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Enhancing Advisory Committee Effectiveness

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Guidelines for Community and Technical College Committee Administration

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If the board of trustees and administration are the "brains" of community and technical colleges providing professional-technical programs, advisory committees are the central nervous system. When they operate well, they accurately sense internal and external environments, process information, and provide valuable guidance to the "brain" so that it can make good decisions. When they do not operate well, the college, students enrolled in these programs, and employers who eventually hire the students suffer.

Overview

The primary purpose of professional-technical education advisory committees is to promote collaboration between specific educational programs and business, industry and labor in preparing individuals to enter and succeed in their chosen career. Advisory committees historically have been a very effective means of making the educational delivery system respond to the needs of a constantly changing labor market.

Advisory committees are made up of volunteers who give of their time, talent, and expertise to help improve and update professional-technical programs. These committees usually serve specific occupational training programs in comprehensive high colleges, skills centers, technical and community colleges.

Professional-technical advisory committees have three major roles. They **advise** the administration and board of trustees, **assist** program staff, and **provide support and advocacy** for quality education and training. Working cooperatively with program administrators and instructors, advisory committees can significantly help strengthen and improve the programs they serve. Since they are "advisory" by design, these committees do not have administrative or legislative authority.

Types of Advisory Committees

Advisory committees are appointed by the administration of a college to provide direction for professional-technical or vocational programs. **Program advisory committees** can be formed for a single program, a group or cluster of related programs within the institution, a regional or area committee for the same programs or a cluster of related programs or career pathway. Regional committees are encouraged for the purpose of coordination and development of articulated/integrated secondary and postsecondary programs. If program cluster or regional advisory committees are used,

care must be given to ensure that every occupational program area is adequately represented. Clustering of advisory committees is highly recommended to enable balanced representation that minimizes the burden of excessive meetings for private sector members.

Some colleges establish a **General Advisory Committee** to assist the administration in making policy recommendations to the board, undertake long-term assignments, and to develop and carry out a strategic plan. **Task forces** may be formed by the administration or board to undertake specific assignments such as capital construction/remodeling projects and usually remain active only one to three years.

Establishment of Advisory Committees

Appointment Process. Advisory committee members are appointed by the administration of the college, in writing, for a specific term of one, two, or three years. A member may be appointed, when deemed appropriate by the administration, for a maximum service of six years. (Note: There may be extenuating circumstances when the administration would choose to appoint a member for additional terms. But these appointments should be limited for very special cases. A three-year rotational process provides for continuous flow of new talent and ideas to the committee. Written documentation of all appointments must be kept on file.

Membership Composition. The strength of an advisory committee is reflected in the diversity of its membership. Consideration must be given in the makeup of the committee to gender, geographical representation, ethnicity, and nature of the occupational area represented. Advisory committees must be composed of equal numbers of employers and employees to maintain a balance of interest. When the occupation being taught is apprenticeable and a local Joint Apprenticeship and Training Council (JATC) is active in the geographical area, at least one labor and one management member of the JATC should be invited to participate on the committee.

Consideration should also be given to include representatives of local professional associations related to the occupational area, organized or non-organized employee organizations, and county/state labor councils.

Committee Administration

Constitution and Bylaws. A written constitution should be developed for each advisory committee and included as part of official policy guidelines of the college. Once approved, it can only be amended by the governing board. Constitutions usually include the name of the committee, relationship to the governing board, purpose, membership, organizational structure, and procedural rules or bylaws.

Bylaws are rules that address the operation of the committee, selection of officers, appointment of subcommittees, responsibilities of members, and establishment of the annual plan of action. Because the rules of operation may need to change as the program work of committee membership changes, the bylaws should be revisited at the beginning of each academic year.

Chair and Program Administrator. The chair of the advisory committee must be elected from the private sector membership of the committee and must represent business, industry, labor, or a non-profit agency. The name and position of the committee chair should be noted on the committee roster on file.

The committee chair, program administrator, and program instructor(s), working in partnership, are responsible for facilitating the work of the committee. The program administrator and instructor(s) serve as consultants to the committee. However, they are not voting members and do not count towards the constitution of a quorum. Typically, the program administrator acts as the liaison to the board regarding the committee's activities. The program administrator also is responsible for providing logistical support for the committee's work.

