

PROGRAM COMMITTEE NAME:		Business Management & Business Technology			
CHAIRPERSON:		Jodi Lindseth, Business Management Rashmi Pillai, Business Technology			
MEETING DATE:		09/24/2025	MEETING TIME:	MEETING PLACE:	Innovation Outpost (IO) 1220 S Polk Ave. Amarillo
RECORDER:		Collette DiAngi		PREVIOUS MEETING:	
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List all members of the committee, then place an X in the box left of the name of those present					
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MINUTES

Welcome and Introductions	The meeting opened up at 8:10 am, with Mrs. Becky Burton (VP of Academic Learning and Services, at Amarillo College) having everyone introduce themselves and her explaining the definition and role of the Business Leadership Council (BLC).	Meeting Facilitator Becky Burton
Overview of today's Conversation	• The Strategic Imperative: Why this matters now. • Our Goal: Leveraging your expertise to define our programs • Deep Dive 1: Essential Credentials & Certifications. • Deep Dive 2: Mission-Critical Technical Skills. • Deep Dive 3: High-Impact Human Skills. Action Plan: How your input will shape our strategy.	
What is a BLC?	What was once an Advisory Board has changed to a Business Leadership Council.	
Why now?	And the conversation that would be covered for today's meeting is as follows: Becky submitted the focus statement on the evolving landscape of business and technology. To stay competitive, we must align our programs with your needs. Key points include • Rapid Tech Advancement: AI, automation, and data analytics are changing job requirements. • The Talent Gap: The competition for skilled professionals is fierce, necessitating better talent development. • Future-Proofing: We must equip future employees with skills for today and tomorrow's challenges. We aim to gather your leadership insights to create a unified and actionable vision for talent development. We're here to listen and learn from you.	
Data on Business Management, graduates, Jodi Lindseth presenting	Business Management: Jodi Lindseth spoke about the Business Management Graduation Data. She said that over the years, we've simplified our program, leading to an increase in our numbers, but the graduation rate of 103 students isn't meeting labor market demands. Our goal is an 80% success rate, which requires more graduates. They are working on making the pathway easier and quicker for students, most of whom are already working in the field. For example, Cara Day was one of our students who advanced her career through our certificate program. We're exploring what other colleges are doing to streamline the process, as it can still be confusing for students. Our faculty, including Rhonda, Renee, and me, is trying to reduce the number of classes to improve efficiency. We've recognized the need to rejuvenate the program, as significant changes haven't been made in about ten years. We're also considering adding new focus areas, like human resources and	

300+ majors
Labor market gap
2358 jobs-103
Graduates = gap of 2255 jobs

Data on Business Technology
graduates, Rashmi Pillai
presenting

project management, while retaining the program's core structure. We're seeking your feedback on these developments. Annalisa stated that the Business Management program serves as an umbrella. Jodi responded, "Yes." They are all business management majors, but within a track, we officially have five tracks. One aspect of management is that students don't need to be TSI-ready to enroll at Amarillo College, which can lead to mixed skill levels in the classroom. While some students are not adequately prepared for college, we start them in lower-level classes to help them progress and eventually become TSI-ready if they choose to continue. This creates challenges for instructors, especially when some students, like Kara, have years of experience, while others may struggle with basic skills like professional dress and soft skills. Graduation rates were shared for Business Management for 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 which were 70, 70, 89, and 103. There are currently over 300 majors. A labor market gap exists in this area of 2255 jobs.

- How can we get them through more efficiently?
- Many students are already in the field, looking to advance, grow skills.
- Currently, we are looking at other colleges across Texas and ways to simplify the path so students can get into the workplace. These students can move to the BAAS pathway if they desire.
- This is a time for change. We are seeing HR training and project management pathways to be needs.
- Management students many times are not TSI ready and we will work to get them ready.

Further discussions are happening in EDUC 1100 to help students decide on a path and stay on the path.

