Derek Dokter:

Think about what are your dreams? What dreams do you have when you come to Mt. SAC? What do you want to do with your life? Try out your skills in the classroom. Maybe have some failures, something you can grow through and learn how to apply that to the real life. And that's what I want for you, application, right? At Mt. SAC, our staff, classified, everyone here is here for you to help for you to be successful. And that's what we truly want from you. We want you to be dedicated to making you successful. Attainable goals here at Mt. SAC, I want you to be able to achieve those goals. Career focus, we want you to get the job that you like so that you could be number one and enjoy what you want to do. And the life lesson is, don't lose hope. Mt. SAC can help you get through these tough times, and we want you to get through these tough times. So, have a can-do attitude and go Mounties.

Christina Barsi:

Hi, I'm Christina Barsi.

Sun Ezell:

And I'm Sun Ezell, and you're listening to the Magic Mountie Podcast.

Christina Barsi:

Our mission is to find ways to keep your ear to the ground, so to speak, by bringing to you the activities and events you may not have time to attend, the resources on campus you might want to know more about, the interesting things your colleagues are creating, and the many ways we can continue to better help and guide our students.

Sun Ezell:

We bring to you the voices of Mt. SAC, from the classroom to completion.

Speaker 4:

And I know I'm going to achieve my goals and I know people here are going to help me to do it.

Speaker 5:

She is a Sociology major and she's transferring to Cal Poly. Come on down. Psychology major, English major.

Sun Ezell:

From transforming part-time into full-time.

Speaker 6:

I really like the time that we spend with Julie about how to write a CV and a cover letter.

Christina Barsi:

By just finding time to soak in the campus.

Speaker 7:

To think of the natural environment around us as a library.

Christina Barsi:

We want to keep you informed and connected to all things Mt. SAC. But most importantly, we want to keep you connected with each other. I'm Christina Barsi, Mt. SAC alumni and producer of this podcast.

Sun Ezell:

And I'm Sun Ezell, learning assistance faculty and professional learning academy coordinator.

Christina Barsi:

And this is the Magic Mountie Podcast. If you're looking for a comprehensive breakdown for what an educational pathway pursuing a business degree might look like, then you'll enjoy this episode with Mt. SAC student host, [Brando Reynoso 00:02:17], leading the way as he asks the practical questions of business faculty, Derek Dokter, Professor of Business Management, Brenda Domico, Accounting Professor, and Regina Martinez, Department Chair of Business Management. Let's get started.

Brando Reynoso:

Hello everyone, welcome to today's Magic Mountie podcast. My name is Brando Reynoso and I'm a business student here at Mt. SAC, and I'm also very excited to introduce our special guests and speakers that will be answering all of our questions today, Mrs. Regina Martinez, Mrs. Brenda Domico, and Mr. Derek Dokter. Can you each tell me a little bit about yourselves?

Regina Martinez:

Hello, I'm Regina Martinez and I'm a faculty professor of Business Management in the Management Department. I've been with Mt. SAC for a little over six years as a full-time tenured faculty member and I am the management chair.

Derek Dokter:

Hi, my name is Professor Derek Dokter. I'm so excited to be here and welcome every bounty on the call. I teach Business Management classes for our department and teach mostly supply chain marketing, and I also teach principles of supply chain management. And I've taught at many different schools, different capacities, and I'm just excited to be here in front of you. And I welcome all of you.

Brenda Domico:

Hi, my name is Brenda Domico. I'm an accounting professor at Mt. SAC and I've been here for a little over 25 years. I'm a certified management accountant and I got my masters at Cal Poly, and about 15 years of experience in financial and managerial accounting in the aerospace industry. And I am so incredibly excited to be here as well. So, thank you for inviting me. I love teaching and I'm glad to be here.

Brando Reynoso:

I'm so glad that I'm interviewing all of you. I'm familiar with each and every one of them and they're very incredible professors, so I'm pretty sure you will all learn a lot of great information today. So, let's get started with our first question. One of many degrees that Mt. SAC offers is the Business Administration and Associates in Science Transfer degree. Can each one of you spit out some information about the AST degree and programs?

