



Business and Office Systems Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: April 22, 2026

External Participants:

Meghan Pinter – Director of Administration, Nenni & Associates
Scott Schumacher – Business Education Teacher, DeKalb High School
Tiffany Kousoulas – Employee Benefits, Crum-Halstead Insurance Agency
Michelle Brenning – Human Resources Generalist, City of DeKalb
Margaret Myles – Director of Advising & Student Resources, NIU College of Business
Jacky Aguilera – Life Coach, Suter Company

Internal Participants:

Dr. Jessica Berek – Interim Associate Vice President
Jescelynne Gibbons – Associate Dean of Instruction
Tammy Tiggelaar – Business and Marketing Faculty
Pamela Pascolini – Office Systems Faculty
LaCretia Konan – Associate Vice President of Community Engagement
Courtney Walz – Director of Development
Catherine Macias – Administrative Specialist

I. College Updates

- A. Spring 2026 enrollment declined by 1%.
 - i. Nearly 60% of the College’s students are first-generation, exceeding the national average, and external partners were thanked for continued support of student success.
- B. The College’s all-inclusive tuition model, including textbooks, has received national recognition. Tuition will remain flat for the upcoming year and continue its all-inclusive tuition model.
- C. The College anticipates \$30 million in capital improvements over the next three to four years, focused on essential infrastructure upgrades.
 - i. Construction of a new greenhouse will begin later this month following Board approval.
 - ii. The roof of the Caukin Building will be replaced this summer.

II. Department Updates

- A. Spring Semester Enrollment
 - i. Business enrollment increased by 84 credit hours, around 30%.
 - a. Tiggelaar noted student withdrawals were due to non-participation, faculty and advisors are actively monitoring retention and conducting outreach. Overall, a positive spring semester with student performance.



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- ii. Office Systems Enrollment
 - 1. Pascolini noted Office systems enrollment is slightly down, even though several students are successfully completing the program.
 - a. Enrollment challenges may influence misconceptions about Artificial Intelligence (AI), reducing the need for human interaction and essential workplace skills.
 - B. Business and Office Systems Curriculum
 - i. The leadership certificate course was transitioned from a hybrid format to a fully online delivery with improved enrollment, supporting its continued offering alongside the supervision certificate.
 - ii. Program emphasis incorporates realistic workplace scenarios across courses to strengthen students' professional communication and ability to navigate differing perspectives. Business partners were invited to provide input to faculty to reflect current workplace needs and scenarios.
 - iii. The College is in the initial stages of exploring a cross-disciplinary data analytics certificate.
 - C. Club Updates
 - i. The Business Club participated in a field trip to First National Bank of Omaha (FNBO), where Director Hayes Tiggelaar presented on career development, community service, leadership, and relationship building.
 - ii. During the Fall 2025 semester, the Business Club participated in a community service event with Feed My Starving Children at The Suter Company.
- III. Partner Updates
- A. Hiring/Labor Market Needs
 - i. Business partners reported current hiring needs, including sourcing specialists, assemblers, and part-time administrative support.
 - ii. Business partners noted the generational differences in communication styles and emphasized the importance of coursework that prepares the students to address sensitive workplace issues professionally, objectively, and collaboratively across perspectives.
 - 1. Konan reported that the College offers Crucial Conversations training at no cost to businesses and community groups and shared reading materials with the business partners.
 - B. Other Updates
 - i. Pascolini noted offering courses in a hybrid format, the College is meeting student needs and maintaining consistent enrollment and completion across both programs.
 - ii. Dr. Berek reported that the Fall 2025 Career Technical Education (CTE) Open House experienced lower-than-expected attendance.
 - 1. The College is reviewing options to continue the event in a revised format, including program-specific or combined, whole-college open house to better meet student and program needs.