

## I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The primary function of the Business Communications Office Technology Department (BCOT) is to prepare students in both the business communications and the office technology fields regardless of their majors. Business communication courses prepare students to communicate orally and in writing using diverse writing tools/styles in business environments both nationally and internationally. The primary function of the office technology courses is to prepare students for employment, job advancement, or personal/academic skill attainment in the fields of *Administrative/Executive Assistant* or *General Office* in executive and legal office positions.

The department offers an Associate of Arts degree as well as Certificates of Achievement in General Office, Legal Secretary, and Secretary Administrative Assistant. A department Certificate of Completion for Microsoft Office 2013 is also offered. Department Certificates of Completion for Microsoft Office 2016 and Business Communications will be added for the Fall 2016.

### **Program SLO's for the BCOT program are:**

1. Competency in computer technology.
2. Competency in keyboarding speed/accuracy.
3. Competency in the legal office.
4. Competency in office skills.
5. Competency in English grammar, spelling, proofreading, and vocabulary.
6. Competency in business writing and oral communications.

## II. INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

**A. Teaching Effectiveness:** The department has two full-time faculty members (who co-chair the department) and six part-time faculty members. There are two areas of expertise in the department—business communication skills and office technology skills. Both full-time instructors are proficient in both areas. The part-time instructors teach in the areas in which they are most qualified. All business communication instructors have a strong English and business background. One part-time instructor has passed Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) certification in all Microsoft Office 2013 software. In addition to English proficiency, department faculty also demonstrate fluency in Spanish and Portuguese. Spanish, in particular, has helped in reaching students who are not proficient in English.

The department encourages faculty attendance at related conferences specific to *Office Technology* and *Business Communication*—ABC (Association of Business Communication), NBEA (National Business Education Association), and CBEA (California Business Education Association) as well as workshops offered as Webinars by various publishers.

The department Advisory Committee is comprised of members of the business community in the financial, retail, medical, legal, real estate, educational, and insurance fields. Their primary

focus has been to give the department input regarding current trends in business. Their ongoing goals are to advise on the current business trends/needs within a company of any genre, i.e. customer service skills, telephone techniques, writing/editing business documents, grammar/punctuation skills, team work, business etiquette/ethics.

**B. Activities to Improve Student Learning:** The department has an active BCOT website. It has been recently updated to show all current Certificates of Achievements, Associate of Arts degrees, and department Certificates of Completion. The Business Communications Office Technology Department is in the process of including three- and four-semester plans for students to follow on the website. With the help of Perkins funding, the department has created and distributed brochures that include the three- and four-semester plans. Additional information on the Business Information Worker Program will be updated on the site as program updates become available.

All BCOT courses can be offered online making it possible to offer online Certificates of Achievement and Associate of Arts degrees; however, the Administration will not allow full-time instructors to teach a full course-load online. Hybrid classes, which allow students to attend a campus lecture and complete and submit work online, are offered. With the past high unemployment in the state over the past three to four years, students were able to attend this modality. The problem that the department is now facing is that with a decrease in unemployment, students are no longer able to attend the hybrid classes and they consistently request that more online classes be offered. The department faces and experiences a direct correlation between unemployment/employment and enrollments—the effect is exponential.

The majority of students within the department work on a part- or full-time basis and need to take the classes online to achieve their goals—academic, employment, or personal. Administration should reconsider allowing departments that offer technology-based courses to make such offerings completely online.

**C. Course Grading/SLO Assessments:** All department syllabi are aligned with course outlines of record as well as with student learning outcomes for all courses. The department reviews these outcomes during the semester by Direct assessments for all courses being taught. It is then determined if any outcomes need to be changed or new ones added. The department also ensures that all instructors have the correct and updated Student Learning Outcomes on their syllabi and that SLO's are listed in respective class assignments.

In the Fall 2015, all department courses were updated for textbook currency as well as separate delineation of course content for classes with lecture/lab components.

In the Fall 2014, the department deactivated or deleted, courses that were no longer viable or pertinent to the program; the courses were subsequently removed from current certificate/degree offerings.

All courses, taught online or hybrid, have been approved by distance education and are updated to match the delivery methods outlined on the department's original proposals.

The department has two courses with prerequisites: BCOT 147 requires BCOT 46 to prepare students write business letters, memos, employment documents, reports, etc. The BCOT 46 class is a review of English grammar, punctuation, word usage, and capitalization. BCOT 247 requires English 100 since it is a transferable course to CSUF.

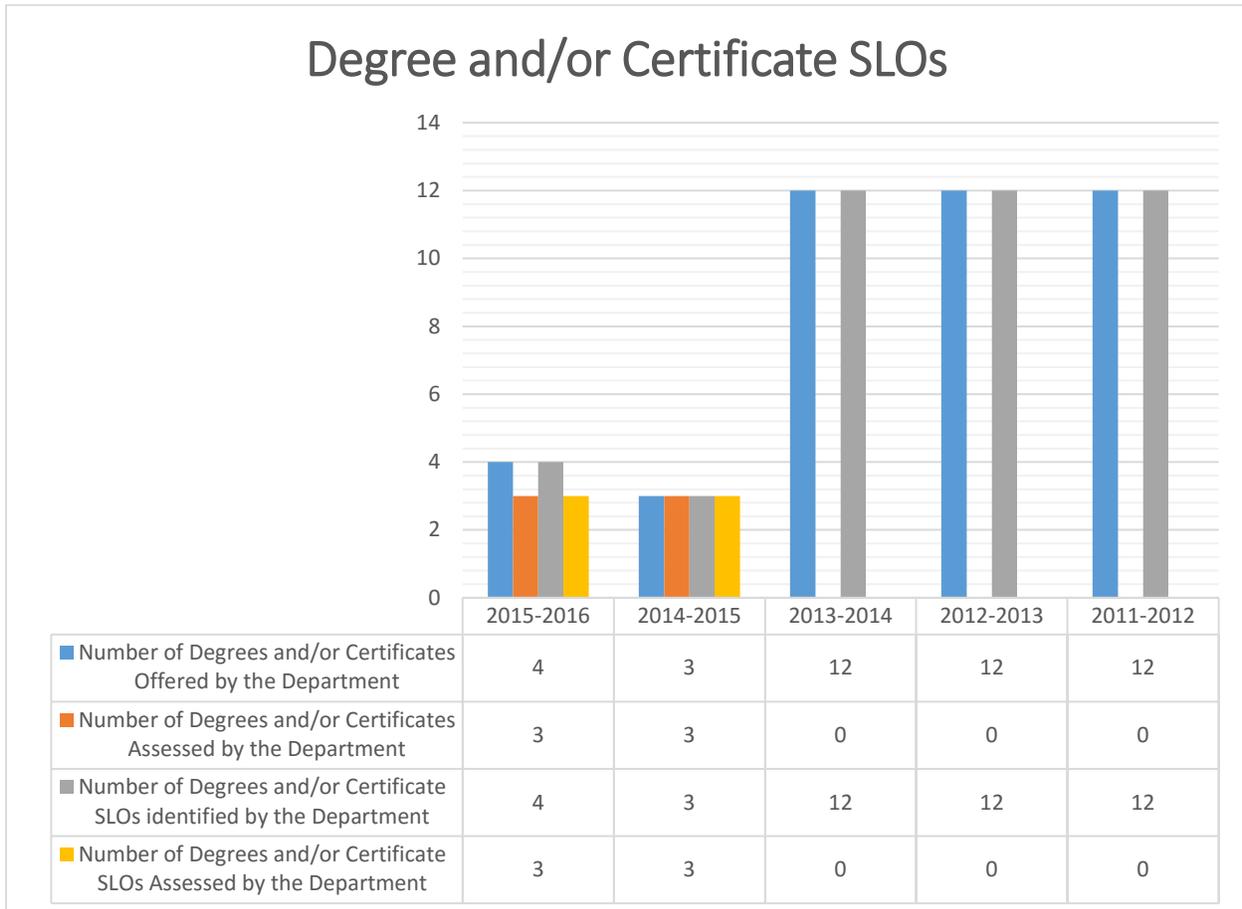
In April 2015, the department created Certificates of Achievement and Associates of Arts degrees for General Office, Legal Secretary, and Secretary/Administrative Assistant. Department certificates have been included for Microsoft Office 2013 certification; the 2016 Microsoft Office version will be offered in the 2016/2017 academic year. The department is in the process of creating a department certificate for Business Communications.

