



School of Business & Management  
Advisory Committee  
Minutes  
March 28, 2025 9:00AM-10:30AM

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**Committee Members:** Arley Flores, Brooks Speake, Jessel Hernandez, Todd Lawrence, Caleb Suitenko, Rebecca Lomas, Toby Speake  
**College Staff:** Dana White, Adam Martin, John Alpay, Patty Worsham  
**Note taker:** Danielle Elizondo and Patty Worsham

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## Annual Recap

### Accounting (Dana): VITA Program Updates

- Discussed the VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) program, which provides free tax return preparation for low-income individuals and seniors (income under \$85K and AARP age-eligible).
- Partnered with CAP Riverside; overseeing the program since 2018.
- Passionate about the impact of the program.
- Growth Highlights:
  - 2018–2022: Two volunteers annually
  - 2022: \$91K in refunds
  - 2024: Ten volunteers; \$194K in refunds and \$45K in taxes owed so far
- Received a new \$10K state grant to promote the program.
- Addressing curriculum challenges by adopting RCC’s model—adopting a for-credit VITA course to support recruitment and skill-building.
- Emphasized the growing tax preparation industry and the opportunity for students.

### Business Administration (Patty)

- Updates on ACBSP accreditation
- KBD Honor Society activities
- Participation in CAP Days. Recapped SPR24, FAL24 and SPR25 events

### Business Law (John): Pathway to Law School Initiative

- Developing a new pathway to law school for community college students.
- Program aims to increase the number of attorneys in California, particularly through Riverside County’s Access to Justice initiative.
- Application submitted in June; approval expected by this June.

- Students benefit from support, mentorship, and preferential admission to partner law schools.
- Initiative complements the ADJ (Administration of Justice) program.
- Noted: Advisory member highlighted a shortage of Spanish-speaking estate planning attorneys.

### **Entrepreneurship (Adam): Center, Competitions, and OER/ZTC Initiatives**

- The Entrepreneurship Center is a grassroots effort to build a local entrepreneurship ecosystem.
- Focused on experiential learning—helping students launch real businesses.
- Norco College has supported over 30 student businesses, all of which have remained local, contributing to job creation and the tax base.
- Also supports business succession planning.
- Upcoming Pitch Competition in May, with preparatory workshops and business plan development.
- OER/ZTC (Open Educational Resources/Zero Textbook Cost) initiative continues to grow:
  - Aims to reduce student costs
  - Statewide impact: \$2B in savings
  - Textbook prices now rising faster than healthcare
  - Adam has secured ~\$2M in grants for curriculum conversion.

### **Logistics (Patty):**

- Full-time faculty position update.

### **Business Club (Adam & Patty):**

- Shared recent updates and event plans for Fall and Spring.

### **Real Estate (Patty/John):**

- Program updates and CPL (Credit for Prior Learning) integration.

### **Professional Development (Patty/Adam):**

- Non-credit program updates.

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### **Labor Market Information (LMI) Data Update (Adam)**

- Regional population expected to grow by over 35K.
- Current population: just under 5 million
- Average earnings: \$68K (compared to national average of \$80K)
- Regional employment: 730K, showing 12% growth—9% higher than the national average

- Educational attainment in the region (college/some college) exceeds the national average
  - Advisory partner expressed interest in offering training/upskilling via the non-credit program.
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## **Instruction & Curriculum Changes**

### **Workplace Trends**

- Emphasis on improving financial literacy: understanding Medicare, saving from first job, and consequences at each life stage.
- Need for better industry awareness among students.
- Young entrepreneurs are already engaging in online marketing/sales—developing procurement and business skills.
- Students involved in clubs stand out due to leadership, collaboration, and event planning experience.
- The Coast Guard emphasized competitive applicants: GPA 3.4+, extracurricular involvement, and leadership experience.
- Dana inquired about soft skills in accounting grads:
  - Advisory feedback: Post-pandemic students lack interpersonal skills and critical thinking.
  - Need for improved communication, judgment, and understanding beyond calculations—interpreting and validating data without relying solely on big data tools.

### **Adjournment**

- Meeting concluded at 10:30 AM.