Rashmi Pillai, Business Technology Coordinator, spoke about the Business Technology program. She stated that Business Technology is a program that has evolved to emphasize the integration of technology into business environments, moving away from just coding. It focuses on practical applications and essential skills that employees need to thrive in the workplace. The program offers stackable certificates that help students secure entry-level jobs, addressing the growing demand for graduates in this field. We emphasize project-based learning, incorporating presentations and data analysis to prepare students for real-world challenges. Management is aware of industry needs, and we're adapting our curriculum to ensure our students are prepared for data-driven roles, including project management, while maintaining a balance that isn't overwhelming. We aim to send our graduates into jobs where they can succeed and grow, with success stories like Anna highlighting the impact of our program. We take pride in meeting industry needs and are committed to continually improving our offerings.

Graduation rates were shared for Business Technology for 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 which were 20, 23, 14, and 11. There are currently 74 majors. A labor market gap exists in this area of 1492 jobs.

- Currently have stackable certificates and have added the banking certificates.
- Focus on technology applications and doing presentations.
- Data is a big part of this program, and how to interpret and predict.

Employers are embracing data and the science behind it.

Betsy stated that we need to stay updated on current trends, which is why we're working on a redesign. We're still in the early discussion phase, and conversations can get lively and passionate, but that's a good thing. Your input is essential as we explore internships and industry-based prevention. What qualifications truly make a difference? We need to find the right balance between formal education and certifications: Do we need AAS, BS, MS degrees, or just shorter certificates? What industry credentials are most valuable for your teams, and are there any we might be overvaluing or undervaluing? I'd love to hear your thoughts on this.

Marin Rivas posed the question, Is there currently a list of certifications or credentials that are being offered? Dr. Reneé Stovall responded that the programs have “Level I, Level II, Level III, and an Associate’s, also specialized tracks such as