In the Fall 2011, the department began to assess courses via Indirect Assessments. This necessitated that students fill out online surveys. Participation in the online assessments was so low that the department decided move to the Direct Assessments starting the Spring 2015. The department created new rubrics for all courses and assessed all courses for that semester. The information derived from the assessments assisted the department in making decisions for changes/improvements to instructor teaching delivery modalities and course content. Every instructor within the department participated in completing the assessments and in discussing the results. Using the same methodology, the department again evaluated all courses being taught in Fall 2015/Spring 2016 academic year.

From Fall 2011 to Fall 2015, the department evaluated SLO performance for the current program. This assisted the department in deciding the viability of certain certificates/degrees within the program. The action taken was to fine tune Certificates of Achievement and Associates of Arts degree to three—General, Legal, and Secretary/Administrative. It also led to the department decision to create a department Certificate of Completion for Microsoft Office 2013 and the addition of Microsoft Office 2016 and Business Communications Certificates of Completion for the Fall 2016. In Spring 2015, mapping of all SLOs for degrees/certificates was completed.

After evaluating the SLO performance for the three certificates in the department, the SLO that is supported by BCOT 152, ("Students apply the steps for effective job search in the business field"), is 44 percent in the Good Performance category. All other SLOs are rated from 57 percent to 67 percent in this category. The department is discussing changes in BCOT 152, Job Search in the Business Field. It may be that this is a class that should be taught either as a campus or hybrid class instead of online. The students may need more interaction with the instructor.

## Degree and/or Certificate SLOs (APPENDIX F—Part 1)

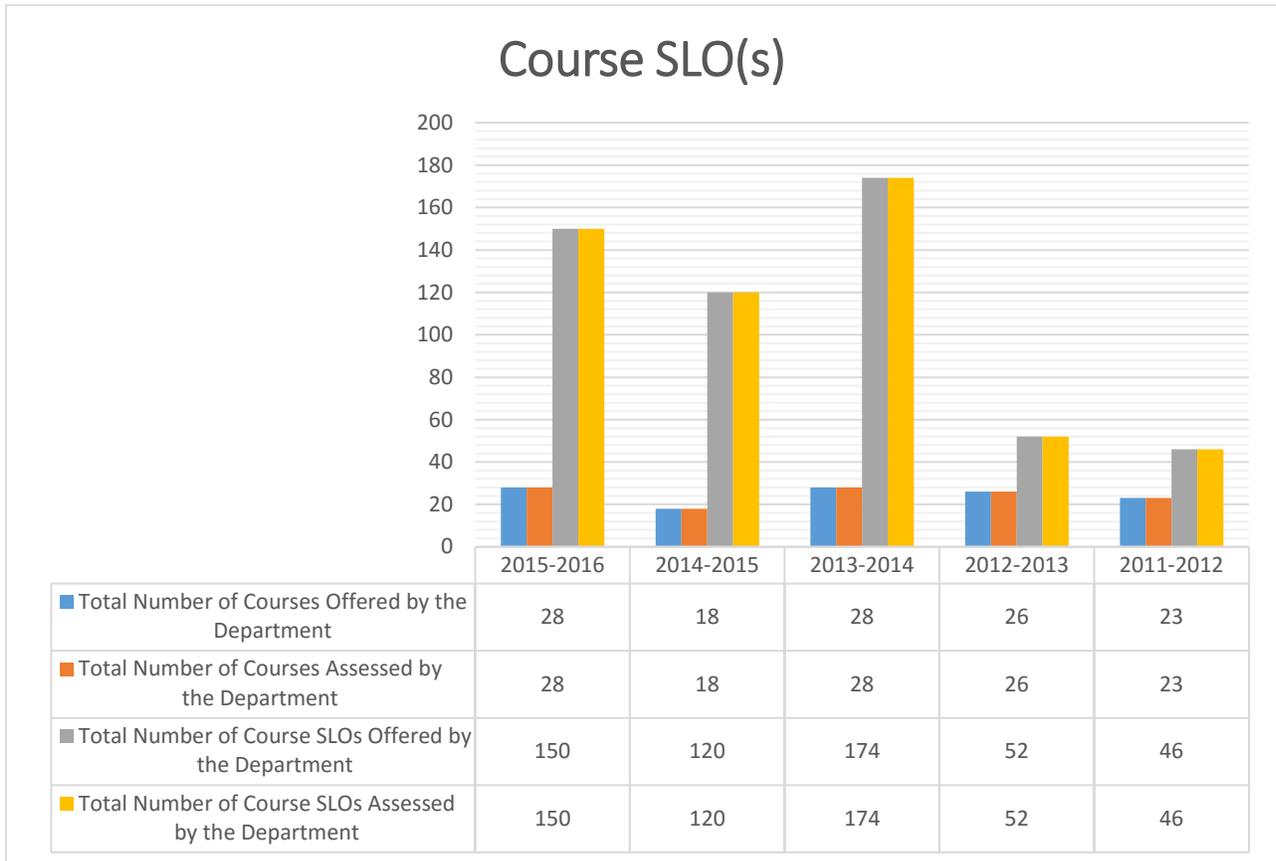


**2015-2016**—The BCOT Department added a Microsoft Office Certificate that would be granted from the department to students successfully completing a list of Microsoft Office courses.

