

ELECTRIC UTILITY TRADES APPRENTICESHIP ADVISORY COMMITTEE

April 28, 2014

Western Technical College
Mauston, Wisconsin

DRAFT MINUTES

Members Present	Employer/Organization
Ardelt, Bruce	Oakdale Electric
Blenka, Al	Dairyland Power Cooperative
Chartier, Chris	WPPI Energy
Jeske, Ken	WE Energies
Kumm, Nicholas	Marshfield Utilities
Lorenz, Jim	Madison Gas & Electric Co.
Lukasavitz, Craig (Co-Chair)	IBEW Local 2150
Muench, Mark	Alliant Energy
Wicklund, Rick	Sun Prairie Utilities

Members Absent	Employer/Organization
Christopherson, Garry (Co-Chair)	Dairyland Power
Howard, Todd	Chippewa Valley Electric Coop
Miller, Eric	Kaukauna Utilities

Consultants & Guests	Employer/Organization
Crownhart, Ed	Mid-State Technical College
Larson, Randy	CVTC, Eau Claire
Morgan, Karen	BAS, Director
O'Sullivan, Kathy	Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards (BAS)
Smith, Owen	BAS

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1. The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Co-Chair Craig Lukasavitz, in conformity with the Wisconsin Open Meeting Law.
 2. A sign-in sheet was circulated to record those in attendance.
 3. Minutes of the October 18, 2013, meeting were approved as written.

4. Old Business

a. Follow-up Items from Previous Meeting

No follow-up items were needed from the previous meeting, but Owen Smith reported that this topic will be a standing item on the agenda.

b. 2014 Wisconsin Apprenticeship Biennial Conference Summary

Owen Smith reported the outcomes of the 2014 Biennial Wisconsin Apprenticeship Conference Summary, asked Members for their feedback, and explained the Bureau's plans for future Conferences.

i. Summary

Overall, the Conference was a great success, attracting the second highest Conference attendance—450 participants—despite below-freezing temperatures, and earning praise for its speakers and workshops. Unfortunately, winter temperatures forced most high schools throughout the state to close. As a result, the Expo was attended by only 50 of the more than 600 high school students who had registered.

ii. Speakers

All speakers earned high ratings from attendees, especially Governor Walker, national economist Anirban Basu and national author Mark Breslin. Governor Walker's speech earned the Conference brief media coverage in several state metropolitan news and television outlets.

iii. Workshops

Most workshops received very favorable feedback from attendees, particularly for their professional relevance. The Conference offered a series of introductory workshops on apprenticeship and key partners, such as "The Department of Public Instruction 101"; and several well-received workshops on youth apprenticeship and apprenticeship prep programs. The three most attended workshops were, "Preparing Students for Apprenticeship Programs," "Diversity in the Workplace," and "Understanding Generational Differences in the Workplace."

iv. Criticisms and Suggestions

The Conference received two common criticisms: it was held during the timeframe of year that poses the highest risk for severe cold and inclement weather; and the removed location of the Expo, a mile from the conference activities, limited the amount of time attendees could visit without missing workshops and discouraged some attendees from visiting at all.

Therefore, the most common suggestions for improvement were twofold: hold the Conference in spring or fall; and hold the Expo and Conference as unique, separate events.

Owen Smith asked the members for their responses to the Conference. A general discussion on the pros and cons followed. ...

v. Future Conferences

Owen Smith acknowledged the downside of scheduling the Conference in the first calendar quarter of the year and holding the Expo in a removed location from the main Conference area. However, he explained the factors that make the timeframe and hosting the two events together the most ideal plan.

Foremost, the first calendar quarter of the year is when the most apprenticeship stakeholders are available. Spring is when the construction sector, the largest sector of apprenticeship stakeholders, typically prepares to return to work, sometimes as early as mid-March and public schools generally have spring break. Fall is the beginning of the academic calendar for high schools and technical colleges, and the construction trades typically remain active through October. Late fall and early winter contain deer hunting season, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Second, the few hotels that can provide all Conference accommodations are most likely to offer the state lodging rate during the off-season months. The Conference requires a large meeting space, five-to-seven breakout rooms for workshops, and at least 20,000 square feet for the Expo. Many hotels can meet the first two requirements, but very few can satisfy all three requirements.