Committee Recommendations and Reports. The committee chair and program administrator are responsible for keeping the administration, board, and appropriate staff fully informed of the committee activities. **Minutes of all meetings should be available at all times and kept on file for the previous three years.** A written report of achievements and recommendations should be provided to the administration and board at the end of each college year (See following checklist for sample report format.).

Committee Charge. In addition to the general committee charge, which outlines the committee's scope of activities, the administration or board may charge the committee with specific work (i.e., achieving industry certification for the program). The committee chair and program administrator are responsible for keeping the work of the committee focused on the charge and aligned with the college's strategic plan.

Meeting Frequency. Most colleges require that professional-technical advisory committees hold a minimum of two meetings each college year. Effective advisory committees meet quarterly, and quite often monthly, to complete their plan of action. A complete and up-to-date roster of committee membership should be maintained at all times. Members not attending at least 50 percent of the scheduled meetings should be replaced to maintain a viable committee. In order for the meeting to count as an "official" meeting, at least a quorum (50 percent) of the voting members must be present.

Committee Responsibilities. Committees are directly responsible to the board of trustees through the administration of the institution. Committees may not determine policy, commit to expenditure of fund, perform administrative functions and may not express opinions or represent positions in the name of the college, unless specifically authorized by the board or administration. In recommending activities that may involve expenditure of funds, the committee should provide a detailed description, rationale, and budget for consideration by the administration and board for inclusion in the institutional budget.

Member Responsibilities. Members are expected to fully participate in committee activities by attending committee meetings and conducting business by telephone, e-mail, and written communications. Members are expected to do the following:

❑ Act in good faith and in accordance with what they believe to be in the best interest of students, the program, or college, and their profession or occupation.
❑ Discharge their responsibilities diligently and not delegate them to other committee members or staff.

❑ Publicly disclose any actual or perceived conflicts of interest and not vote on such committee matters.

State Ethics Laws & Responsibilities. Although state ethics laws are directed toward state and public employees, advisory committee members are indirectly affected by the law through their relationship with college employees. For example, the ethics laws govern all actions and working relationships of state employees with current or potential customers, government representatives, the media, and others. In these relationships, state and public employees must observe the highest standards of ethical conduct. Each employee is expected to place the college's best interest above his or her own self-interest in all education, business, and other matters and decisions, where there is an actual, potential, or appearance of conflict of interest. Paramount in the public trust that obligates college administrators, instructors, and advisory members in fulfilling their responsibilities is the principle that **their position may not be used for personal gain or private advantage within any relationship**.

Checklists for the

<u>Advisory Committee Chair</u>

The following checklists are provided as quick references to help the chair of the advisory committee effectively lead his or her committee.

Qualities of the Effective Advisory Chair

Knowledge

❑ Has extensive background/work experience in the occupational area.
❑ Demonstrates active participation and interest in professional association relating to occupation.
❑ Commands prestige and respect from within the industry or profession.

Communication skills

❑ Demonstrates ability to communicate with committee members, instructors, administrators and other groups.
❑ Demonstrates willingness to listen (communication is not solely talking).

Participation

❑ Demonstrates active participation and interest in the program and college.
❑ Thinks in terms of program goals and the best interest of students.

Leadership

❑ Commands attention and inspires others.
❑ Demonstrates ability to create a positive work atmosphere.
❑ Controls without dominating.
❑ Understands how the committee fits into the overall educational process.

Administrative skills

❑ Demonstrates willingness to take initiative.
❑ Demonstrates ability and willingness to carry out responsibilities.
❑ Supports orderly procedures for conducting work.
❑ Understands the role of the instructors and administration.

Responsibilities of the Chair

❑ Attends all meetings.

❑ Accepts and supports the committee's purpose and charge.

❑ Plans committee meetings and agenda with administrators and/or instructors.

❑ Exercises leadership.

❑ Maintains records and relevant information on committee work. The chair must be sufficiently informed to interact knowledgeably with other committee members, instructors, and the administration.

❑ Moves members towards consensus and decision-making.

❑ Evaluates committee efforts and communicates accomplishments to the committee and college administration.

Making Early Contact With Committee Members

❑ Sends a welcome/orientation letter, cosigned by the program administrator and/or program instructors.

❑ Provides the committee with its charges and goals, in context with the college's strategic plan.

❑ Provide the date, time and location of the first committee meeting, even if tentative, and a calendar of future meeting dates, even if tentative.

❑ Review recent accomplishments of the advisory committee so those new and continuing members can put that in context of work to be done.

