



GIS/SUR/UAS - Advisory Committee Minutes, **Spring 2025**

Date: 2/7/2025

Number of Attendees: 15

Called to order: 3:06 pm

Adjourned: 4:12 pm

Chairperson: Eric Ghahate

Recorder: Katherine Meagher

Location: ATC 108 & Zoom

Members present from industry: Morgan Cartwright- Instructional Tech, Serri Grube- Valley High School, Ethan Lacher- KA Surveys/Vexcel Group, Melodee Saiz- APS (all on Zoom)

Members present from CNM: John Beltran- Instructor, Kala Chavez- Academic Affairs Specialist, Nate Geoffrion- Instructor (zoom), Eric Ghahate- Program Chair, Sionna Grassbaugh- Associate Dean (zoom), Erin Johnson-Kruft- Dean, Samuel Kerwin- Technical Support Technician, Katherine Meagher- Academic Technical Assistant, Margaret Ortega- Outreach Manager WCS, David Ortiz- Lab Manager, Cynthia Ramirez-Gurule- Academic Technical Assistant

Next scheduled meeting: TBD, Fall 2025

I. Welcome/Introductions: John Beltran called meeting to order. Everyone introduced themselves.

II. Minutes: Minutes from Fall 2024 were approved as written.

III. Reports:

- 1. College Updates:** Erin reported: There has been an increase in enrollment from fall to spring and from last year alone, there was a 7% increase overall for Skilled Trades and Arts. The benchmark is looking at pre-COVID numbers and enrollment. STA is one of the few academic schools close to pre-COVID numbers. There has been a high demand for some of our programs while others need help with recruitment. Overall, these increases are good, even with lacking a budget for marketing. One other advantage is that there are plenty of scholarships to help support the community and for those looking to go back to school- most programs in STA qualify!

Erin also took some time to address the current shift in politics and how the recent rash of executive orders could be affecting funding. Perkins will be impacted as will CTE programs, professional development, travel, and equipment, which are funded by Perkins. One of the main focuses moving forward is to support students and staff during these times in the current political climate. Some activities may not be funded going forward, even if they were funded before. Events and workshops will be heavily impacted especially if they fall under DEI.

There have also been national cluster changes with the Perkins grant and many clusters are being revamped. Erin said that she is attempting to get more clarity on the matter as the term continues but this could take about 3-4 weeks until more is known.



School of Skilled Trades & Arts

Erin also brought up that since the birth rate going down in the country, fewer high school graduates will be coming to CNM. Erin stated that STA will have to enhance their recruitment strategies and target adults looking to go back to school. She discussed the New Mexico New Elder program, launched as part of Ingenuity, and how it aims to work with an elder workforce. Adults ages 55+ come in as mentors and volunteers to re-career and find jobs. Overall, there is a need to restructure STA's efforts to keep these factors in mind (retirement ages increasing, birth rate decreasing, newer working classes, etc.).

2. **Enrollment and Graduation rates:** Sionna reported that they are looking at the health of current programs and what benchmarks are being met. GIS was designated as a "fix" program as part of CNM's Collegewide Integrated Program Review process and is getting support for growth. GIS currently has 90 active students (average age of 37 years). In the fall, there were 2 graduates for GIS and 5 graduates in the certificate program. UAS currently has 22 active students (average age of 41 years) with 7 total graduates in the fall. She also did a quick update on the Construction Management program saying that there are currently 210 active students in the program, with 2 graduates in the fall term. Overall, numbers have increased for all three programs.

Eric discussed the Pre-Construction program and the misunderstanding of what Construction Management is. He stated that the focus on estimating and scheduling is a misnomer- it is actually much more complex than that. One issue that he brought up was that the CM program can be offered totally online with two in-person requirements. This is creating a block for students. Eric reported that enrollment is good except in advanced courses, as there are not as many programs that funnel in or are require CM in conjunction with other programs. Sionna added that there is a move to do a competency-based construction management program in Fall 2026.

