Graphics and Printing Advisory Committee Meeting

CHAIRPERSON: Melinda Schmidt, Printing Services Supervisor, Printing Services Supervisor HOST: Bobbi Waddle, Instructor, Graphics and Printing Technology			
MEETING DATE: November 8, 2024	MEETING TIME:MEETING PLACE:11:00 AM - 1:00 PMBuilding 253E. Room 15		
RECORDER: Bobbi Waddle		PREVIOUS MEETING: October 27, 2023	

MEMBERS: (P=PRESENT) Add nonmembers present to bottom of table with heading "Others Present" (OP=)

(P / OP)	Name and Title (List all members)	Business Affiliation	
Р	Melinda Schmidt Printing Services Supervisor	City of Killeen	
Р	Rueben Rodriguez Graphic Designer, Printing Services	KISD	
	Valerie Payson Owner	VP Printing	
Р	Duane Robinson Graphic Design Teacher	KISD Career Center	
	Melissa Rosales Owner/Operator	Air & Armor Awards	
Р	Mark Pignato Service Technician/Owner	Color Mark	
	Jeff Raver Color Specialist	Ricoh	
Р	Gavin Tweeten Human Resource Coordinator	Ricoh	
Р	Peggy Rush Xerox Account Executive	Xerox	
Р	Molly Lesley Owner/Operator/Graphic Designer	Udderly Creative	
Р	Andrew Mohr American Trigger Pullers Apparel	Production Operator	
Р	Leera Calaunan Reprographics Manager	Central Texas College	
Р	Joshua Moore Graphic Design Teacher	CCISD Career Center	

Р	John "JD" Stovall Director of Production, Specialty Products	Ubeo
	Michelle Flores Interim Director, Marketing & Outreach	Central Texas College
OTHER		
(P/OP)	Name and Title (List all members)	Business Affiliation
	Dr. Tamara Clunis Vice Chancellor - Instruction and Workforce Initiatives	Central Texas College
	Dr. Melanie Baak Dean of Career & Technical Instruction	Central Texas College
	Ms. Veronica Martin Associate Dean of Career & Technical Instruction	Central Texas College
	Ms. Melissa Gonzalez Department Chair, Industrial Technology	Central Texas College
Р	Ms. Linda McCottrell Director, CATE Center Advising	Central Texas College
Р	Mr. William Jones Director of Career Services	Central Texas College
	Ms. Lesley McGough Coordinator, Instructional Program Support Services	Central Texas College
	Ms. Jinette Campbell Director, Instructional Program Support Services	Central Texas College

AGENDA

Agenda Item	Action, Discussion, Information	Responsibility
Call Meeting to Order		B. Waddle
Approve Minutes from Last Meeting		M. Schmidt
Introduction of members and guests		M. Schmidt
Old Business:		B. Waddle
New Business:	 Program/College Updates: Certificate/Degree Programs Occupational Skills Awards Enrollments Facilities/Equipment Internships/Work-based learning Marketing & Recruitment 	M. Schmidt B. Waddle All Members
	Student Activities: • Achievements • Projects/Initiatives	M. Schmidt B. Waddle
	 Certifications/Memberships Adobe Certifications Printing United Alliance Certifications Legislative Changes PIA MidAmerica 	M. Schmidt B. Waddle Industry Partners
Curriculum Decisions	Industry Updates Labor Market/Workplace Trends Certifications required or preferred Emerging Technological Additions/Deletions/Recommendations	M. Schmidt Industry Partners M. Schmidt
		Industry Partners

MINUTES

Key Discussion Points	Discussion		
Old Business:	No old business discussed.		
New Business:	Bobbi Waddle opened the session with program updates, including student enrollment trends, newly approved certificates, and key activities undertaken by the department. These include hands-on projects like trailer wraps, screen printing, and Halloween poster contests, emphasizing practical skills and industry relevance.		
	Key developments included three new Occupational Skills Awards (OSAs) in Graphic Design for Print Production, Prepress and Print Production, and Wide Format Graphic Specialization. These certifications aim to address industry feedback, ensuring students gain specialized skills like color profiling, pagination, and prepress operations, which help them stand out in the job market.		
	Participants discussed the importance of aligning academic training with real- world needs, such as troubleshooting digital production machines and preparing students for both digital and offset printing. Industry partners highlighted the growing demand for professionals proficient in digital printing, color management, and emerging technologies like G7 certification, which bridges offset and digital printing processes. Attendees emphasized the need for internships and job placements to provide students with hands-on experience and career opportunities.		
	Emerging trends included the adoption of direct-to-film (DTF) printing, UV printing for customized items, and the ongoing transition from offset to digital printing. Industry partners encouraged incorporating modern tools into the curriculum, like UV printers and DTF machines, to motivate students with quick, tangible results.		
	Internship opportunities, strategic partnerships, and exposure to large-scale print facilities were identified as crucial for building a skilled workforce. Participants agreed on the importance of collaboration between high schools, colleges, and industry partners to bridge gaps and provide clear pathways for students entering the field.		
	During the meeting, industry partners shared valuable insights into the skills gap they observe and the technological trends shaping the printing industry. They emphasized the importance of ensuring that students graduate with practical knowledge that aligns with current industry demands, particularly as the field evolves rapidly with digital advancements.		
	Input from Industry Partners		
	One of the recurring themes was the difficulty in finding employees who are proficient in both traditional and digital printing methods. Industry representatives noted that many graduates lack critical hands-on experience, particularly in areas like print-ready design, understanding bleeds, color		

