

Los Angeles Harbor College

Business Department Advisory Committee Meeting – Minutes

Date: August 22, 2025

Location: Zoom

Facilitators: Kymeshia Taylor, Chris Han, Nathan Tribble

Attendees

- Kymeshia Taylor – Business Department Faculty, Harbor College
- Chris Han – Business Department Faculty, Harbor College
- Nathan Tribble – Business Department Faculty, Harbor College
- Michael Kim – Industry representative (Solganick & Co.)
- Missy Coffey – Industry representative (Heuristic Strategies)
- Alexis Diaz – Industry representative (JPL)
- Daryl Kato (Industry Representative) (Super 7)
- Priscilla Lopez – Dean of Academic Affairs

Agenda

1. College and business department overview
2. Review of student demographics, awards, and program offerings
3. Presentation of proposed business certificates (Certificate of Achievement in Business Management, Entrepreneurial Management, and Banking and Finance)
4. Proposal for a bachelor's degree in Business Psychology
5. Employer feedback on skills gaps and curriculum alignment
6. Discussion of internships, portfolios, and recognition of top students
7. Motion of support for new certificates and Business Psychology bachelor's degree
8. Next steps and follow-up

1. College & Department Overview

Presenter: Chris Han

- Harbor College is part of the Los Angeles Community College District and serves a highly diverse student population with wide-ranging socioeconomic backgrounds.
- The college's service area includes:
 - Local communities around Wilmington
 - Nearby more affluent areas such as Palos Verdes
 - Strong geographic connection to the Port, a major industry and potential employer base.

- Business courses are taught both at the college and through dual enrollment at local high schools, resulting in:
 - A wide age range of students
 - Varied work experience and cultural backgrounds in the classroom.
 - Demographic summary:
 - Student population skews slightly female.
 - Many students are 24 or younger, but there is significant age diversity.
 - Only about 15% enroll in 12+ units (mostly part-time students, many balancing work and school).
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2. Awards, Programs, and Department Vision

Presenter: Chris Han

- In a recent academic year, Harbor awarded:
 - Over 700 associate degrees
 - Hundreds of credit and non-credit certificates
 - Within business:
 - Degrees include transfer-oriented programs and applied associate degrees.
 - Multiple certificate options are already in place, with plans to expand.
 - **Vision & Pillars for the Business Department:**
 1. **Increase engagement and visibility** of the business department on campus and in the community.
 2. **Expand industry partnerships** across a broad array of sectors, especially leveraging proximity to the Port and regional employers.
 3. **Strengthen student networking and social capital**, helping students access opportunities they might otherwise not reach.
 4. **Align curriculum with current and future job markets**, particularly around technology, AI, analytics, and evolving workplace demands.
 5. **Boost completions** – degrees and certificates – and energize the broader student population around business pathways.
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3. Employer Needs Assessment – Key Findings

Presenter: Chris Han

A recent needs assessment of employers highlighted:

- **Strengths / Desired Attributes:**
 - Strong communication and presentation skills
 - Analytical skills and critical thinking

- Eagerness to learn, initiative, and self-motivation
- Problem-solving ability and adaptability
- **Skills Gaps Identified:**
 - More concrete financial understanding and comfort with financial concepts
 - Stronger technical and analytical skills, including data literacy
 - More relevant work experience connected to career goals

Advisory members were invited to reflect on:

- Additional skills or competencies not yet captured in the assessment
- How Harbor can better position business students for internships, entry-level roles, and long-term career growth.

4. Proposed Certificates – Business Department

Presenter: Kymeshia Taylor

Harbor is developing three new Certificates of Achievement, aiming for launch around Spring 2026. These include:

4.1 Certificate of Achievement in Banking and Finance

- Designed to equip students for entry-level finance roles, teller and branch positions, internships, and early-career finance opportunities.
- Informed by labor market (LMI) data, showing demand in banking and finance fields.
- Core course themes (titles generalized):
 - Introduction to Business (survey of management, marketing, HR, accounting, finance, economics, entrepreneurship, leadership, etc.)
 - Business computations and/or business statistics
 - Personal finance
 - Investments/financial markets
 - Work-based learning/project component
- Intended to be stackable with existing business degrees so students can earn the certificate en route to their A.S.-T. in Business or other degrees.

