

## **NCTC Auto Body Advisory Board Fall Meeting**

Meeting called to order on December 12, 2023 at 5:55 p.m.

Introduction of members in attendance: Kent Wagner, Cody Johnson, Chuck Hoard, Mike Paulson, Shawn Carson, Jackson Brouse, Morgan Rude and Monty Johnson (available via phone).

The agenda was reviewed and no additions were added.

Kent went through current enrollment; 12 - 1<sup>st</sup> year students, 1 – 2<sup>nd</sup> year student and 1 - 1<sup>st</sup> year student to be added for spring semester as a transfer from Wahpeton, ND. Two female high school students have indicated their desire to enroll in Auto Body for fall 2024 if there is a 1<sup>st</sup> year program. Kent doesn't know their intentions as a course is currently not planned to be offered. Interest from high school students has been very high, the most Kent has seen in a long time. Shawn Carson mentioned that almost all the auto body shops he calls on are looking to hire technicians with wages and benefits up dramatically. "They're able to write their own salary", he stated. Chuck Hoard had the same sentiment. Discussion then proceeded to student recruitment ideas. Chuck suggested encouraging auto body shops looking for technicians to pay for students' tuition and/or tools and tie it to an employment contract. A new program very recently passed in Minnesota that makes college tuition free for students coming from families with annual income under \$80,000. Cody passed out copies of a news release that shared some details of the bill. Mike asked how many 1<sup>st</sup> year students are expected to re-enroll in fall 2024 as some of them enrolled in auto body because there wasn't a 1<sup>st</sup> year auto mechanics program. Kent thought he would lose only 3 of the 13. The board would like the college to decide as early as possible on whether they are going to offer a 1<sup>st</sup> year program, recruit students for it and hire an instructor to teach 1<sup>st</sup> year auto body.

A potential deterrent to student enrollment is the assumption by recruitment that students will want to attain an AAS (Associate of Applied Science) degree and when some students hear about the non-trade classes involved (English, Math, etc.) they lose interest. The advisory board unanimously feels it's important for recruiting that students know up front that there is a choice of AAS degree or a certificate that doesn't require taking non-trade classes. The board believes more students could be recruited if they are made aware of the certificate and allowed to make that choice without recruitment assumptions or undo pressure.

Perkins Equipment – Kent has received the ProSpot I4S Spot Welder but hasn't had enough time to spend learning its use. It appears to be a very powerful learning tool that will teach students the latest welding technology available to modern auto body shops that will match OEM welds.

Kent has applied for an updated SIM paint sprayer that will allow viewing on a large screen for multiple students.

NCTC Auto Body and Auto Mechanics career day and car show collaborations with Street Wizards Car Club. Kent manned the NCTC Auto Body booth during two Street Wizards car shows, during the Pennington County Fair in July and Riverfest in August. While there were only a few young people stopping by to ask about the auto body program, interest by participants in the car shows was very good and it is hoped that they will influence/encourage their children or grandchildren to look into the program. Kent would like to conduct a career day/car show at the college this spring that is more targeted to high school students and offers them the opportunity to see the facilities, do some activities

and learn about a career in auto body from people involved in the business. Discussion was had on when to have this event and the best time of day so students and their parents could attend. Mike and Chuck made themselves available to help Kent organize the event.

Board agreed there are 2 things that must be addressed before our spring meeting:

- 1) Clarification by NCTC on fall 2024 recruitment and instructor
- 2) Finalizing plans for a NCTC/Street Wizards career days car show this spring.

Cody made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Mike seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:25