profiling, and the operation of advanced machinery. They pointed out that while many designers excel in digital platforms (e.g., designing for screens in RGB), they often struggle with the nuances of preparing files for print in CMYK or ensuring compatibility with production standards.
Several partners stressed the importance of certifications, such as G7 certification, which equips individuals with the ability to ensure color consistency across both digital and offset printing. This certification was highlighted as a significant advantage in the job market, with certified professionals being highly sought after by top companies. Industry leaders also discussed the value of preflight tools in software like Adobe InDesign, which helps streamline file preparation for production, and encouraged incorporating this knowledge into the curriculum.
To address the skills gap, industry representatives advocated for stronger internship programs and partnerships with print shops. They shared examples of companies willing to invest in housing for interns or train new hires on-site to address workforce shortages, particularly in offset and digital press operations.
Technology Trends and Recommendations
Emerging technologies and processes in the industry were a major topic of discussion. Industry professionals highlighted the growing adoption of Direct-to-Film (DTF) printing, a versatile and cost-effective method for creating vibrant designs on apparel, including challenging materials like polyester blends. DTF was praised for its consistency across various fabrics and its ability to maintain color vibrancy, which solves common issues with direct-to-garment (DTG) printing.
UV printing was another key focus, with its ability to print on non-traditional materials like tumblers, golf balls, and phone cases, offering a broader range of customization options. This technology enables the application of full-color designs on items that would traditionally rely on laser engraving, making it an exciting area for students to explore.
Additionally, wide-format printing and flatbed printers were mentioned as essential tools for creating large-scale and specialty signage. Industry representatives emphasized that students who gain experience with these technologies will have a competitive edge in the market. Some companies are also transitioning to hybrid systems that combine roll-to-roll and flatbed capabilities, which require specialized training to operate efficiently.
Partners also discussed the decline in offset printing, with many companies consolidating to larger presses while transitioning smaller jobs to digital platforms. The need for professionals who can operate both types of equipment and bridge the gap between these methods was emphasized, with a particular focus on understanding color management and calibration for consistent results.

Suggestions for Curriculum Enhancements		
To better prepare students, partners recommended incorporating equipment like UV printers and DTF machines into the curriculum. These technologies not only reflect industry trends but also allow students to produce quick, tangible results, which can be highly motivating. Additionally, teaching color profiling, troubleshooting production machines, and using tools like Adobe Creative Suite for prepress workflows were highlighted as essential components.		
Overall, industry representatives stressed the importance of balancing foundational knowledge with exposure to cutting-edge technologies. By fostering collaboration between educators and industry leaders, the program can create graduates who are well-prepared to enter a competitive and evolving field.		
The Printing United event, described as the largest printing industry conference in the United States, was a key topic discussed during the meeting. It serves as a hub for professionals to explore new technologies, network with peers, and gain insight into the latest industry trends. Vendors from small businesses to large corporations showcase their products, offering attendees a comprehensive view of advancements in printing technology and applications.		
Highlights and Feedback		
Attendees from the meeting who participated in Printing United shared their experiences and reflections. While the event remains a critical space for discovering tools and trends, there was a shared sentiment that innovation at this year's event was less groundbreaking compared to previous years. Industry veterans noted that fewer manufacturers were introducing new technologies, with most vendors focusing on iterative improvements to existing products rather than revolutionary developments.		
Despite this, the event still provided significant value, particularly for those new to the industry. For first-time attendees, Printing United offered a chance to see a wide range of equipment and tools in action, such as wide-format printers, finishing equipment, and digital presses. The sheer scale of the event was described as inspiring, with attendees leaving with a clearer understanding of the industry's possibilities and challenges.		
Key Technologies Showcased		
 Flatbed and Wide-Format Printers: Many vendors focused on showcasing advancements in wide-format and flatbed printing, which continue to be essential for applications like signage, specialty graphics, and custom products. Attendees noted improvements in efficiency and versatility, though the core technology remains consistent. Label Printing: The label printing sector, while not heavily represented, included a few manufacturers showcasing compact and efficient systems designed for small to medium-sized businesses. 		

Canon, in particular, teased future advancements in this space, though many innovations are still a year or more away from market release.

- 3. **Digital Presses**: Digital printing continues to dominate as companies phase out smaller offset presses. Innovations like G7 color management certification were highlighted for their ability to bridge the gap between offset and digital printing, ensuring consistency in color and quality across platforms. However, some vendors, such as Xerox, were critiqued for a lack of notable updates, with their primary focus being refinements to existing product lines.
- 4. **Finishing Equipment**: Significant advancements were seen in finishing technologies, including slitter-cutter-creasers and inline perforators, which streamline production workflows. Duplo, a leader in finishing equipment, was highlighted for introducing versatile machines capable of handling a range of customizations, such as business cards with tear-out sections or intricate folds.
- 5. **UV Printing**: UV printers were prominently featured, catering to the growing demand for customization. These printers allow for vibrant, durable prints on unconventional surfaces, from tumblers to acrylic panels, expanding possibilities for businesses and students alike.