❑ Include an RSVP sheet for committee participation and for attendance at the advisory meeting if the date is set. Some chairpersons may wish to solicit agenda items. If this is done, the first requirement of the committee is to validate these agenda items in terms of the purpose of the committee and the charge provided them by the college and program administrator.

Developing and Structuring the Meeting Agenda

❑ Provide in advance of the meeting, an agenda listing beginning and ending times for the meeting, the meeting location, room number, a list of committee members, and topics to be discussed and/or acted upon.

❑ Sequence agenda items thoughtfully. Start the meeting with agenda topics that unify the committee; this sets the stage for working together. Make the first few items quick-action items to establish movement. Early in the meeting is a good time to discuss topics that require mental energy, creativity, and clear thinking. Do not put difficult topics back-to-back – people need a break. If the meeting will last more than two hours, build in breaks at logical places. End the meeting with topics that will unify the committee; people like to leave meetings feeling that they are part of a productive team.

❑ Do not over schedule the meeting. Provide sufficient but not too much time for each topic. Some chairpersons like timed agendas; others do not. A good approach is to show key times on the agenda. Having these "markers" lets members know the general pace of discussion the chair anticipates for the meeting.

❑ Provide at least minimal written background information for each agenda item.

❑ Indicate whether the item is for discussion only or if action is expected.

❑ Identify the person who is presenting each item.

The Chairperson's Role as Facilitator

❑ Be a facilitator of meetings; "don't hold court." The advisory committee belongs to the program and the college, not the chair.

❑ Set the tone for the meeting by briefly stating the purpose of the advisory committee. This is also a good time to highlight recent student or program successes.

❑ Guide, mediate, probe, and stimulate discussion. Let *others* thrash out ideas; advisory committees are not formed to validate the thinking of the chair, administration, or program instructors.

❑ Encourage discussion that challenges status quo of the program, but not the personalities of the instructors or administration. Good decisions are made when the committee examines all sides of an issue, but not when members personalize the debate. Emotional discussion of an idea is good, but an emotional reaction to a person is bad. When emotions are too high, return the floor to a neutral person, seek a purely factual answer, or take a break.

❑ Prevent one-sided debate.

❑ Deal with dysfunctional behaviors. Don't let a person who is blocking constructive discussion ruin the advisory meeting for everyone else. Strategies for dealing with this behavior include confronting the person privately in a caring manner, pointing out the effect of the behavior, and suggesting alternative behaviors.

❑ Keep discussion on track; periodically restate the issue and the goal of the discussion.

❑ Monitor participation; control talkative members and draw out silent members.

❑ Use well-placed questions, seek points of information and clarification, and periodically summarize to keep the discussion focused.

❑ Be sensitive to the feelings of members. Look for visual and verbal cues to determine if a member is not happy with the discussion, and then deal with this.

❑ Keep the group focused on the central question and moving toward a decision. Call on the newest members first to express their views; discussions tend to close down after long-term members express strong views.

❑ Seek consensus, but unanimity is not required. Sometimes, trying to get every member to completely agree compromises ideas.

❑ Close the meeting by recapping achievements of the committee.

Tips for Presiding Over a Meeting

❑ Start the meeting on time!

❑ Review the business to be conducted.

❑ Recognize members who are entitled to talk; discourage breaking in.

❑ Restate the issue to be voted on before calling for a vote, and explain the consequence of the vote.

❑ Put all issues to a fair vote; don't make assumptions about how committee members feel.

❑ Announce the results of actions taken and explain the follow-through to be taken and by whom.

❑ Help expedite business. Don't let discussions drift or go on too long.

❑ Stay with the agenda. Seek the full committee's agreement to change the agenda once it has been announced.

❑ Close the meeting on time; seek the committee's agreement regarding extending the time if necessary.

Parliamentary Procedure

❑ Most advisory committees do not use, or are required to operate using parliamentary procedure; however, the objectives and principles of parliamentary procedure should be employed.

❑ The objective of parliamentary procedure includes expediting business, maintaining order, ensuring fairness and equity for all, and accomplishing the objectives for which the group is organized.

❑ The principles of parliamentary procedure include courtesy and justice for all, rule of the majority while respecting the rights of the minority, partiality to none, protection of the absentee, and taking one item of business at a time.