4.2 Certificate of Achievement in Business Management

- Focused on management and leadership.
- Courses include:
 - Core business survey course(s)
 - Principles of management
 - Financial/managerial accounting (offered through the accounting department but required in the business pathway)
 - Business communication and/or business law

- Additional management/business elective(s)
- Goal: prepare students for entry-level management, supervisory, and coordinator roles, while aligning with existing business degree requirements.

4.3 Certificate of Achievement in Entrepreneurial Management

- Built around existing dual-enrollment partnerships (e.g., Carson High School and other local high schools).
 - Intent is to provide high school students with:
 - A clear business/entrepreneurship pathway
 - Courses such as Introduction to Business, Small Business Management, Personal Finance, Business Law, and an additional business elective (e.g., marketing or investments).
 - Students can:
 - Complete much of the certificate before graduation
 - Transition seamlessly to Harbor to complete remaining coursework and pursue additional business credentials.
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5. Accounting Pathway Clarification

Discussion between: Michael Kim and Kymeshia Taylor

- Question: Whether there is a clear accounting track and how it fits into the framework.
 - Clarification:
 - Accounting courses (financial and managerial) are currently housed outside the business department but are required for business students.
 - Business students pursuing degrees and the proposed certificates would still complete the standard accounting sequence as part of their academic plan.
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6. Proposal: Bachelor's Degree in Business Psychology

Presenter: Nathan Tribble

6.1 Rationale

- Many Harbor students indicate an interest in transferring, but for some, Harbor may be the last stop in their formal education.
- A bachelor's degree in Business Psychology at Harbor would:
 - Provide a local, affordable four-year option.
 - Bridge the gap between understanding markets and organizations and the behavior of people who make them work (customers, employees, leaders).

- **Labor market data** show:
 - Strong and growing demand in areas related to business, organizational behavior, consumer psychology, and related fields.
- **Strategic opportunity:**
 - No clear regional competitor offering a similar bachelor’s program, positioning Harbor as a first mover and helping meet a genuine employer-identified need.

6.2 Advisory Board “Homework”

Nathan requested that advisory members:

- Review sample curricula and comparable programs at other institutions.
 - Offer feedback on:
 - Key skills and competencies for Business Psychology graduates
 - Types of projects, capstones, and applied experiences that would be valuable
 - Ways Harbor can ensure the program is distinct, rigorous, and aligned with industry demand.
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7. Employer & Industry Feedback – Skills & Curriculum

7.1 Technical and Coding Skills

Contributor: Missy Coffey

- In many roles, there is an expectation of baseline coding or data skills, such as:
 - Basic Python
 - R or SPSS (especially in statistics and research contexts)
- Recommended:
 - Incorporating coding and data analysis into statistics and analytics-related courses.
 - Ensuring students understand how to apply these tools to real business and psychology problems.

Response:

Nathan noted that some statistics courses already use R/SPSS, and the department is interested in working more closely with math and computer science to integrate these tools intentionally into business and business psychology curricula.

7.2 Project Management & Configuration Management

Contributor: Alexis Diaz (JPL)

- Strong support for the new certificates and proposed degree.
- Recommended:
 - Integrating project management and configuration management concepts so students can:
 - Work effectively on large, complex projects
 - Understand versioning, documentation, and structured processes
 - Exposing students to technical communication in addition to interpersonal communication.
- Noted a strong industry need for professionals who can translate complex technical information clearly and accurately.

Response:

- Business communication courses at Harbor already incorporate technical writing, but the department will consider:
 - Making this more explicit in learning outcomes
 - Potentially adding non-credit or short courses focused on project management and technical communication.

7.3 Internships & Workplace Exposure

Contributor: Alexis Diaz (JPL), Kymeshia Taylor, Chris Han, Michael Kim

- Alexis confirmed that JPL does offer internships and values candidates with:
 - Strong foundational coursework
 - Clear evidence of initiative and interest (certificates, projects, etc.).
- Kymeshia noted:
 - It has been challenging to get large corporations to take community college interns.
 - Certificates could help demonstrate readiness before completion of a degree, making students more competitive earlier.
- Chris observed:
 - High school students in dual-enrollment settings (e.g., Peninsula High School) sometimes secure internships more easily than traditional Harbor community college students.
 - There is a need to better bridge the pipeline from Harbor students to internships, not just from more privileged high schools.