Why redesign	Marketing, and that they are exploring professional services like SHRM for HR certification and project management certification. Students can earn a certification after completing 350 hours of project management experience, which aligns with the projects they completed during their associate's degree program. Graduates will receive smaller certifications, preparing them for full accreditation later. Chip McCampbell shared that he has been with Bruckner's Trucking Equipment, established in 1932 by a man who didn't complete fourth grade. He built a successful business with the help of his college-educated son. When he joined the company 20 years ago, the founder's son had passed, and only a few executives had degrees. Our focus has always been on skills like diesel mechanics and parts sales. When they discussed introducing classes at Amarillo College, he faced pushback from general managers who felt threatened. They often dismissed graduates due to insecurity, overlooking the importance of continuous development. Some employees have even asked about class schedules because their managers are intimidated by their own lack of education, and wouldn't share the information. They have prioritized developing their people rather than just emphasizing certifications or degrees. In the last six to eight years, they began attending career fairs at colleges like WT, Texas Tech, A&M, and OSU, targeting students in agricultural business programs who are accustomed to hard work. Our approach has evolved, and they continue to adapt and grow. Becky stated that the pace of evolution, technology, and change is a significant challenge for us. Starting with someone off the street with no education puts them at a disadvantage. However, having some education makes adapting to technological changes easier, which is why the value of education is increasing. In the panhandle area, nearly 50% of graduating students do not pursue any post-secondary education, creating a lack of educational attainment to meet growing demands. With new industries and data centers emerging, there's a pressing need for a skilled workforce, as indicated by local leaders like Trent Sizemore, who highlights the requirement for 2,000 employees. Becky also stated that she could not speak on the Hispanic demographic, but it mirrors the city's population as of right now. The Hispanic educational attainment level is the lowest, but she hasn't seen the new numbers as of yet. Marin responded that he believes the driving factor is cultural families. In Hispanic communities, children often go straight to work instead of pursuing higher education. Many job opportunities offer decent pay without requiring a four-year degree. For the past few years, we've worked to connect with school systems to expose students to career pathways for higher-paying jobs that only require a certification or training. We're also helping businesses understand how to utilize internships to build a talent pipeline. Internships provide students with hands-on experience and mentors within the company, highlighting the skills they need to succeed. Our area tends to be self-sufficient and supportive, which leads students to prioritize work over education. While we have some opportunities for higher wages, many still overlook the benefits of additional training. Our goal is to encourage students and their families to consider dual credit programs and certifications in technical fields, showing parents that these paths can be affordable and beneficial. Dana Connor stated at Valero, there are various roles within the field of computer programming. While most entry-level positions do not require a degree or certification, having a certification can be advantageous during the interview process. When they see a candidate's resume and notice that they have obtained a certification, it reflects their dedication to completing a course or series of courses. Therefore, this qualification is generally viewed positively. Chip also commented on the Dual Credit conversation and said that after he graduated, he felt he wasn't smart enough for college. His parents, both teachers, never said he couldn't succeed, but he was intimidated by his dad, who had a PhD and was a colonel. Because of this, and his success in retail management, I assumed college wasn't for me. That's why I wanted to partner with high schools to offer dual credit programs. It shouldn't be limited to advanced classes. He occasionally teaches at
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	Amarillo College and knows the curriculum can fit well with standard classes like English or math. By providing dual credit opportunities, we can show students they are capable of succeeding in college, and it doesn't cost them anything.	
Internships/Industry Based Credentials	What qualifications truly move the needle? - Degrees vs Certifications - Key Industry Certifications What credentials provide the most significant business value in your teams? Are there any credentials we are currently over-valuing or under-valuing? (Handout distributed for business members to write down thoughts and share with AC)	
Current state of high school graduates who pursue higher education in our region	The value of education is increasing. Nearly 50% of high school graduates in our area do not obtain any post-secondary education, though the need in the area is great. Many of these new high school graduates are going straight to work. How do we utilize internships to build opportunity?	
Badger Bound	Becky explained what Badger Bound is. The Board of Regents has approved the Badger Bound Scholarship, a new initiative aimed at making higher education more accessible, affordable, and attainable for local students starting next fall. This scholarship offers up to 45 hours of free college credit for students who complete at least 15 dual credit hours at AC during high school, bringing the total to 60 hours and enabling them to earn an associate degree. To take part in this program, school districts must establish partnership agreements with AC on behalf of their students. Previously, we had the Thrive scholarship program, which raised concerns for families whose children attended schools like Canyon. To address funding challenges, we switched to a performance-based funding model two years ago with the passing of House Bill 8. This has actually allowed us to secure more funding from the state based on student outcomes. Thanks to Dr. Russell Lowry Hart's support, we now receive \$3,500 for every high school student who earns 15 hours of dual credit. This is a significant achievement for our program!	
Technical Skills	Top technical skills your employees need in the next 24 months? - Computer skills, Microsoft office - Soft skills including timeliness, integrity - Data analysis-understanding sorting and filtering - Critical thinking, being inquisitive - How does what I am doing affect the whole picture? - Problem-solving - Financial aspect of my job within the whole company Becky asked: What are the top three technical skills that your new employees will need	

