

Imperial Valley College/San Diego State University/Workforce Development  
**Renewable Energy Advisory Committee**  
**-Minutes-**

Thursday, October 30, 2014  
07:30-09:00  
SDSU's Center for Energy Sustainability  
Brawley, California

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**Members Present:** Jeff Brothers, Dave Edwards, Charlie Hosken, Ricardo Jimenez, Edwin Obergfell, Efrain Silva and Bruce Townsend

**Members Absent:** Sergio Cabanas, Rosa Dominguez, Mike Lopez, Arkie Mayes, Jesse Montano, Tracy Rascoe, Michael Sabath and Jim Turner

**Guests:** John Fahim, Larry McLaughlin and Armando Ramirez

**Presiding:** Glen Allegranza

**Recorder:** Rick Johnson

**Informational Items/Minutes:**

- Mr. Allegranza called the meeting to order at 7:30.
- Introductions
  - Mr. Allegranza welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**MOTION:** Mr. Edwards moved to approve the May 1, 2014 minutes as presented.

**SECOND:** Mr. Fahim

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Fahim inquired support for recruiting a full time renewable energy instructor, at IVC. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Johnson recalled that we were to be invited to provide input during the next round of discussions with the staffing committee, to be scheduled in November.

**VOTE:** Unanimous

**Current/Proposed Projects - SDSU:**

- Rick Johnson, SDSU provided the committee updates for ongoing projects at the Center for Energy Resources, which included:
  - Informed the committee that Sol Orchard's project had been completed and commissioned for operation in June 2014.
  - Explained to the committee that the Power Plant Simulator has been installed and is operational. Please schedule classes!
  - Apprised the committee that the Hyperlight project has been completed. In return, they are applying for another grant that will use dairy manure to create additional power along with a byproduct of bio fuel. They are seeking letters of support.
  - No current updates on the LEIDOS or Interra projects.

- SDSU offered a very successful international Renewable Energy Boot Camp for Teachers, over the summer, with 34 enrollees.
- SDSU is seeking funding through WIA/WIB in order to provide the Renewable Energy Foundation course to Simbol employees. Currently, we are waiting upon an ETP grant submitted by Simbol before we commence with the course.
- Recapped a series of meetings between Cal Energy and various educational entities and service providers within the southeastern region of California with an anticipated commencement during fall 2015. Mr. McLaughlin added that various community colleges are working on current curriculum that will benefit industry. Discussion ensued.
- Briefed the committee on upon the two Department of Labor (DOL) evaluations, which included highlights of the positive feedback that SDSU received from the physical evaluation, while providing solutions to areas that were reported less than satisfactory by the desk audit (e.g. schedule more classes, provide more training opportunities and skill development, etc.).

#### **Current/Proposed Projects - IVC:**

- Rick Johnson updated the committee on the following items:
  - Notified the committee that he attended the NSF PI Conference last week in rainy and cold Washington, DC. He added, our educational collaboration is more comprehensive and inclusive than any other projects presented at the conference. Mr. Johnson suggested that we send a contingency to next year's conference in order to make a presentation. Discussion ensued with affirmations from Mr. Brothers and Mr. McLaughlin.
    - Mr. McLaughlin stated that what we are doing within Imperial County surpasses any other of the programs that he has seen throughout California. All of the coursework that we are developing are for long term positions.
    - Mr. Brothers added that Imperial Valley is the epicenter of the renewable energy industry
    - Mr. Townsend added that IID has an educational initiative targeting K-12 grades.
    - Mr. Johnson informed the committee that he has been asked to assist in the development of the educational materials, by IID Energy Manager Carl Stills.
    - Mr. Obergfell, "IVROP has also been involved."
    - Mr. Fahim reaffirmed that IVC has completed the Alternative Energy Certificate, the NABCEP Certificate, while the Power Plant and Alternative Fuels Certificate programs are still under development and/or consideration. He expanded by stating that some of the programs conflict with Agricultural and Automotive certifications. Discussion ensued.
  - Encouraged that IVC spend some additional money from the NSF funds to market the various programs.
  - Notified the committee that the NSF grant will close in June 2015.

**Action Items:**

- None

**New Business:**

- With new members present, Mr. Allegranza reviewed the reason and role of the renewable energy advisory committee, stating, "Education requires input from industry."
- Mr. Fahim asked, "We always discuss hiring students at entry-level positions. What is need in industry; troubleshooting or optimization/"
  - Mr. Hosken responded, "We have string monitoring, which would be too expensive for large operations. Be we monitor throughout the day, which may end since the software company will be closing the access."
  - Mr. Jimenez suggested that they stay in contact. His instrumentation class can recreate monitoring codes at high level devices."
  - Mr. Silva asked, "How is your ability to hire with current project labor agreements (PLA)?"
  - Mr. Hosken, "We have to go through the unions. There are three of them. Sometimes we go out and recruit people to join the union which are all seniority based."
  - Mr. Silva added, "One of the selling points is that these projects hire locals."
  - Mr. Hosken, "Not entirely true."
  - Mr. Brothers, "It's challenging to jockey among the various labor groups."
  - Mr. Silva, "What can we do as educational institutions?"
  - Mr. Hosken, "Not sure. The union operates as seniority-based. In return, the seniority is not within Imperial County."
  - Mr. Fahim, "The PLA is only for the construction phase, right?"
  - Someone responded, "Yes."
  - Mr. McLaughlin, "Same issue in our area (Palm Springs) with the unions. We try to maintain good relationships. We invite them to speak to our classes. They inform the students that many of these employees hired for projects start off as 'trainees,' then become apprentices."
  - Mr. Townsend, "What do we do when we reach PV build-up? Where do they go then?"
  - Mr. McLaughlin, "I think Imperial Valley is doing a better job in training long-term employees. Better than anyone else in the state. You are all doing it right for long-range jobs and not for just short term positions."
  - Mr. Brothers, "Storage facilities will generate new technologies, with lots of intelligence. This should be the nucleus of renewable energy."
  - Mr. Fahim, "The missing link is research and engineering programs."
  - Mr. Townsend, "Battery storage will turn more eyes to Imperial Valley."
  - Mr. Johnson, "Dr. Pearson is working closely with USAB and CETYS in order to collaborate in offering engineering classes at SDSU. Plus we are always looking at new opportunities such as new NSF grants in Water Sustainability or new proposals such as the agave project and solar panels over canals." Laughter and light chatter ensued.
  - Mr. Hosken, "Last union comment. We have to pay a laborer \$55/hour to dig holes."

