



WELD - Advisory Committee Minutes, Fall 2025

Date: 10/15/25

Number of Attendees: 21

Called to order: 2:05 pm

Adjourned: 3:19 pm

Chairperson: Paul Bauman (absent), Roderigo Padilla (sub)

Recorder: Katherine Meagher

Location: TTC 403/Zoom

Members present from industry: Nicholas Blodgett- Stainless Motors, Paul Disque- JATC 412, Wade Florence- Matheson Tri-Gas, Ryan French- Airgas, Stephanie Georgio- Kairos Power (online), Ed Kuyper- Reytek (online), Peter Lopez- NMGCO, Melodee Saiz- APS, Edward Sanchez- JATC 412, Paul Sanchez- Ironworker Local 495, Mike Thomas- Rocky Mountain Testing, LLC

Members present from CNM: Manuel Aragon- Instructor, Sionna Grassbaugh- Interim Dean, Freddie Grossetete- PT Instructor, Ronald Hackney- Instructor, Chris Martinez- Instructor, Katherine Meagher- ATA, Jessica Metz- CNM Ingenuity (online), Margaret Ortega- WCS (online), Roderigo Padilla- Associate Dean, Ashley Prelo- WCS, Denise Proctor- Advisor

Next scheduled meeting: TBD

I. Welcome/Introductions: Meeting started at 2:05 pm. Roderigo chaired the meeting as Paul was absent. Introductions were had.

II. Minutes: Minutes from Spring 25 were accepted.

III. Reports:

- 1. College Updates:** Sionna gave college-wide updates. 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.

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!

As we are entering into the next fiscal season, Sionna said that STA is looking for more creative ways to get students into college. We are looking to partner more closely with industry to make this happen! She also noted that Skills USA will be held at the end of the fall term in house before the state-wide competition in March/April. Industry partners are welcome to attend!

2. **Enrollment and Graduation rates:** Roderigo gave an update on enrollment and graduation rates for the Welding program. Last fall, Welding saw a total of 858 students (duplicated) and this fall, there have been 1,027 enrolled (also duplicated). The fill rate last year was 71%, while the fill rate this year is 81%, a 10% increase from Fall 24. Roderigo attributes this increase due to the program's access to W building, which runs the fundamentals lab- ten class sections are being run in this lab. This should continue as long as is allowed. These courses are being used to find students who really have a passion for welding. Students will be able to get in, get a taste for the material, and figure out if they wish to pursue the program. These classes fill fast due to the lack of welding booths and are highly popular.

In Fall 24, there were 15 AAS graduate and 16 certificate graduates. In Spring 25, there were 17 AAS graduates and 23 certificate graduates. In Summer 25, there were 8 AAS graduates and 19 certificate graduates. In total, the Welding program saw 83 graduates (40 AAS and 43 certificates) in the 24-25 school year. Roderigo stated that these numbers are a credit to our instructors and their hard work!

3. **Equipment:** Roderigo gave an update on equipment. The new lab has 64 welding stations, as opposed to 31 in the old building. These stations are all brand new, though they did have to bring over some old equipment. They are currently utilizing as many funding sources as is possible. Roderigo mentioned that Welding is currently in the grow phase with CIPR and one benefit from this is they get to access additional funding. He noted that this is especially good as Welding was not eligible for Perkins 5 funding this year, so funding from CIPR will come in handy. Welding is also in the process of obtaining a new plasma/CNC table- this should be in soon, hopefully within the next couple of months.

Sionna said that she is currently working with the Welding faculty to grow the new lab and create a list of things that are needed for the new space. Ron said that Wade from Matheson recently offered a professional development opportunity with Lincoln 300s to demonstrate some software, which was very much appreciated!



