Business Department (BLC) Business & Leadership Council
October 02, 2026, 8:30 am
Amarillo College (Oak Room)

Attendance: Susan Burks, Edie Carter, Dr. Brent Clarke, Collette DiAngi, Victor Favela, Julianne Guy (MCMC), Holly Hicks, Jodi Lindseth, Karyn Pierce (AISD), Rashmi Pillai, and Dr. Renee Stovall.

Overview:
Amarillo College is presenting updated business degree pathways and curriculum changes to industry partners for feedback.

The meeting began at 8:45 am with Victor Favela giving an overview of the purpose of the meeting and curriculum updates.


Business BLC - Oct. 2, 2026.pptx

New Course Offerings

- Edie Carter and Rashmi Pillai detailed a new "Intro to Data" 16-week course focusing on Power BI, data ethics, and data storytelling to ensure skills are transferable to Tableau or Alteryx.
- The business core will offer two distinct tracks: HR Management and Project Management/Entrepreneurship.
- Dr. Renee Stovall noted that the Strategic Management Capstone (BMGT 2341) will be a rigorous, project-based course that will be in the last semester before graduation; it will be a requirement for both pathways.
- New specific courses include E-commerce Marketing (BMGT 2312) and Employment Law.
- Dr. Brent Clarke explained that Employment Law is a needed course; Tina Alexander will be teaching it. Tina was one of the first graduates in the Paralegal Studies Degree here at AC. It will cover your rights as an employee and what they are to do as an employee, help them advocate for themselves as an employee, help them get into leadership roles, and help them to understand their responsibilities in that position.

Financial Literacy and Principles

- Rashmi Pillai explained that the financial literacy curriculum covers personal finance from savings to retirement, integrated with Excel, and was developed in alignment with Education Credit Union.
- Karen Pierce discussed potential shifts in high school graduation requirements regarding economics and how it might affect dual credit offerings like Dollars and Cents.
- Rashmi Pillai emphasized that Business Principles (BMGT 1301) will be required for both AAS and AS degrees to ensure students are on the right path early.

Industry Integration / Workforce Readiness

- The college is prioritizing work-based learning through internships and co-ops. Edie Carter highlighted that even existing jobs can qualify as co-ops and described a proposed student-run business model involving a pop-up event, where students act as project managers handling logistics and vendor negotiations.
- Edie Carter and Rashmi Pillai mentioned the success of the Future Billionaires Club, which hosts events like Innovate U, which showcases every April.

Technology and AI

- The group discussed the ethical use of AI. Rashmi Pillai cautioned against using AI as a shortcut for critical thinking, noting risks like "junk in, junk out" or fabricated citations.
- The college's strategic plan includes educating students on using emerging technologies like Gemini as tools rather than replacements for foundational knowledge.
- Regarding data tools, Julianne Guy recommended focusing on Power BI, Excel, and understanding SQL for data extraction.
- Jodi Lindseth: When it comes to using AI in higher education, we are facing a complex mix of ethical questions. Right now, many students "don't know what they don't know" simply because we haven't taught them yet. But educators are also living through this shift in real time, trying to figure out how these tools fit into professional environments. Artificial intelligence isn't going away. Our responsibility in secondary and higher education is to teach students how to use it for its intended purpose: as a tool, not a replacement for their own intellect. I like to tell students that AI isn't a shortcut to turn a 10-hour project into a two-minute one; rather, it's a way to invest the same amount of time to produce a much better final product. I often compare AI to Wikipedia. When Wikipedia first arrived, students were skeptical of its credibility, yet they still used it to find a baseline. AI functions the same way. It is a fantastic starting point to gather ideas, but you must still do the heavy lifting yourself by fact-checking, investigating the sources, and verifying the information.
- Victor Favela said that "in the new **Amarillo College strategic plan**, we have explicitly addressed the ethical use and education of AI, recognizing both its pros and cons. Over the next couple of years, our goal is to integrate this into all of our programs. We want our students to build a strong foundation and knowledge base because, as we've discussed, that ultimately leads to a better end product.

Business Core and Specialty Tracks

- Dr. Stovall explained that the business core provides a foundation before students choose between HR management or project management and entrepreneurship tracks.
- The curriculum is designed to ensure students gain sufficient core knowledge before specializing to prevent them from choosing a track they later regret.
- The specialty tracks are structured with "bookend" classes at the end to guide students into their chosen fields.
- Rashmi Pillai introduced a new 16-week "Intro to Data" course focusing on data analysis exposure and Power BI skills.
- The course aims to teach transferable visualization skills that can be applied to other software like Tableau or Alteryx.

- Key components of the course include data ethics and data storytelling to ensure students can communicate insights effectively.
- Julianne Guy emphasized that understanding how to make information digestible is more important than specific software mastery, especially with the rise of AI.

