OCCUPATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEMBERS

Erin Derby
Instructor
Eastern Center for Arts and Technology

Cynthia Giannini
Greenberg Trauig, LLP

Latonia Ayscue
Abington Memorial Hospital

Theresa Sullivan
Montgomery County Community College

Chane’ Clark
Elite Underwriting Services

Patricia Canning
EASTERN (Ret.)

Katie Braun
Centennial School District

Marlene Moran
Janssen Biotech, Inc.

Leslie Ramirez
Montgomery County Community College Student

Autumn Clark
Student Representative

EXECUTIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
REPRESENTATIVE

Gary Bissig
LABRepCo
ANALYSIS OF LABOR MARKET DATA

Data from the U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2013-14 Edition indicates that employment of Administrative Assistants and Secretaries is expected to grow about as fast as the average through the year 2022. Job opportunities should grow in upwards of 12% from 2012 to 2022. The need to replace experienced secretaries who retire or stop working for other reasons will account for the majority of job openings. Opportunities should be best for persons with work experience and computer skills. In addition to these findings, these significant points were mentioned also:

1) The largest growth will occur for individuals trained as Medical Secretaries and general secretaries and administrative assistants.

2) Community College or trade schools provide specific training in industry specific terminology and practices for specialized medical secretaries such as medical or legal.

3) Certification can demonstrate competency to employers.

The Occupational Advisory Committee reviewed the supply/demand data and concluded that it fairly represents the state of the industry in EASTERN’s employment area.
STUDENT COMPLETION, PLACEMENT AND FOLLOW-UP INFORMATION

The first graduating class of Office Management in June 2015 indicates that 89% (8 of 9 graduating students) of all students completed all tasks for their career objective and received a final grade of 70% or above. The overall placement rate for entry into related occupations or related schooling immediately following graduation was approximately 50%. Office Management students placing Advanced and/or Competent reached 66% in 2014, the first testing year of this class. Based on the labor market data and the graduate placement data for EASTERN’s students, it was agreed that the Office Management Program should be continued.

PROGRAM SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

1. The skills associated with this program are quite varied and encompass much more than the traditional office setting. Should the name of the program be changed to more accurately reflect the program of study?

   Yes, the OAC has concluded that changing the name will help with growth of the program and continuing recruitment strategies. If the name is changed to incorporate “Business” students can make a closer connection to what it is about. The final name that the OAC has decided upon is: Business & Technology Professional

2. Looking at the Bureau of Labor Statistics for Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, it seems as if Medical Secretaries has the highest projected growth to year 2022 (36%). Montgomery County Community College offers a Health Services Management degree program, should this be integrated into the curriculum?

   The OAC has spoken about this possibility. After reviewing the current curriculum task list, along with the material that must be integrated for the 9 dual enrollment credits, they have come to the conclusion that there is not sufficient room to teach this material. Also, with the changing of the NOCTI test for next year, much more emphasis and time must be put on the Accounting and Financial part of the curriculum. While this projected growth
is astounding, looking more closely to what is involved is much more medical terminology and medical coding/billing related than general business.

3. What are some new ways other than school presentations and speaking with counselors, that enrollment can be increased?

This topic has readily been discussed at multiple meetings. It has been suggested that changing the name to align directly with “business” will eliminate the preconceived notion that it is all secretarial work. Keeping the name business related will also help recruit more males, as the majority of the current population is females. If students enjoyed their business class at their home school, they might see this as an opportunity to expand on those lessons learned in a class they hopefully enjoyed.

We have found an increase in the amount of students showing initial interest in career expo when the instructor accompanied Mrs. Shields to the pre-career expo presentations. The amount of students and the “right fit” students were attending career expos compared to past years. Continuing these presentations would help with any confusion with the future name change and also bring more attention to this program.

Sending out emails alerting counselors, administration and special education teachers about the course are especially helpful right before scheduling time, along with the beginning of the year in September (last minute adds or changes). The instructor can briefly outline the course, costs, materials and what types of students are typically successful in the program. This will help “remind” those counselors of the program and whom might be a good fit.

TRENDS IN OFFICE MANAGEMENT

Between April and January of 2016, the Occupational Advisory Committee examined trends in the industry as they relate to Technology, Business Operations, Structure of the Industry and Types of employees/skills required for employment. Based on the resident expertise of the Occupational Advisory Committee, the following industry trends were identified:
EMERGING TRENDS

Many companies are vetting work to 3rd party companies. They are not able to find the right worker with the right skills set, so they are leaning on other companies to do this for them. Employers need more skill based workers.

The virtual office or working from home has been discussed several times. With employers finding outside parties to do their work, many are turning to incorporating virtual assistants or various virtual workers. The field is broadening and becoming more in demand with more and more workers working from home. Working from home, employee focus, time management and being able to plan out your whole day are all ways to improve your value. Being able to reinvent yourself through life to learn more skills and adjust to demand are skills employers are looking for.