IV. Old Business No old business to discuss.

V. New Business Ashley of Workforce & Community Success (WCS) gave a quick presentation highlighting their work between WCS and our community partners. She emphasized the importance of advisory committees and how they help CNM align our programs with industry needs. She said that employer engagement with WCS is continuing to increase significantly each year and that they exceeded their target goal in said engagements, with a 3% increase from the 24-25 school year to Fall 25. She also spoke about student internships- the goal is for all students to have a work-based learning opportunity (such as job shadows, internships, micro internships, etc). 254 interns were placed this year with 84 employers partnering with CNM for these internships. 95% of these internships are paid through NM Higher Education Department (HED) funding and about 2,592 learners have received scholarships for training resulting in industry-recognized credentials. She also mentioned that 44% of employers receiving these interns were private companies non-profit organizations, not large businesses, so our local workforce is reaping the benefits of these programs!

Skilled Trades and Arts still has room to grow- the goal is to get manufacturing to grow which should be possible with employer help. WCS can coordinate job shadows, lab tours, and internships with employers to meet their needs. She also mentioned that WCS will be focusing on Manufacturing Month this October and is planning activities in order to increase awareness in our programs and help students with their career plans. She encouraged any interested parties to contact WCS at employersupport@cnm.edu and to fill out the survey available on the Agenda page provided via email in order to provide feedback! A survey link will also be emailed to the entire committee at a later time.

Roderigo gave an update on curriculum. In previous meetings, there was talk about switching to AWS. We were able to accomplish this change, but there has been an issue with the Bookstore and students have been having trouble getting their access cards. This switch hasn't been completed as a result, but this should be fully ironed out for Spring 26. We have also gotten a new vendor for welding kits, which has resulted in kits being 100% filled and filled correctly for the first time in a long time.

Welding has also been looking to switching credit hours and adding more credit hours in order to allow for further lab time. However, both CNM and the state of New Mexico, require that programs be as close to 60 credits as possible. This change would have meant that the program would have had 72 credits. Next month, Welding will propose to the school and the state that they instead shift lab hours, creating more lab credits than theory credits. This should allow for more lab time and give students more freedom while still staying close to that 60 credit limit.

Ron stated that Welding faculty recently reached out to industry partners for their assistance with writing letters of support for the program. He noted that 2 partners have responded- this information will be forwarded to the committee. Sionna added that industry support is important as it helps us make our case to the school for curriculum changes. Ron added we are trying to make changes to respond to industry needs, so it is always great to have industry support and input. Roderigo added that thanks to efforts like these, we were able to add a new fabrication class and we are in the process of adding an aerospace welding class (though cost is a concern). He also praised our faculty and said that we are excited to welcome our new full-time RioTech instructor, Sebi Parker, to the team!

VI. Reports from Industry Members: Melodee spoke about APS' focus on career pathways and their efforts to bring skilled trades and arts into schools. She mentioned how she has been in touch with committee member Shawn Coffey, former instructor at Valley High School, and he has continued to work with APS after leaving his teaching position. Valley currently has over 27 welding students and they are working on beautification efforts on campus and throughout the



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North Valley. She encouraged our industry partners to keep an eye on the rising youth workforce! One of these efforts are the Albuquerque Academies at three different high schools. These academies will be promoting engagement in trades & arts and supporting students in career pathways. She also spoke on the partnership APS has with United Way in order to speak with more middle schoolers, especially 8th graders. In the spring, United Way held career exploration events at Van Buren, Hays, and Wilson middle schools, working with over 300 8th graders and community employers. They will be holding more of these events on October 16th at Jackson Middle School and October 22nd at Kennedy Middle School. These events should help get students engaged with trades & arts and give them an idea of what it is like to be work ready and how to conduct oneself. Please share all productions and events with Melodee so she can share this information with APS high schools. She also invited committee members to be speakers for career events!

Peter said that NM Gas Company now has the most stabilized work force they've had since the pre-COVID era. They are still wanting to do more outreach with Ingenuity and want to get more involved with Welding and Plumbing to get their recruitment up. There are currently 7 openings in their construction department and they want to recruit students! Reach out to him if anyone is interested!

Wade stated that the demand for young welders is at an all-time high right now. He commends our program for taking the leap with advanced tech equipment. He said that very few shops use older tech and that CNM is the first educator he's seen that's trying and succeeding to stay with the times.

Ryan said that welding in NM is blowing up! Companies are coming to the state to keep producing and this is putting our state on the map. Seeing this growth in welding has been amazing!

