

SRJC Business Dept. Advisory Committee

11/10/25 3:00 – 4:30 pm

Doyle Library 3rd Floor Conference Room

Minutes

Members Present: Spencer Bader, Tanya Bruno, Cassandra Cape, Carmen Cervantes, Kevin Cox, Alex Crossman, Dave Fahrner, Kelly Bass Seibel, Angela Sutherland, Mike Tracy, Diane Traversi

Guests Present: Adrienne Morgan

SRJC Present: Amy Merkel, Brad Davis, Roy Gattinella, Katie Seder, Al Yu, Ryan Wenzel, Steve Fichera, Alta Erdenebaatar, Steph Chapman, Jane Braynard Barr, Carrie LeBlanc, Mike Von Der Porten, Gayle Goldstone, Joe Henderson, Regina Mahiri, Kim Kinahan, Peg Saragina, Kris Dalby

Quorum Achieved: Yes

Committee Purpose: The purpose and objectives were reviewed and discussed. Committee voted ominously to approve.

Introductions were made

Approval of Minutes: Approved

General District Updates re: SRJC: Dean Davis updated the committee on the current state of the SRJC. Spring 2026 showed over 500 students enrolled in the first 10 minutes. Over all enrollment is good as is productivity. There are several career fairs planned, students are showing a lot of interest in them. The Board is discussing a new bond, this is still in the survey stage. The demographics of SRJC students were discussed.

SRJC Business Completer Data: Data on completers business completers was presented and discussed. Auto-award was suggested to capture those who do not apply. The new Banner program and how it might help was discussed.

HR Program Revisions: Ryan Wenzel presented a revision of the HR program to more closely align with the skills needed by HR professionals and offerings at other colleges. The committee unanimously recommended he continue with the revision.

Digital Marketing Certificate: Roy Gattinella discussed a potential new Digital certificate. Content was discussed. Comments included incorporating AI into the certificate, collaborative tools/products, and include analytics. The committee unanimously recommended the creation of this program.

AI for Business Program: Ryan Wenzel presented this. The base level course has been created, discussed was other possible courses for the program. Ryan agreed to return to the committee with this a bit more fleshed out. Suggestions included “train your own AI” course, a course directed at educators, ethics in AI course. The committee unanimously recommended he continue with the program creation.

Associate Faculty Opportunities: The hiring pools are open for associate faculty.

Updates from Committee Members:

- Alex Crossman, Sonoma County stated they are seeing lots of changes. They need employees to be more efficient, use of AI is important.
- Diane Traversi, Saint Vincent De Paul College discussed that digital influence and technology adaptability were needed, tech can be a challenge. They look for emotional intelligence, customer services, data awareness, accurate record keeping, cultural awareness and crises management abilities in their employees.

- Cassandra Cape, Hogan Land Services hires primarily for those with CAD experience, surveyors, and the importance of AI. They work to retain top talent.
- Carmen Cervantes, Next Home Wine Country Premier discussed the need for continuing education in the real estate field.
- Dave Farhner, Corcoran Global Living discussed some of the changes in the laws regarding MLS and realtors' compensation. Important skills include math, writing, interpersonal skills, and public speaking.
- Spence Bader, SCORE Northbay stressed financial literacy is needed. SCORE has restated their workshops. Partners include RCU and Builders Exchange. They are recruiting for mentors for new entrepreneurs.
- Angela Sutherland, Redwood Credit Union discussed issues with SBA funding and its impacts.
- Tanja Bruno, PASCO states needed skills include communication, decision making, AI/real skills balance, soft skills, and human relations skills. PASCO provides scholarships to students in the Human Resources program.
- Keven Cox, Bakertilly discussed the importance of internships and that the human side is more important than skills. People need to put down their phone and interact. Use AI if you can at work, excel skills are important.
- Kelly Bass Seibel, Sonoma County Tourism stated they do sales and marketing for 2800+ local businesses. They are seeing GenZ is looking for more authentic experiences. The wine industry is struggling, and looking at how to pivot. Skills needed are project management, excel, power point, and critical thinking.
- Michael Tracy, Trois Noix Wines provide a written answer to the questions, see below.

Amy Merkle told the committee about the Career Hub and internships.