Takeaways for the Program

Attendees from the Graphics and Printing program expressed excitement about incorporating insights from the event into their curriculum. For example:

- **Incorporating Advanced Equipment**: The idea of investing in tools like UV printers, DTF printers and wide-format machines was reinforced. These technologies align with industry trends and provide students with hands-on experience in emerging areas of printing.
- **Exploring New Certifications**: Certifications such as G7 were emphasized as valuable additions to the program, equipping students with skills that directly address industry needs.
- **Fostering Innovation**: Printing United showcased creative applications of existing tools, encouraging the program to inspire students to think beyond traditional printing and embrace innovative uses of technology.

Challenges Noted

While Printing United remains an essential event, some industry partners noted challenges in adopting new technologies:

- **Cost of Equipment**: Advanced machines like flatbed printers and high-end digital presses require substantial investment, which can be a barrier for small businesses and educational programs alike.
- **Regional Support Limitations**: For technologies like those from Fuji, attendees pointed out the limited availability of technicians and support in certain regions, making it difficult to maintain and operate cutting-edge equipment.

Curriculum Decisions	Areas for Growth		
(Additions/Deletions/ Recommendations):	 Print-Ready Design Proficiency: While students excel in design, some partners noted gaps in their ability to create print-ready files, particularly in understanding technical requirements like bleeds, crop marks, and color management. These skills are critical for avoiding production delays and ensuring high-quality outputs. Experience with Specialized Equipment: Feedback suggested incorporating more training with emerging technologies like UV printers and Direct-to-Film (DTF) machines. These tools are increasingly in demand, and exposure to them could give students a competitive edge. Portfolio Development: Industry partners emphasized the importance of polished portfolios that effectively showcase students' capabilities. They noted that while students graduate with excellent projects, more structured guidance on assembling professional portfolios could enhance their employability. 		
Other:	Future Outlook		
	Overall, Printing United reinforced the importance of staying current with industry advancements while emphasizing foundational skills. The event served as a reminder of the importance of collaboration between industry and education to ensure students are prepared for the workforce. Participants expressed a desire to see more breakthrough innovations at future events, which will continue to influence the trajectory of the Graphics and Printing program. Industry partners provided positive feedback on the skills and accomplishments of students in the Graphics and Printing program at Central Texas College. They highlighted several key areas where students have shown promise and how the program has effectively prepared them for industry demands.		
	Strengths of Students		
	 Hands-On Skill Development: Partners commended the program's emphasis on practical experience. Students demonstrated proficiency in working with advanced equipment like wide-format printers, laser engravers, and screen printing machines. Notable projects included trailer wraps, custom screen-printed apparel, and innovative poster designs, which showcased their ability to tackle real-world tasks. Adaptability and Creativity: The creativity students bring to their projects was a common theme. Industry representatives appreciated the Halloween poster contest, which not only honed students' design skills but also demonstrated their ability to connect with specific audiences, such as tailoring designs to resonate with the campus community. Quick Learning Curve: Several partners remarked on how quickly students adapt to new tools and techniques, even those outside the traditional curriculum. This readiness to learn aligns well with industry 		

	needs for adaptable professionals who can navigate rapidly evolving			
	technologies.			
	Success Stories			
	Several anecdotes illustrated the success of the program in preparing students for the workforce:			
	 Industry-Ready Talent: One partner recounted hiring a graduate who excelled at troubleshooting digital production machines and managing prepress workflows, attributing their readiness to the program's comprehensive training. Collaboration with Local Businesses: Internships with companies like Fast Signs and collaborations on large-scale projects like trailer wraps have allowed students to gain valuable industry experience. One partner shared that a student who interned at their print shop was instrumental in optimizing workflows for wide-format printing. 			
	Recognition of Program Efforts			
	Partners praised the program's leadership, particularly its responsiveness to industry feedback. The introduction of Occupational Skills Awards (OSAs) in areas like Prepress and Print Production was cited as a forward-thinking move to address specific skills gaps. Partners expressed confidence that these targeted certifications will enhance students' employability and prepare them for specialized roles.			
	Recommendations for the Future			
	 Internship Expansion: Partners encouraged strengthening partnerships with print shops and other businesses to provide more structured internship opportunities. They cited examples of companies willing to sponsor housing for interns, highlighting the strong demand for skilled workers in the industry. Emphasizing Emerging Trends: Incorporating training on high- demand technologies like G7 certification, DTF printing, and UV customization was recommended to ensure students are ahead of the curve. Geographic Mobility: Partners stressed the importance of preparing students to explore opportunities beyond the local area. They noted that while the regional job market has limited openings, larger cities and national firms are actively seeking skilled graduates, often with lucrative offers. 			
CHAIRPERSON SIGNATIO	RF. (or designee).	Date	Next Meeting:	
Molinda Schmidt		23 January 2025	TTAL MUCHING.	
		20 January 2020		