Minutes – Advisory Board Meeting – October 29, 2024

Attendees: Michael Harrison, ONEOK; Bret Smith, NEXTERA, David Huff, OMPA; Kalvin Beaston, OMPA; and Doug Worley, Kay County Electric

Agenda:

1) Welcome by President Watkins
2) Overview of items for the Past Year
3) Overview of current degree programs
4) Discussion of optimum operation of the Board
5) Program Suggestions

Dr. Wood-Black provided an overview of the program, i.e., specific additions of Data Analytics, Drones, and status of courses. The primary challenges faced by the PTEC/Wind program is the lack of industrial instructors to provide the students with the particular real-world applications. The PTEC program has been using operations personnel from the Phillips 66 refinery, which does not provide the expertise in power generation. The Wind Program lost its primary adjunct last year.

Challenges related to encouraging students to apply for the PTEC/Wind Programs are ongoing, although there is increased interest in power generation. The pre-engineering program/computer science program has 38 entering freshman, the introduction to wind course has 7 students and the PTEC program currently has 18 entering freshman. Based upon the growth of the pre-engineering and challenges facing the PTEC/WIND, it seems that it would be better to divide the advisory board into two separate groups – one focused on pre-engineering and computer science, and the other focused on the PTEC/WIND. Those in attendance agreed.

Timing of the meeting was also discussed as this year, there was limited attendance. Given the current plans for 2025, an October date did not appear to be conducive next year. Based upon the feedback provided, Dr. Wood-Black is going to look at restructuring the advisory board meetings specifically hold two separate meetings, one for the pre-engineering group and one for the PTEC/WIND. The PTEC/WIND meeting is going to be targeted for the second quarter of 2025.

Program Suggestions

There was a vibrant conversation about business development plans in the service area of Northern Oklahoma College. ONEOK, OMPA, and Wind energy projects foresee several positions opening in the near future and through 2026. Thus, the need for skilled, career-ready employees that want to remain in the area is there. Program suggestions included:

1) A greater focus on power generation particularly in the operation and maintenance.
2) Quality control, such as supporting a six-sigma credential.
3) Water chemistry credential to support water testing for boilers, cooling towers and other industrial uses
4) Micro credentials for current employees for certain areas.

There was additional discussion about how to stage courses so that students/interns/apprentices could be working while pursuing degrees. Several options were discussed related to how courses could be

offered – weekend only, workshop, eight week, etc. This is a topic that will be under particular discussion as workforce issues are present and the need for industrial instructors.