Meeting adjourned

Advisory Committee Meeting 11-10-25 | SRJC Business Department
Feedback on Local Wine Industry from Michael Tracy, Winemaker

*Please prepare a 3–4-minute update in response to the following: “Please highlight any changes and trends in your business/operations that have emerged since we last met. In what ways might our specific Business Department programs support your industry sector and better prepare our students to contribute and respond? Address related workforce impacts and opportunities, such as demographics, economic/legislative, AI, marketing, social media, etc.” *
My comments are in red. **

The wine industry in the United States, including Sonoma County and Napa Valley, continues to struggle with flatlined wine sales and wine consumption, as described thoroughly in the 2025 Silicon Valley State of the US Wine Industry 2025 Report (highlighted below). It appears that the negative impact of current trends will peak in year 2030, therefore we are far from out of the woods. This report is the leading industry standard for accurate information regarding the state of the wine industry. Here are the key takeaways from the report:

After three decades of sustained growth, wine industry metrics have flattened out. The underlying causes of this market shift are modern day developments and therefore lack historical solutions. However, as we examine the trends more closely, there are positive indicators hidden within the data.

1. The supply imbalance of wine is caused by two dominant factors:

Today's reduction of wine consumption, and corresponding supply imbalance, is heavily influenced by a fundamental shift in consumer demographics coupled with a resurgence of anti-alcohol campaigns. The decline in the wine-friendly Boomer population and a change in the sentiment towards alcohol have led to the continued reduction in demand.

2. The decline of the Boomer population will drive a more aggressive outreach to younger consumers.

The market is rotating out of 60+ aged consumers who index higher for wine purchases compared to other alcoholic beverage categories and making way for consumers who index lower for wine. Developing occasion-based marketing campaigns designed specifically for consumers aged 30 to 45 may help offset the decline in the Boomer segment.

3. Our take on the metrics powering the industry downturn:

We estimate Boomers' impact on sales declines should peak between 2029 and 2031, the premium business will return to flat growth between 2027 and 2029 and off-premise will move to flat growth between 2028 and 2031.

In addition to the shift in consumer demographics that are consuming wine, as well as anti-alcohol campaigns, I also believe that maladapted, mistargeted, and generalized wine marketing is largely to blame for the stagnation in our industry. Below is a quote from a wine industry creator / influencer from LinkedIn that summarized this point well:

Wine Branding Is Broken *No One Knows Who They're Talking To

Walk down any wine aisle or scroll through a producer's Instagram and it's the same scene: rolling vineyards, gold foil labels, phrases like "family tradition," "handcrafted," and "passion in every bottle." It's beautiful. It's also background noise.

Wine branding has become an echo chamber. Everyone's talking, but no one's saying anything that actually lands with the people who buy wine.

Ask a winery who their wine is for, and you'll usually get one of two answers: "everyone who enjoys good wine" or "people who appreciate quality." Both mean nothing.

I believe that the SRJC Business Department would be providing a service to our local wine industry to have a course on Wine Business, or at least a module covering these topics in one of the existing courses. I reviewed the AA degrees and certificates and did not find anything that mentioned wine. As a winemaker with 17 vintages of experience, a BS in Viticulture and Enology from Cornell University, and an MBA in Wine Business from Sonoma State University, I would be interested in guest lecturing or possibly even developing a full course covering current issues in the Wine Business. While SSU offers many courses on these topics, I think the SRJC could be a potential incubator for an educated workforce in the local wine industry, and help stabilize the situation.

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<https://santarosa-edu.zoom.us/j/4845583687?omn=87322894947>

Call to Order:

1. Committee Purpose

Purpose: The primary purpose of the Business Advisory Committee is to (1) assist the Business faculty at SRJC by providing Program recommendations, evaluations, and suggestions that serve the needs of the students and the local industry, and (2) to provide expertise pertaining to business systems, processes and changes so that programs remains current and vital.

Objectives:

1. to provide an opportunity for communication between program educators and industry representatives
2. to focus on how to improve Business Career Education opportunities
3. to maintain positive alignment between industry needs and Business Program content

2. Introductions

Action Items:

1. Approval Meeting Minutes

New Business/Discussion/Voting:

1. General District Updates re: SRJC – report/discussion
2. SRJC Business Completer Data – report/discussion
3. HR Program Revisions – discussion/vote
4. Digital Marketing Certificate – discussion/vote
5. AI for Business Program – discussion/vote
6. Associate Faculty Opportunities – announcement
7. Other Business

Updates from Committee Members:

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(If you are not able to attend the meeting, please consider sending your update to Kris Dalby at kdalby@santarosa.edu).

In preparation for our meeting, kindly review the attached data regarding our student certificate and AA completions. Also, review the current list of AA degrees and career certificate programs offered in the Business Department here:

<https://bd.santarosa.edu/certificate-programs>

<https://bd.santarosa.edu/majors>