



**Mountain Desert Economic Partnership**  
Regional Education and Economic Development

**Team 3 Meeting Minutes**

April 21, 2020

3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Zoom

**In attendance:**

Matt Wells, MDCP JPA

Kendle Crowell, MDCP JPA

Andy Page, MDCP JPA

Sheila Thornton, OneFuture Coachella Valley

Kim McNulty, OneFuture Coachella Valley

Frank Castanos, Victor Valley College

Lisa K. Kennedy, Victor Valley College

Carol Tsushima, SBCSS Alliance for Education

Chad Brooks, Chaparral High School

Jeff Dunagan, General Atomics

Shehzad Bhojani, SBCSS Alliance for Education

Ryan Holman, Snowline JUSD

Rebecca Rubio, Lucerne Valley USD

Lorraine Collins, Victor Valley UHSD

Willie Jones, Serrano HS

Susan Drake, Supervisor Robert Lovingood's Office

Sarina Muhammad, Goodwill Southern CA

**1. *Welcome and Introductions***

**2. *What is MDEP's role during this crisis? How does MDEP stay relevant and emerge from the crisis poised to lead/drive economic development?***

- Beacon of hope
- Help economic development and recovery through innovative ideas
- Sense of community - use existing and build new relationships and networks through this group to achieve results
- If people didn't know what MDEP was before COVID, they should coming out of it.
- Team-specific work:
  - Team 1: Innovation - How do current realities impact innovation support needs? Before, innovation targets were largely around new businesses/startups. Are there innovation supports that can be offered to support existing businesses to make money during these

challenging times (e.g. can we support businesses learning how to pivot their focus)?  
What does our economy have as advantages (e.g. we aren't heavy in the hotel business) and thus opportunities?

- Team 2: What strengths does the drafted value proposition to 4-year universities have in the distance learning environment? Students need skills aligned to industries with jobs. Public retirement is currently down \$1T (21%) - a squeeze in expansion may be coming. How do we pivot to move forward?
- Team 4: Essential skills - Is there a subset of essential skills that can be deployed as key in the current economic environment? For instance, can MDEP deploy a Top Ten Essential Skills for Remote Hiring/Job seeking in this environment, etc. that would lift up students to be an asset as HD weathers and emerges from this situation? Students exiting HS right now aren't going to be able to drop off a resume like before or conduct an interview like before. How can we support their transition to the workforce or later ed?

### **3. Team 3 Update and Projects Underway:**

- Mechatronics surveys and work done so far:
  - 20 educators have taken the survey so far and we are hoping to receive more feedback from VVC and BCC staff.
  - Only 4 industry partners have taken the second version of the survey.
  - Jeff Dunagan commented that the survey is long and takes a pretty deep dive into skills, so it may be best if we backwards map from what educators say they're doing and what they are willing to add to existing curriculum, and then hold a Zoom meeting with industry partners to briefly discuss and get direction from there.
  - Jeff added that what we sent out for the industry survey was far deeper than what the educators need at this point so we need to get more to a surface level and let the educators decide how deep they want to go into specific questions. Employers don't necessarily need to advise on specifics that need to be taught, but more a generalized set of skills to be taught. Ryan Holman agreed.
- Ryan raised the topic that with what's occurring across the education system, and if we are assuming that Fall 2020 rolls out in a traditional way, who's ready for implementation of a Mechatronics curriculum at the onset of the year? What is the willingness by districts to implement?
- Carol Tsushima asked how the high schools and community colleges can partner and use existing programs and curriculum at the Colleges, since they already have Mechatronics programs. They would still be high school classes, but held at college campuses that have the resources.
- Frank Castanos discussed the VVC training center at SCLA, which is finally ready to open:
  - Their equipment from Amatrol and Klein has been assembled.
  - They have the same industrial mechanical equipment as the InTech Center, as well as computer labs.
  - Working with GA to move electronics equipment to that location.
  - The HD Manufacturer's Council indicated they wanted VVC to focus on mechanical and welding programs and the electrical component wasn't as high of a need, so they didn't purchase that equipment yet.

- For manufacturing, they will start off with incumbent workers with hopes to make it a for-credit program.
- Students can start taking electrical classes now. Industrial Electric will be on hold or can be modified.
- Frank would love to see HS classes come utilize the center, whatever that may look like.
- Frank asked what is the most doable model to get HS students involved at the training center? How to build a parallel or merging track?
  - Willie Jones stated we should follow the same patterns of Early College Academies that already exist. Classes 5th and 6th period and on campus after school. Dual Enrollment where VVC approved instructors teach on the HS campus. College staff could visit the HSs to see if their equipment is up to par with what students need for the curriculum. During the summer, additional classes could be offered.
  - Some HS programs don't have the same equipment that the Training Center has, so those students would need to travel to the Training Center to use their equipment, It depends on the school and what their setup is.
  - Transportation is always an issue
- Could our shift be a virtual phase of introducing students to mechatronics? That would serve our long term vision and be utilized with younger students later on.
- Using Nepris for virtual tours would build a bridge between the high schools and colleges.
- The labor market data is showing this crisis will make the employment gap much worse and there's not enough people in the education system in the skilled trades, so we don't want to wait on getting this program off the ground.
- Once we start backwards mapping from the skillset survey, we can look into equipment needs and how to borrow and share with the CCs.
- Subcommittee meeting was scheduled to map out how high school programs feed into what is being offered at the College. Same members on the subcommittee as before.
  - May 5th at 10am

