

Business Leadership Council Meeting Minutes

PROGRAM COMMITTEE NAME: Aviation BLC Meeting

Program Coordinator: Terry Smith

MEETING DATE: 04/15/26 **MEETING TIME:** 2:30 PM **MEETING PLACE:** EACC 152

RECORDER: Adriana Soto Rodriguez **PREVIOUS MEETING:** 6/2/25

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

List all members of the committee, then place an X in the box left of name if present

	NAME	TITLE	EMPLOYER INFO	PHONE	EMAIL
X	Jeremy Stoddard	Maintenance Manager	Bell Flight Textron	(806)206-2402	jstoddard@bellflight.com
X	Martin Forde	Manager	IAC	(509)822-9618	martin.forde@iac.aero
	Nick Kemp	Maintenance Manager	Haven Aero	(806)206-8282	nick@havenasg.com
X	Tom Johnson	Maintenance Manager	Apollo MedFlight LLC	(612)508-8105	tomjohnson@apolloedflight.com
X	Travis Larnance	Maintenance Manager	Flight Mechanix	(806)595-0330	travis@flightmechanix.com
	Willard Peters	Manager	AV Aviation	806-678-3736	will@avmtx.com
X	Jon Kuehler	Manager	Tradewind	806-376-1608 // 720-412-1132	jon@tradewindairport.com
X	Diane Mendez	Office Manager / Recruiter	IAC	806-414-6413	diane.mendez@iac.aero
X	Halle Fly	T.A. & Outreach	Apollo MedFlight LLC	806-242-7993	hbrown@apolloedflight.com

EX-OFFICIO'S PRESENT

X	Terry Smith	Program Coordinator	Amarillo College	(806)335-4343	tlsmith27@actx.edu
X	Chris Seth	Faculty- Aviation Maintenance Technology	Amarillo College	(806)335-4382	ckseth22@actx.edu
X	Jim Faustina	Instructor- Aviation Maintenance Technology	Amarillo College	(806)335-4381	j0451071@actx.edu
X	David Hall	Dean of Technical Education	Amarillo College	806-335-4309	dhall36@actx.edu
X	Adriana Soto Rodriguez	Administrative Assistant	Amarillo College	806-335-4211	a0387635@actx.edu

AGENDA ITEM

ACTION DISCUSSION INFORMATION

Welcome and introductions

Terry Smith and David Hall welcomed the employers and staff. Everyone introduced him/herself with their name and title.

BLC Overview

The Business Leadership Committee convenes semiannually to ensure alignment between academic programming and industry needs. The aviation maintenance program operates under strict FAA accreditation, limiting rapid curriculum changes but ensuring regulatory compliance and quality standards. Key priorities discussed:

- Maintaining program relevance amid evolving industry requirements
- Strengthening employer partnerships for hiring pipelines
- Expanding workforce development through grants, internships, and training programs
- Supporting community engagement and student career readiness

A hiring job fair is scheduled for April 28th, with strong encouragement for employer and student participation.

<p style="text-align: center;">Program Overview</p> <p>Structure & Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duration: 21 months • Enrollment: 50 students • Completion Rate: 97% • FAA-regulated curriculum with strong emphasis on hands-on training <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical, in-person technical training (vs. virtual-heavy models elsewhere) • High completion and job placement potential • Growing equipment inventory (PT6 engines, Allison engines, digital systems) <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited class capacity (approx. 25 students per cohort) • Instructor shortages restricting program expansion • High demand: registration filled within 48 hours, with waitlists forming • Need for enhanced soft skills (communication, teamwork, critical thinking) <p>Enhancements in Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced training modules (hot section inspection, PT6 rigging) • Exploration of Avionics certification pathway • Integration of VR-based training (planned via grant funding) • Acquisition of additional equipment (engine cores, digital systems) 	<p>Industry Needs & Workforce Gaps</p> <p>Employers emphasized:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirement of 2–3 years of experience for technician roles • Global shortage projected (400,000 mechanics by 2030) • Continued disruption from post-pandemic supply chain challenges <p>Key Gap Identified: Graduates lack required experience for immediate field roles despite technical readiness.</p> <p>Proposed Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop structured career pathways (see below) • Shift hiring focus toward skills-based evaluation over traditional interviews • Increase partnerships with certified repair stations (Part 145) • Expand apprenticeship and cross-training models <p>Internships & Career Pathways</p> <p>Current Internship Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STEM grant-funded intern (technical exposure) • IT intern supporting infrastructure/network upgrades • A&P Tech partnership providing paid, hands-on training • Military transition pathways (SkillBridge, Right Turn program) <p>High School & Early Pipeline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dual-credit partnerships (e.g., Ascension Academy) • Badger Bound: up to 15 free college credit hours • Increased outreach needed to grow early interest in aviation careers <p>Community & Experiential Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraged participation in aviation organizations (e.g., Civil Air Patrol, Commemorative Air Force) • Internships viewed as critical for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Skill validation o Employer evaluation o Bridging experience gap
	<p style="text-align: center;">Internships</p>

Procurement / MRO Pathway (Strategic Initiative)

A major discussion focused on creating a Procurement/MRO entry pathway:

Concept

- Hire new graduates into procurement or support roles
- Provide exposure to parts, logistics, and maintenance operations
- Transition employees into field technician roles after 2 years

Benefits

- Addresses experience barrier
- Builds operational knowledge before hands-on fieldwork
- Creates sustainable hiring pipeline for employers

Procurement & Grants

Grants, Funding & Training Expansion

- Skills Development Fund Grant: \$155K awarded; reapplication planned with VR component
 - Skills for Small Business program supports employer training
 - Potential for consortium-based training models across companies
 - Additional workforce training offered (CPR, OSHA, safety certifications)
- Constraints**
- Limited instructors and facilities
 - Need for scalable funding and infrastructure investment

Adjournment

The meeting underscored strong program performance and growing demand, alongside critical workforce challenges—particularly the experience gap for graduates. Stakeholders aligned on expanding internships, developing structured career pathways, and leveraging grants and partnerships to scale training capacity. Continued collaboration between education and industry remains essential to meeting future aviation workforce needs. Meeting was adjourned at 3:28 pm.



Program Coordinator Signature: Terry Smith

Date: 04/21/2026

Next Meeting: TBD