

# Department of Computer Information Systems (CIS)

## Advisory Board Meeting

Date: April 26, 2013 9:00 AM

Location: MBA 417A

Attendees: Dr. Virginia Rapp, Dr. Pat Vacca, Dick Barton, Randy Harris, Dave Miller, Dave Murphy, Jay Siddiqui, Gabriella Fernandez, Monica Chaban, Kevin Laird, Debbie Goldwater, Elliott Stern, Doug Thompson, Nathan Mintz

Absent: Jacquie Thompson

The meeting began at 9AM with Dr. Virginia Rapp welcoming everyone and providing background about the CIS department and the goal of the CIS advisory board meeting. Introductions were conducted.

Randy Harris then introduced the CIS program, focusing on the topic - *How computers are used in business and industry*. The Program Review process and Plan Builder were described. Randy indicated the goal of CIS is to try to remain current and develop relevant courses. The limitation CIS has is that faculty are not in the industry on a day-to-day basis, and therefore input from the advisory board is very important. Also, students should be able to complete the program in 2 years. There are three groups that CIS services: students seeking an AA degree for transfer to a 4 year; students seeking a certificate for career change or advancement, and students coming back to learn a specific skill.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to discussion and recommendations. One main topic centered around what employers look for in job applicants with AA degrees. The board's opinion was mixed – some felt that in the field of IT, a 4 year degree was important, while others felt experience was what mattered. All agreed that a 2 year AA degree in CIS would not get a person hired today in a large company, but that small to medium sized companies, or companies that work was outsourced to, would be more likely to hire an AA degree applicant.

For skill development, some companies would enroll their employees in a short-term course at a community college. Other companies have quick-start, 1 day programs in-house, but that these courses do not cover the full breadth of the material.

Everyone agreed that IT has changed - 15 years ago an AA degree got a person a job, but not today. The focus today is on cyber security, networking, computer hardware, and web development. A CIS AA degree would need to map into a 4 year MIS degree. As such, the AA degree should offer the respective transferrable courses to clearly guide the CIS major seeking transfer.

The new Help Desk certificate that is being proposed was discussed. The board felt that typing skills should be a pre-requisite. The board members use a wide variety of help desk software (Prism, Apex,

Remedy, Service Now), but felt that a student trained in one help desk package could easily learn another, as the concepts are the same. CIS teaches Help Star. One other requirement mentioned was that help desk personnel need to be well rounded, in that they know enough about computers in order to know how to properly direct a call/ticket.

Other technology that the board felt should be considered would be advanced courses in Excel, Visio, and a CMS, as all are heavily used in industry. The board thought a basic class in networking should be required of all CIS students.

Entry level positions were discussed at length, along with the skills and course content needed to get such positions. The concept of “tracks” was discussed and highly recommended. Such tracks might include:

- Help Desk
- Device/Desktop support, including setup and maintenance of not only PC's, but phones, tablets, virtualization, cloud computing, application support, PC management, security, virus protection, backups, maintenance, basic networking, etc.
- Web development/management including HTML, CSS, Javascript, PHP, MySQL or Access databases, a CMS, such as WordPress, SEO, and social marketing
- Programming, including system analysis and design, languages, databases, and most often mentioned, logic

The meeting wrapped up with the discussion of where graduates go after they get their 2 year/4 year degrees. There is a group that has conducted a survey. The response rate was 25%. Mail and phone contact received the best feedback. The survey is being planned again.

The board was thanked for their time and contribution. The meeting adjourned at 10:20.