Regina Martinez:

Yes. So, we currently have our Business Administration AST degree in place. However, there are going to be just some slight changes to it. So, currently, Mr. Dokter will talk to you about our program that is currently in place.

Derek Dokter:

Thank you, Mrs. Martinez. Thank you, Brando. The Business AST degree is a degree that we have in our business department. It comprises of 60 units at $46 per unit. That's roughly only 2,760. So, $2,760, that's a great price, right? It's exciting. A minimum of 2.0 GPA and it's actually 10 classes. And some of the classes, I'm just going to say a few of them, are principles of accounting, a finance class, a management class, principles of economics, a macro, a micro class, a business law class, statistics, computer information systems, Business 25, which is business communication, which if you take it, take my class, right? And lastly, 10 to 12 different GE classes represent this specific degree. Mrs. Martinez, would you like to share about the new upcoming changes?

Regina Martinez:

So, last spring, spring 2020, the Business Administration Faculty Discipline review group recommended a substantial change to the Business Administration AST degrees. So, this affected most if not all colleges. Later, the Intersegmental Curriculum Work group, which is called ICW, approved it. So, in order to stay compliant with the CSU system, that's why we wanted to modify our program. And so, this modification will probably take place within the year. But the major change, and there's not too many changes, the major change would be that our CISB 11, Computer Information Systems, is going to be taken out of the program. And instead, under list B you can take either Principles of Business or Business Communications, before it was just Business Communications. And then also, you'll be able to take MATH 120, MATH 140, or MATH 180. So, those are the only significant changes, but we are compliant so that it supports the CSU system so students are able to more easily transfer over. So, Ms. Domico will talk about the two accounting courses that are still part of the program. So, our current program and our future program as well.

Brenda Domico:

Okay. I just wanted to add, I don't have not much time here, but that the accounting courses, some of the courses are just preparatory, but accounting are more of a career building courses where there's 10 units all together, financial and managerial. And by taking these courses and getting the AST when you transfer, you are set up to go in as a junior and compete with your peers for the jobs because now you're at the same status level as everyone else at the Cal State. And you can join the clubs, you can join the accounting program. And probably the most important thing for accounting professionals is you can now get involved with the internships, which usually start around the beginning of the junior year. So, by taking these courses at a community college and transferring, you are now establishing yourself to be successful in that career.

Brando Reynoso:

Awesome. So, this career has many pathways for a student to enter. Which brings me to ask, what made you all decide this discipline, and what kind of lessons have you learned, and what drives your passion about leading students in a career of business?

Regina Martinez:

This is Regina. And so, I actually have my Bachelors of Science Degree in Criminology from the University of La Verne. When I looked at business, I wasn't quite sure if that was a good discipline for me or not, but I knew that it was important to learn different areas of study. So, I tried it and I actually did really well. Business is a great program because it overlaps in a multitude of different industries. And so, the lessons that I've learned from it is that diversity, meaning learning different areas of study, opens up more opportunities for you. Maybe, opportunities that you never even planned of. Also, it's important to treat your education as a privilege, not a right, because not a lot of people are in that position, like you may be at one point in time to be able to transfer, get your bachelor’s degree and then move on to get your master’s degree. So, my Business degree opened a lot of unplanned opportunities and rewards for me. So, that's why I'm so passionate about teaching it to other students so that they can have those same opportunities.

Derek Dokter:

Thank you, Mrs. Martinez. This is Professor Derek Dokter. And one of the reasons why I chose this discipline specifically is that I was a 1st Generation community college graduate like I hope each one of you are going to become real soon here at Mt. SAC. And I wanted to be able to get a degree that transferred to a university at Cal State. So, I actually got the [Inaudible 00:10:03], which is still around today. Wow! And I was able to go into business because I thought this would be a great well-rounded degree that could open up many job opportunities for me. It could be HR, marketing, supply chain management, business communication, whatever. And I actually have a family business and I thought maybe I could help them in the future. As a backup, if maybe one of these other positions or jobs didn't work out, I'd always have something to lean back into.