**2014-2015**—The BCOT Department reevaluated certificates and Verifications of Completion, as a result, the department focused on three major areas of concentration—General Office, Legal Secretary, and Secretary Administrative Assistant. The Department created both AA degrees and certificates for each area. They are now in the 2016-2017 catalog.

**2011-2014**-- The BCOT Department had 4 Certificates and 8 Verifications of Completion. During that time, the department was assessing only course SLOs and not program SLOs.

## Course SLO(s) (APPENDIX F—Part 2)



**2015-2016**—The BCOT Department decided to continue to use the Direct Assessment mode to assess all courses in the Fall and only assessed those courses in the Spring that were not taught in the Fall.

**Spring 2015**—The BCOT Department decided to use the Direct Assessments mode and assessed all courses being taught in that semester. There was a noticeable change in assessing courses—the instructors evaluated the information and created Action Plans based on the results from student success per SLO.

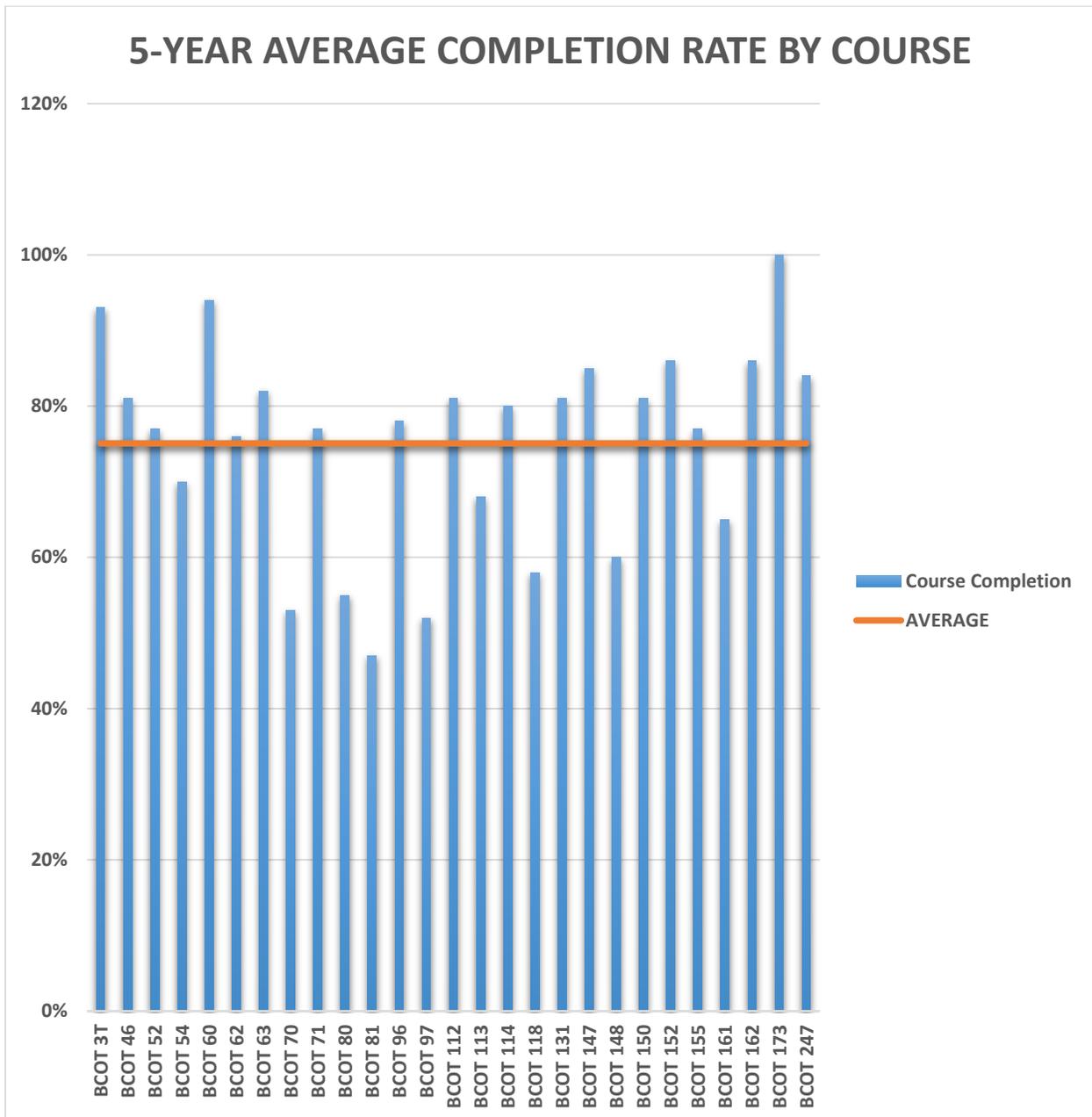
**Fall 2014**—No courses were assessed due to a problem with eLumen.

**2013-2014**—The BCOT Department continued to use Indirect Assessments, but the number of student responses continued to be minimal, even though instructors encouraged students to fill out the surveys. At this time, the SLOs requirement increased from 2-8 SLOs per class depending on the units.

