

# MITEC is On the Move!

By Steve Kitchin, Chairman, Marine Industry Technical Education Council



Many have asked me, “What’s going on with The Marine Industry Technical Education Council (MITEC)?” And my answer always is that MITEC is very busy! As you may have read in the Spring edition, the boating career Web site is up and running, and includes our marine education provider catalog. Please check it out at [www.boatingcareerinfo.org](http://www.boatingcareerinfo.org) if you have not done so already and let us know what you think!

MITEC met in Orlando, Fla. in conjunction with the National Marine Service Expo. One of the primary issues the council deliberated was the role MITEC should play in serving the educational needs of our industry. This has been an ongoing topic of conversation among council members and many interested parties. Complicating this issue is the fact that our industry is very diverse. We have a service sector, which in itself is divided into sub-sectors. It also has a manufacturing sector, which in turn

has education and training needs that are somewhat different than the service sector. So, how can MITEC satisfy all of these different needs?

One of the things we’ve learned is that there are quite a few marine training programs in existence covering a vast variety of topics. Also, manufacturers have their own proprietary training programs and offerings. Which programs are best? Which suit the needs of industry? These are some of the questions the Council has had to grapple with.

The plan in place is an outcome of the Orlando meetings, and the key points are as follows:

- MITEC will become an accrediting body for existing training programs, private, public and industry provided.
- As part of that process, a skills analysis for all sectors has already been done, with data gathered from a broad variety of sources in the U.S., Canada, Europe, New Zealand and Australia. What remains to be done is to sort this data and remove the considerable overlap that exists from the multiple sources. This project should be completed by the middle of this summer.

Once the skills analysis is completed, the resulting report will become a tool to be used by MITEC to help evaluate the merits of training programs that apply for MITEC accreditation. Additionally, it will become a valuable tool for curriculum developers, educators and training providers as they evaluate the content of their respective programs.

In addition to the skills analysis, the next project which will unfold over the next several months is a detailed industry needs analysis. This is a critical part of the data needed both for the funding of programs, but also on the curriculum development and evaluation side. Once specific industry needs are positively identified, this will help in judging the relevance of programs in fulfilling

the mission: To create a properly trained workforce for jobs that already exist or are emerging.

The continuing dialogue among MITEC members made it clear that we also need to categorize training programs based on the “level” or target audience. Is a program intended to service entry level personnel or perhaps a high school or postsecondary program, and if so, is it a certificate or degree program? Is the training program targeted towards incumbent workers with years of requisite experience or is it an industry-endorsed certification program? Could it be a manufacturer-based certification program? How do we as an industry rate programs so that an employer can scan an applicant’s work and training history and be confident in the exact level(s) of training the applicant has completed?

On this topic the council was unable to carve anything into stone in Orlando, but it was generally agreed that a system of levels was a good direction to research and review. The key point is that it must be unified to be of any real value to the industry, and again, MITEC as part of its accrediting process will ultimately be the body to assign the rating to a given program.

As to the question “what’s MITEC been up to?” you now have the latest information. We’ve been busy, and much progress has been made. But there is so much more to do and you can count on follow-up progress reports in future editions of *the Reference Point*. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me at [skitchin@neit.edu](mailto:skitchin@neit.edu) for any questions, comments or concerns you may have regarding MITEC. ■

*About the author: Steven H. Kitchin is chairman of the Marine Industry Technical Education Council and vice president, corporate education and training at New England Institute of Technology in Warwick, R.I.*