Third, hosting the Expo and Conference as separate events on alternating years would place the Bureau in perpetual planning and fundraising cycles for the last half of each year. Conference preparations typically take at least six months, and the Bureau would be continuously asking its stakeholder base for donations.

Therefore, the Bureau will present feedback from the state committees to the Advisory Council with two recommendations: the next Conference be held in early March to maximize the potential for favorable weather without conflicting with preparations for the construction year; and the Expo in the same location as the Conference but one day prior to the opening of the Conference to maximize attendance.

c. For Action: Revisions to Substation Electrician Job Book

Owen Smith reported that he added a new, boilerplate section titled, "How to Use This Book." The section establishes the Job Book as a necessary component of a hybrid program; details how the Job Book aligns with the Apprentice Contract; and includes instructions on proper use for both the apprentice and the journey worker.

Owen asked members to approve the new section. A general discussion followed on the contents. Members agreed that the content was helpful in establishing the purpose of the Job Book and how it is to be used.

***Action:** A motion to approve the Job Book with additions, as written, was made and seconded. The motion passed.*

d. Apprenticeship Advisory Council Update

i. Apprenticeship Awareness Toolkit

Owen Smith walked members through the Apprenticeship Awareness Toolkit website, a one-stop resource on Apprenticeship for high school guidance counselors, teachers and staff to assist their raising awareness of registered apprenticeship among high school students and parents.

The website was created and is administered by the Department of Public Instruction.

Key content includes:

- An explanation of registered apprenticeship as well as a separate explanation of youth apprenticeship, which explicitly states it is "not the same as [registered] apprenticeship."
- Apprenticeship Salary Chart, a downloadable document that compares the potential earning of an apprentice to an individual on a four-year degree program
- Educator How to Sheet, which advises educators on classroom strategies for engaging students about apprenticeship, such as inviting industry representatives as guest speakers
- Apprenticeship Promotional Flyers, five versions, one per audience, communicate three central points to parents, educators, students, and more: apprentices earn a good wage without incurring student debt; they earn college credit, and they earn nationally recognized credentials.
- Sample Apprenticeship Pathway Program of Study, which outlines how high school general education courses and specific electives prepare students for potential apprenticeships in different economic sectors, such as manufacturing

Owen reminded members that the Toolkit is an organic, living website that is to be updated with new material as stakeholders see fit. He asked the Committee whether it preferred to publish additional material to the site.

ii. Parents' Guide to Apprenticeship

Karen Morgan reported that the Bureau will produce a guide to apprenticeship this fall for guidance counselors to distribute during career counseling sessions with parents and students. The document will be modeled after the Wisconsin Technical College System program guide. The project was recommended by guidance counselors who attended the apprenticeship presentation by Ms. Morgan and Mr. Clay Tschillard at the Wisconsin School Counselors Association meeting this spring. The counselors specifically requested a print publication because many students do not have access to computers and/or internet, particularly in rural areas.

e. Other

No additional items were brought forth.

5. New Business

a. BAS Personnel Update

Owen Smith reported several recent personnel changes within the Bureau:

Liz Pusch is the new Apprenticeship Training Representative (ATR) for Area 10, which includes Dodge, Ozaukee and Washington counties. Liz worked formerly as a legislative aide in Madison. She is from the Dodge, Ozaukee and Washington county area. The area was served previously by ATR Barb Robakowski.

Andrea Loeffelholz is the new ATR for Area 6, which includes Dane and Rock counties. Andrea worked formerly as a grant specialist for the WI Department of Transportation in Madison. The area was served previously by ATR Mary Pierce, who accepted a Policy Analyst position within the Bureau's Administrative Office in Madison.

Darrel Cappetta is the new coordinator of the Veterans in Piping program. Darrel was previously in the Office of Veterans services where he worked as a DVO.

Kay Haishuk, ATR for Milwaukee County, announced that she will retire in June. Kay has worked with the Bureau for many years.

b. Reactivation of Utility Worker / Field Representative Apprenticeship

Owen Smith reported that the Bureau reactivated the two-year Utility Worker/Field Representative (2 year/320 hours PRI) apprenticeship program. Randy Larson assisted by researching curriculum and business interest. He confirmed that curriculum is available and a sufficient amount of apprentices and employers are interested.

