



**BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT  
2025-26 ADVISORY MEETING MINUTES**

**Date:** December 17, 2025

**Time:** 3:00 PM (PST)

**Location:** LRC-438

**Chair:** L. Reza Wrathall

**Attendees:**

• **Advisor Participants:**

1. Clint Backhaus - Program Delivery Manager at Sempra Energy
2. Fauzia Burke - Book Publicist/Founder of FSB Associates
3. Carlos Duarte - VITA Program Coordinator
4. Justin “Results” French - Fractional CMO/Founder of The Revenue Ronin
5. Dave Kaushagen - Real Estate Broker/CEO of Passport Realty
6. Jim Miller - Founder and President of Global Trading Partners
7. Jacob Richardson - Professional Carpenter/Specialized Trades/Management
8. Jorge Salgado - CEO of 6S Machining Enterprises
9. Paul Viersen - Accountant
10. Rick White - CSIT Faculty at MiraCosta College

• **Palomar College Faculty and Staff:**

1. Mary Cassoni – Professor of Business
2. Meei-chun Gau – Academic Department Assistant of Business
3. Joel Glassman – Assoc. Professor of Business
4. Kevin Hall – Part-time Faculty of Business
5. Leah Hoover – Assoc. Professor of Business
6. Lakshmi Paranthaman – Assoc. Professor of Business
7. Brian Roppe – Assoc. Professor of Business
8. Loudes Runk – Instructional Support Assistant of Business
9. Sarra Salib – Asst. Professor of Business
10. Justin Smiley – Acting VPI

11. Tricia Wood – Part-time Faculty of Business

12. L. Reza Wrathall – Assoc. Professor of Business/Department Chair

- **Student Participants:** 87 students participated in the panel discussion and breakout sessions.

**Documentation:** A complete list of student attendees is available via the physical sign-in sheets used during the session.

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## Welcome, Introductions, and Groundwork

The session opened with an introduction by Department Chair (Reza) of the ten business advisors, who represent various industries including accounting, manufacturing, real estate, and digital marketing. Reza welcomed the panel and emphasized that the goal of the meeting was to identify what the Business Administration Department might improve, incorporate, or adapt in its current curriculum to better prepare students for the workforce.

Before the meeting, the ten business advisors were directed to a dedicated webpage created for the advisory meeting, available at

<https://www.palomar.edu/business/advisory/> to include:

- links to the various Business Administration Department programs;
- short biographies of the advisors;
- “*Top 25 Advisory Questions for 2025*” for the advisors’ consideration before the meeting and for input after the meeting; and
- several reference articles for the advisors’ further consideration, including re:
  - fast-growing jobs and San Diego area talent demand;
  - rising healthcare talent needs;
  - the values disconnect between Gen Z and hiring managers; and
  - the relative costs of a 4-year degree.

Carlos Duarte, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program Coordinator, then briefly introduced the VITA program as part of a building collaboration to encourage Accounting students at Palomar to participate in the VITA program as early as next spring semester.

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## Breakout Group Sessions

Following the opening remarks and VITA program introduction, students broke into ten small groups to engage directly with individual advisors in a speed-roundtable format. Each rotation lasted approximately 12 minutes, allowing students to ask specific career questions and receive personalized mentorship on topics ranging from financial literacy to experimental mindsets in business.

## Advisor Panel Session

### 1. General Recommendations for the Department

The advisors were asked: *"What do we need that we do not have? What should we be thinking about that we are not?"*

- **AI Integration, Literacy & Ethics**

The panel agreed that AI is no longer an “extra” skill but a fundamental requirement across all disciplines.

- Curriculum-Wide Integration: Fauzia Burke emphasized that AI should not be taught in a single siloed class; it must be “sprinkled” and integrated into every subject, so students understand its specific application in marketing, accounting, or management. See Burke’s follow-up e-newsletter post on Substack, enclosed as **Exhibit A**.
- Media Training & Fact-Checking: Burke also stressed the need for “media training” to handle AI “hallucinations” and ensure students can verify the accuracy of AI-generated data.
- Human-AI Collaboration: Rick White suggested moving away from using AI as a mere tool and instead treating it as a collaborator (e.g., NotebookLM) to enhance human creativity and provide the “soul” that raw data lacks.
- Ethics as a Foundation: Clint Backhaus warned that AI is like a powerful vehicle; without a heavy emphasis on ethics, it can cause “mayhem.” He believes the Department must teach the moral implications of automated decision-making.
- Deep Discipline Knowledge: Rick White noted that AI is “coming for” those who only know surface-level labels or definitions. Students need deeper conceptual understanding to remain relevant.

