC students this semester in regards to the hemp program and she also sees a lot of interest coming from her high school FFA students in these projects.
- Dr. Abi-Ghanem suggested that soil nutrient management and bio-stimulants for the hemp/cannabis crop is a much-needed area for future research.

Action: None

Deadline: n/a

Responsibility: n/a

Agenda No. 9 Young Farmers & Ranchers Club

Discussion:

- The AHC Young Farmers & Ranchers (YF&R) club continues to meet in person outdoors at the student farm. The club members volunteered to work several hours over many days to set up the displays at the Festival of Lights fundraiser for the Santa Maria Fairpark.
- The club's upcoming meeting will be held on Zoom and will host guest speaker 4th District Supervisor-elect Bob Nelson to talk about Santa Barbara County agriculture issues, ag leadership, ag policy and government issues, ag legislative issues, and ag advocacy and communication.
- The club annual legislative trip to Sacramento was cancelled last spring only 3 days before the group was scheduled to leave due to the travel restrictions imposed following the covid-19 outbreak. The club is hopeful that the Sacramento trip will resume in March 2021 and is raising funds to ensure that students will not have to pay for any of the costs themselves. Farm Credit West recently made another generous donation of \$1000.00 to help with the costs of this trip so that students can enjoy this valuable experience.

Action: None

Deadline: n/a

Responsibility: n/a

Agenda No. 10 Rodeo Team



- The AHC Rodeo Team was forced to postpone its fundraiser dinner and auction which was scheduled in August as a result of covid-19 restrictions. The virtual fundraiser was held over two weeks at the end of November/beginning of December.

- The team is fortunate to have hired a fantastic coach, Karla Sanchez. She is the local CDFA brand inspector and a professional barrel racer. She is working closely with Cal Poly rodeo coach Ben Londo to try to establish some spring college rodeo contests.

Discussion:

- Club meetings have been held outdoors at the student farm but will be moving to the Elk's Rodeo Event Center as practices begin again in January 2021, adhering to strict covid-19 guidelines but still affording the student competitors the opportunity to improve their skills.

- The club members volunteered to work several hours over many days to set up an AHC Rodeo Team display at the Elk's Christmas in the Country drive-through light event.

Action: None

Deadline: n/a

Responsibility: n/a

Agenda No. 11 High School Partnerships

- AHC currently has 15 signed concurrent enrollment agreements with local high school agriculture programs.

- AHC is working closely with the new high school CTE center to collaborate with agriculture projects and ag mechanics.

- A recurrent suggestion has been made to host a FFA Field Day at AHC in the near future. The AHC ag program is interested in pursuing this possibility, perhaps starting with small, simple contests as a test run before expanding to more diverse contest options.

Discussion:

- Christine Ready suggested that former FFA students who are current AHC students who have experience attending many field days could sign up for a Special Projects class at AHC to earn college elective credits helping to plan and execute a field day at AHC.

- Christine also informed the committee that this year might be a perfect year to attempt to host a first-time event because of the virtual nature of some of the contests. She said there are computer-based contests that AHC could host online such as best informed greenhand, cooperative marketing, and farm records.

Action: Follow up with FFA teachers to start planning a FFA Field Day at AHC, potentially Spring 2021.

Deadline: February 2021

Responsibility: Erin Krier

Agenda No. 12 Internship Opportunities
Discussion:

- AHC has amazingly hard-working and dedicated students who are hungry for work in agriculture. Any job or internship opportunities available with our industry partners are much appreciated.

Action: None

Deadline: n/a

Responsibility: n/a

Deadline: None

Responsibility: Erin Krier

Reports: Important Dates and Follow-up

- Next advisory committee meeting will be April 5, 2021