Owen Smith noted that this item will be on the fall agenda to monitor its progress.

c. For Action: Helmets to Hardhats and Related Revisions to State Standards

This item was not discussed. It was included mistakenly, because the program applies to construction trades only.

d. 2013 WI Act 57 (Apprenticeship Completion Award Program) and DWD 295.25 (Emergency Rule)

The Department of Workforce Development is drafting an emergency administrative rule to implement 2013 Act 57, the Apprenticeship Completion Award Program (ACAP). ACAP was passed in November 2013, and will be active from June 2, 2014 through June 30, 2015. Developed by the State Legislature and signed by Gov. Walker, ACAP partially reimburses eligible apprentices, sponsors and employers for partial related instruction costs. Available funding totals \$450,000.

ACAP will be administered by the Bureau, as directed by law. BAS may reimburse the apprentices, the employer and the sponsor—whichever incurred the cost—a maximum of \$1,000 for up to 25% of the tuition, book, materials and other course fees directly associated with related instruction. An apprentice is eligible when he or she successfully completes either the one-year calendar anniversary of the contract start date or the entire apprenticeship program within the ACAP performance period.

Karen Morgan reported several key considerations and requirements for implementing the program. First, it will be a learning experience for the Bureau, and BAS will pay close attention to any lessons learned. Second, the Bureau will require the sponsor to confirm that the apprentice is in good standing to qualify for the one-year reimbursement. If an apprentice is eligible, the reimbursement will go to the party that incurred the cost. Split reimbursements can be made if more than one party incurred expense.

The Bureau plans to present performance data to the Legislature after the program concludes in the hopes that the program is continued in subsequent fiscal years. ACAP is projected to be used extensively by apprenticeship stakeholders, because similar funds available through the SAGE Grant (2011-2013) were disbursed entirely. Ideally, all funding will be disbursed before the performance period concludes, which would show a high need for additional funding.

A general discussion on the history and implementation of the program followed. Members inquired whether the apprentice and the employer can be reimbursed, if they both incurred costs. Karen confirmed that ACAP reimbursements can be split between multiple parties, and emphasized that all of the payments would be deducted from the \$1,000 maximum.

e. Wisconsin Apprenticeship Website WisconsinApprentice.com is a privately owned and operated website that culls and collects news articles relating to apprenticeship from multiple news sites into a single blog format. The owner created the website as a public service to apprenticeship, and approached DWD to sponsor the site, but DWD declined. The Bureau is sharing the website with state committees because it may be a useful information tool and because the website address is close enough to the Bureau's website address, wisconsinapprenticeship.org, that stakeholders may inadvertently confuse the two.

f. Other

Karen Morgan distributed an informational flyer on veteran employment grants available currently through the Department of Workforce Development and the Department of Veterans Affairs. Governor Walker signed the grant program into law as part of the 2013-15 state budget, following approval by the Wisconsin Legislature.

Employers can receive a state grant of up to \$10,000 over four years when they hire a veteran who is eligible to participate. Participating veterans must meet statutory unemployment requirements and be rated with a 50% or more service-connected disability by the Federal Department Veteran Administrator rating schedule. DWD/Office of Veteran Services will identify veterans who meet the disability requirements.

The state grant is in addition to up to \$9,000 in tax credits that employers can receive under the existing federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit program for hiring a disabled person.

6. WTCS Update

Ed Crownhart distributed the course sequence for the Electric Metering Technician apprenticeship program at Mid-State Technical College. The courses had been retitled.

7. Review of Program Participants

As of April 1, 2014, active participants included 242 apprentices and 83 sponsors. The apprentice total is its lowest since 2005. The employer total is slightly less than the nine-year average.

8. The next meeting date is Monday, September 29, 2014, at 10:00 a.m. at Oakdale Rural Electric Cooperative in Tomah.

9. The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

10. Follow up items

The Bureau will send the Substation Electrician Job Book to the printer and mail copies to the State Committee Members.

Submitted by Owen Smith, Program & Policy Analyst