



Business and Office Systems Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: April 23, 2025

External Participants:

Margaret Myles – Director of Advising & Student Resources, NIU College of Business

Helen Sharp – Manager of Teller Line, First National Bank

Michelle Brenning – Human Resources Generalist, City of DeKalb

Tiffany Kousoulas – Employee Benefits Specialist, Crum-Halstead Insurance Agency

Scott Schumacher – Business Education Teacher, DeKalb High School

Meghan Pinter – Director of Administration, Nenni & Associates

Internal Participants:

Barbara Leach – Vice President of Instruction

Jessica Berek – Dean of Career and Technical Education

Jescelynne Gibbons – Associate Dean of Instruction

Tammy Tiggelaar – Business and Marketing Management Faculty

Pamela Pascolini – Office Systems Faculty

Catherine Macias – Administrative Specialist

I. College Updates

A. Costs to Kish Students

- i. Reviewed changes that were implemented in the 2024-2025 academic year and discussion of proposed changes for 2025-2026 academic year.
 1. In 2024-25, the College completed the elimination of student fees and provided clarity to students in billing; easier for students to prepare for the costs of college.
 2. Textbook costs and affordability have been a high priority. In 2025-26, the College proposed a tuition increase that would cover the costs for textbooks and digital materials for students. This would simplify the process of acquiring books and save students money during their time at the College.
 - a. Summer 2025 semester "All In" program will be implemented. Increased tuition by \$8. The final cost is \$160 per credit hour and will include students' textbook(s) for the semester.

II. Program Updates

A. Spring 2025 Enrollment

- i. College-Wide Growth: Enrollment has increased by 11.3% over Spring 2024.
- ii. Business: The Business (BUS) program recorded 243 credit hours in



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Spring 2025, reflecting a 3.6% decrease over Spring 2024 with 252 credit hours; a difference of 9 credit hours.

- iii. Office Systems: The Office Systems (OS) program recorded 222 credit hours in Spring 2025, reflecting a 76.2% increase over Spring 2024 with 126 credit hours; a difference of 96 credit hours.

- 1. 7 students completed the program this spring.
 - a. The curriculum was updated last year, and certificates are now streamlined to build off each other.
 - b. The department launched a Contemporary Office Technology course which will stay up to date with current office technology and the programs being used in the workforce.

B. Department Updates

i. Student News, Field Trips/Experiences

- 1. In Fall 2024, the Business Club volunteered for Feed My Starving Children at Suter Company in Sycamore.
- 2. 3 students attended a discussion held by DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation on employment and how to keep employment for Dual Credit Education.

ii. Department Events

- 1. Career Technologies Education (CTE) Open House was not held this year; the College will investigate hosting this event in the future. The committee shared how helpful this event was for students to see all the technical programs the college has to offer.

iii. Other

- 1. Business partners suggested conducting student outreach to area high schools before students reach senior year.
- 2. Business partners discussed focusing on continuing education for non-traditional students, offering technological refresher courses is needed for the community. Note: This is a college goal for FY26.

III. Employer and Industry Update

A. Industry Update/Employer Needs

- i. Barbara Leach and LaCretia Konan are working on initiatives regarding short booster training options.

B. Skills

- i. Data Centers are building faster than employers can hire qualified applicants. Also, the need for civil engineers and engineering technicians for support is in high demand.
- ii. Business partners expressed the need for applicants to have communication skills and critical thinking skills.
 - 1. Suggested incorporating research skills into the curriculum.
 - 2. Communication skills, email, and phone call proper etiquette



training are essential.

3. Life skills training is a need for employers in applicants.

C. Artificial Intelligence

- i. Business partners expressed the need to teach students how to find answers without technology including how to research to find answers, write essays, and make reports without technology assistance.

D. Curriculum Guidance

- i. Northern Illinois University made a change in curriculum with Business majors. Finite math or Business calculus will be an option starting in Fall 2025.