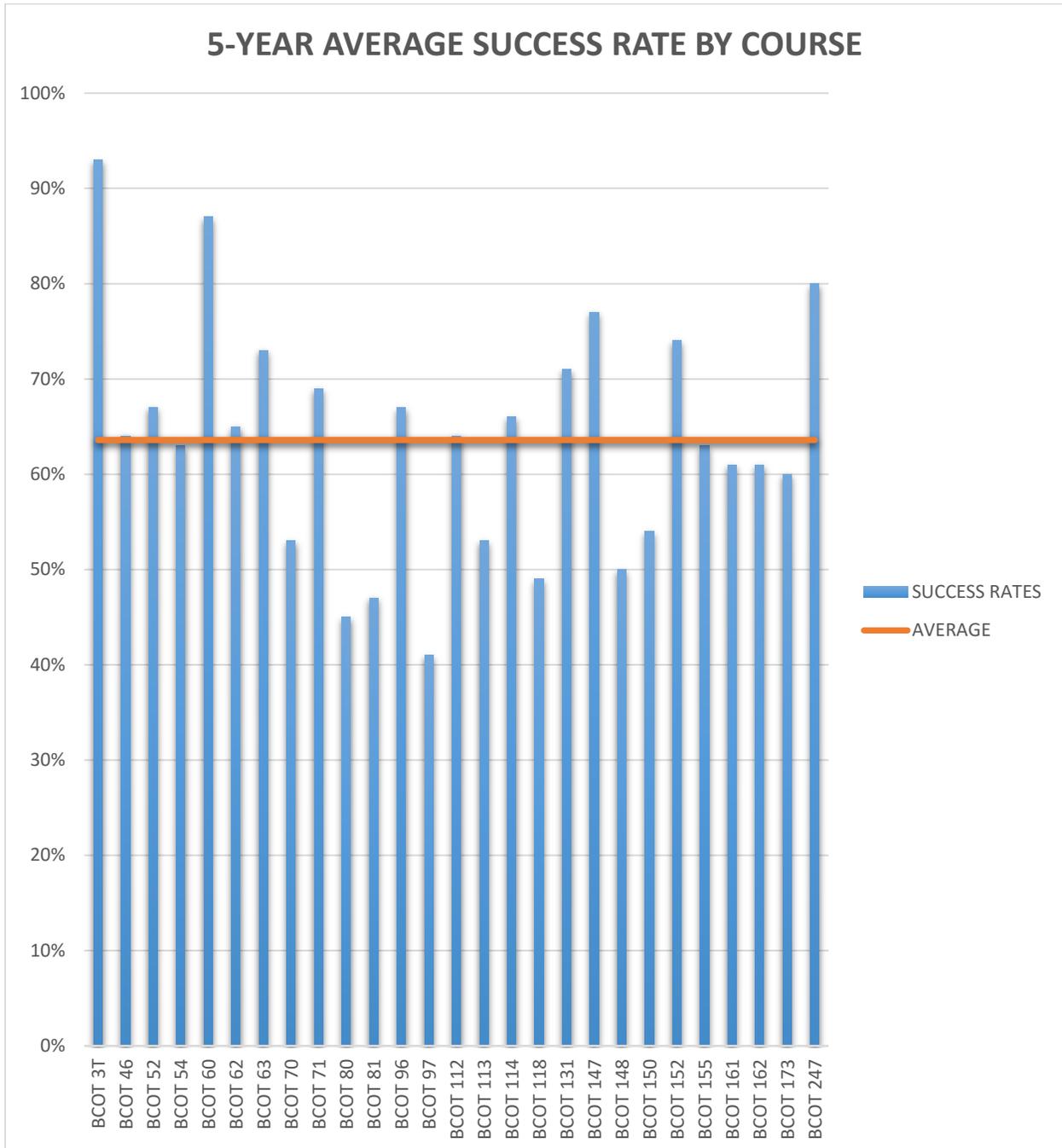
**2011-2013**— The BCOT Department employed Indirect Assessments and were required to have only 2 SLOs per class.

**D. Institutional Data:** The department chairs regularly review the various institutional data provided by the college including Completion Rates, Success Rates, Fill Rates, Degrees Awarded, Certificates Awarded, Perkins Core Indicators, WSCH, FTES, and Number of Majors. Below is an analysis of the department’s review.

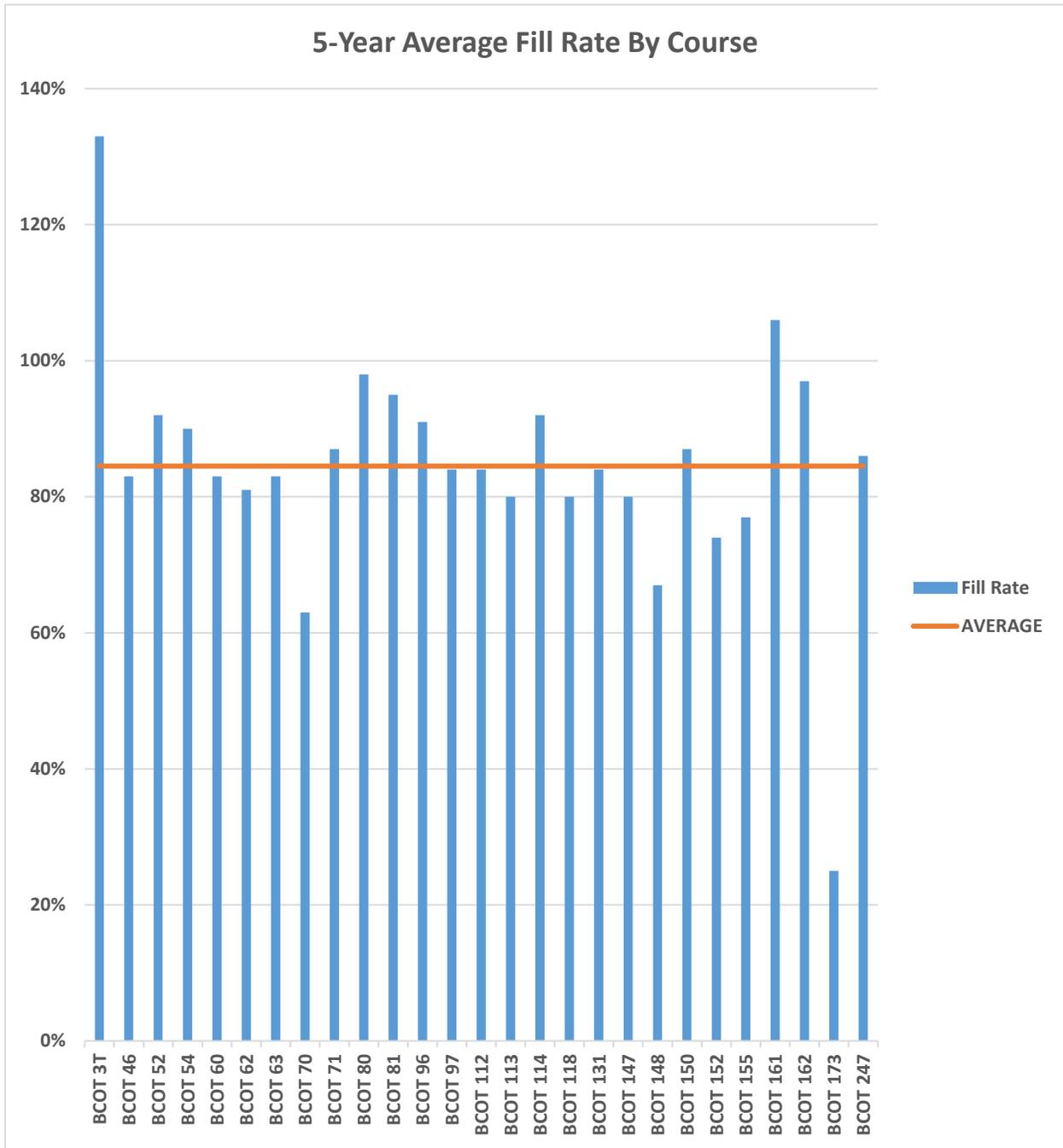
**1. Course/Program Completions:** BCOT individual course completions for the last five-year period range from 47 percent to 100 percent. The average completion rate for individual courses is 75 percent compared to BE Division average rate of 77 percent. (Reference to Program Data supplied by Research and Planning on June 13, 2016.)



