



Cuyamaca College
Ornamental Horticulture
Advisory Committee Meeting
Thursday, January 14, 2021
6:00 – 7:30 p.m.



Advisory Committee Members:

Hannah Gbeh – Executive Director, San Diego County Farm Bureau
Corey Hansen – Sales Rep, Western Region, FoxFarm Soil & Fertilizer
Lorraine Kelley – Production Manager, Native West Nursery
Ron Matranga – Consulting Arborist, Senior Acct. Manager, Atlas Tree Service
Larry McLemore – Dean, Career Education, Cuyamaca College
Leah Rottke – Program Coordinator, Ornamental Horticulture, Cuyamaca College
Jennifer Crocker – CCBS President 2019-20, Ornamental Horticulture, Cuyamaca College

Meeting Minutes

- I. **Introductions** – Attendees introduced themselves. Angela Tilley attended the meeting

- II. **OH Program Update from Leah** – OH course offerings are being modified in response to campus closure impacts. Projected course offerings document is updated more often. Enrollment has been maintained through online format, especially for Fall 2020. In-person labs are scheduled for Spring 2021. The OH website has been re-designed to conform to the college’s new web presence and to be more accessible from mobile devices. Leah described the negative impacts to OH from the campus closure: the nursery, staff layoffs, OH events, CCBS and OH field site maintenance. Re-opening of the nursery and the return of Spring Garden Festival are not anticipated before Spring 2022.

- III. **OH Facilities Construction Project Update** – Leah showed images of the new buildings and related that work is delayed for several months.

- IV. **Green Industry Challenges** – Hannah described the initial collapse of the local agriculture industry at the beginning of the pandemic, but also how the producers pivoted to direct and online sales. Current difficulty rests with distribution. There is increased demand from consumers. The federal stimulus program definitely helped local agriculture, which wasn’t included until the second round of the program. Production nurseries cannot keep up with product demand, and there is a labor shortage in all ag-related positions. Lorraine also cited the continued need for more qualified employees. Demand exceeds supply for Native West’s products. Their labor shortage is concentrated in field worker positions. She also mentioned the need for improved emotional intelligence and “soft” skills among employees: interpersonal connection, organizational and management skills. Angela offered the Career Center’s assistance to OH students through workshops and in-class presentations. Leah requested the promo materials to forward on to adjunct faculty. Jennifer described increased interest in horticulture since the onset of the pandemic.