



**Wind Energy Technology  
Advisory Board Meeting  
November 12, 2008**

**Meeting Minutes**

Members present:

John Dunlop, American Wind Energy Association  
Gerald Toland, Southwest Minnesota State University  
Deb Full, Energy Maintenance Service  
Loren Hacker, Canby High School

Minnesota West Personnel including:

Duane Olson, Fluid Power Instructor  
Duane Carrow, Director of Renewable Energy Programs and Energy Enterprise Center  
John Joosten, Assistant Dean of Technical Programs  
Rebecca Weber, Canby Campus Manager  
Gary Olsen, Wind Energy Technology Instructor  
Jim Smalley, Minnesota West Foundation Director  
Katie Delaney, Canby Campus Marketer

Rebecca Weber called the meeting to order at approximately 11:15am. Following lunch, agenda items were discussed as follows:

**1) Enrollment/Marketing/Morris Career Fair**

Katie Delaney reported current enrollment numbers for the 2008-2009 school year of twenty-eight new students, of which seventeen are pursuing their A.A.S degree and eleven will graduate in May 2009 with the Diploma. There are nine second-year students that will also graduate in May with their A.A.S Degree. For the 2009-2010 school year, the campus has currently taken seventeen applications for the on-campus program and 9 applications for the online Windsmith Certificate. In addition to those seventeen, there are approximately 4 more students that will or are currently taking general education courses, and will be new to the program in the Fall of 2009. Thus, there are twenty-one applicants for the Fall of 2009. In comparison to 2007-2008 school year, 84% of applicants did not submit applications until AFTER January of 2008. Therefore, the Canby Campus does anticipate reaching a possible enrollment maximum prior to August 2009.

Deb Full asked what our maximum enrollment number would be. Rebecca Weber informed the committee that the campus is currently looking at the total number of students that could comfortably be accommodated by the campus and that they are also looking into additional classroom/lab space as well as a possible need for an additional instructor.

Katie also updated the committee of past and upcoming campus marketing events, including the Morris Career Fair. She reported they will be attending this event on 11/18/08 at the Morris Area High School.

## **2) Placement**

Rebecca Weber reported that graduate placement for this program remained very high.

In reference to placement, Loren Hacker inquired if students were being hired away before finishing the A.A.S Degree. Gary Olsen explained that he does strongly encourage his students to stay on for the full program and complete their A.A.S. degree. Deb Full, speaking on behalf of EMS, said they do prefer students to finish and have that extra skill when they enter the workforce. She said EMS offered 11 internships over the summer, but each intern was encouraged to go back to complete their degree. Deb said they sometimes will offer to hire that student back following graduation.

## **3) Program & Curriculum Updates/Grants**

John Joosten introduced and explained the 2+2 articulation agreement with SMSU which allows for a Bachelor's Degree in Business Management upon completion of the A.A.S Degree in Wind Energy Technology or Renewable Energy Technology. John also said they have similar agreements with U of M - Crookston for an Ag Management Bachelor's Degree and Bemidji State in which students pursuing their Engineering Degree can take our online Windsmith courses as electives.

John also mentioned that he is currently working with a consortium of High School Counselors in the area to integrate high school courses with our technical education curriculum. They are brainstorming ways to utilize the WIRED Grant for this project.

The new MnSCU 60/120 rule was introduced. John informed the committee that MnSCU has made the decision that all programs will need to be reduced to 60 credits for the A.A.S. Degree by 2012. However, programs may submit a waiver requesting more credits, provided there is very strong support from members of the Industry and Advisory Boards. Duane Carrow went on to explain that Minnesota West requires AAS degrees to carry at least 15 general education credits, leaving only 45 credits for technical courses. Rebecca Weber added that the current Wind Energy A.A.S Degree is 64 credits, 16 of which are general education. Should the Wind Energy Advisory Board feel that a special waiver is needed, it must be submitted prior to June 30, 2009 therefore this decision will need to be made at the Spring meeting.

Rebecca Weber asked how Minnesota West will be affected with more and more companies electing to build new training programs for Technicians. Deb Full responded that the current industry needs around 6,000 technicians just for the installed turbines, therefore they have had to create their own programs to satisfy the demand. But, she added, the industry programs are mostly basic skills, they are not as complete as a two-year degree program.

John Dunlop questioned if these companies are encouraging unqualified applicants to go back to school, or take further courses online? Deb responded that yes, they certainly do encourage applicants to attend school and strong encourage their current technicians to take courses online through Minnesota West.