TECHNOLOGIES

Technologies have been discussed at length. Outlook is a program that is used in the majority of companies. It was discussed how some companies and school districts are going to Google, a cheaper version. In review it was decided that since Outlook is used primarily in the business industry, it needs to be mainstreamed into the curriculum. Office 365 is the program that the OMT program uses to attain this. Office 365 gives students access to Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and Access from the web. They are able to complete their assignments at home, while communicating with their teacher through Outlook. Students can utilize the cloud to save their documents, while also using all desktop versions of the aforementioned programs.

Salesforce.com is a website that several companies are turning to to manage their relationships with customers and clients. They are an industry-leading customer platform that has become the world’s leading enterprise cloud ecosystem. Industries and companies of all sizes can connect to their customers like never before using the latest innovations in mobile, social, and cloud technology. This was discussed as a tool that could be incorporated into the classroom.
STRUCTURE OF THE INDUSTRY

**Shared Services** has been a growing topic and use in the business industry. More and more companies are turning to incorporate this model into their business. Shared Services has the mindset of a business and views the rest of the organization as their customers. As a service organization, their accountabilities are delivering value (balancing cost and service levels), as well as identifying ways of further leveraging their operating model. It is the provision of a service by one part of an organization or group where that service had previously been found in more than one part of the organization or group. Thus the funding and resourcing of the service is shared and the providing department effectively becomes an internal service provider. The business and office management industry has been utilizing this business model. Students need to be aware of this and any changes so they can be knowledgeable upon applying for jobs and working for a business with this set up.

**Third party services** are increasingly becoming more popular with businesses. They are seeking to outsource work and employment outside of their company. Employees need to reinvent themselves with the tools so that these such companies do not turn to third party services to fill a position. Students also need to know that these parties are ones that they might be able to find a position with as an “in” with a reputable company. This method allows students/job seekers to be an entrepreneur. This would allow them to market themselves differently, and create their own personal brand to gain employment in nontraditional ways.
TYPES OF SKILLS REQUIRED FOR EMPLOYMENT

**Trainable**

**Organizational skills** are one of the most important transferable job skills a worker can possess. Companies need workers who can stay organized and focus on the projects at hand. However, company managers must also organize the work of their employees.

**Time Management** - Employers want to hire workers who can prioritize and manage their work. In today’s workplace, more is being demanded of workers than ever before. You have to accomplish more in less time, with fewer resources. This puts a lot of pressure on you to be able to manage your time more efficiently so you can get more done, be less stressed and have a feeling of accomplishment. If you aren’t doing a great job of managing your time, then you probably aren’t able to deliver projects on time or you end up missing a few important meetings. You have to always stay on task because in today’s work environment, you can easily be replaced on a moment’s notice.

**Communicator**

**Interpersonal skills** or life skills are often the soft skills that employers look for immediately. Some employers believe that you can teach one the technical or “hard” skills, but soft skills are acquired through life and very hard to teach. Employers often seek to hire staff with 'strong interpersonal skills' - they want people who will work well in a team and be able to communicate effectively with colleagues, customers and clients. Examples of interpersonal skills are: Being a team player, working with difficult people, understanding conflict resolution, leadership, coping with stress, verbal and nonverbal communication and teaching others.

**Writing skills** are essential in every organization and every outlet of business. Employees need to be able to professionally communicate via email, memos and letters with their clients and co-workers. They should be able to articulate their thoughts and ideas in a clear, organized manner.
Critical Thinker

Focus – There are things that happen in our personal lives on a daily basis that could distract us from our work. A sound employee needs to be able to set aside issues inside and outside of the workplace and focus on the task at hand. Employees need to be able to deal with distractions and sustain themselves so work gets done no matter what outside distractions or the time frame might be.

Proving your value is integral for personal growth. Employers need to see personal growth to keep up with change in the company and increase their value within the company with new technologies, knowledge and skills.
PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS WITH PURCHASING TIMELINE:

SCHOOL YEAR 2016-17

- Change name of program to better represent program objectives/outcomes.
- Revise and replace all promotional materials—approximately $1000
- Implement OFM110 (Microsoft Word) in conjunction with Montgomery County Community College for dual enrollment—approximately $3,500

SCHOOL YEAR 2017-18

- Implement OFM160 (Modern Office Management) in conjunction with Montgomery County Community College for dual enrollment—approximately $3,500

SCHOOL YEAR 2018-19

- Investigate the acquisition of a site license to become a Certiport testing center to be able to provide online certifications to EASTERN students—approximately $10,000
- Purchase a new copier—approximately $5,000