

Pasadena Citizens' Advisory Council

www.pasadenacac.org

Tuesday, May 28, 2019

Developing the Future Workforce for the Petrochemical Industry

Pasadena Citizens' Advisory Council (PCAC) completed a series of four programs on workforce development that began in 2018. Speakers gave an overview of various area programs to attract the future industry workforce and described some internships and co-op programs.

Dani Grant, a member of the East Harris County Manufacturers Association (EHCMA) Workforce Development Committee talked about programs that involve EHCMA member plants as well as San Jacinto, Lee, and Houston Community Colleges:

- www.petrochemworks.com is an interactive website that helps students and other jobseekers map their interests, education, skills and experience to identify a career in the petrochemical industry.
- EHCMA hosts an annual golf tournament that has funded approximately \$2 million in scholarships in the three local community colleges. Grant said more than 555 students have received up to \$1000 per semester to pursue careers such as process technology, maritime logistics, and pipefitting. Details are available at www.ehcma.org/workforce/scholarships/
- The petrochemical industry supports a Junior Achievement program called JA Inspire that this school year introduced more than 40,000 8th graders to a variety of local career opportunities.
- In an effort to interest girls to careers in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), several local plants take part in POWER: Women in Industry, an annual event hosted by the Community College Petrochemical Initiative. In 2019, more than 1300 students and women who are unemployed or underemployed heard from women in industry about specific careers, how to get hired, and where to find information about classes, financial aid, degrees, and certificates.

Several people talked about semester-long co-op programs and summer internships:

- LyondellBasell's Bill Clyburn said their refinery has had a co-op program for more than 50 years. It hires interns from specific universities to do real work. Co-op Silvere Kengni, a senior at Prairie View A&M University, described his co-op assignments in process safety and the value of his co-op experience.
- Garrett Berg of the Port of Houston Authority said 17 summer interns are working for 12 weeks at PortHouston in maritime, environmental protection, public administration, security, and skilled trades jobs. The program also involves them in mock job interviews, resume writing workshops, and a group project. Details available at www.porthouston.com/portweb/careers

- Wendel Langley of BASF said they are currently refining their intern and co-op programs. These include a professional development program for new college graduates who are given three different six-month assignments, after which they may apply for a full-time job at BASF.
- Scott Halbrooks said Oxy Vinyls has a summer internship program offering hands-on experience, training, and mentors. Oxy Vinyls has provided scholarships to San Jacinto College students in the Instrumentation and Electrical program and the Process Technology program. Oxy Vinyl's women plant managers are also involved in the POWER: Women in Industry Conference.

In discussion after the presentations, PCAC members and visitors were pleased to hear of the efforts by local plants and community colleges to develop the future industry workforce.