John Dunlop inquired if MnSCU reviewed program content and how do we insure each program has quality curriculum? Rebecca explained the curriculum process, but noted that the Advisory Board is really the reviewing body for technical courses. Gerald Toland asked if there was a National Accreditation for these types of programs. Duane Carrow explained that Minnesota West is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, but beyond that there is nothing specifically for Wind Energy. John Dunlop asked if AWEA wouldn't be the logical host for such a National Accreditation. All agreed, and Rebecca Weber commented that would be wonderful, as no standardized assessment exists in Wind Energy. John confirmed that AWEA's goal is John confirmed that AWEA's goal is to institute a wind technician safety testing and certification program.

Duane Carrow mentioned that is what the WIRED Grant could be used for, the dollars to put together a standardized curriculum. (See attachment for details on the WIRED Grant) The deadline for these proposals is due early in January 2009. Duane said he would be very interested in working with John and AWEA on a proposal. John stated that everyone needs to do a better job of sharing content with each other. All agreed. Duane Carrow acknowledged that yes, eventually all wind energy programs would have a standardized test and Minnesota West should take the lead to create one. Loren Hacker suggested that perhaps the MN Wind Industry Institute be based from the Canby Campus. Duane Carrow responded that would be a great idea, if the goals and objective were clearly defined as there are many wind energy organizations in the state. However, if the goal was to look at standardized testing no other group is doing anything similar to that. Gerald Toland acknowledged that would be a great proposal for the WIRED Grant.

Duane Carrow also explained the new Department of Labor Grant that was awarded to Minnesota West in partnership with six other community colleges and two state universities. Minnesota West was fortunate to be put in charge of \$489,500.00 of this one-million dollar grant (Duane Carrow is the lead on this). He detailed that we will have three years to develop 4 online certificates in Ethanol, Biodiesel, Wind Energy, and Solar Energy. Century College is currently working to develop the Solar Energy certificate, and Minnesota West will improve the two certificates already offered online in Wind Energy and Renewable Energy (Ethanol) and work to create one in Biodiesel. Using these DOL funds, this group of MnSCU institutions will be challenged to develop the first A.A.S Degree in Renewable Energies in the nation. This A.A.S Degree would include 15 credits of general education, 16 core credits, and 16 technical electives. Cooperation from all programs and colleges will be needed to identify which courses should be included as core credits. The program will be blended, with the bulk of courses available to students online, they would then complete the technical electives at the campus in which they are offered. Duane went on to explain that he needs to establish the value of everyone's time for the Personnel Leverage Funding portion of the grant. The committee agreed a rate of \$800/ half day is a reasonable figure and very competitive with other industries.

#### **4) Equipment/Facilities**

Rebecca Weber reported that Jeff Harms, Minnesota West Facilities Director, indicated to her there may be additional funds available for program facility improvement. As this point, it is unknown whether the Wind program will be the recipient. However, the more the program can show outside partnerships with industry, the better chance we have of receiving it.

Until then, Gary Olsen has compiled a list of equipment that will be purchased using legislative funds. For example, new LabVolt equipment, a rigging system, laptops, new chairs, rescue dummy, hydraulic trainers, and other supplies would be included. This equipment would help previously received donations to become useful and functional for students. Gary also outlined new goals for equipment needs as:

- A lower base section of a tube tower to teach students to torque.
- Ladder sections that could be mounted inside that would allow him to teach safety to multiple students at one time.
- He reported there is a chance in receiving a lift cage from Avanti
- A 35 kW nacelle that would be used as a training tool inside where all students can physically see things happening at one time.
- Blade sections to teach blade repair

Deb Full said she would check to see if EMS would have 35Kw nacelle that could be sent over.

John Joosten asked if industry would ever consider setting up a training center on campus that could be used by both the company and the campus. Duane Carrow also asked if something like this could be explored. He added that with the previously discussed DOL Grant, there would need to be additional faculty to facilitate the technical training to those students taking the degree online.

## **5) Scholarships**

James Smalley shared information regarding the Minnesota West Foundation. He distributed pledge forms and explained that donations made to the Foundation can only be used where the donor specifies. Any company interested in donating scholarship dollars or equipment could contact him for further information.

## **6) AWEA**

Rebecca Weber stated that we will be looking at sending students to the AWEA Conferences in May 2009. However, there has not yet been much discussion on the topic. John Dunlop added that for graduating students, the AWEA Exhibit Hall would be a fantastic place for career and networking opportunities. He would expect the college to put high priority to help get students attend the conference.

Rebecca asked John which AWEA committees he would suggest Gary Olsen be involved with. John stated that the Education Working Group, the O & M Working Group, and the Safety Committee Working Group was all be excellent.

Gary Olsen said another meeting will be held in the Spring and input from the Advisory Board is always welcome.

Rebecca Weber thanked all those in attendance and closed the meeting.