Nicholas- Things are going well for Stainless Motors. They currently have 2 CNM welders and he loves the quality of our alumni. He praised the program for being top notch and approves of the move for more lab time. He did note that he is concerned about soft skills and metallurgy- he sees these skills starting to slip with new welders. He really emphasized the need for good problem solving skills as some new workers don't seem to have that down. Ashley mentioned that these soft skills are a top need for employers, these discussions about badges should address this.

Paul Disque said he didn't have much to add, but did speak on inspections. He said that the southwest areas are booming in demand right now!

Edward spoke about JATC 412's Accelerated Welding program. They recently had a contractor in need of apprentices and 412 put out a national call for this demand. They were able to tap 12 individuals, 7 of which were CNM students, and ran them through the program. These students were able to get their union certificates and passed an ambidextrous test within 6 weeks! He said that CNM is the biggest contributor to their programs and they are doing very well. Many of these individuals come out making \$43-47 per hour. There are over 30 CNM graduates in the program right now, with about 10% in the upper level program. He also praised CNM for producing a high caliber of students while offering affordable program prices, which is fantastic to see.

Currently, 412 is running an application window. This will open on November 14th from 12 to 4:30 pm. Anyone interested can call (505) 256-9257 or pick up an application at the local 412 training center at 411 Arizona St SE, 87108. This is an application for entry-level people! He also added that he is noticing a shift in work in the state- work is moving south into southern New Mexico, El Paso, and Las Cruces. Students should be mindful of this shift and recognize that they may have to relocate or travel for work- these kinds of jobs are not always available in the metro area. Demand for welders is high right now! As an example of this demand, 412 has 3 contracted, 24 hour, long-term projects running right now! The industry is growing and they are trying to move to keep up with that.

Paul Sanchez said that he is starting to see workers coming out of schools with a wider variety of skills! The idea that the younger generation doesn't know how to work is incorrect. However, this wider variety of skills creates higher



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competition and employers have to be picky about who they bring on. He said that currently, employers want a candidate that is stable, willing to learn, can show up on time, and can pass a background check! He also emphasized the importance of having life skills- working hard is better than talent when talent isn't working hard. He asked that students be mindful that traveling in the industry is common and that they have to maintain their relationships at work and at home to see success. Ironworker gets plenty of great students from CNM, but they could work on patience- some students don't seem to understand that they may not weld right away. They have to be patient and earn their time with a stinger! He also said they are always looking to find people and is willing to come into classes.

Ed said that he has a new intern through WCS- he is doing great! Reytek values variety in welding skills so he is glad that our program promotes that. He has been trying a new recruitment tactic with his Job-in-a-Box program, where applicants can put together parts from the box using their welding skills and apply for a position that way. He said Reytek currently has a great team and mentors for new employees. Their experienced welders are amazing and highly productive! He wants to establish a pipeline so that those that leave Reytek can be prepared for other employers. He will be in touch with the program and is excited to see the new lab!

Mike said that he works with several trade schools whose programs have waiting lists, so he is also seeing the high demand for welding. There will be an AWS welding meeting on 10/23, 6-7 pm. The theme is Weld Like a Girl and their out-of-state speaker is Shannon Alamore. She has worked for multiple different companies, is a certified inspector and educator, and is a professor of wellness and psychology. She is promoting women in trades and manufacturing, though anyone is welcome to attend especially women! He encourages students to attend the event, especially as it will be on campus! The event will be held in Smith Brasher Hall on CNM's Main Campus. Mike can share that information and welcomes industry members to join!

Jessica with CNM Ingenuity discussed contract trainings with employers. Business owners can contact Ingenuity to hold special trainings that focus on up-scaling. This training will be funded by Ingenuity and they can help with specific classes. Ingenuity has also been working with the department of Workforce Solutions for apprenticeships. Ingenuity is also looking to offer two contract training classes for Welding during the winter intersession. Please contact Jessica Metz (jmetz9@cnm.edu) if you are interested in working with Ingenuity.

VII. Adjournment: Roderigo told partners that a tour will be held after the meeting for those who have been unable to see the lab thus far. Adjourned at 3:19 pm.