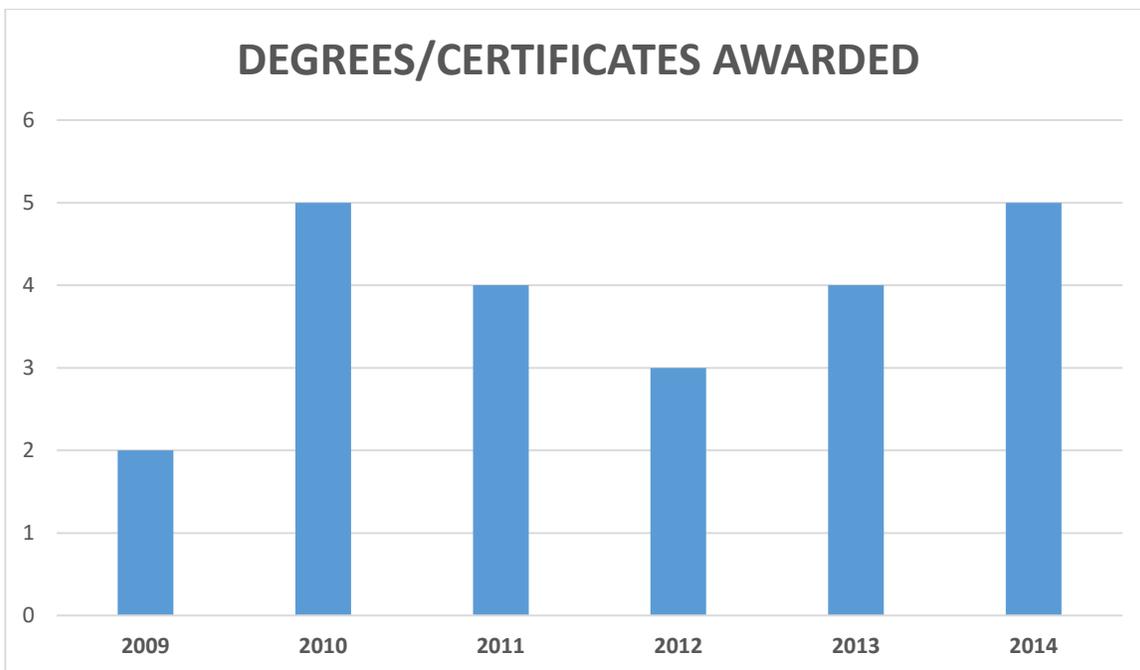
**2. Course/Program Success:** BCOT individual course success rates for the last five-year period range from 41 percent to 93 percent. The average success rate for the BCOT Department is 64 percent compared to the BE Division average rate of 67 percent. This represents the overall percentage of students who earned a C or better in BCOT Department courses. Since the revision of department courses and certificates/degrees, that percentage is expected to increase in the future. (Reference to data supplied by Research and Planning on June 13, 2016.)



**3. Course Fill Rate:** BCOT individual course fill rates for the last five-year period range from 25 percent to 133 percent. The average fill rate for the program is 85 percent compared to the BE Division average of 86 percent. The BCOT Department ranks the second highest in the BE Division. Comparing the different semesters validates that the department is offering the correct number of classes either by semester or annually. (Reference to data supplied by Research and Planning on June 13, 2016.)



**4. Degrees/Certificates Awarded:** The number of degree/certificates awarded over the last six-year period has remained consistent with an average of four degrees/certificates a year. The BCOT Department has streamlined the degrees/certificates to three—General, Legal Secretary, Secretary Administrative Assistant, which have recently received Chancellor Office approval this year and will be in the 2016-2017 Cerritos College catalog. It should be noted that most students who are enrolled in the BCOT Department have majors in other areas across campus; these same students enroll in classes to meet employment requirements, to advance in career positions, or to maintain their personal/vocational skills. (Reference to 2015 Program Data CD supplied by Research and Planning)



#### 5. Perkins Core Indicators

The following is a comparison between 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school year using the College Core Indicator Information by 6-Digit Top:

**Core Indicator 1—Technical Skill Attainment** is 2.8 above the CTE Cohort--an increase of 1.3 from last year. This is an area in which the department takes great pride because it constantly and consistently updates all software and technical skills.

**Core Indicator 2—Completions** is 4.2 above the CTE Cohort-- it was -21.6 last year. The department created brochures and pull sheets that indicate the requirements to complete Certificates of Achievement and Associate of Arts degrees. The three- and four-semester plans that guide students through this completion process are being updated in the website.

