Minutes

Office Systems Advisory Committee Meeting

Date | time 12/7/2017 at 12pm | Meeting called to order by Pam Pascolini

# In Attendance

Advisory Committee Members:

Tiffany Kousoulas – Elder Care Services

Jean Symonds – Furst Staffing

Cecilia Peterson—Operations Manager, People Link Staffing Solutions

Kishwaukee College Representatives:

Pamela Pascolini—Faculty, Office Systems

Matthew Feuerborn—Dean, Career Technologies

Bette Chilton—Dean, Health and Education

Joanne Kantner—Vice President of Instruction

Bill Nicklas—Executive Director, Foundation

LaCretia Konan—Director of Business and Training Partnerships

Brenda Butz—Adjunct Faculty, Office Systems

Brianna Hooker—Administrative Assistant, Office of Instruction

Patti Wragg – Curriculum and Training Specialist, Adult Education

# Purpose of Committee

Pam welcomes everyone in attendance and reviews the purpose of advisory committees. Industry members advise and counsel on how to best prepare students for the workforce. Bette stresses the importance of having industry-led meetings.

# Enrollment Report

Pam explains that in recent years, enrollment in Office Systems courses has been low. May be partially because there was not a full time faculty member in the department.

# Curriculum Review

Certificates include: Medical Coding/Billing, Applications Specialist, and Administrative Assistant. Emphasis is on stackable credentials which is encouraging for students and a trend in higher education right now.

Proposed Curriculum Changes:

The Office Systems AAS degree is currently 63.5 credit hours.

Proposed deletion of one course, an elective that encompasses Word, Excel, Power Point, and Access. The course is unnecessary since students are required to take courses with content specifically focused on each of these topics individually.

The goal of curriculum change is to make the Program Planner clear and concise to ensure students take classes in the correct sequence.

# Getting to Know the Program Discussion

Bill asks if a student begins pursuing a Certificate, if they could easily transition into pursuing the AAS degree? Pam explains that the Certificates are designed to do just that with everything being “stackable.” The exception is with Medical Billing and Coding due to the specificity of the certificate.

Jeans inquires about pre-requisites for the program. Students must be college-ready in English. Currently Business Math (BUS 120) is the only math requirement in the program.

Pam explains that the program is currently hybrid-heavy to fit the needs of students. Many students are working while in school so this allows them to learn at their own pace while faculty are available as students need more guidance/instruction.

Brenda emphasizes importance of being able to “learn at your own pace” based on the wide variety of starting levels of the students. Some students navigate computers very well while others may not be sure how to turn on the computer.

Pam explains to the committee members that the program is currently set up to prepare students for basic administrative/office manager work; not so much executive/legal assistant preparation. Jean thinks the addition of executive/legal prep would be a marketable degree as there is a need in the community. Although many of these positions can be hired with no degree or certificate however, experience is wanted.

Jean and Cecilia confirm that finding the “right person” is the challenge AND the ticket for hiring practices in the industry. Both cannot remember the last company/person who expected knowledge of Access. Brenda confirms that she does not use Access within her company either. However, she believes the Access course is valuable to the program because it exposes students to the general database system.

# Ideas/Suggestions Discussion

Pam asks the committee for ideas and suggestions of things missing that should be included in courses or the program. Committee as a whole stresses the importance of good soft skills. Pam confirms that the Employment Strategies course includes interviewing, resume writing, and soft skills.

LaCretia suggests having employer-guest speakers come into a class to give students an employer’s perspective of what they are looking for in employees.

Jean has some concern with graduates without work experience who expect higher than an entry-level position which is not realistic. Brenda asks Jean if she sees any income differences with additional education. Jean sees income increase with experience more so than with additional education.

Jeans asks if the program or the school follow up with students after they graduate? The school does a 6 month graduate survey however, within Office Systems, response rates are not high.

LaCretia inquires about the time of day in which most Office Systems courses are offered. Most Office Systems courses are offered as online and hybrid rather than face-to-face so students have the opportunity to work or pursue internships. Pam is interested in a committee to pursue internships. Brenda thinks job shadowing opportunities would be valuable for students.

Tiffany suggests reaching out to area high schools if we don’t already. Matt hopes to build relationships with high school business classes. Brenda agrees this is an important group to reach out to since many students probably are not aware of everything Office Systems includes.

# Internship Opportunities

Tiffany’s company could potentially offer an internship opportunity but it would be unpaid.

Bill stresses importance of scholarships for students. Pam agrees as many students who are pursuing something for an entry-level position are likely unemployed or low-employed so financial assistance can be very helpful for them.

Joanne sees that many students are interested in Medical Billing and Coding but would like to know where a graduate could find full time employment in the field? Matt reports that about half of graduates are able to find jobs locally and the other half seem to be going to the Fox Valley area or to Rockford.

# Next Meeting

Thursday, April 12, 2018 at 12pm Location: Kishwaukee College, Room: TBA

Standing Meetings will be held on the Second Thursday of April and November each year.

Meeting Adjourned 1pm.