

BUS/MGMT/PNPA Advisory Committee Meeting
April 17, 2026

Meeting Agenda

2:00: Welcome and introduction

2:05: Overview of Business/Management/Public and Non-Profit Administration/Real Estate departments

2:10: Feedback from industry partners about our programs/courses

2:55: Final Words

List of Attendees

- Francisco Gamez, Ed.D. (Dean)
- Page Bigelow (faculty)
- Peter von Bleichert, Ph.D. (faculty)
- Philip Tran (faculty)
- Sujata Verma, Ph.D. (faculty)
- Lale Yurtseven (faculty)
- Jane Gong, BS, Director of Emerging Technologies at the City and County of San Francisco
- Diane Kostka Cho, MHSc, Sr. Director of Global Support Management, Datadog

Meeting Minutes: Business & Management Advisory Board

Date: April 17, 2026 **Time:** 2:00 PM – 2:48 PM **Location:** Virtual Meeting

I. Attendance

Advisory Board Members:

- **Jane Gong:** Director of Emerging Technologies, City and County of San Francisco
- **Diane Kostka Cho:** Sr. Director of Global Support Management, Datadog

College of San Mateo Team:

- **Francisco Gamez, Ed.D.:** Dean
 - **Faculty:** Page Bigelow, Peter von Bleichert, Philip Tran, Sujata Verma, Lale Yurtseven
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II. Emerging Skills & AI Integration

The board discussed the critical shift from simply using AI tools to possessing high-level cognitive skills.

- **Critical Evaluation:** Employers are looking for candidates who can critically evaluate AI outputs and understand when human effort is more efficient than automation.
 - **Data Literacy:** While AI simplifies data analysis, the essential skill is now interpreting outputs to drive business decisions and identifying anomalies or errors in data.
 - **Systems Thinking:** Diane and Jane both emphasized "Systems Thinking"—the ability to connect dots across multiple tools, platforms, and teams rather than working in a silo.
 - **Process Synthesis:** Jane noted a deficit in entry-level hires being able to articulate a problem statement before jumping to a solution.
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III. Employment of 2-Year Degree/Certificate Holders

Both sectors confirmed they hire candidates with associate degrees and certificates, though their approaches differ:

- **Public Sector (SF City/County):** Employs two-year degree holders in administrative analyst, IT support, and customer service roles. Jane noted they are currently modernizing "archaic" job classifications to create specific roles for Product Managers and Data Analysts.
 - **Private Sector (Tech):** Diane stated that degrees are often secondary to demonstrated skills. Approximately 50% of her team does not have a degree in their specific field or at all.
 - **Portfolio Importance:** For tech roles, a GitHub repository or a portfolio of personal projects (data dashboards, business insights presentations) is more influential than a degree alone.
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IV. International Landscape & Global Competencies

- **Cultural Nuances:** Diane highlighted the need to understand varying customer expectations (e.g., Brazilian customers preferring WhatsApp vs. US customers preferring minimal interaction).
- **Documentation:** Recent graduates often struggle with writing clear documentation that international counterparts can easily understand.
- **Empathy:** Jane emphasized that cultural competency and empathy are vital for local government to communicate effectively with diverse residents.

V. Regulatory Environment, Ethics, and Liability

- **Business Law:** Diane stressed the importance of graduates understanding NDAs and non-compete agreements, especially as more young professionals build side-businesses or apps.
- **Data Privacy:** A critical ethical concern is "data leakage"—understanding what company information can and cannot be entered into public AI tools like ChatGPT.
- **Public Trust:** In government, the focus is on cybersecurity and preventing "deepfakes" to maintain the integrity of official communications.

VI. Program Feedback & Future Outlook

- **Marketing Degree:** The board supported the proposed A.S. in Marketing, noting growth in digital marketing, social media, and event management.
- **Labor Trends:** Jane referenced an Anthropic study indicating that while AI hasn't caused mass job loss yet, it is shrinking entry-level opportunities (ages 22–25), creating a "pipeline problem" for future leadership.
- **Discipline Trends:** Diane noted that Engineering and Data Analytics roles are currently shrinking at the highest rate due to AI automation.

VII. Action Items for Faculty

- Incorporate more **Data Interpretation** and "storytelling with data" into Business Analytics courses.
- Introduce **Systems Leadership/Thinking** modules across management and public administration pathways.
- Advise students to include **all projects** and parallel skills from unrelated work experience on their resumes.

College of San Mateo
Business, Management,
Public and Non-Profit Admin.
Department Advisory Board

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Welcome Advisory Board Members!

Jane Gong, BS, Director of Emerging Technologies at the City and County of San Francisco

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/janegong/>

Diane Kostka Cho, MHSc, Sr. Director of Global Support Management, Datadog

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/dianekostka/>

Business & Management Team

- Francisco Gamez, Ed.D. (Dean)
- Page Bigelow (faculty)
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Summary of Degrees and Certificates

- A.S. - T Business Administration (transfer degree)
- A.S. Business Administration
- A.S. Business Analytics
- A.S. International Business
- A.A. Management
- A.S. Public and Non-Profit Administration
- A.S. Marketing (pending state approval)
- Business Analytics (certificate)
- International Business (certificate)
- Entrep. and Small Business Management (certificate)
- Entrepreneurship - The Start Up (certificate)
- Business Management (certificate)
- Marketing Specialist (certificate)
- Management (certificate)
- Human Resources Management (certificate)
- Project Management (certificate)
- Real Estate (certificate)
- Non-Profit Management (certificate)
- Leadership (certificate)

Questions for Advisory Board

- What emerging skills do you anticipate industry will be seeking?
- Do you employ students with certificates or 2-year degrees and if so, in what areas and/or positions?
- How does the international landscape impact recent college graduates, and what global competencies do you consider most essential in today's entry level roles in international business?

Slide 6

- TP0** [@Bigelow, Page] Feel free to ask a question in place of mine.
Tran, Philip, 2026-02-20T21:04:06.121
- 0 0** [@Tran, Philip] I like your question and I think we should leave it as is.
Bigelow, Page, 2026-02-23T17:05:08.386
- VS1** Follow up question: What kinds of trends are you seeing in terms of hiring of fresh graduates in your specific industries/departments?
Verma, Sujata, 2026-02-23T23:19:19.061

Questions for Advisory Board

- Based on your experience in public organizations, what knowledge, skills, and competencies are most critical for entry-level professionals today?
- Given the complex regulatory environment, what is the minimum level of business law or ethics awareness you expect a college graduate to have to ensure they are not a liability to your organization?