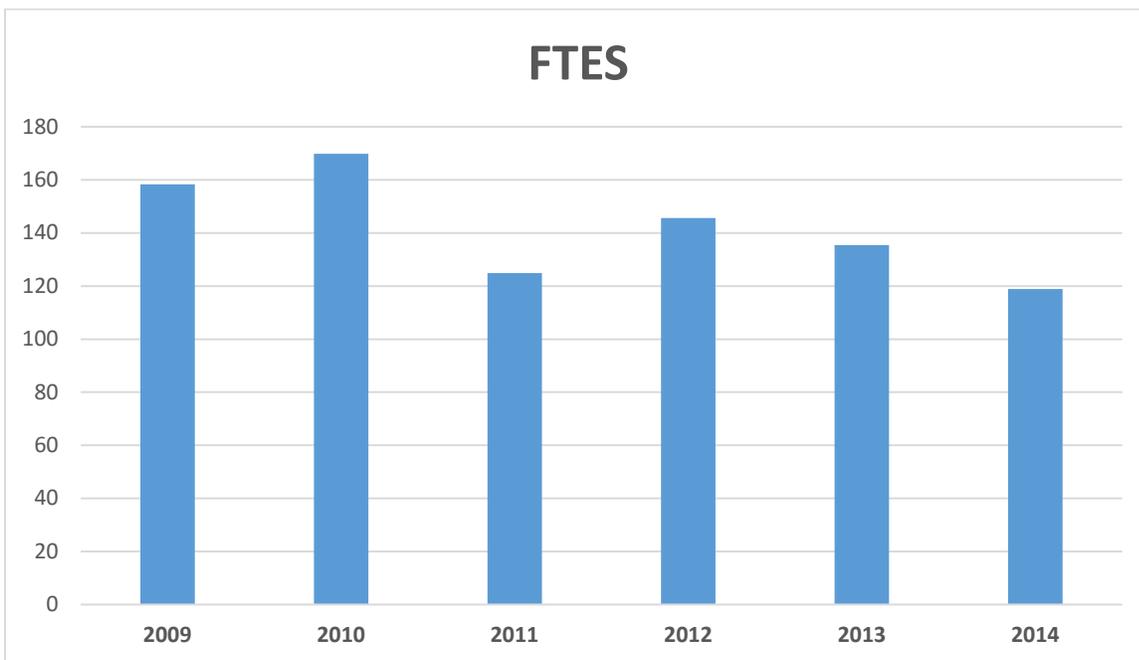
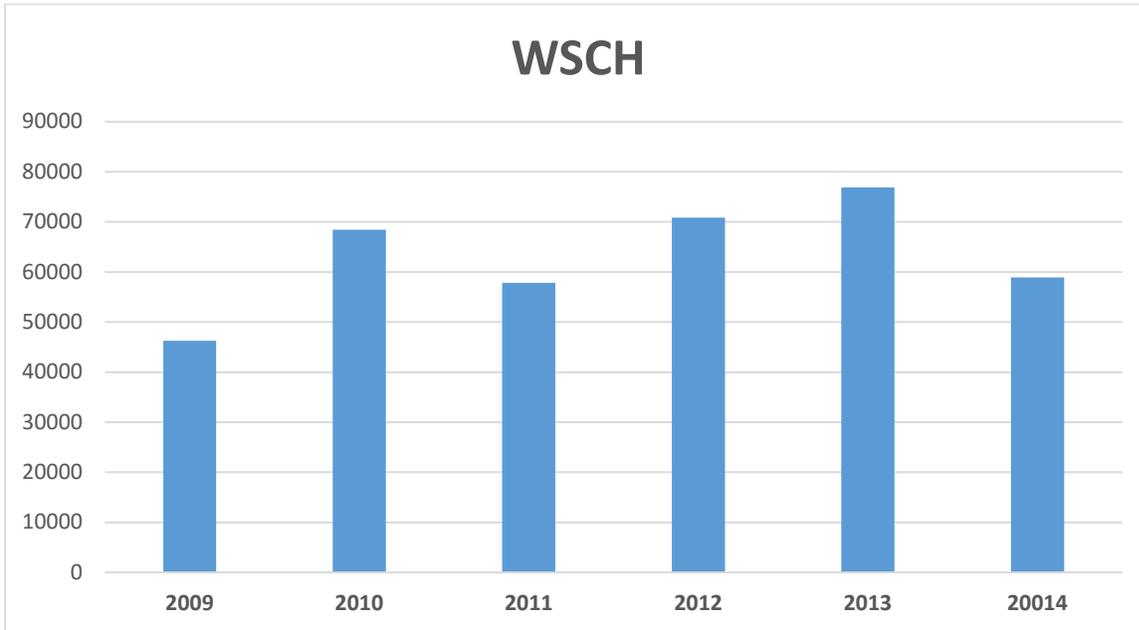
**Core Indicator 3—Persistence and Transfer** is 2.0 above the CTE Cohort-- an increase of 1 from last year. This indicates that students within the department are both persistent in their goals and are transferring to four-year colleges.

**Core Indicator 4—Employment** is 8.4 below the CTE Cohort--lower than -35.5 from last year. This demonstrates that students came back to take department courses targeted at employment and were able to find jobs after completing either the classes needed or after earning certificates. As an addition for inclusion in student work portfolios, the department added Certificates of Completion for students who completed five MS Office 2013 classes. It will include new department Certificates of Completion for MS Office 2016 and Business Communications.

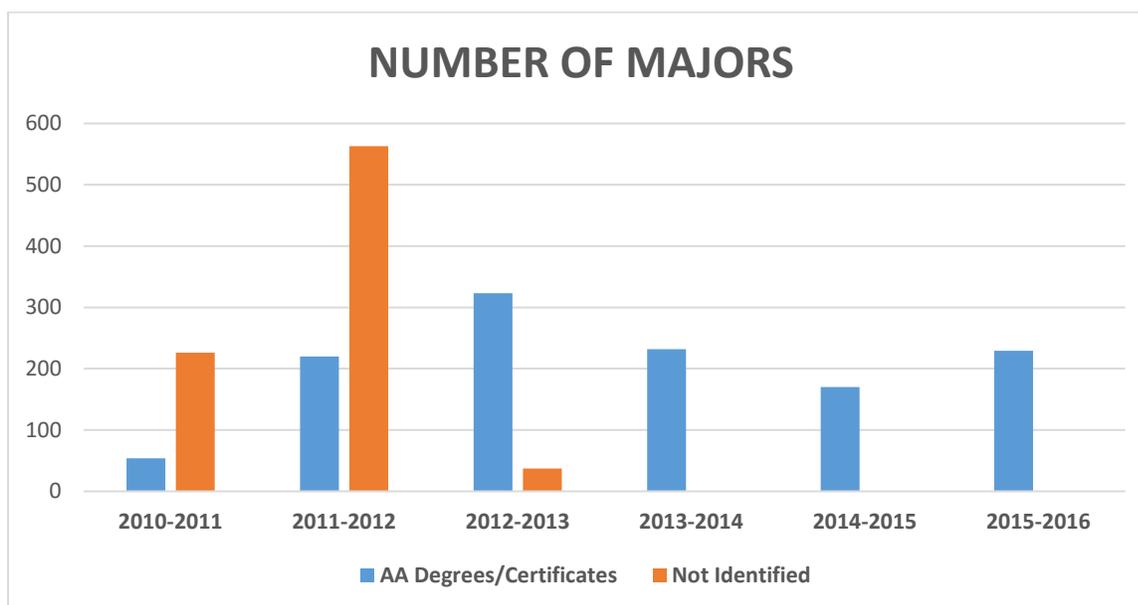
**Core Indicator 5—Nontraditional Participation** is 10.2 below the CTE Cohort-- higher than it was at -8.6 last year. The department is unsure as to how to advertise to improve this number since it is at a disadvantage in knowing what students fall under the category of displaced homemaker, economically disadvantaged, or single parent. The department has purchased (through Perkins funding) additional textbooks for lab use to help students who are not able to afford the books at the beginning of the semester, it has provided flash drives for student in need, and it has loaned textbooks to help students succeed. The department has brochures, pull sheets, and an updated department website to better inform students of its resources availability to assist students in obtaining gainful employment.

