



INDUSTRY ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes

May 4, 2026 12:00 – 1:00 PM via Zoom

ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Alexie Patel – *Gloss & Co. Salon*

DEPARTMENT ATTENDEES

Deborah Baker – *Assistant Professor*

Oksana Brinson – *Instructional Aide*

Rafael Delgado – *Staff Assistant*

Lizette Fontana – *Storekeeper*

Erin Gruman – *Instructional Aide*

Aurora Medrano – *Associate Professor*

Kim Salido – *Associate Professor*

Tasia Scott – *Assistant Professor*

Yvonne Williams – *Instructional Aide*

AGENDA:

A. Workforce Readiness & Skill Gaps

- Are graduates/recently licensed beauty industry professionals prepared to succeed in the industry?
- Key strengths vs. gaps in technical abilities (haircutting, treatments, skin analysis, etc.)
- Soft skills such as professionalism, communication, time management and client retention
- The growing importance of retailing skills and business-building

B. Industry Trends & Service Demand

- Current high-demand services, including skincare treatments, hair extensions, color techniques, etc.
- Continued growth of non-invasion esthetics treatments and trends with chemical texture services
- The evolution of traditional salon and spa services
- The difference between social media-driven trends and actual clients' needs
- Services and the transition from school to work

C. Diversity, Inclusion & Serving All Clients

- Ability to work confidently with diverse skin types and hair textures
- Existing gaps in inclusive and comprehensive education
- The importance of representation in training, curriculum, and the workplace

TRANSCRIPTION (See minutes following transcription):

Kim: After speaking with friends in the industry, I am wondering how salons view the professionalism of their new hires. They stated how new stylists are always showing up late to work or not dressed appropriately. Is anyone seeing that out there?

Alexie: I haven't had any bad experience with that in the salon, even with the ones that have come straight out of Cosmetology school. Some of the new hires do wear open-toed shoes but otherwise they have been professional.

Tasia: The students have more awareness about health and safety standards as well as infection control. They are making the connection when they go into nails salons, for example, and notice that the area isn't clean. It says a lot about the establishment.

Kim: I was talking to a former student from about 3 years ago who had been hired by one of the visiting salons to CSM. He worked for them for 2 months and then they let him go. What is going on around training expectations? How can we help this stylist?

Alexie: I have been hearing about this happening a lot whereas a stylist completes the training and the salon can't keep them. I am not sure why.

Tasia: Maybe they do not have the capacity or resources to keep them. Were they a good match for the salon? Fit is really important; those are good questions to ask during the interview.

Deborah: If this is happening as often, what is the missing link?

Alexie: Maybe the salons are taking on too many apprentices at once. They normally pick the stylist that is catching on most quickly.

Deborah: That is something we should look into.

Alexie: Salons are being pickier.

Tasia: The students ask me all the time whether they really have to do a PD test for example out in the real world. Yes! You still need to follow certain protocols specially around client protection.

Alexie: Perms, partial perms in particular, are really popular right now. Bangs are coming back as well. We do a lot of work with rollers; women want as much volume as possible. Layered haircuts are also really popular.

Tasia: Partial relaxers are also popular. Heatless rollers are very in as well. Stylists get away from heat but are still able to add volume. A lot of what is popular isn't new trends but rather using them a little differently.

Kim: I'm happy to hear about these trends.

Tasia: After talking to the students about renting versus owning a salon, a lot of them want to rent a suite. Are you hearing anything about that?

Deborah: A lot of the suite rentals can be very expensive. Students have to start somewhere. Many go for more than \$3,000 a month. It is a real eye-opener for the students.

Tasia: A lot of times students don't take into account paying rent and also having to pay for products. It is often cheaper to booth rent.

Deborah: It is great that they want to be independent but it really is a reality check.

Aurora: I agree. There is a new mentality of not wanting to work for 40 hours. The students don't realize that they will not make enough money if they only work for a short amount of time.

