



**CENTRAL OREGON**  
community college

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Dear Vaughan and Business Faculty,

Thank you for taking part in this inaugural year of the Department & Program Review (DPR). The focus of the DPR redesign was to simplify the compilation process, to highlight successes and voice critical needs, and to connect the College plan to a department or program's vision. Your engagement in this process is important, and we applaud the time and effort you spent reflecting on your program and analyzing the work you are doing.

## Strengths of your program

Your dedication to updating the curriculum to better align with industry trends, guided by the advisory board's insights, is commendable. The partnerships created with departments like CIS and CBIPD, integrating interdisciplinary elements into degree programs, are great examples of creating better learning experiences for students. The business program's initiative in offering all of the business classes in an online format sets a positive precedent for other COCC programs. This also aligns nicely with the college's strategic plan goal of moving toward having fully online accessible programs/degrees as does your work offering streaming courses to the branch campuses. This, coupled with efforts to secure in-person instructors, showcases innovation and dedication to serving the greater Central Oregon community. Congratulations on these achievements, and thank you for your continued efforts at enhancing student accessibility.

Your collaboration with the Small Business Development Center and the Center for Business, Industry and Professional Development demonstrates effective teamwork and mutual support between credit and non-credit offerings. This also aligns well with the College's strategic plan goal of workforce development in multiple types of offerings.

## Challenges of your program

We know that the successes highlighted above did not come without challenges and that, like many disciplines on campus, the pandemic significantly impacted student enrollment and engagement. Your DPR report makes particular note of the attrition rate of BILAPOC students in BUS courses, as well students who identify as women. Your data suggests that the attrition rate for these student groups has occasionally been higher for Business than in other disciplines and programs at the College. However, we are encouraged to see that you plan to address this issue with a deeper, systemic analysis of the issue. Your DPR report was light on how/when this analysis would occur, but we recommend engaging the Assessment and Curriculum Office if you want to look at this issue from a student learning perspective. The new assessment process produces data dashboards that can be disaggregated by student demographic filters, providing you and your faculty with perspective on challenge

points in the curriculum and program. While this data will not offer any particular solutions on its own, it can help you to narrow your focus to specific “pain points” in your courses.

We noted that your report hypothesized that “academic preparedness” and “financial constraints” may be key issues causing these uneven attrition rates for these student populations. While we’d like to better understand the rationale for how you arrived at these potential causes for the challenges, we also want to highlight the Strategic Plan’s emphasis on COCC being a student-ready college. That is, if these are indeed the issues behind these attrition rates, how can your discipline and the broader College arrange curriculum, support, and resources to proactively address issues like academic preparedness before they result in course attrition and program stop-outs? We acknowledge that this is no simple question to answer, but one that should be carefully explored with your colleagues, your chair, and your dean.

Finally, we appreciate you raising leadership transition as a concern for Business. We encourage you to take an active role in the search for the new instructional dean that will oversee Business. The challenges created by this leadership transition will no doubt also be impacted by the upcoming retirements of two of your full-time faculty. We encourage you to begin work now on a departmental transition plan so that the disciplinary and institutional knowledge possessed by your expert faculty is not lost once they transition into their (well-deserved!) retirement.

## Goals and needed resources

Regarding the strategic initiatives and potential areas of growth that you discussed in your report, we want to share the following:

### ***Goal 1: Industry Partner Enhancement***

Enhancing industry partnerships will benefit from access to a comprehensive database of local businesses and industry contacts as well as information about regional workforce needs. The Analyst tool from Lightcast, which we will get soon, could potentially help us identify key industries and businesses in Central Oregon that align with our programs and career pathways. We will be interested to see how you are able to use this tool for the business program, specifically.

### ***Goal 2: Secondary Partner Collaboration***

You are already working with the Office of High School Partnerships (OHSP) to offer College Now courses and express a desire to align additional programs from other high schools. Continued collaboration with Krissa Harris and the recruiting team from Admission and Records can help you build those partnerships. Especially as we move into our Guided Pathways work more fully, you will want to think about what kinds of outreach events, workshops, and career exploration activities will be most fruitful.

**Goal 3: Alumni Engagement and Support**

For alumni engagement and support, continue to explore what platform or software would best facilitate ongoing communication and engagement with your graduates. In our response meeting, you mentioned developing a mentorship program or creating networking opportunities with alumni. You also mentioned the possibility of tapping into your advisory board for help, but this has lapsed and not met in some years. Once you get an advisory board up and running again—which we would like to see happen next year—work with them to develop a plan.

Thank you for your ongoing dedication to student readiness. Together, we can build on our achievements, address the challenges ahead, and meet the evolving needs of our students.

If you have any questions or need further clarification, please reach out. We look forward to working collaboratively to enhance the quality and impact of the Business program.

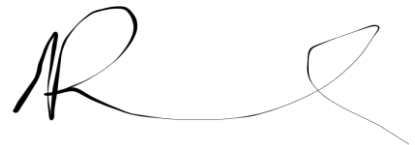
Sincerely yours,



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Michael Fisher  
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