#### **4. Nepris Discussion:**

- All student internships and WBL opportunities are no longer taking place. What is an alternative?
- Now is the time when meaty conversations between students and industry should be had.
- Jeff Dunagan and Steve Tyrrell have both participated in Nepris. Jeff explained what the platform is about and why he is advocating for more buy in:
  - He set up a chat on professional development
  - Nepris organizes it, hosts/moderates the call, records/edits the chats, and posts them on their website
  - Jeff was impressed with the company and the ability to get industry representatives into the classroom using a very smooth process and not
  - Shezad added that the talks can range from 25 mins to an hour
  - Industry chats are a great way to limit the impact on teachers (busses, liability, time constraints, etc.) and industry partners (not having to leave their work site, commute, etc.)
  - Once a partner registers on Nepris, teachers can contact them requesting further chats and asking for specific topics.

- Matt Wells asked if this is something that fits in within Team 3's overall plan moving forward:
  - Jeff replied that as an industry rep, it would make it easier for far more industry partners to participate and impact students
  - We could use it specifically for panel discussions and a video series about what Mechatronics is, what are the careers, etc.?
  - Frank would like to see programs ready to offer before we start utilizing Nepris for outreach.
  - It is a method to give students an insight to what the Mechatronics industry looks like while they can't do physical tours or field trips.
  - The handoff piece is an important aspect that is missing for our students, so it could help fill in that gap.
  - We aren't just looking at our HS students in the long term - we want younger students to understand the economic opportunities, so Nepris allows us to reach out to elementary and middle school students to build a pipeline of interest and awareness of the Mechatronics pathway.
  - School districts also need to have the same buy in to using the platform. The districts have to see this as more than a CTE thing. Nepris crosses over all four of the MDEP teams, and can reach multiple audiences that we are trying to reach including CC students, adult ed students, etc.
  - It's an open door with a broad reach to connect more students.
  - It's also an opportunity for Community Colleges to be able to show off the equipment and programs they have
- Shehzad shared about the Leading Through Disruption series where they are inviting industry experts from across the county and ask them about how they are dealing with this crisis, what are some leadership skills they have deployed throughout this and what are some lessons/advice for students.
  - Jeff will be participating and Matt and Kendle will find other partners who may want to be involved.
- Subcommittee meeting was scheduled to discuss Nepris and plan its use to build a Mechatronics series for next school year.
  - Subcommittee Members: Jeff, Matt, Shehzad, rep from VVC
  - April 30th at 12pm

## **5. Tactical Plan Review**

Matt Wells reviewed the tactical plan and what our next project should be as subcommittees work to complete the Mechatronics academy program.

- Does Nepris fit within our tactical plan and team's intention?
  - Jeff agreed that we do need a plan in place to "close the loop", but as things are changing and evolving, we need a way to connect students and industry partners in a less intrusive fashion and Nepris fits right in to this.
  - This platform can match students with the economic opportunities in our region, which has been an intent of this group from the beginning
  - The purpose of the group was to work backwards from jobs that exist to get more students into those jobs. Nepris can be used as a tool that can drive industry engagement in demand areas. It can be tracked in correlation with the next steps in a

regional context (increase to X number of industry participants on the Nepris platform in order to have penetration of X amount of teachers and students)

- We can track students who had exposure on Nepris to see if they attain employment
- How many students had the engagement at the K12 level through Nepris, had exposure will allow us to stay in alignment with one another
- Ryan agreed that it is a powerful platform, but trying to get something off the ground within the next 4-6 weeks before school is out is a challenge. However, how we leverage it for the coming year in the Fall to obtain the outputs outlined in the tactical plan seems very reasonable.
- Chad is very interested in Nepris. Any time that they can introduce their students to industry is powerful for the students. Allowing General Atomics or others to continually introduce their schedule would lend to using Nepris often. Introducing students to industry at the onset of school and continuing with those relationships and building the understanding of industry would be tremendous.
- Willie added that it fits right in with the CTE classes and could backwards map to integrate in the non-CTE classes. It would also strengthen partnerships between the HS's and Community Colleges and industry partners.
- We can build the collaborative infrastructure now because it serves as the engagement piece in our tactical plan that will allow us to push through a message to students. We can identify and highlight the leaders in our region within Mechatronics and pilot it the efforts there.
- Ryan added that as the Fall shapes itself we can put ourselves in a place to be nimble with the whole CTE design, how to make distance learning work in a new environment. For now, less is more and we can start with Mechatronics in mind and expand organically from there.

## **6. Other Items**

Steve Tyrrell suggested an idea about coming up with a survey for students (similar to the ones on Facebook that identify an interest or quality) that would help them identify an area of interest - like a very quick and fun aptitude test.

- Sheila liked the idea. We need to be more affirming of what is emerging within them earlier on.
- It will be addressed at a later meeting

## **7. MDEP Conclave Save the Date - August 19, 2020**

- The hope is to hold this event in person, but we will plan accordingly as the time comes.