	to develop over the next few months, particularly from a business management and technology standpoint? Let's discuss these skills, and she provided the committee with a sheet to fill out for their comments concerning the "Technical Skills." First and foremost, proficiency in Microsoft Office is essential for any of our positions. Interestingly, while technical skills are important, they are not as critical as soft skills. We can teach employees the technical aspects, but attributes like punctuality, integrity, hard work, and staying off their phones are crucial. This leads us to the second point, which focuses on human skills. In my 21 years of participation in advisory boards and Business Leadership Councils (BLCs), we consistently discuss the importance of soft skills over technical skills. Despite this ongoing conversation, it remains a challenge we have not yet solved. Another key technical skill is analysis. While it may not be a strict requirement, I have started assigning projects to some promising individuals in the call center. They handle various customer inquiries and feedback, which gives them unique insights. For instance, I've tasked a few of them with analyzing specific data to identify trends. They can draw connections between complaints from customers and what the data reveals. Therefore, having data analysis skills can be quite beneficial. Even simple tasks like sorting data in Excel present challenges. It's crucial to encourage curiosity and the willingness to explore data, as some individuals may not consider the broader implications of their work. Identifying curious individuals allows us to help them grow while they contribute to our goals. To foster critical thinking and inquiry in the curriculum, we should prompt students to ask their own questions instead of always providing them. Furthermore, when using AI tools like ChatGPT, students must learn to critically assess the information they receive rather than accept it at face value. And, you know, I think I said this a couple of years ago, but, but teaching people to kind of think along the lines of this query, you know, about what information do I need to see? Like, what columns do I need to see? Select these. From where? From what data am I looking at to derive these columns? And then where do these filters apply? You know, they're all in the state of California where they're you know, this zip code where they're past due 90 days. Just thinking along those lines in human	
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Human Skills	Human skills are the catalyst for collaboration, leadership, and resilience. They determine <i>how</i> work gets done. • Critical Human Skills: ○ Strategic & Critical Thinking: Moving beyond execution to solve core problems. ○ Communication & Influence: Articulating complex ideas clearly to diverse stakeholders. ○ Adaptability & Resilience: Thriving in ambiguity and learning continuously. ○ Collaboration: Working seamlessly across functional and hierarchical boundaries. ○ Communication is huge, along with email etiquette, growth mindset, determination, resilience, teamwork, group projects.
Building an Ideal Talent Profile	• What does great look like for you? • What will great look like in 3 years? • What new ideas have our conversations sparked? Business leaders are to fill out the distributed questionnaire.
Student Run Business	Dr. Reneé Stovall reported on the student-run business: . Students are currently researching a student-run marketing agency. • The agency would provide resources to local businesses, including non-profits: ○ Focus Groups/Survey development ○ Marketing projects ▪ Social media campaigns ▪ Website feedback and redesign ▪ Product launch ○ Multiple options: ▪ One-time consultation with feedback ▪ Initial consultation, research and development, with a four-week follow-up visit ▪ Semester-long partnership with students ○ Three paid internship opportunities: ▪ Creative Director ▪ Client Communications Director ▪ Strategic Planning Director ○ Semester Project: ▪ Opportunities for multiple marketing students to work on the project
Adjourn	In addition to hearing from our business partners, we will be having student focus groups to hear from them and get their feedback too. Meeting adjourned at 10:04 am
Recorder Signature: <i>Becky Burton</i> 10/13/2025 <i>Jodi Lindseth</i> 10/13/2025	

Rashmi Pillai

10/13/2025

Chairperson Signature: <i>Collette V. DiAngi</i>	Date: 10/13/2025	Next Meeting: TBD/April 2026
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Recommendations from Business BLC-9/24/2025

Credentials and Certifications	Technical Skills	Human Skills
Specialized, any would be a testament to dedication	Your role in the full financial scorecard of organization	Coachability
Customer service experience, even server experiences	Problem-solving	Adaptability/flexibility – 3 times
Some that are specific to the position	Data interpretation	Growth mindset
	Telephone	Customer service!
	Ten key, budgeting, financial education	Communication -2 times
	Understanding credit and loans	Empathy
	Microsoft Office knowledge	Active listening
	Outlook, Word, Excel	Team Support
	Licensure specific to the position	Problem solving -2 times
	Computer literacy & applications	Time management – 2 times
		Positive attitude
		Conflict resolution
		Collaboration
		Leadership

What does great look like?

- A proven record of classes to set the foundation walking into a professional setting and a willingness/mindset to continue to learn, and adapt to the culture.
- Great looks like a full staff, cross-trained, punctuality and attendance are a priority, embracing a team mindset, and have all of the human skills as listed above.
- Someone willing to learn on the job.

What does great look like in 3 years?

- (or less than 3 years) Able to make their own impact on the culture.
- Transitioned into a full contact center, customers find alternate ways to do their banking business, and freed up employees can help collaborate and execute new projects more efficiently.
- Trained and advancing on their career path to the next level.