- **Soft Skills & Professional Interpersonal Dynamics**

- Advisors noted a significant gap between technical “book knowledge” and the ability to function in a professional environment.
- Interpersonal “Polish”: Clint Backhaus observed that students often have the technical discipline but are “off-putting” in person. He emphasized that social intelligence is often the deciding factor in hiring.
- The Nuance of Written Tone: Dave Kaushagen highlighted a major deficiency in written communication, particularly the inability to strike the right professional tone in emails and texts, leading to frequent misunderstandings.
- Empathy and Human Connection: Carlos Duarte argued that empathy is a missing business skill. He suggested that direct service roles (like VITA) help students learn to step into a client's shoes.

- **Shift from Technical Execution to Analytical Oversight**
  - As automation takes over manual tasks, the “missing” skill is the ability to manage the process.
  - Accounting Evolution: Paul Viersen explained that since “bots” now handle data entry, the Department needs to pivot toward teaching high-level Data Analysis and decision-making.
  - Manufacturing Strategy: Jorge Salgado noted that robots now handle physical labor; therefore, students need to be taught how to develop complex Inspection Plans and manage automated systems rather than operating machines manually.
  - Applied Knowledge: Justin French challenged the idea that “knowledge is power,” stating that only applied knowledge — using tools to increase productivity — is valuable in the current market. See the transcript of French’s follow-up YouTube post, enclosed as **Exhibit B**.
  
- **Professional Reliability & "Managing Up"**
  - Several advisors expressed that basic professional habits are becoming rare and highly valuable.
  - The “Reliability” Competitive Advantage: Jacob Richardson stated that simply showing up early and doing what you say you will do is now a “leg up” because so few entry-level workers do it consistently.
  - Proactive Communication: Richardson also defined organization as “managing up” proactively informing supervisors of project status and availability before being asked.
  - Personal Finance & Life Balance: Jim Miller suggested that students lack “balance,” often spending excessive time on non-productive activities (like gaming) which impairs their ability to manage a professional schedule and personal budget. See Miller’s follow-up email, enclosed as **Exhibit C**.
  
- **Entrepreneurial Mindset & Personal Branding**
  - Students were encouraged to view themselves as business entities from Day 1.
  - The Value Proposition: Jim Miller urged the Department to help students define their “Value Proposition” — the specific financial or operational benefit they bring to an employer. *See also* Exhibit C.
  - Digital Asset Building: Justin French advised that students should not wait for a job to start building their “Personal Brand.” He suggested they start building email lists and digital portfolios immediately to own their professional identity. *See also* Exhibit B.
  - Community Ethics: Carlos Duarte highlighted that programs like VITA are essential because they combine technical training with a sense of community responsibility that is not found in textbooks.

## 2. Career & Life Advice for Students

Advisors provided a “checklist” of attributes and habits students should cultivate to be competitive in 2026.

Advisor	Key Takeaway
Jim Miller	The Value Proposition: Students must define what value they deliver to an employer. He also stressed Personal Finance (budgeting) and Work-Life Balance, noting that “50 hours of gaming a week” is a lack of balance. See <i>also</i> Exhibit C.
Justin French	Personal Branding: Authenticity is the new currency. Students should start building their personal brand and email lists immediately. See Exhibit B. He also recommended reading <i>Rich Dad Poor Dad</i> .
Rick White	Human-Centered AI: Do not use AI as a tool; use it as a collaborator. It should be a partnership where the human provides the “soul” and critical oversight.
Jorge Salgado	Internships & Mentorship: Real-world application is the only way to see the true future of automation and AI in practice.
Fauzia Burke	The Side Hustle: Side gigs (even small ones like mowing lawns or managing a band) show initiative, passion, and organizational skills on a resume.
Carlos Duarte	Empathy & Service: Volunteering (such as the VITA program) provides real-world ethics and the ability to put oneself in another's shoes.

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## 3. Discipline-Specific Insights

The panel discussed how their specific industries are shifting:

- Real Estate (Dave Kaushagen): While tech helps efficiency, the fundamentals remain: communication, math, and budgeting.
- Trade & Technical (Jacob Richardson & Jim Miller): There is a high demand for skilled trades (e.g., specialized auto mechanics as well as electricians, plumbers, carpenters and construction contractors). These skilled trades require both “uncarvable” technical and interpersonal skills that AI cannot easily replace, including critical interpersonal skills relating to customer/client management.
- Accounting (Paul Viersen): The industry is transitioning to “bots” for manual tasks. Accountants must now focus more on analysis rather than data entry.

