

Amarillo College Business Community

Business and Leadership Council

Meeting Minutes

Date: February 26, 2026

Time: 12:00 – 12:45 PM

Format: Virtual (Microsoft Teams)

Facilitator: Dr. Lori L. Petty

Recorder: Compiled from meeting transcript

Attendees

Amarillo College

- Dr. Lori L. Petty
- Victor A. Favela
- Robert B. Clarke – Coordinator, Legal Studies Program
- Rashmi S. Pillai
- Tina Alexander

Business & Community Partners

- Brian Wink – Griffin Wink Advertising
 - Amber Griffith Slocum – Legal Professional (Law Firm)
 - Mona Tucker – Director of Human Resources, BSA Health System
 - Melissa Ann Roy – Pantex
 - Phillip Flores – Texas Workforce Commission
 - Brett Beasley – Amarillo ISD
 - Braden Black – KT Black
 - Kevin Isern – Lovell Law Firm
 - Stephen Myers – Pantex
 - Mona Tucker – BSA
 - Amber Griffith Slocum - FPH
 - Additional participants introduced via chat or audio
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Purpose of the Meeting

The Business and Leadership Council convened to:

- Review regional labor market data related to business, management, technology, and legal studies.
 - Gather employer feedback to inform **program redesign** and **continuing education (CE) “sprint” credentials** at Amarillo College.
 - Discuss current and emerging workforce skills, particularly related to **technology and artificial intelligence (AI)**.
 - Validate employer needs for entry-level and incumbent worker preparation.
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Summary of Discussion

1. Labor Market Data & Workforce Gaps

- Dr. Petty presented a data slide highlighting a **significant gap** between:
 - Replacement and growth job demand in business, management, technology, and legal fields, and
 - The current number of graduates produced in the region.
 - Employers generally agreed the data **accurately reflects current workforce shortages**, particularly in:
 - Paralegals and legal support roles
 - Skilled business and technology positions
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2. Professional Certificates & Continuing Education “Sprints”

Participants discussed the value of **short-term credentials** (6–12 weeks) for incumbent workers.

Key priorities identified:

- Customized training
- Professional certificates
- Leadership development
- Networking opportunities

Specific credentials and skills mentioned:

- Project management
- Human resources
- Bookkeeping/accounting
- Legal studies/paralegal certificates
- Data analytics
- Microsoft Excel and Word (advanced/drafting use)
- Google Workspace and Meta certifications
- Adobe products (creative and marketing fields)

Employers emphasized that certificates are most valuable when they are **practical, applied, and immediately usable** on the job.

3. Technical Skills Needed in the Next 24 Months

While specific skills varied by industry, several cross-cutting themes emerged:

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** as a foundational tool across industries
- Data analytics and data-informed decision-making
- Industry-specific software platforms
- Ability to learn and adapt to rapidly changing technologies

Multiple employers stressed that **coachability, adaptability, and openness to learning** may be more important than any single technical skill.

4. Artificial Intelligence: Opportunities and Risks

AI generated extensive discussion across sectors.

Opportunities:

- Increased efficiency and productivity
- Reduced administrative burden
- Ability to reallocate labor toward higher-value work
- Enhanced service delivery (e.g., AI-assisted call centers)

Concerns & cautions:

- Legal and ethical risks (HIPAA, confidentiality, liability)
- Copyright and intellectual property issues

- Over-reliance without human review
- Students perceiving AI as “cheating” rather than a professional tool

Consensus emerged that AI should be taught and used **as a tool**, with clear guidance on appropriate and inappropriate use.

5. Entry-Level Hiring Considerations

When reviewing resumes for entry-level roles, employers reported valuing:

- Demonstrated work history and longevity
- Evidence of progression or increased responsibility
- Practical experience
- Problem-solving and strategic thinking
- Willingness to learn and adapt

Certificates and degrees were viewed positively **when paired with applied skills**.

6. Legal Studies Program Feedback

Legal professionals provided targeted feedback on program design:

- A **business degree with a legal studies specialization** is acceptable and desirable, provided:
 - Students gain practical legal skills (e.g., drafting pleadings, discovery)
 - Graduates are not “coming in blind” to the legal profession
- Legal research skills are essential; familiarity with **any major platform** (Westlaw, Lexis, etc.) is sufficient as long as students understand the research process.

Basic employment law knowledge was highlighted as valuable across multiple industries.

7. Funding Opportunities for Employer Training

Phillip Flores (Texas Workforce Commission) shared information on **available funding**:

- TWC can cover training costs (up to ~\$2,000 per employee) for eligible employers.
- Employers must continue paying wages during training.

- A new **Skills for Small Business** grant is planned, with an emphasis on improved outreach and full utilization.

8. Next Steps & Closing

Dr. Petty outlined upcoming work:

- Development and marketing of CE sprint credentials (two expected to launch in summer 2026).
- Continued **programmatic redesign** of business, legal studies, and business technology pathways.
- Employers will be invited in the future (likely fall) to review redesigned programs and provide feedback.

Gift card drawings were held to thank participants for their time.

Action Items

Action Item	Owner
Continue development of CE sprint credentials (project management, HR, accounting, data analytics, legal studies)	Amarillo College Business & Legal Faculty
Market CE sprints to employers once available	Amarillo College
Incorporate employer feedback into business and legal studies program redesign	Amarillo College Faculty
Present redesigned programs to Business & Leadership Council for feedback (Fall 2026)	Amarillo College
Share information on TWC training funds and Skills for Small Business grants	Phillip Flores (TWC)
Attend Amarillo College redesign meeting to explain TWC funding processes	Phillip Flores
Export and share meeting data and recording with Edie, Becky, and Linda for reporting purposes	Victor A. Favela

Edie Carter