

## 1. Viability of AAS Degree for Direct Entry into Workforce: Conclusions

- The AAS Business programs may still be a viable option for students. There are some considerations to explore to truly assure that students are getting a degree that prepares them both for the work force, and for the possibility that they may change their mind and pursue a Bachelor's degree.
- The AAS Business programs should focus more than they currently do on providing something meaningful for students seeking entrepreneurship or to “wear many hats” in a small to medium business.
  - The Business department can create this value in the programs by working with other departments, such as CIS and ANM, to qualify useful courses as electives, providing students with hands-on skills relevant to the workforce (not just textbook learning).
  - Some skills that were mentioned in the meeting were basic web design/development and SEO, and other computer technologies used to make a small to medium business competitive and efficient.
  - Another consideration would be offering more simulations of a variety of software and web applications in a lab environment, such as: advanced Microsoft Office, ERP, CRM, popular accounting programs, non-traditional alternatives to MS Office such as Google Apps, Open Office, Prezi, slideshare, etc., actual methods to market research and data collection. After completing an AAS Business Degree, I would like to see students be able to start their own business, or enter a small to medium sized business knowing how they can implement the concepts they learn in textbooks... not just be able to talk about the concepts.
- One major common theme, the room's consensus, was that employees entering the workforce need a variety of soft skills. The members of the council conceded that they can train technical skill to a point, but they feel less able to train employees in working with people, managing people, and general work ethic.
  - These skills specifically included communication, sales, the ability to collaborate, and the ability to manage and coach others.
  - One of my thoughts was to offer students opportunity to essentially be forced to take turns managing group projects. There was quite a discussion on group projects, and the stereotypical way that the same people take the lead and do most of the work. My idea is that in the real world of work, you have to be able to function on a team both managing other, and being managed.
    - As a person who typically leads group projects, it becomes difficult in the world of work to collaborate on a team when you are *not* the leader. Leaders struggle to be “followers”, but this is necessary for the workforce.
    - On the other hand, “followers” or those who do minimal work in groups struggle to understand leading, or even contributing their fair share of work.
    - Everyone needs to know how to effectively coach others, whether laterally or managerially. Face-to-face replication of this in a class environment was mentioned and supported by committee members.

- Mr. Kraas-- in relation to giving students with little or no work experience a simulation of that at the college-- brought up a yearlong project class that effectively put students in a work environment as part of a team with different skills to deliver an actual product to a client. This covered their internship, but it took a lot of hours, so it may not be a great option for students that work full time or have other obligations, at least on this scale. I think the idea is relevant even to those of us who do have work experience and other life obligations, just on a less time consuming scale.
  - Projects such as this can be explored and applicable to many programs in the business department.
  - Some classes or instructors do already implement a project of this nature-- specifically the closest one I have had was the final project in Organizational Behavior where teams had to work with a real business to provide a solution to a problem (which students had to identify through interviewing managers and employees), using the AMA 8-step process.
- Other ways to simulate a work environment were mentioned, such as locking the door upon class starting to force punctuality (which was a struggle mentioned by many committee members). The trouble with this idea is that it will only discourage students from learning-- specifically non-traditional students-- due to the students trying to balance work, school, and family the majority of the time. In relation, the student is increasingly the customer to a community college. Students are footing the bill for the opportunity to learn, grow, and achieve better things for themselves in life. I conclude that ideas along this line may be relevant for younger students with less commitments and no work experience.
- Another relevant point that came out of this discussion, especially in relation to punctuality, was that younger generations are increasingly expecting and seeking out opportunities that provide flexibility. The committee stated that this is just not possible for some positions, for obvious reason. I concede that we should be enforcing the idea that flexibility comes with skill-- the more skilled you are at a trade that you could do remotely (especially utilizing technology), the more ability you will have to select those opportunities. I think this could be great point toward added technology electives and a convincing reason for students to attend and graduate. Millennials desire flexibility, we can give them the skills they need to get there in the workforce or as an entrepreneur.

## **2. Movement to Offer Blended Marketing (BUS 105) Class**

- This was well received by the committee, and a highlight was giving students the flexibility of doing work online and less time in class, while still maintaining the advantages of classroom learning such as time with the instructor and accountability.
- Personally, after struggling with two online classes despite being an outstanding student, blended has been a great option for me. I see the true value in my education at Valley as what the instructors have to teach from their own experience, and through discussion. I really value the instructors we have at Valley and the majority that I have had will make it a point to try and prepare you for the world and customize your learning. I can buy a

textbook and read it for much less than a class costs, in my mind I am paying for access to instructors who know more than me. At the same time, the flexibility needed for those of us with other things on our schedule is much appreciated.

### **3. Movement to Offer International Business Course for Western Articulation**

- Well received as well, and I believe would be well received by students. The transferability to Western is a definite strength. I have noticed that instructors already sense the need for education in this subjects, as a few have made it a point to emphasize its importance and educate students on the subject.

### **4. Mention of Early Middle College Program**

- It was discussed that students in High School might not be ready to declare a major quite yet, as many students even at 18 or 19 and beyond are unsure. Does this program not offer the ability to be “general studies” or acquire the general education classes that will be needed for any degree? If they are aware of what they want to study, that’s great, I would have loved to have classes I was actually interested in for life during high school. But if they are not sure, I think the program could still have value (since in high school you complete general education courses year after year anyways). As a high school student, I had the opportunity to dual enroll in KVCC, but I chose to complete 4 AP classes instead, because it gave me more college credit than dual enrolling would have, and took care of extra years of general education requirements. I realize dual enrollment is different from early middle college, but that is the perspective I am coming from.