**Core Indicator 5b— Nontraditional Completions** is 2.5 above the CTE Cohort— an increase of 1.9 from of last year. The department is making every effort to inform students by distributing brochures, pull sheets, semester plans, and website updates of resources available to help them find employment.

**6. WSCH/FTES:** It should be noted that WSCH/FTES department statistics indicate a direct correlation with the economic job patterns in the state. When there is a recession, more students enroll in the classes because of job loss and/or retraining; conversely, during an economic upturn, there are more job opportunities, and fewer students enroll in courses offered by the department. (Reference to 2015 Program Data CD supplied by Research and Planning)



**7. Number of Majors:** Students enrolled in the BCOT Department courses are predominantly non-declared majors, or students majoring in other academic areas. Over the last six-year period, the average number of students who have declared BCOT as an AA major is 50; as a certificate major, the average number is 27. The non-declared students average 160 over the same six-year period. The business communications component of the department offers no AA or certificate degrees—students who enroll in these classes are there primarily to fulfill requirements for other academic areas on campus and for academic transfer to four-year institutions of learning. (Reference to 2015 Program Data CD supplied by Research and Planning)



**E. Student Feedback:** Department chairs regularly review instructors’ student evaluations. These indicate that students continually view the department teaching staff as knowledgeable in the subject matter, clear in their teaching modalities, fair in their grading, and exceptional in assisting students in meeting their academic goals. The department also conducts student surveys in the business communications classes on a semester-by-semester basis. Students in these classes indicate that the instructors have been instrumental in helping students to succeed in the SLO’s of the courses’ content, to understand and retain the course content, to achieve their academic goals, and to apply course content to practical personal use. Surveys have also been sent to students who are enrolled in online courses; however, the feedback from online students has been minimal. The department is considering new approaches in reaching this segment of students.

### III. PROGRAM STRENGTHS/WEAKNESSES

#### Strengths:

1. Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's) are clearly defined for all BCOT courses and are updated by the department on an annual basis.
2. The "direct assessment" method is used for all department courses.
3. All faculty, full- and part-time, have consistently been in compliance with department policies in syllabi preparation, housekeeping of course records, SLO's assessments, and the following of "master course" guidelines.
4. The department offers three *Associate in Arts Degrees and Certificates of Achievement—General Office, Legal Secretary, and Secretary Administrative Assistant*.
5. The department awards internal *Department Awarded Certificates* in both Microsoft Office who complete associated courses.
6. The department website has been recently updated to include degrees, certificates, and awards.
7. *Managerial Business Communication*, BCOT 247, Managerial Business Communications, is part of the Business Administrations transferable certificate—Associate in Science in Business Administration for Transfer (AS-T).
8. The department boasts a professionally strong Advisory Committee with its members representing business in a variety of fields—legal, medical, executive, insurance, accounting, and education.
9. The department participates in high school/college fairs by sending BCOT brochures to individual local high schools/counselors when requested.
10. Articulation with the local high schools is always welcomed by the department.
11. When needed, individual students are assisted within the program by the department chairs.
12. Brochures and pull sheets have been created for certificate offerings showing a three- to four-semester completion plan for students. Current Certificates of Achievement, Associate in Arts degrees, and department Certificates of Completion are included in the brochures.

#### Weaknesses:

1. Though certificate offerings have been added to the department website, a three- to four-semester completion plan for students has not been included.
2. Department needs to add an internal certificate for business communication classes.
3. Other than through Advisory Committee members, the department does not maintain strong communication ties with local businesses for prospective student internships and subsequent employment.
4. Enrollment fluctuations have resulted in a shift in class offerings with the department "guessing" as to which course offerings to present on a semester-to-semester basis.
5. With the economy improving, greater numbers of working students are not able to take conventional on-campus or hybrid classes. These students have requested

more online courses, but the department has been restricted in its online offerings by the administration.

6. The department has received numerous student complaints regarding the skeletal summer course offerings. The administration has approved only two courses to be offered during both summer sessions.
7. The department has no way to “track” students who have received jobs or job advancements as a result of the BCOT program.
8. College counselors are not currently updated with changes in department curricula, certificates, awards, etc. In an effort to update counselors, brochures and pull sheets have been forwarded to every counselor, the Veterans Resource Center, the Welcome Center, and CalWORKs.
9. BCOT Department business communications classes have 30 students per class which is not in par with the English Department classes at 25. The paperwork is equal in comparison to both departments.

#### **IV. PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES/THREATS**

##### **Opportunities:**

1. The Business Information Worker Program is newly established within the California Community Colleges as a tool to identify qualified potential job candidates. This is a pathway for the BCOT Department students after obtaining the skills to find employment.
2. The department works closely and continues to work with the Educational Partnership Coordinator to improve articulation with local high schools and to explore the possibility of dual enrollment.
3. Attendance at professional conferences, workshops, webinars, etc. continue to enhance teaching methodologies and course content. Through Perkins and Division funding, the department is able to send instructors to several different conferences a year— ABC (Association of Business Communication), NBEA (National Business Education Association), and CBEA (California Business Education Association), etc. The impact of attending these conferences has led to the building of professional relationships across the United States and internationally; the business communications writing courses are comparable to those taught at four-year and university levels in content; lasting and effective industry partnerships have substantiated the relevance of the technical coursework offered within the department; currency in methodology and in the most up-to-date software used in industry has led to student success in the classroom and in employment opportunities. Attendance and participation at these conferences, workshops, etc. is ongoing and has been consistently supported by the division dean.
4. The department is considering the establishment of a BCOT alumni group that might be beneficial to students for networking purposes and the ways in which to proceed with such an undertaking.

5. The department has created BCOT 247, Managerial Business Communications, which is a transferable class to CSU and sees an opportunity to have this class added to other degrees in the Business Division.