Derek Dokter:

So, one of the lessons learned that I share with my students in my classes is the acronym KISS, K-I-S-S. I know everyone thinks, well, what's that have to do with business? Well, it stands for Keep It Simple Silly, and that's just to be simple minded. Sometimes we over-exaggerate some things that could be more challenging or we get nervous and do the wrong thing, KISS is keep it simple is, it helps you be motivated, helps you want to do the right work, the right way, the right time, and helps you be more flexible. Helps you wanting to be more willing to learn and understand that we're all learning together. And we're going to be successful here at our community college and then into the job marketplace. So, that's important to me.

Derek Dokter:

And why am I so passionate about leading students to this career? Simply because I was told when I was in my professional world, that people do what they love and that people make people. And you think of what does that have to do with it? Well, if we can help someone else find out what they're truly passionate about and what they end up loving, it creates a better atmosphere for that person. They're excited about it and that's kind of like spread, it's contagious to everybody else in the community, and that makes our community better. And who doesn't want to live in a community that's out there, helping each other, is excited at each other, and want everyone else to succeed? So, that's why I jumped into this. Thank you.

Brenda Domico:

Thank you so much, Derek. Well, that's going to be a hard one to follow. So, when I was in community college at Rancho Cucamonga Chaffey College, I honestly did not know what I wanted to do. I felt very lost and I know a lot of students that I talked to have that similar feeling. I chose accounting. I'm going to focus on accounting because that was my choice from the beginning. Because I took an accounting class, I absolutely loved it and all I needed was a little confidence. And my teacher said, you can do it. That's all I needed. To get started is a little bit of confidence, somebody to believe in me. It didn't take much, but I still had lack of confidence. So, I continued my path to accounting course, still not really sure, still not understanding what it is.

Brenda Domico:

My confidence started to increase the more I took courses, the more I stayed focused, and I ended up with a high GPA. And honestly, looking back, it's not something I thought I could do. And I know a lot of students are in that place right now. They don't think they can do it. They have a lot of hardships in their life. They're dealing with a lot of challenges and they truly don't believe that they can get to the end path. The lesson that I learned is don't ever give up, don't ever give up, work hard. Don't be afraid to work hard. It really does take that. And don't make excuses, be honest, be true to yourself. Whatever path you choose, there's going to be challenges. Just keep going, I promise you, you'll succeed. That is the main lesson that I learned.

Brenda Domico:

Business is a diverse industry. It has more opportunities and choices than any other degree. I love helping students, that's why I got involved with teaching in the first place. I want to help students find their own path like I got that same help. Even if it's not in the path that I chose, when I see a light bulb go off in a student and I see their passion come, it rewards me more than any paycheck that I could ever get. I love teaching because I want to help students get that dream that I was able to get. And that's it.

Brando Reynoso:

That is amazing. I love all the passion and thank you everyone for sharing all those stories with me. So, let's say a student earns an AST degree and then goes on to earn a bachelors in business, can you discuss what kind of careers are available to that student?

Brenda Domico:

So, in accounting Brando, I know that's what you're interested in, there's many, many tracks that you could take and focuses. It just depends on what your interests are. When you transfer over, one of the focuses could be CPA in tax road. You can be a public accountant, compliance manager. You can also be a managerial where you can work for a private company and work on things such as costing and budgeting and financial analysis. And you're more like an assistant to the managers, helping them make decisions on how to run their company from an accounting point of view. And you can work and specialize in a particular industry such as banking or [Inaudible 00:15:02]. So, there's a lot of different roads you can take, you can work for government, you can work for non-profit and you can also be a financial planner. So, there's a lot of different avenues that you can take.

Brando Reynoso:

Okay. What are the typical job duties or responsibilities?