Notes:

Checklists for the
Program Administrator
<u>and Instructor(s)</u>

*The following checklists are provided as
quick references to help the program
administrator and instructors work effectively
with their advisory committee.*

Role of the Program Administrator

❑ Be a valuable resource to the advisory committee, not the "authority figure." Note that too large an administrative role reduces the value of the committee and reduces the motivation of the volunteer members. Too small of an administrative role results in the committee drifting aimlessly and operating ineffectively.

❑ Be sure the committee understands its purpose and charge.

❑ Provide a brief summary of written background information to the committee such as the college's strategic plan goals, list of program offerings, current enrollment and enrollment trends for the college and program, recent program equipment purchases and facilities changes, staffing changes, current fiscal year program budget, changes required by legislation or college policy, state ethics law requirements relating to advisory committees, etc.

❑ Be thoroughly familiar with all aspects of the committee's work, subjects under discussion, and the college and state's policies related to the committees work.

❑ Answer questions, offer suggestions, and raise questions.

❑ Coordinate administrative and clerical support.

Responsibilities of the Program Administrator to the Committee Chair

❑ Make early contact with the committee chair and provide orientation.

❑ Ensure that the chair executes his or her leadership duties.

❑ Maintain contact with the chair.

❑ Provide administrative support to the committee throughout the year. The level of support should be agreed on by the chair, program administrator, and program instructor(s) during the orientation.

❑ Help the chair prepare meeting agendas.

❑ Help the chair prepare and distribute minutes of committee meetings.

❑ Provide on-site support for committee meetings.

❑ Help prepare an annual advisory committee report to the board.

Orientation of the Chair

(*Note: This orientation may be provided individually by the program administrator and program instructor(s) to each advisory committee chairs or through a joint meeting of all program committee chairs and instructors.*)

❑ Review the purpose of the advisory committee, its relationship to the educational process of the college, and its charge for the year. Link to the college's strategic plan whenever possible.

❑ Identify lines of authority. Review and clarify the bounds of the advisory committee's activities and authority. Review relevant college policies, practices, and procedures

that affect the committee. Note where the work of other committees/groups may overlap with or affect the committee (i.e., college accreditation, program industry certification, etc.).

❑ Clarify the chairperson's role and duties, and emphasize the importance of this position (see previous section, Checklist for the Committee Chair).

❑ Review all ongoing committee projects, continuing activities, and assignments of individual committee members. Identify the level of staff assistance/clerical support available.

❑ Identify focus areas for committee activities.

❑ Determine the process to be used during the year for handling the committee's work.

❑ Provide the following background information: a committee roster (and perhaps the previous year's); minutes of previous meetings; background on recent committee activities and accomplishments; a list of college administrators and the board of trustees, program instructors, support staff, and other people with whom the chair is likely to interact.

Managing the Advisory Committee Meeting

❑ Each advisory committee sets the number of times it will meet each year. This will be determined by the scope of the committee's plan of action. Some committees may meet two or three times a year. Others may meet more often to carry out their activities.

❑ The program administrator and instructor(s) should arrange for refreshments (optional), necessary secretarial/support staff, and make copies of handout materials in advance of the meeting.

❑ The committee chair, program administrator and instructor(s) should arrive early to check room setup and distribute meeting materials.

❑ They should go over all agenda items before the meeting begins.

❑ The program administrator or a program instructor should sit next to the committee chair to ensure the meeting stays on schedule, that all members participate in the discussion, and that the meeting adjourns on time.

❑ Immediately after adjournment, the chair and program administrator should meet briefly to agree on what follow-up actions are required and who is responsible — the chair, program administrator, program instructor(s), or another committee member.

Minutes of the Advisory Committee Meeting

❑ Include the date, time, and place of the meeting. Note the chairperson's name, members present and absent, and other key people in attendance.

❑ Note all formal motions and passage or defeat.

❑ Note all decisions reached, including motions passed and follow-up actions to be taken, with deadlines for implementation.

❑ Include a brief summary of discussions. Do not attribute comments to members, except possibly where formal motions are introduced (attribution for motions is not required).

❑ Provide information of the time and place of the next meeting.

❑ Review of the meeting minutes by the committee chair should be completed prior to distribution to committee members.

❑ Distribute the minutes to all committee members, including those who did not attend, within two weeks of the meeting.

❑ In most instances, meeting minutes do not require formal approval by the committee. A good approach is to send the meeting minutes out immediately after the meeting with a statement to contact the chair or program administrator if errors are noted.