**Threats:**

1. Low enrollment that results from an improved economy is a major threat to the office technology classes that cannot be taught online to accommodate working students.
2. The increase cost of textbooks and materials has directly impacted student enrollments and/or completion rates.
3. Local high schools have not adequately prepared students with lifelong English grammar and writing skills which can contribute to student success rates.
4. The number of awards within the department has been low in the past years.

**V. PROGRAM GOALS/ACHIEVEMENTS**

**Unit Plan Goals:**

1. Improve available information on BCOT Associates in Arts degrees, Certificates of Achievement, and department Certificates of Completion for Microsoft Office 2013.
2. Organize the OrgSync App to better inform students of department course offerings on a semester-by-semester basis, of department updates on AA degrees, Certificates of Achievement, or certificates of completion, and of BCOT Department news/job opportunities.
3. Assess all SLOs by Direct Assessment.
4. Work closely with the Business Information Worker Program.

Though declared department majors are few in comparison to other departments, it should be noted that the BCOT Department continues to provide quality courses within the department offerings, and that the benefit to students who are majoring in other academic areas is immeasurable.

**VI. GOALS MET FROM LAST PROGRAM REVIEW**

In the last Program Review, the department focused on accomplishing the “work for submitting Verifications of Completion certifications to Curriculum for Chancellor approval.” After studying what other colleges throughout the state were focusing on, the department decided to delete all the verifications in Fall 2012 and the Word Processing Certificate of Achievement from its curricula.

In April 2015, the department revised/created Certificates of Achievement and Associates of Art degrees for General Office, Legal Secretary, and Secretary/Administrative Assistant. These certificates were approved by the Chancellor’s office and will be included in the 2017-2018 catalog.

A department certificate for Microsoft Office 2013 certification has been created in Fall 2015. Microsoft Office 2016 will be added to replace this certificate in the 2016/2017 academic year. A Certificate of Completion for Business Communication will also be in the 2016/2017 academic year added.

“Aligning the Chancellor’s Office regarding Major Codes for courses/certificates within the department” was updated Fall 2016.

The department created BCOT 247 (with a prerequisite of English 100) as a new course that is transferable to all four-year colleges and universities. It is an integral part of the Business Administration program and a recommended course for other business disciplines on campus, particularly Business Accounting. BCOT 147 (with a prerequisite of BCOT 46) will continue to be offered as an elective transfer for Business Administration or for non-transfer students who plan enter the work force.

The BCOT Department uses the information obtained from its BCOT Advisory Committee members, from professional associations, and from workshops/seminars to constantly and consistently provide its students with courses and programs that meet the demands of the working world. It maintains currency in ever-changing technology and textbooks to give each student the opportunity to gain confidence and mastery of the subject area in each course that is offered. The department welcomes the diversity of its student population and works to meet the challenges associated with such diversity.

## Goals (Appendix D)

GOALS	ACTION TO BE TAKEN	COMPLETION DATE	PERSON ASSIGNED
<b>Mid-range goals (next 3 years)</b>			
1. Organize the OrgSync App to better inform students of certificates and requirements to successfully complete certificates—new student communication app. Update the department website.  (S5, S6, W1)	1. List all Certificates of Achievement, Associates in Arts degrees, and Department certificates 2. List semester-by- semester plans 3. Create a section to add current job opportunities and fairs 4. Encourage faculty to use OrgSync 5. Increase communication with present and past students	Spring 2017	Barbara Soden
2. Add BCOT 247, Managerial Business Communications, to all degrees/certificates in the Business Division either as a requirement or elective  (S7, O5)	Meet with Accounting, Law, Real Estate, & the Women Studies departments	Fall 2017-Fall 2019  <b>Fall 2017:</b> Persuade business departments to add BCOT 247 to their programs. <b>Fall 2018:</b> Cooperating departments would rewrite degrees and certificates, and submit in Spring 2018 for approval. <b>Fall 2019:</b> The change is in the catalog.	Mageya Sharp Barbara Soden
3. Increase degrees/certificates by 3 percent  (S6, S9, S10, S12, W1, W4, W5, W8, T1, T2, T4)	1. Update brochures and pull sheets 2. Add semester-by-semester plan for each degree/certificate on the department website 3. Encourage faculty to add a link to the department website on their individual syllabus	2018-2019	Mageya Sharp Barbara Soden

GOALS	ACTION TO BE TAKEN	COMPLETION DATE	PERSON ASSIGNED
<p>4. Reestablish high school articulation (S9, S10, S12, O2, T3)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work closely with Educational Partnership Coordinator to contact local high schools</li> <li>2. Distribute current department brochures and pull sheets to the high schools</li> <li>3. Contact the 4 feeder High Schools: Garr, Bellflower, Downey, and El Camino</li> </ol>	2017-2018	Barbara Soden
<p>5. Create a department certificate for business communication classes (S5, W2)</p>	<p>Create a list of business communication classes that will be beneficial to the students in the business community and award this department certificate upon completion</p>	Fall 2016	Mageya Sharp
<p>6. Create and establish a system to track students who acquire jobs or job advancement as a result of the BCOT Department. (W7)</p>	<p>Work with Research and Planning to develop such a tracking system</p>	2017-2020	Barbara Soden Mageya Sharp
<p>7. Change the current policy that restricts a full-time instructor to teach completely online if their program requires this change. (W6)</p>	<p>Work with the Union to include the contract language that permits the level of online instruction that the department thinks is best for the program and students. The BCOT Department already has approval from the Chancellor's Office to teach their program completely online, and all the courses in the Department have Curriculum approval for online teaching.</p>	2017-2018	Barbara Soden Mageya Sharp

Long Term Goals	ACTION TO BE TAKEN	COMPLETION	PERSON
<p>1. Explore the advantages and possibilities of reestablishing the Department's Work Experience program</p> <p>(O1, O4, W3, W7)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Determine current needs in the office technology industry</li> <li>2. Determine the criteria for office technology students to become successful in the legal, medical, and administrative fields</li> <li>3. Create an initial list of industries utilizing office technology skills</li> <li>4. Follow through with contacts to create job placement opportunities, partnerships, volunteer opportunities, and stronger contacts in the business community</li> <li>5. Use contact list of possible employers for student placement</li> <li>6. Partner with industry to create internship positions</li> <li>7. Work closely with the Business Information Worker Program to build stronger relationship with businesses</li> </ol>	2020-2021	Barbara Soden Mageya Sharp
<p>2. Study the feasibility of internships with local businesses</p> <p>(O1, O4, W3)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create an initial list of viable industries interested in offering student internship positions</li> <li>2. Build stronger contacts in the business community with the help of BCOT Advisory Committee</li> </ol>	2020-2021	Barbara Soden Mageya Sharp