Brenda Domico:

The job duties are numerous. I would say that there's a lot of clerk level positions, account receivable, bookkeeping, billing, inventory, payroll. If you want more analytical jobs, you have financial analysis, budget analysis, cost accounting, project managers, data analysis. It's just limitless how many job positions there are. And then you can get into senior management level positions and be more of problem solving, presentations and report interpretation to your management. And basically, you're helping them with all their finances and costs to run their business.

Brando Reynoso:

Great, sounds exciting. What are the typical salary ranges I should expect for that position?

Brenda Domico:

You might like this part Brando, is just for a one-year plus experience as a clerk, you could start at 32 and you don't have to have a four-year degree, just with a two-year degree, the range is up to 72,000 for a billing bookkeeper payroll. If you go into the more analytical higher level positions, which is property management forensic taxes cost, you can make from 65 to 153,000. Once you get into management and five plus years’ experience, you can make up from 60 to $200,000 in various budget analysts, financial analysis. And then you can go into executive positions, such as controller, CFO, treasurer, VP. They make anywhere from 100,000 to 500,000 a year. And that's national average Brando. If you want to adjust for California, add 30 to 40% above that because in California, it's the highest labor rate in the United States.

Brando Reynoso:

Wow! That's nice. So, shifting gears from accounting, I would like to ask a question and open the floor for everyone. Would a bachelor’s degree be sufficient or is there any recommendations for further education?

Regina Martinez:

This is Regina. We recommend that you continue your education because the more education that you achieve, the more valuable you're going to become not only for professional growth but also to an employer. So, your bachelor’s degree definitely will open up many opportunities, many doors for you because you're in a position where now you can, you have that opportunity to move to another degree. The best choice is to look, to see what can you achieve next? So next, you might think about getting your master’s degree, getting an MBA, or getting a master’s degree in human resources, or accounting, or supply chain or even management. So, your bachelor’s degree may be sufficient at that time, but you always want to continue to grow. So, looking at what can you get next? Can you get your master’s degree? And then once you get your master’s degree, then you'll be in a position where now you can think about getting your doctorate degree. So, you want to continue to grow not only personally, but also to bring more value to you for an employer.

Brando Reynoso:

Awesome. So, much good information. Aside from technical training, what kind of personality traits or practical skillsets should I develop for this field?

Regina Martinez:

So, same skills. If we're looking at management, active listening, critical thinking, reading comprehension, judgment and decision-making, speaking, computer skills, oral comprehension, oral expression, written comprehension, the adaptive reasoning, speech clarity and interpersonal skills. So, these are all some really great skills that you would want to build on.

Brando Reynoso:

Great. So, each and every one has great fields in business and great information which makes me come up with this question, my favorite question, what industries are hiring now and has COVID increase job opportunities or has it been decreased ever since COVID?

Regina Martinez:

Well, business administration covers so many different industries. And so, I'm going to go through this. This is from the Orange County Center of Excellence, but according to their data, over the next five years, there is projected to be 16,374 jobs available annually in this region due to retirements and workers leaving the field. Which is a lot more than the 6,510 awards conferred annually by educational institutions in this region. So, what they're saying is that there's this multitude, over 16,000 jobs that are going to be available, but not enough people are getting their degrees. So, definitely, there's a lot of growth. If we look at human resources according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, it's ranked at a 6% rate of growth which is faster than the average. And also, a management analyst, there's 11% growth in that position which is also much faster than the average.

Brando Reynoso:

I love that. It shows how much in demand these jobs and positions are in this field. What kind of partnerships does Mt. SAC have with other universities?

Regina Martinez:

So, we currently have a partnership with the University of La Verne. So, Mt. SAC students have the opportunity to earn a bachelor’s degree in business administration from the University of La Verne while attending Mt. SAC classes. So, the classes are held at Mt. SAC. For most students, the program will require an additional 44 units to obtain the degree, but there are some really great benefits to that. So, a waiver of the fee application, also, you're guaranteed admission to the University of La Verne provided that all those requirements are met. And this program is called the TAG program, which stands for Transfer Admission Guarantee. So, if you qualify, another benefit would be a possible TAG scholarship, and it would include a one-time $1,000 TAG scholarship applied towards the tuition costs of the first semester at University of La Verne.

