Central New Mexico Community College
School of Skilled Trades & Arts

GIT/SUR/UAS - Advisory Committee Minutes, Fall 2025

Date: 12/3/25 **Number of Attendees:** 11

Called to order: 4:06 pm **Adjourned:** 4:50 pm

Chairperson: N/A **Recorder:** Katherine Meagher

Location: ATC 108/Zoom

Members present from industry: Mike Casman- Vectors Inc (online), **Serri Grube**- Valley High School (online), **Aaron Martinez-** Bohannan Huston, **Melodee Saiz**- APS (online)

Members present from CNM: **John Beltran**- Instructor, **Diane Craig**- Advisor, **Sionna Grassbaugh**- Dean, **Erin Joseph**- Associate Dean, **Samuel Kerwin**- AVS, **Katherine Meagher**- ATA, **Margaret Ortega**- WCS

Next scheduled meeting: TBD

I. **Welcome/Introductions:** Meeting started at 4:06 pm.

II. **Minutes:** Minutes from Spring 25 were accepted.

III. **Reports:**

1. **College Updates:** Sionna gave college-wide updates, highlighting that this year marks CNM's 60th anniversary. The 60th anniversary celebrations are currently winding down as we are reaching the end of the Fall 25 term. She reported that enrollment at CNM is over 19,000 and is expected to increase as the year continues, mostly due to late start courses. Enrollment in Skilled Trades and Arts is up 8% from Fall 25 and further growth is expected, especially as many of our classes started on September 22nd. Enrollment numbers are very close to exceeding pre-COVID enrollment, using a benchmark of Fall 2019.

   The new Ted Chavez Trades and Technologies Center (TTC) had its grand opening in August and started holding classes on September 22nd. This project cost about $57 million and was built in order to provide better access to trades education and address the growing needs of the local workforce. The center is designed for hands-on, practical learning and features multiple outdoor training areas so that students can experience similar working situations as they would in the workforce. The new TTC building will house our administration offices as well as our Carpentry, Welding, HVAC, Plumbing, Electrical, and Mechatronics programs. This includes a wing dedicated entirely to Carpentry.

   The RioTech campus also opened for classes this fall, providing instruction to high school and adult learners. Programs at RioTech include Carpentry, Plumbing, Welding, Digital Media, and Electrical. In the future, there are also plans for our Film and Digital Media programs to move to the Albuquerque Railyards (in partnership between MAC and the city) as well as a new building in Rio Rancho to house our Automotive and EV programs. The west wing of the old Ted Chavez (TC) building is slated for demolition starting in January 26. Until the new Rio Rancho campus is done, Automotive and EV will remain in the east wing of the TC building.

There are also plenty of part-time faculty position that have been posted or will be posted soon. We encourage our partners to look into these postings and share them with anyone they think could be interested!

CNM will be implementing more short-term certificates and micro-credentials in order to provide flexible and focused learning options for students. This means that students will be receiving targeted skill development within weeks or months, as opposed to traditional degrees that take multiple years. Micro-credentials will validate certain skills and/or competencies and can be stacked for students to build a larger, better professional portfolio. This should help students with quickly upskilling, reskilling, or even switching careers in a fast-changing job market. Both these micro-credentials and short-term certificates are industry-aligned, affordable, and recognized by employers as a sign of proactive learning and specific expertise. We do value input from our advisory committee as we implement these credentials- your feedback on this will be valuable!

2. **Enrollment and Graduation rates:** Erin reported that there are currently 65 students with a declared major in one of the Geographic Information Technology (GIT) or Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) programs. For the current school year, there are 14 potential graduates. Last school year, there were a total of 40 graduates, though some of these may be duplicates.

   John spoke about the Esri-hosted UAS-oriented workshop and conference that was held during this term. This conference took place to highlight the UAS capture process and Esri's software. There was a turn-out of around 50 people, including students, industry members, and government workers. John said that this helped to generate interest over the program and was a great opportunity to highlight what he is doing at CNM. He is hoping to do this again next year. He also mentioned that our programs are always looking for enrollment, so please spread the word about our work!

3. **Equipment:** John stated that there wasn't much to update members on in terms of equipment. They are currently in the equipment replacement cycle process and could be losing their instructional tech. The program was finally able to obtain an RB with LIDAR, which was one of the last things they needed. They are also looking into new software. He also mentioned that they may see some difficulties with the DJI drone ban in the United States, making it so those models cannot be used in federal work. They need to find a US-made drone that could potentially replace the DJI. He stated that Esri could be a potential vendor for the next big purchase.

IV. Old Business Sionna asked about schedule changes. John said that the upcoming schedule is currently ironed out, but they are currently looking ahead at the next few terms. So far, everything is looking good. Sionna also mentioned that as of the day of the meeting, the data for the college-wide integrated review process (also referred to as CIPR) has been released. As it came out right before the start of the meeting, she said that she was unable to share any of that data quite yet, but she will be sharing this with John and Erin sometime soon. Updates on this should come at our Spring 26 meeting.