John said that there are no major updates on UAS. Enrollment is good and the SUR program is doing just as well. John noted that the skillsets built in the SUR program are still necessary and in demand. John emphasized the importance of keeping SUR coursework offline due to nature of work. He is also allocating Fridays to do field work for his students to practice data collection.

Margaret discussed the initiatives of the Workforce and Community Success Division, emphasizing their role in connecting employers with students for internship opportunities. She mentioned that the division offers subsidized funding for internships, allowing employers to pay students a minimum of \$15 an hour while receiving reimbursement for a portion of that cost. Additionally, she noted the importance of these internships for students, particularly those facing challenging circumstances.

3. **Equipment:** Orders have been placed for DJI mini drones for the UAS program. No other major updates.

IV. Old Business: Erin reminded everyone that there will be Teams Meetings held in the spring and summer to discuss changes for the upcoming Fall term.

V. New Business: Nate discussed low enrollment in second half of the UAS curriculum, which is problematic as that is where most of the main, in-depth knowledge required by industry. Nate is concerned that the students are not seeing the full scope of the UAS program beyond drones. He discussed how many students come into the program focused on the drone-flying aspect and not expecting the other more complex components. There is a lack of knowledge about what UAS truly entails and it is causing issues with enrollment, especially for later parts of the program. The idea of cross-listing UAS courses with other programs or on elective lists has been considered before but quickly shut down at higher levels and hasn't truly been an option until this point. Multiple committee members expressed wanting to try this avenue again and investigate further.



School of Skilled Trades & Arts

Serri highlighted the challenge of using complex acronyms in program marketing, suggesting that clearer terminology could help high school students better understand opportunities in fields like drones. Nate supported this by mentioning his efforts to connect with New Mexico Tech and promote the mechatronics program, emphasizing the importance of effective communication in attracting students. Melodee also said that drones are a huge topic with high schoolers, even if there are no current internships.

Sionna discussed the varying backgrounds of GIS students, emphasizing that internships often require complementary skills beyond basic GIS knowledge. John also mentioned that older students frequently return to education to gain spatial analysis skills, while younger students typically pursue entry-level GIS internships. The conversation also touched on the importance of promoting dual credit pathways for high school students interested in GIS.

Serri highlighted the necessity of connecting with high school counselors to promote dual credit opportunities beyond traditional subjects. She suggested sharing videos and fliers to inform students about engaging programs, particularly in engineering and CTE. John agreed and offered to send fliers while also addressing the challenge of mapping out available CTE courses across schools to better guide students.

Melodee said that IT person reported that 100 drones were bought for the lending library and about 10 schools have them. She is reaching out to learn more as the information on it was vague info is vague. John asked about considerations for FAA guidelines and other safety guidelines, as that could present an issue. John asked that Melodee keep him informed and he can help train APS employees on those guidelines to make sure that things are done right.

VI. Reports from Industry Members: Morgan reported that he is very grateful for his time in our program as it has helped him obtain in his current GIS position in Missouri. He said that the system he now works with was very broken when he started and the skills he obtained in this program helped him be able to adapt and clean house. However, he was also lucky to have had essential skills that he got from his background in IT. He noted that the program being used in his workplace is entirely different from what he learned at CNM (ARC online vs ARC pro). It has been a struggle to replace one knowledge set with the other so it would be best for us to be mindful about what some industries are working with vs what our program is teaching. Even with that said, he praised the program, saying that he has utilized every single aspect of the courses, especially field work as he uses it frequently.

Melodee mentioned an annual career fair held by APS with a focus on high school trades to skill trades. The fair will be taking place on March 25th at Berna Facio from 9 am-1 pm. APS is expecting 2000 students and 150 employers to be present. She will forward an email to everyone with the flier attached.

Erin spoke to Melodee and Serri about the I Love CTE event on February 14th, targeted to career counselors in high schools. Several charter schools are enrolled as well as some APS schools. Erin will be forwarding this information to them ASAP.

VII. Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 4:12 pm.