Regina Martinez:

There's two different tracks. So, there's a track called Fast-Track where you can be eligible to take two University of La Verne classes per term. So, with that, you would have had completed 48 or more units, have a GPA of 2.7, be at age 23 or older, and have completed several prerequisites. Track-A, which is a second track. You can take one University of La Verne class per term. You must have completed 28 or more units, have a GPA of 2.5 or better, and you want to try to get a 2.7 so then you would be eligible for that TAG scholarship, you're age 23 or older, and you completed two prerequisites.

Regina Martinez:

The due date to get involved or to apply for this type of partnership with University of La Verne is that the application is December 1st for admission to the spring semester. And April 1st is the due date for admission to the fall semester. So, if you're interested, there's two ways to get more information as far as the requirements. And that would be to contact the University of La Verne. And you can contact Thomas Cobos, who's the Senior Associate Director there, or you can simply contact the Mt. SAC Career Center or transfer center. And they typically on a monthly basis, have information regarding our partnership with the University of La Verne.

Brando Reynoso:

That's so amazing. Thank you for that, Mrs. Martinez. Do you have any last advice for a business student who wants to transfer to earn a four-year degree at a four-year university and major in business?

Regina Martinez:

Yes, definitely. So, adapt, embrace and overcome life's challenges. Problem solve, be empathetic, patient ethical, be kind towards others and yourself. Sometimes students are too hard on themselves, but try to maintain that healthy balance. Don't get distracted and if connecting to social media starts taking up too much of your study time, think about disconnecting. Maintain your faith, allocate time to yourself to study. Mark your study time so everyone knows like this is your study time. Seek out resources, utilize student resources like scholarships. Continue to build interpersonal skills, form study groups and classes, get involved with some type of student or academic activity, some type of campus activity. Stay organized, especially with university dates and deadlines, because once those pass they don't forgive those. So, dates and deadlines are very important.

Regina Martinez:

Try not to take off any time, maybe during an intercession. Still continue your education even if it's just taking one class because you don't want to ever lose that momentum. Even if it's just taking one class at Mt. SAC during the summer or at another community college. Try to gain work experience or participate in an internship. That's very important. And financially, if there's material things, don't be afraid to sacrifice because if you need to be able to purchase that textbook or you need to be able to purchase items to help you obtain your educational goals, that's going to be more important. And believe me in the end, you'll reap the results. So, in the event that you're in that position, sometimes you might have to sacrifice material items.

Derek Dokter:

All right, Mounties. Well, I know it's been a great time. I like to end with, if we have any advice for you, the first thing is, is I like to share. I always like to have some kind of acronym in my classes to make it fun. And so, I want you to remember this it's M-T-S-A-C, right? Mt. SAC. And the first one is M, my dreams.

Brenda Domico:

I just want to say Brando, it was very nice meeting you through voice and good luck to you. I know you're going to do very, very well and just stay focused. Keep your head up, stay positive and never give up.

Brando Reynoso:

Thank you. Well, I've learned so much from our wonderful speakers today and thank you all for giving us this valuable time and information. I'm pretty sure someone listening to today's podcast is mostly likely inspired. And thank you for listening to the Magic Mountie Podcast. I hope you all enjoyed it and hope to see you all again.

Derek Dokter:

Thank you.

Regina Martinez:

Thank you.

Brenda Domico:

Thank you.

Regina Martinez:

Thank you, Brando.

Brenda Domico:

Thank you, Brando.

Regina Martinez:

It was great being here.

Derek Dokter:

3, 2, 1...

Participants:

Never give up again.

Christina Barsi:

Thank you for listening to the Magic Mountie podcast and don't forget to share your favorite episodes.