**Business Administration Advisory Committee Minutes**

November 20, 2019

4:30 – 6:00 p.m.

North County Campus, Room N1007

Neil Higgins, Committee Co-Chairperson

Gary J. Rubin, Committee Co-Chairperson

The meeting started at 4:30 p.m. Members of the committee present at this meeting: Kim Lahargou, Liz Summer, Natalie Sanchez, Fred Russell, Marlaine Sanders, Scott Bess, Mark Corella, Joe Moreno, Jackie Zucker, Kimberly Espino, Neil Higgins, Gary Rubin.

Each person introduced her/himself. It was noted that we had one parent, Scott Bess, and one grandparent, Fred Russell, of current Cuesta College students.

Neil Higgins presented an overview of Cuesta’s current accounting degrees, certificates, and courses offered. Participants were asked for their input regarding these offerings and the demand they have for employees with accounting education. Extended discussion ensued with the following points made:

* Bookkeepers are needed.
* A tax preparation course for businesses is needed.
* A course that would help business owners understand their tax returns is needed.
* A payroll tax accounting course is needed to serve small businesses.
* A small business accounting course is needed.
* A non-profit accounting course is needed. Several employers noted that a first job with a non-profit goes a long way on one’s resume.
* Finance courses are needed to serve the banking industry. Members who work in banking were asked if they would hire into an analyst position somebody without a bachelor’s degree. Representatives from SESLOC, Founders Bank, and Wells Fargo Bank unanimously indicated they would, as long as the applicant had some business experience.
* Employers are looking for employees with “Soft Skills”, which is a common refrain at each Advisory Committee meeting. Committee members were asked specifically what they meant by “Soft Skills”, and responded:
  + How to be an adult
  + How to take care of a customer
  + Who are you? What will you do to make the company better?
* Support was indicated for a business course dedicated exclusively to “Soft Skills”.
* Technology skills were indicated as being very important.
* Atascadero State Hospital is hiring in its Accounting Department. If a student has at least 12 units in accounting, even without any degree, ASH will hire her/him into an entry level, full-time accounting position and train her/him in-house. Starting salary, plus extensive state benefits, for this position is $3,400 per month.

Neil then gave an overview of the Cuesta course offerings in the area of management and supervision. He gave a brief overview of the management certificate that is being revised and asked participants to indicate their preference for two of the five courses noted below in order of importance for managers/supervisors. The number of times each course was indicated as being a “Top Two” choice is indicated next to each course number:

BUS 286 17

BUS 248 7

BUS 218 3

BUS 253 1

BUS 290 0

Kimberly Espino, Cuesta Job Developer-Strong Workforce, then gave an overview of the services offered in her area to local employers and to students. Kimberly gave detailed information regarding internships, including the number of required hours, components of an internship, and the fact that flexible scheduling is available for employers/interns to complete the minimum required internship hours.

Gary Rubin then gave an overview of the facilities at the North County Campus, including the history of the campus and its structures. He briefly described the Agriculture Facilities, Early Childhood Education Building under construction, and an upcoming Trades & Technology Building that will be built in the near future as part of the successful bond measure.

Participants were asked for their final comments regarding any other courses or programs they believe may be offered at Cuesta to serve local demand. Responses included:

* Help a business owner open an onsite daycare
* Geriatric/senior care
* Microsoft Excel
* Bookkeeping

It was also noted by several community members that they were not aware of the courses and programs that we currently do have, e.g., Hospitality. Members asked what was being done to promote our existing courses and whether we are advertising online. Gary Rubin and Neil Higgins responded that Cuesta does have a Marketing department, and that we believe the Marketing Department does use some social media, plus other forms of promotion, including television and billboards.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m. A few people left immediately, and some stayed for further informal discussion. Two members of the committee, both CPAs, again indicated a strong need for bookkeepers. The collaboration and discussion between these two members, Neil Higgins, and Gary Rubin produced an idea for Cuesta to consider a North County clinic in which Cuesta accounting students could get bookkeeping experience by serving North County business owners.