Sample Timeline for Committee Work

June 1: College administration appoints new committee members. (Most advisory committee members are appointed for three-year terms and may be re-appointed to a second term. Replacement of members is usually made through a system of staggered terms. The benefit of having one-third new members each year is that it provided new ideas and a smooth transition for the committee.

June 15: Program administrator and committee chair contact new members to provide orientation.

Aug. 15: Letter from chair and program administrator is sent to committee members announcing the tentative calendar of meetings for the year.

Three weeks before first committee meeting: Chair, program administrator and/or instructors develop committee meeting agenda.

Two weeks before meeting: Program administrator mails agenda to committee members.

One week after meeting: Program administrator/Instructor(s) draft meeting minutes and forwards to chair for his or her approval.

Not more than three weeks after meeting: Program administrator mails meeting minutes to all committee members.

Sample Report to the Board of Trustees and Administration

Date:

Purpose: This annual report is submitted to bring the board and administration up to date on key committee work and to tie the work of the committee to the strategic plan/purpose of the college.

(Note: Do not exceed one page, front and back. This report is not intended to be exhaustive. If an individual board member so requests, he or she will be provided the minutes of the meeting(s) addressing the topics in question.)

1. Committee name:

    Chair:

    Chair Elect:

    Program Administrator:

    Program Instructor(s):

(Note: Use phrases only in responding to each of the following sections (2-5). In brackets preceding each phrase, indicate the GOAL number and OBJECTIVE number for the committee's plan of action that ties to the activity (for example, [2;1]). Also note where activity ties to a specific goal of the college's strategic plan.)

2. Specific committee tasks, goals, and key issues for the current year.

    [   ]

    [   ]

    [   ]

    [   ]

    [   ]

3. Current year key accomplishments since last annual report to the board and administration.

    [   ]

    [   ]

    [   ]

    [   ]

    [   ]

4. Specific recommendations to the board and/or program changes with significant financial or staffing impact.

    [   ]

    [   ]

    [   ]

    [   ]

    [   ]

5. Goals/activities planned for the next year.

    [   ]

    [   ]

    [   ]

    [   ]

    [   ]

6. Past meeting dates:

Sample Position
<u>Descriptions</u>

Advisory Committee Chair Position Description

Basic Function

Consistent with the college's policies and procedures, the committee chair guides the committee in its work as outlined by the plan of action and charge from the board of trustees and administration.

Responsibilities

❑ With program administrator, instructor(s), and other committee members, develops a plan of action that will allow the committee to effectively and efficiently discharge its responsibilities for the year.

❑ Approves meeting minutes before their distribution.

❑ Works with program administrator and instructor(s) to ensure that the work of the committee is carried out between meetings.

❑ Approves reports on committee activities, including recommendations for action by the board of trustees and/or administration regarding curriculum, facilities, equipment, or staffing changes.

❑ Reports to the committee on decisions of the board of trustees or administration that affect the committee's work or activities.

❑ Where appropriate, make policy recommendations to the board of trustees and/or administration.

Advisory Committee Member Position Description

Basic Function

Reports to the committee chair. Actively participates in the work of the committee; provides thoughtful input to the deliberations of the committee; focuses on the best interests of students, the occupation represented, the college, and the committee rather than on personal or constituent interests; and works toward fulfilling the committee's goals.

Responsibilities

❑ Reviews all relevant material before committee meetings. Makes contributions and voices objective opinions on issues.

❑ Attends committee meetings.

❑ Carries out individual assignments made by the committee chair.

❑ Informs the committee of recent changes to the occupation represented regarding employment opportunities and wage rates, certification/licensure requirements, federal/state laws, emerging practices/trends, new equipment, etc.

❑ Works as part of the committee and college instructional team to ensure that the committee develops recommendations that help students and staff responsible for the program.

❑ Represents the committee in meetings of professional associations and groups.

❑ Promotes clarity within the committee on the committee's role and how it supports and fits within the interests of the occupation or profession.

Program Administrator Position Description

Basic Function

Serves as an informed resource person to the chair and members of the committee and as a link to the college's administration and board of trustees. Assists the chair in facilitating committee discussions and activities that address the committee's charge. Works with the chair to ensure that all committee work is consistent with the college's policy and procedures and goals of the program.

Responsibilities

❑ Provides thorough orientation for each new committee chair and assists the chair in providing orientation for new and continuing committee members each year.

❑ Works with the committee to develop a plan of action that will allow the committee to effectively and efficiently carry out its responsibilities for the year.