Program Alignment and Dual Credit

- Jodi Lindseth asked Karyn Pierce if it is possible to align business principles with K-12 programs of study for potential dual credit opportunities.
- There was discussion regarding the overlap between high school business management, marketing, and entrepreneurship programs.
- Karyn Pierce noted that while some high school courses like "Dollars and Cents" exist, legislative changes regarding economics and personal financial literacy may impact future offerings.

Financial Literacy Curriculum

- Rashmi Pillai detailed the financial literacy curriculum, which covers topics from savings to retirement and integrates Excel usage.
- The course was developed in alignment with Education Credit Union, providing students with a certificate upon successful completion.
- mentioned the possibility of incorporating business finance concepts into the personal finance curriculum based on stakeholder feedback.

Degree Pathways and Capstones

- Dr. Renee Stovall presented a working copy of the degree levels, including Level 1 (yellow), Level 2 (green), and AAS pathways (blue). Both HR and Project Management pathways will culminate in the same BMTT 2341 Strategic Management capstone project.
- Dr. Brent Clarke introduced an Employment Law course taught by Tina Alexander to help students understand their rights and responsibilities in leadership roles.

Project Management and Entrepreneurship

- Dr. Renee Stovall went over the Project Management pathway, which includes courses such as BMGT 1309. Information Project Management and small business entrepreneurship.
- Described a semester project where students use themselves as a "project base" to practice risk mitigation and funding management.
- E-commerce marketing is also included to teach students about digital platforms and how to manage their professional brand.

Student-Run Business Initiatives

Dr. Stovall explained that this student-run marketing agency was conceived in 2023, fueled by an influx of funding from the **Aspen Award**. The founders envisioned a transformative student experience. However, translating their vision into our eight-week course format presented a significant structural challenge. Because the founders came from traditional four-year university backgrounds, they designed a model best suited for juniors and seniors with advanced marketing experience. In contrast, our agency relies on freshmen and sophomores who may have only completed a single introductory course. To bridge this gap, we are actively adapting our approach. One strategy we are

exploring is developing a student-run business model, potentially as a 16-week "hard link" course involving local vendors.

- One concept involves a pop-up event similar to a Christmas fair or farmers' market where students manage logistics and negotiations.

DECA:

The DECA Club was established last year in response to strong student interest, particularly from incoming high school graduates. Although active membership is currently low and the club is temporarily dormant, the foundational organization is fully set up. We are ready to reactivate the chapter as soon as student interest and participation increase." Last year, AC had a student who came from Amtech who was a national qualifier; faculty member Bryan Modisette accompanied him to the national competition.

The Future Billionaires Club

Advisors: Jodi Lindseth and Rashmi Pillai
Rashmi Pillai highlighted the success of the "Future Billionaires" club, which engages in community service and flagship events like "Innovate U." They are highly motivated by a business mindset, which reflects in their fundraising strategies. For instance, they are hosting a professional headshot fundraiser next week, which is always a highly successful initiative.

In addition to fundraising, the club is deeply committed to community service. We recently adopted a local park from the City of Amarillo and host quarterly cleanups. We invite the entire campus to participate; even our colleague Holly Hicks brought her children, who thoroughly enjoyed it. It has turned into an unexpectedly fun and rewarding event for everyone involved.

Our flagship event, **Innovate U**, takes place every April. This platform allows students and staff to showcase their businesses. Last year, we evolved the format to allow participants to make direct sales. This year, we are taking it a step further by inviting Amarillo College alumni to return and utilize the platform. To enhance the experience, the students are also planning to bring in local musicians.

AI in Education and Industry

- The group discussed the ethical use of AI, noting its potential as a tool for productivity rather than a shortcut for assignments.
- Rashmi Pillai advised students to use AI for practicing interview skills or translation skills rather than generating entire projects.
- Amarillo College's strategic plan includes educating students on the pros and cons of emerging technologies like AI.

Open Questions

- How can the college better align articulation agreements with high school programs to avoid duplication?
- Will the transition to a one-credit economics course in high schools impact the demand for current dual credit offerings?
- Can local businesses provide more consistent feedback on specific skill gaps, such as risk and quality management?

Action Items

- Add data ethics and data storytelling components to the Intro to Data course.
- Incorporate comparisons between personal finance and business finance into the financial literacy course.
- Send an invitation for the Innovate Youth event scheduled for April 14.
- Meet again to review alignment between the college business pathways and existing high-school agreements, and identify potential program-of-study changes.

Data Tools and Internships

- Discussion regarding analytic tools focused on the importance of Excel, Power BI, Tableau, and SQL for data extraction and cleaning.
- Rashmi Pillai suggested that the 16-week data course could lead to a Microsoft certification for students.
- The meeting concluded with a discussion on internships and co-ops, noting that any job can qualify as a co-op under the college's model to meet workforce needs.

Meeting adjourned at 10:22 am

Business Department, Chairperson, Professor Susan Burks

Susan Burks 10/05/2026

Signature **Date**

Business Department, Administrative Assistant III, Collette DiAngi

Collette V. DiAngi 10/05/2026

Meeting Recorder: **Date**