

Creating and Maintaining and Actively Involved Business Advisory Council

1. Education is a business, and there are consumers for our product, our graduates.
 - Businesses
 - Industries
 - Governments agencies
 - Non-profits
 - Universities
2. Determine which businesses, industries, agencies, non-profits, and universities should be represented
 - Distribution of size and type
 - Do not limit to just large companies; medium and small companies provide perspective and are likely to hire as well
3. Determine what you want to get from the BAC and develop your sales script
 - Establish expected time commitment per quarter
 - Establish expectations of involvement activities
 - Job skills validation – detail the process
 - Course and curriculum validation/modification
 - Job forecasting- anecdotally and through surveys
 - Internships
 - Job shadowing
 - Providing expertise in set-up and operation of labs
 - Donating equipment or other resources
 - Providing speakers at student, public and education events
 - Helping with recruitment
 - Teaching Case Study courses
 - Consulting with students
4. Find and retain appropriate business and university partners by starting with the President
 - It's a "high-touch" activity, requiring personal contact, not mass mailings or mass emails.
 - Identify businesses and industries, universities and agencies that hire people with the job descriptions representing your curriculum.
 - Contact the President of the company or university
 - Share your vision of what the program can mean to the area.
 - Explain the importance of the company's having a subject matter expert, usually first-line manager, involved in the BAC. (Typically the HR representative can also be involved, but you have to have a SME as well.)
 - Make sure you point out what's in it for the company or educational institution to be involved.
 - Drop the fact that you have grants from NSF, DOL, etc. if you have them. This carries a lot of weight.
 - Establish time expectations of BAC members

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Contact abeheleer@collin.edu for more information

5. Hold BAC with initial meeting

- Invite all faculty to attend the meetings as observers to gain their buy-in to what the BAC wants
- Publicity – invite reporters/writers
- Refreshments – not elaborate, but important to have, especially early in the morning
- Time – early morning typically works better, before BAC members go to the office
- Explain how important they are to the program and what their companies will get from their involvement
- Clarify roles and responsibilities between BAC and educators (educators are there to listen, not to present or run the show)
- Explain need for quarterly meetings and establish dates for the year
- Ask for their initial forecast report – what's "hot", where hiring is expected, etc.
- Review opportunities for helping from your "sales script"
- Stick to the agenda and keep discussion rolling, limiting those who might want to dominate
- Acknowledge the importance of their time by starting and stopping on time regardless of whether or not your agenda is complete. End early if you have what you need. You can always complete your work on email.
- Take minutes; publish them; have next BAC approve them.

6. BAC recognition

- News releases/articles
- Thank your emails (personal, not mass emails)
- Thank you letters to the President and their bosses
- Certificates
- Plaques

7. Reporting

- Quarterly minutes
- Yearly accomplishment report – not just body counts
- Have students present

8. Keeping the BAC fresh

- Aim to have at least one new member each quarter and introduce them
- Talk with each member individually at least yearly to ask them what they think you could do differently to obtain more from them or the entire BAC

9. Benefits from following this approach

- Business ownership of your curriculum and your program in general
- Interest in hiring your students above other applicants because they know what your students know
- Faculty recognize and understand business requirements first-hand