- Manufacturing (Jorge Salgado): Automation and robots are taking over inspection and machine-feeding. The human role is shifting toward Critical Thinking and developing inspection plans.
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#### **4. Tools & Resources Mentioned**

- NotebookLM (Google): Rick White highlighted its ability to generate high-quality infographics using the Nano Banana model.
  - Gemini Pro: Recommended for students to take advantage of pro-level AI features for research and learning velocity.
  - VITA Program: Cited by Carlos Duarte as a prime example of combining technical skills with community service.
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#### **5. Closing**

The meeting concluded with the distribution of gift bags (succulent plants and Department mugs) to the advisors. Student participants were reminded to sign in for credit and everyone was encouraged to visit the advisory website to continue the conversation via QR code.

#### **Next Steps:**

- Department Faculty to identify opportunities across all Department disciplines to effectively incorporate high-engagement exercises for developing, and update curriculum accordingly to introduce and reinforce:
    - complementary and “multiplier” AI skills;
    - soft skills;
    - analytical and critical thinking skills; and
    - value propositions and personal branding.
  - Department Faculty to evaluate and execute on opportunities at the intersection of skilled trades and complementary Accounting, Marketing/Advertising, Business Management, and Project Management coursework that may deliver both of the “uncarvable” technical and interpersonal skills that AI cannot easily replace.
  - By extension, Department Faculty to evaluate and execute on opportunities to build the current Medical Office Specialist Program to meet rising healthcare talent needs.
  - Students were encouraged to reach out to the advisors for mentorship through the digital portal.
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**Adjournment:** 5:08 P.M.

# EXHIBIT A

Substack post by Fauzia Burke, available at:  
<https://fauziaburke.substack.com/p/are-gen-z-students-worried-about>

## Are Gen Z Students Worried About AI? I Asked Them

Turns out, students have a lot to teach us about using AI wisely



FAUZIA BURKE  
JAN 13, 2026



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Last week, I stepped onto the San Marcos campus of Palomar College (San Diego) and was hit with an unexpected wave of nostalgia. It was finals week, and the air practically vibrated with that familiar end-of-semester mix: caffeine, stress, nerves.

Honestly? It made me want to grab a backpack and go back to school.

I was there as part of the Business Administration Department's Advisory Roundtable. A group of industry professionals was invited to guide and help shape future classes in the program. But as valuable as the professionals' advice was, the real highlight for me came from the students.

I sat down with 16 business students (4 groups of 4). These students were right in the thick of finals, yet they took the time to talk with me about Artificial Intelligence. I expected shortcuts and shrugging. What I got was ethics, insight, and a reminder that the next generation is paying attention. They seem much more confident in their responses than many professionals I talk to. They are not afraid or worried, but they are also not happy about AI being part of daily life.

Here's what I learned.

### 1. AI Isn't One Vibe. It's a Spectrum.

The very first thing that stood out was how differently each group responded to AI.

Group 4, made up mostly of men, was optimistic. They believe AI will eventually take on 50% of their daily workload. Or they will have completely different jobs than what we have today. They weren't afraid of that future. They were already thinking about how to manage it.

The women, however, were more reserved. In my first group of four women, three said they weren't *happy* about AI's role in their lives. They still use it weekly, but they approach it with a healthy dose of skepticism. Even the second group of women, who were more enthusiastic, made it clear they don't believe AI will, or should, replace half their work.

## 2. Cheating? They Say No, But...

Here's the moment that really impressed me.

I asked: "If you use AI to write a work report, is that cheating?"

Every group gave me the same answer: "No." And every group followed it with a big caveat: "It's only okay if you cite your sources, and verify the information."

These students don't see AI as a shortcut. They see it as a tool, one that demands transparency. They understand that integrity still matters. And they're not trying to fake it.

## 3. They Know Where the Real Value Lives

Last, I asked whether strong communication skills matter more in a world with AI.

The response? A unanimous *yes*.

They all agreed that as AI becomes more capable, the people who can connect, empathize, tell a story, give context, and lead will stand out. When AI can draft the email, the human who builds the relationship becomes the real asset.

## The Next Generation is Ready

I left that library feeling genuinely hopeful for the future.

We talk a lot about how technology is shaping the next generation. But what I saw were students who were carefully, intentionally, and ethically shaping *their* relationship with technology.

They're not scared of AI. They're not overhyping it either. They're using the tools, but not losing themselves in them.

A huge thank you to the Palomar Business Department, and specifically to L. Reza Wrathall and Mary Cassoni, for creating the space for these conversations.

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consider becoming a free or paid subscriber.  
Thank you, Fauzia :)

# EXHIBIT B

**Transcript of video produced by Justin “Result” French (aka “The Revenue Ronin”) for Palomar College Students on December 18, 2025, following the Advisory Meeting, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fusDbggd4ZQ>**

Hey everyone, Justin R. “Results” French here, the Revenue Ronin. I want to say a massive thank you to Palomar College, Reza, and the entire Business Advisory Panel for having me yesterday. That was one of the best speaking engagements I’ve done in a while, and the energy in that room was incredible.

