



Date: November 3, 2025  
To: Dr. Laurie Borowicz  
From: Barbara Leach  
Re: FA25 Advisory Committee Minutes

**Agriculture and Horticulture Advisory Committee**

**Meeting Date:** September 11, 2025

**External Participants:**

Aaron Bivens – General Manager, Altman Specialty Plants  
Brad Buker – Arborist, Bartlett Tree Service  
Josh Pepping – Section Grower, Hampshire Farms  
Kelsey Minalga – Product Manager, Ball Horticulture Company  
Larry Hubbard – Owner, Pepper Creek  
Vicki Hubbard – Owner, Pepper Creek  
Matt Ewert – Associate Landscape Architect, Western DuPage Landscape, Inc.  
Matthew Fredrickson – Director of Greenhouse Operations, Hampshire Farms  
Mike Krueger – Nursery Manager, Midwest Groundcovers  
Vince Kuyvenhoven – Field Sales Representative, Carlin Sales

**Internal participants:**

Barbara Leach – Vice President of Instruction  
Jessica Berek – Dean of Instruction  
Janet Gallagher – Horticulture Faculty  
Sean Walters – Biology and Horticulture Faculty  
Catherine Marsh – Horticulture Adjunct  
Kimberly Rotella – Greenhouse Grounds Specialist  
Laura Gregory - Coordinator of Employment & Job Placement Services  
Catherine Macias – Administrative Specialist

- I. College Updates
  - A. FY26 College Goals
    - i. All-In Tuition Program started in Summer 2025
      - 1. Textbooks are included in the cost of tuition
      - 2. Tuition is \$160 per credit hour.
    - ii. Partnership with ReUp Education

1. Reaches out to students that have not completed and creates a partnership to bring students back to college.
    - iii. Fall 2025 credit hour enrollment is up 5.4%
    - iv. Horticulture department is up 9.7%.
    - v. FY26 College Goals were reviewed.
  - B. Future Planning
    - i. Career and Technical Education Open House on Wednesday, October 15, 2025 from 5-7pm in the Caukin building.
- II. Department Updates
- A. Greenhouse Construction Plan
    - i. In the design phase for the new greenhouse, with dimensions set for 36' W x 90' L.
    - ii. Public bidding is tentatively scheduled for December through January with Board approval by January 14, 2025.
    - iii. Construction tentatively scheduled to begin mid-March.
    - iv. The new greenhouse will have a smaller footprint than the current one.
    - v. Advisory Committee discussion on new greenhouse:
      1. Organize site visits with partners to evaluate greenhouse structures and seek bids with design consultants from multiple greenhouse vendors.
      2. Research control systems, high-efficiency boiler options, potential irrigation equipment and work with architects on orientation, height, and ventilation designs.
      3. Incorporate an open roof design with side vents for ventilation and add a heated floor system.
      4. Recommend planning separate electrical infrastructure from the headhouse, with ample outlets to support future lighting needs.
      5. Consider reviewing and adjusting the construction timeline to ensure alignment with vendor availability and lead times, as current supplier schedules may render the proposed timeline unrealistic.
    - vi. Support needed during construction
      1. Owners of Pepper Creek, Larry and Vicky Hubbard, may potentially donate a small boom irrigation system for the new greenhouse.
  - B. Fall Semester Updates
    - i. Course and Program Updates

1. The College will continue to host the Future Farmers of America (FFA) competition event for local high schools.
2. An increase in traditional-age students, internships, and a shift in enrollment from certificate programs to full-degree programs.
3. Horticulture U.S. Field Studies students will visit the Kane County Cougars' field, Unilock in Aurora, and Wilson Nurseries in Hampshire.
4. In July, five Horticulture students attended the American Institute of Floral Designers (AIFD) in Palm Springs, California. Three out of the five students placed in the competition.
5. Faculty have implemented collecting data and utilizing Excel basics training in the program based on committee feedback.

### III. Partner Updates

#### A. Hiring/Labor Market Needs

- i. Suggest improving students' practical skills in water management; should not rely on irrigation systems for watering.