7.4 Portfolios, Capstones, and Showcases

Contributor: Michael Kim & Missy Coffey

- Michael emphasized:
 - Employers need to see tangible, role-relevant deliverables, not just course titles or certificates.
 - Examples include:
 - Business plan competitions
 - Case studies analyzing real or simulated companies
 - Projects demonstrating understanding of income statements, balance sheets, forecasting, and Excel-based analysis.
 - A portfolio of work can help signal that students are:
 - Ready to add value quickly
 - Serious about corporate finance and related roles.
 - Missy shared a model:
 - End-of-term “science fair”-style capstones where:
 - Students present projects
 - Local employers walk around, ask questions, and network
 - Students showcase communication, analytical, and technical skills.
 - Nathan noted:
 - The department recently received a grant to build space and infrastructure for these types of events and networking opportunities.
 - This aligns well with plans to:
 - Host student showcases
 - Bring in local employers for networking and recruitment.
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7.5 Honors / Recognition for Top Students

Contributor: Michael Kim & Nathan Tribble

- Michael suggested:
 - A formal way to highlight top-performing students (e.g., honors track, designation on transcripts/certificates, awards) to help them stand out to employers.
 - Nathan shared:
 - The department is already working on a Business Honors track, targeted for rollout around Spring 2026, which will:
 - Recognize top students
 - Require more rigorous coursework and/or projects
 - Enhance their transfer and employment prospects.
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8. Formal Motion & Decision

Motion:

Nathan requested a formal motion of support from the advisory committee for:

1. Pursuing the new Certificates of Achievement (Banking & Finance, Business Management, and Entrepreneurial Management).
2. Pursuing the development of a Bachelor's Degree in Business Psychology at Harbor College.

Action Taken:

- **Motion made by:** Alexis Diaz
- **Seconded by:** Michael Kim (and acknowledged support from Daryl)
- **Vote:**
 - No opposition voiced.
 - Motion passed unanimously among those present.

Result:

- The advisory committee officially endorses:
 - The proposed certificates; and
 - The exploration and development of a Business Psychology bachelor's degree.
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9. Action Items & Next Steps

For Harbor Business Department (Kymeshia, Chris, Nathan & team)

1. **Refine Certificate Curricula**
 - Integrate advisory feedback on:
 - Project management and configuration management
 - Technical communication
 - Coding/data tools where appropriate (e.g., Python, R, SPSS, Excel-based analytics).
2. **Coordinate with Math & Computer Science Departments**
 - Strengthen alignment around:
 - Statistics courses used by business/business psych students
 - Embedded coding and data-analysis experiences tied to real-world business/psych applications.
3. **Develop/Enhance Non-Credit & Short-Term Offerings**
 - Explore non-credit or short-course options in:
 - Project management
 - Technical/business communication
 - Possibly micro-credentials aligned with industry certifications.
4. **Capstones, Portfolios, and Showcases**
 - Use the newly funded space to:
 - Design capstone experiences that produce portfolio-ready work.
 - Plan “showcase” or “science fair”-style events with local employers.
5. **Business Honors Track**

- Continue development of the Business Honors track with a target launch in or around Spring 2026.
 - 6. **Internal Advocacy**
 - Nathan and colleagues will bring:
 - Advisory board endorsement
 - Labor market data
 - Employer feedback
 - To curriculum committees and college administration to support approval of the new credentials and Business Psychology bachelor's program.
 - 7. **Follow-Up Communication**
 - Nathan will:
 - Send “homework” materials to advisory members (e.g., draft program outlines, sample curricula).
 - Share a “Save the Date” for a future in-person networking and showcase event.
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For Advisory Board Members / Industry Partners

1. **Provide Feedback on Programs**
 - Review any materials sent by the department (draft degree/certificate outlines).
 - Offer specific suggestions on:
 - Skills, tools, and competencies graduates should have
 - Types of projects and deliverables that would be valuable.
 2. **Internship & Placement Support**
 - Consider:
 - Hosting Harbor students as interns
 - Sharing job descriptions and skill lists to guide curriculum design.
 3. **Ongoing Partnership**
 - Continue to serve as “bridge builders” rather than gatekeepers, helping expand opportunities for Harbor's business students, especially in competitive fields.
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10. Adjournment

- Kymeshia thanked everyone for their time, engagement, and thoughtful feedback.
- Nathan reiterated his appreciation and mentioned forthcoming follow-up materials and events.
- Multiple participants expressed thanks and the meeting concluded.