Tasia: We can support the students by giving them different career paths in Cosmetology.

Kim: Popular salons tend to focus their stylists on haircutting or hair color, not both. That can be a deterrent for new stylists who enjoy both.

Deborah: That is part of their research, they need to know what type of salon they will be joining.

Tasia: I am hearing from many students that they do not feel ready to start working, they want to continue their education. Some students have expressed interest in barbering and they want more experience with clipper cuts. It is important to remember that everyone's career path looks different.

Deborah: I have a question about social media and actual client needs. Social media can sometimes drive client decisions. Are clients being realistic? How much does social media drive business?

Tasia: A lot of time they show up with pictures that are not realistic or even A.I. pictures that are not even real people.

Deborah: We sometimes have to bring the client back down to reality. Do clients get upset? How does social media affect business? Sometimes you cannot just rely on Instagram but the old-fashioned word of mouth.

Aurora: I noticed that after Covid a lot of ladies would not get a touch up as often. A lot of clients are looking to camouflage their greys.

Deborah: Yes, after Covid a lot of people are cutting back on expenses. Pricing may be deterring clients from going as often to the salon.

Deborah: In class, we want the students to be working on different hair and skin types but when they pair up, they choose the same students -- they don't want to work on others. Should we enforce having them pair up with someone different every time? Students like to be in their comfort zone.

Tasia: I like that on the senior side with clients, they are not allowed to request students. For example, Patricia who comes almost every week gets assigned to a different student each time. They are scared at first but then afterwards they realize it is the same thing. I would like to have more curly-haired clients that way students have more practice with a diverse clientele.

Kim: We'll be introducing relaxers next semester.

Deborah: Patricia is very nice so that helps with the students' confidence. Should we have a discussion at some point about having students switch their partners?

Kim: For facials model and reverse, I pick the pairs. Maybe we should start doing it from the start.

Tasia: Maybe we can put it in the handbook.

Aurora: I've been here for a long time and don't want to argue with students on how they pair up. I tell them early on how important it is to be able to work on different

hair and skin types and that school is the place to get that experience. It would become a thing with certain students not wanting to work with other students. We had to fight it a lot in the past.

Tasia: In regards to working on diverse clients, the more skills that the stylist has on different types of hair the more money they can make. There are real benefits to it. Students shouldn't be put in a box. Competition in the industry can be fierce.

Cosmetology Advisory Board Meeting Minutes May 2026

Date: May 4, 2026

Time: 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

Location: Zoom

A. Workforce Readiness & Skill Gaps

Professionalism & Workplace Expectations

Kim Salido opened discussion regarding professionalism among newly hired cosmetology graduates. Feedback from industry contacts suggested concerns regarding punctuality and appropriate workplace attire among new stylists.

Alexie Patel shared that her salon has generally had positive experiences with recent graduates, noting that most new hires demonstrate professionalism. Minor concerns included occasional inappropriate footwear, such as open-toed shoes.

Tasia Scott noted that current students demonstrate stronger awareness of health, safety, and infection control standards. Students are increasingly able to recognize unsanitary salon conditions and understand how cleanliness reflects on a business.

Training Expectations & Retention Challenges

Kim discussed a former student who was hired by a salon but released after two months, prompting conversation around salon training expectations and employee retention.

Alexie shared that similar situations appear to be occurring more frequently and suggested salons may be accepting more apprentices than they can effectively support.

Tasia emphasized the importance of salon fit and workplace culture, encouraging students to ask thoughtful questions during interviews to determine compatibility with a salon environment.

Deborah Baker questioned whether there may be a “missing link” between student preparation and salon expectations.

Alexie added that salons are becoming increasingly selective when hiring and retaining new stylists.

Professional Standards & Industry Preparedness

Tasia reminded attendees that students sometimes question whether certain school protocols, such as performing patch tests, are necessary in professional settings. She

emphasized the continued importance of following safety protocols to protect clients and maintain professional standards.