V. New Business Margaret talked about internships and employment through WCS. Employers are encouraged to post their job openings on HireCNM - our free job board. She also mentioned that the division offers subsidized funding for internships, allowing employers to pay students a minimum of $15 an hour and receive a reimbursement of $12 an hour. The time period is 10 - 20 weeks, dependent on the number of hours the student is available. Additionally, she noted the importance of Work-Based learning opportunities for students. She also outlined documents required by employers as well as requiring a mid-term and final check-in with the student intern. There will also be a career fair in April 2026. She

also spoke about a colleague that runs job shadowing, so job shadow opportunities are available! She also talked about work with Parker Dewey to hold micro-internships. WCS will post an opportunity for a student and Parker Dewey will pay for the student to do 25 hours of work for the micro-internship. Interested partners can contact Margaret for further information and can go to https://info.parkerdewey.com/cnm/program.

John noted that one student is currently doing an internship and is doing very well. He also mentioned that there are no major updates on curriculum at this time, though a review might be necessary later.

VI. Reports from Industry Members: Aaron introduced himself as a recent addition to Bohannan Huston. He said that is has been difficult to get people interested in surveying, even with current opportunities for students taking online classes. Their focus right now is on generating that interest.

Mike gave an update on Vectors, Inc. They are currently helping NMSU with updating their equipment so that their students are using modern tools and have a better understanding of what to expect when they enter the workforce. NMSU's program is doing very well, which is good as CNM's students tend to feed into that program. Industry-wise, they are still in need of workers as there is great demand for experienced people in GIS. They are currently seeing a lot of unqualified applicants, which has been making this harder. In concerns to technology, AI has been the most recent point of interest, though there seems to be little understanding of the full capabilities. However, AI could potentially be used to solving data processing issues, though this is still being worked out. There has been some issue with losing support with Windows 10 as well as with Android interfacing. Many UAS devices work best with Android products, but many upcoming workers have very little experience with Android as they are more used to iOS. He suggested it might be helpful to get students familiar with Android phones to make up for this deficit and make them more well-rounded. He also spoke more on the DJI drone ban- the issue with the ban mostly arises when drones need to be replaced or are needed for federal work. Vectors has chosen to work with American brands recently to stock their products, such as Free Fly and Wingtra. He told John that he wants to keep this conversation open with the program as he wants to be sure our program is supplied properly, even if we are not purchasing directly from Vectors.

Erin asked Mike if industry is looking at specific degrees and certifications- which is more valuable: a GIS degree or a UAS degree? Mike said that a UAS certificate is preferred as companies are looking for people to do field work, be able to fly a drone, and collect data. He stated that NMSU graduates, as an example, tend to be people who are well-rounded and experienced in surveying and construction in addition to the UAS and GIS pathways. He also noted that there is a need for workers to have a higher level of comprehension in survey work, such as a better understanding of what GPS is and how it is used in their field. He said that our students are qualified, but the connection between students and industry needs to be made, as students aren't always knowing who to connect with. Sionna said that they can work together with Margaret from WCS to make that connection. John also mentioned that he has been trying to work with NMSU on course alignment so that CNM's GIS program is more aligned with NMSU's Geomatics degree. This could help create a better pathway between these programs.

Melodee announced that on Monday, December 8th, APS will be holding their own Fall advisory meeting at Berna Facio. 11 industry representatives will be present, including some from Automotive, Design and Digital Arts, Media Production, and Welding. Over 55 community partners have reserved spots as have a handful of CNM's directors and program managers. She is very excited to see our teachers taking part in this to lead these committees and discuss industry pathways.

Serri added that APS is trying to revive their advisories as they also receive Perkins funding. They want to continue these partnerships and get teachers connected with industry and colleges. APS is hoping this can help teachers get a better understanding of what CNM offers through job shadows, externships, and any other opportunities that can help. She also mentioned that Valley High School is hosting their showcase on Thursday, December 4th and encouraged people to

contact her if they are interested in attending. Sionna added that it would be great to work with Serri and other members to map out what these potential pathways could look like, even at the high school level. John encouraged Serri to come out to CNM at any time with her students as he is happy to demonstrate what we do with our programs.

Aaron mentioned that he has seen colleges in Pennsylvania work with high schools and bring high school students onto campuses to show off their equipment and generate interest in their programs. John said that CNM does host Go-to-College Day at this time, in addition to open houses, but he would be happy to do more events like this. Serri mentioned that John has gone to Valley's showcases before to promote the program directly to her students. She also recalled how she used to bring a professional surveyor to her classroom to teach students how to use industry tools and translate that into skills they already knew by mapping the school's baseball field. She said this helped show students that they could easily pick up skills in industry tools. She would be happy to do something like this with our current members if they are interested.

Aaron said that students need to understand that there is much more involved in surveying than just field work, as surveying is just the tip of the iceberg. The skills used in surveying can be used in fields that students may not be aware of- he used undersea mapping as an example of taking surveying a step further. It all depends on how students choose to use what they learn in class. He said this needs to be communicated to students more.

VII. <u>Adjournment:</u> Adjourned at 4:50 pm.