So Reza, thanks again for creating that environment — that speed networking format was brilliant. And to the students who showed up, asked great questions, and stayed engaged, this is for you.

I want to leave you with **four key takeaways** — the four biggest things I want you to remember.

## **Takeaway #1: The 10 C’s Framework**

This is how you build a business that actually generates cash:

- Care
- Commit
- Community
- Context to that community
- Communication
- Content creation
- Consistency
- Conversion
- ...which leads to **Cash**

Most people stop at content and wonder why they’re broke. You execute all ten, and that’s how you win.

## **Takeaway #2: Closest-to-Cash Activities**

Every morning, ask yourself: *Does this action move me closer to revenue today?*

Organizing your desk? Not so much.

Making ten prospecting calls? Absolutely.

One feels productive. One **is** productive. Know the difference.

## **Takeaway #3: You Are Entitled to Nothing**

Breathing is a gift. Everything else, you earn.

Success, customers, revenue, career opportunities — you are not entitled to any of it. And here’s the beautiful part: that means it’s all in your control.

Take the risk. Build the thing. Execute relentlessly.

## Takeaway #4: Organization, Communication, and Delegation

Every single advisor emphasized these three skills — the soft skills:

- **Organization:** Know what matters versus what's noise.
- **Communication:** Align teams to outcomes, not just activities.
- **Delegation:** Focus on your zone of genius and delegate everything else.

You cannot scale without mastering all three. This is how you go from a solo operator to building a real, sustainable business.

### Bonus Insight

Infectious energy beats intelligence.

The students who stood out yesterday weren't the smartest — they were the most enthusiastic. Be the person people want in their corner.

### Free Resource for Students

As a thank-you for showing up, I'm giving you free access to the first chapter of my upcoming book on building revenue systems — *The Revenue Ronin Playbook*.

To get it, subscribe to my free newsletter at **The Ronin** (link below). You'll receive the chapter immediately, plus weekly actionable revenue strategies focused on sales and marketing mastery.

If you want to move the needle on your metrics and your bank account, this newsletter is for you — completely free. I'm also sending the link to Reza so he can share it with all of you.

### Final Thoughts

Connect with me on LinkedIn. Tell me what you're working on. Grab the free chapter of the book.

**FREE chapter from my book on revenue systems** – same strategies I charge clients \$10K+ for.

👉 Share this link with your students: <https://therevenueonin.beehiiv.com/>

When they subscribe, they'll get the FREE chapter immediately + weekly actionable strategies.

And remember: **you're either growing or you're dying — so choose wisely.**

This is the Revenue Ronin, Justin R. "Results" French. Discipline. Data. Results. Wishing you the best.

Let's get after it.

# EXHIBIT C

**Email from Jim Miller on December 29, 2025, following the Advisory Meeting.**

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**From:** Jim Miller <jim@globaltradingpartners.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 29, 2025 10:07 AM  
**To:** Wrathall, Laurence <lwrathall@palomar.edu>  
**Subject:** Re: Thank You!

Laurence, you did a great job! Thanks again for your invite.

My five cents worth - You could literally design a course specifically around everyday skills these kids will need in the business world. It was quite evident during your event as to who had some basic skills and who was lacking. The potential is there but personal skills clearly need to be developed and habits formed to become second nature.

The first question I ask myself after any interview or mentoring session with a young adult is "Are they a processor or a thinker?" It's a very relevant question for me and I take it quite seriously. Where would they fit best in my organization or if I'm mentoring someone, where best could I guide them based on their perceived skill set. Although important to me, if I can't get past their lack of attention or attention to detail they are behind from the getgo and will need much more time and guidance just to get to the processor or thinker stage for me. Quite simply, are they coming into a position as an Asset or a Liability? If a Liability, how much time and money is it going to take to convert them into an Asset?

We also spoke quite a bit about general soft skills and personal finances. Those skills, however, are quite far reaching for most and, frankly, quite broad and intimidating for all. The simplest - shaking hands and making direct eye contact, to the complex - speaking and listening skills are equally important. Those and every skill in between are challenging and need daily attention with daily practice in order to master. I encourage kids to practice being present, listen attentively, stay on top of current worldwide events (without necessarily having a strong opinion - but just being knowledgeable - Read The Wall Street Journal, the Financial Times, Bloomberg, even the New York Times), organize their personal budgets and finances and lead by example. So easy to say.....

Hope that helps,

Jim -

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