

Business and Industry Members Advise Educational Programs

Orange business owners and experts in their fields of employment are invited to help shape the future of their industries by serving on one of Santiago Canyon College's (SCC) career technical advisory committees. These committees meet at least once a year with faculty and administrators representing all college career technical programs to identify trends, ensure that educational programs offer the training needed for employment, and make recommendations for the future.

The annual Master Technical Advisory Committee meeting was held on Friday, March 9, at SCC's Orange Education Center. More than 80 people representing water utility science, surveying, business, project management, real estate, gemology, arboriculture, cosmetology, graphic design and public works gathered to discuss the latest industry information.

"As a business person, I serve as an advisor to Santiago Canyon College's real estate program," said Orange Chamber member John Aust, Ph.D., owner of John Aust Real Estate Company. "But I'm also a college instructor. This gives me a unique perspective and really helps me prepare students for what they can expect when they get out there in the 'real world.' They appreciate the fact I'm on the front lines, actually doing for a living what I'm teaching them. Having the business community active in teaching and advisory committees helps guide career training programs and gives them enormous credibility."

It's a win-win situation for both education and business. By volunteering to serve as advisors, business owners have access to a skilled, educated pool of employees (about fifty percent of students in vocational programs already work in their chosen fields). Advisory members meet with other volunteer professionals to network and promote their company/industry. Opportunities exist for employing student interns, serving as expert guest speakers, and having students visit workplaces during scheduled class field trips.

One of the priorities discussed at the March 9, Master Technical Advisory Committee meeting was increasing the number of women training for employment in "non-traditional" fields (such as surveying, water utility sciences, skilled trades apprenticeships, and others). Many of these professions face large numbers of retirements in coming years.

"Women make up nearly fifty percent of the workforce but are enrolled in less than two percent of training programs in construction and related fields," said Tricia Evans, dean of career education at SCC. "These professions, on average, pay 150 percent higher wages than jobs that traditionally attract women. And in most cases, a four-year degree isn't required."

This summer the college will offer a class entitled "Surveying Careers," that will be geared toward women (but open to everyone) interested in discovering the opportunities that exist in land surveying. A new steering committee called Women in Non-Traditional (WIN) Careers is being formed to help women of all ages get good-paying jobs as professionals in high-demand careers.

When education and business work together, the entire community benefits. Please help make a difference by volunteering to serve on Santiago Canyon College's WIN Careers steering committee or a career advisory group. Call (714) 628-4883 or visit the web site at [www.sccollege.edu/career education](http://www.sccollege.edu/career%20education).

Contributed by Juan A. Vázquez, Santiago Canyon College President