B. Industry Trends & Service Demand

Current Service Trends

Alexie shared several current industry trends, including:

- Partial perms and chemical texture services
- Roller sets and volume-focused styling
- Layered haircuts
- The return of bangs

Tasia added that partial relaxers and heatless rollers are also highly popular. She noted that many trends are not entirely new but are modern adaptations of previous techniques.

Faculty members expressed appreciation for the insight into current service demands and trends.

Salon Suites, Booth Rental & Independent Work

Tasia shared that many students are interested in renting salon suites and pursuing independent work immediately after graduation.

Deborah discussed the financial realities of suite rentals, noting that many spaces exceed \$3,000 per month before product costs and operating expenses are considered.

Tasia explained that students often underestimate the costs associated with independence, including rent, supplies, and product inventory. Booth rental may provide a more affordable entry point into the industry.

Aurora Medrano noted that many students express a desire for flexible schedules and fewer working hours but may not fully understand the financial demands of the profession.

The group agreed that students would benefit from additional exposure to the variety of career pathways available within cosmetology.

Salon Specialization

Kim observed that many high-demand salons now encourage stylists to specialize in either haircutting or color services rather than both.

Deborah emphasized the importance of students researching salons thoroughly to determine whether a salon's expectations align with their professional interests and goals.

Continuing Education & Career Development

Tasia shared that many students report feeling unprepared to immediately enter the workforce and are interested in continuing their education.

Some students have expressed interest in barbering and would like additional experience with clipper cutting techniques.

The group acknowledged that cosmetology career paths vary significantly and that students should be encouraged to pursue the areas that best fit their interests and goals.

C. Diversity, Inclusion & Serving All Clients

Social Media Influence vs. Client Reality

Deborah initiated discussion regarding the impact of social media on client expectations and salon business.

Tasia explained that clients frequently bring unrealistic inspiration photos, including heavily edited or AI-generated images.

Deborah noted that stylists often need to help clients develop realistic expectations while balancing client satisfaction.

Aurora observed that following the COVID-19 pandemic, many clients reduced salon visit frequency and increasingly requested lower-maintenance services, including gray blending and camouflage techniques.

Deborah added that rising salon prices may also be contributing to decreased appointment frequency.

Working with Diverse Hair & Skin Types

Deborah discussed challenges within classroom partner selection, noting that students often choose to work with the same classmates rather than gaining experience with diverse hair textures and skin types.

Tasia shared that in senior clinic settings, clients are assigned to different students rather than requesting specific individuals. This process helps students build confidence while gaining broader hands-on experience.

Tasia also expressed interest in attracting more curly-haired clients to provide students with additional practice opportunities.

Kim shared that relaxer instruction will be introduced during the next semester.

Faculty discussed whether partner rotation policies should be formally implemented to encourage broader experience and reduce student reluctance to work outside their comfort zones.

Potential strategies discussed included:

- Assigning partners from the beginning of the semester
- Including partner rotation expectations in the student handbook
- Reinforcing the professional importance of working with diverse clientele

Aurora noted that similar challenges have existed historically and emphasized the importance of communicating early to students that school is the appropriate environment to gain experience with all hair and skin types.

Tasia concluded that stylists who are confident working with a wide range of hair textures and client needs are more competitive and financially successful within the industry.

Key Takeaways

- Professionalism and salon readiness remain important industry expectations.
- Students demonstrate strong awareness of sanitation and safety standards.
- Salons are becoming more selective in hiring and retaining apprentices.
- Current trends include texture services, rollers, volume styling, layered cuts, and low-heat techniques.
- Students need greater understanding of the financial realities of independent salon work.
- Social media significantly impacts client expectations, often unrealistically.
- Greater emphasis is needed on preparing students to confidently work with diverse hair textures and skin types.
- Faculty will continue exploring structured partner rotation and inclusive learning practices.

