

(Sustainable) Horticulture and Landscape Design Advisory Board Meeting Memo

November 14, Tuesday, 2023, Virtual Session

ADVISORY BOARD:

Casey Anderson (Director, OC Farm Bureau), Kurt Buxton (Vice President, BrightView Design Group), Jodie Cook (Owner, Jodie Cook Landscape Design), Wes Murray (Former City of Whittier Planning Commissioner), Glenn Tanaka (Owner, Tanaka Farms), Mike Evans (Owner, Tree of Life Nursery), Ron Vanderhoff (General Manager, Roger's Gardens)

FACULTY / STAFF:

Full-time Ken Lee (Dept. Chair)

Part-time Dave Stevens (Owner, Oakbrook Landscape), Stephanie Knight (Urban Farmer, Rancho Mission Viejo Farm), Mehrdad Mohregi (Owner, MMDesign), Garry Collins (Owner, Arroyo Irrigation), Christian Galindo (Vice President, BrightView Landscape), Robert Farnsworth (Prof. Emeritus), Tamara Sison, Ph.D

Staff Tina Maldini (Greenhouse Tech.), Cheryl Wallace (Greenhouse Support)

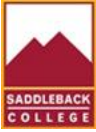
DEPT. CHAIR REPORT:

Considering one person short from the retirement, the program has been doing relatively well. Even though course offering numbers are down, program productivity has been steady. Hopefully we will have a new faculty on board, so, we can get back to expanding mode.

- *New Faculty Hiring will be resumed in Fall 2023, aiming for Spring 2024 as a starting semester for a new faculty*

Our student's club, which has been dormant during Covid period, has come back with full speed. And, it has been quite active on extra curriculum activities, including local community services.

Our internship program has been maintaining its quality and student's participation. And, it has been studied by some other departments to explore their own options for successful internship programs.



Approval and recommendation of creating a new certificate of “The Business of Horticulture and Landscape Design” was motioned, moved and unanimously approved by Horticulture and Landscape Design Program Advisory Board.

Below are the board members comments and approvals with their full support:

- ***Why is creating this certificate necessary for Horticulture and Landscape Design industries?***

Responses: Typical certificate and university graduates lack the depth of basic business knowledge to quickly integrate into either a corporate or sole proprietor business environment. We can only orient the students to a few concepts in the current semester course. A broader survey of business practices and more focused skills development in business development, planning and the fundamentals of revenue, overhead, direct costs, profit, backlog would be extremely valuable in the horticultural and design professions. Additionally, a fundamental understanding of business licenses, insurance and the functions of HR, legal and accounting would equip graduates with the knowledge of the right resources for their growth as an employee or owner.

Professionalism, ethics, presentation/proposal skills, understanding insurance for the designer or contractor, licensing, revenue, margins, competition, value propositions, and profit and loss are all critical aspects of the horticulture and design industry whether our students will eventually be self-employed or not. There is nowhere else in the curriculum with an intense focus on these issues other than through a dedicated business certificate.

it's important for sure. Needless to say, we live in a very specialized world, and we have people that work for us that don't have to worry about the business aspect for things, but for the management team it's the backbone of operations. Naturally the higher the position, the more important it is.

Action Taken: Advisory Board members motioned, moved and approved unanimously.

- ***What will be the immediate and future demand on certificate's needs for job prospects?***

Responses: There are opportunities in account management, sales and project management with existing landscape maintenance, construction, nursery, and products businesses.

Having a basic understanding of business operations, sales, and accounting is essential in a competitive industry such as horticulture and landscape



design. In a competitive interview environment, it will set them apart as prospective employees by demonstrating a commitment to the business success of their future employer.

Good communication skills are critical for doing business, and, entrepreneurship needs to be encouraged.

Business aspects, such as, management, liabilities, contracts, are as important (if not more) as professional knowledge.

Action Taken: Advisory Board members motioned, moved and approved unanimously.

- ***How will this certificate help students to pursue the careers in Horticulture and Landscape Design fields?***

Responses: With correct curriculum and socialization of the program in the industry, students will be well suited to a variety of operational positions in businesses that have creative and technical offerings that are typically in need of industry knowledgeable business support.

For those students entering landscape design as a career, it will help them to price their services appropriately to make a profit, and will allow them to avoid common pitfalls that hinder landscape designers, in particular, from building a profitable business. It will give them confidence in the value they bring to an organization.

I think accounting and understanding of the profits & losses, and financial metrics can help people feel more confident on their roles, and maybe also for sales. At my level it's perhaps paramount, but also much of it is learned through work.

There are many elements in business to learn by horticulture and landscape design students, such as, Administration, Marketing and Finance, etc.

Action Taken: Advisory Board members motioned, moved and approved unanimously.

- ***Any other comments to support creating this certificate?***

Responses: Combining this with internships and general horticultural/ design industry knowledge is critical.

Internship program should be well coordinated with department courses, as the bridge between professional knowledge acquirement and “real world” experience.



Our Group VP was discussing funding courses offered through community college to certify Account Managers, and also a more business-oriented course that he was thinking of offering to Branch managers. This also highlights the internal need of training people in technical aspect but with a much more reduced number of candidates that we would be willing to fund for these business or management courses.

Our students have strong skills in design and sustainable horticulture. Now we need to increase attention in the methods of professional practice. I strongly support the implementation of a Certificate in Business for Horticulture and Landscape Design.

There are opportunities for students with such interest. Entrepreneurship would be encouraged and fruitful. Career paths have changed for people since the pandemic. This would help students create their own careers.

Synergy from collaborating with other programs, such as, Business Department, is important for our students, providing broad spectrum for better understanding of critical non-major aspects. This will surely lead to better employability of students.

Action Taken: Advisory Board members motioned, moved and approved unanimously.