❑ Works with the chair and instructor(s) to develop agendas and conduct effective meetings of the committee.

❑ Provides administrative and secretarial/support staff for planning and execution of all committee meetings.

❑ Makes sure minutes of advisory meetings are drafted for review and approval by the committee chair.

❑ Works with the committee chair, other committee members, and program instructor(s) to ensure that the work of the committee is carried forth between meetings.

❑ Facilitates communication of committee activities, including requests for information and/or recommendations to the college's administration and board of trustees.

❑ Reports to the committee on decisions of the administration, board of trustees, legislature, or state agencies that may impact the work of the committee.

❑ Where appropriate, assist the committee in proposing activities and services that will improve student learning within the program.

Program Instructor Position Description

Basic Function

   Serves as an informed resource person to the chair, program administrator, and members of the committee. Provides information to the committee regarding curriculum, instructional practices, adequacy of facilities and equipment, student recruitment/ placement, student success, student organization activities, professional development activities, etc. Assists in facilitating committee discussions and activities addressing the plan of action.

Responsibilities

❑   Participate in providing a thorough orientation for each new committee chair and members concerning all aspects of the program.

❑   Works with the committee to develop a plan of action that will allow the committee to effectively and efficiently carry out its responsibilities for the year.

❑   Works with the program administrator and chair to develop agendas and conduct effective meetings of the committee.

❑   Provides necessary support for planning and execution of all committee meetings.

❑   Works with the program administrator, committee chair, and other committee members, to ensure that the work of the committee is carried forth between meetings.

❑   Facilitates communication of committee activities including requests for information.

❑   Where appropriate, assist the committee in proposing activities and services that will improve student learning within the program.

Notes:

Checklists for
Advisory Committee
<u>Functions and Activities</u>

*The following checklists of suggested
committee activities and duties are provided
as quick references to help the committee
effectively perform their responsibility.*

Advisory Committee Functions and Activities

The following advisory committee activities and duties are not meant to be all-inclusive, but are suggested areas of review and discussion. Each advisory committee develops its plan of action based on the needs of the program.

Curriculum Advice

❑ Review local, state, and regional labor market data to ensure that the occupational program is in demand, that it produces a livable family wage, and enough openings exist so as to provide a high probability of future employment for students completing the program.

❑ Advise as to industry standards, certification, or licensure requirements required by the program area.

❑ Assist with development of skills standards as appropriate.

❑ Identify the academic competencies, employability and technical skills required for successful entry into the occupation.

❑ Identify new technologies to include in the program.

❑ Advise as to the types and balance of instruction relating to basic academic skills, production work, and/or realistic enterprise tasks to be accomplished to ensure effective and efficient use of instructional time.

❑ Review instructional materials for technical accuracy. Recommend those that are most appropriate to the program (i.e., textbooks, periodicals, trade publications, audio-visual materials, computer software, on-line/internet technical assistance or learning systems, etc.).

❑ Assist in conducting special events that benefit students, the institution, and local businesses (i.e., hosting industry training seminars and workshops, manufacturing or product seminars, open house events, etc.)

❑ Recommend procedures for developing, implementing, and evaluating work-based learning opportunities for students.

Facilities and Equipment Review

❑ Conduct evaluation as to the adequacy of the physical facilities and condition of equipment and prepare recommendations for necessary changes.

❑ Assist in obtaining instructional equipment and supplies through donations, loans, demonstrations, grants, gifts, or at reduced purchase prices.

❑ Advise in development of plans for new construction or remodeling of existing facilities.

❑ Review annual budgetary requests for equipment and supplies. Make recommendations and assist in the development of bid or purchase specifications when appropriate.

Instructional Quality Improvement

❑ Advise in the development of qualifications for the hiring of instructors and serve on interview panels when appropriate.

❑ Advise in the development of evaluation mechanisms and procedures that will assist in determining the success of the instructional program. Conduct outcome assessments (i.e., survey of student success 1, 3, or 5 years after completing program) and recommend appropriate changes to ensure continuous improvement of student learning.

❑ Recommend instructional practices that will promote the development of a safe instructional environment and instill safe working attitudes and habits in students.

❑ Suggest criteria for evaluating instructor competence.

❑ Recommend strategies to ensure that instructor(s) improve instructional techniques, maintain/obtain industry certification, and state-of-the-art proficiency in the use of technology related to their program.

❑ Recommend/develop standards and minimum basic academic skills qualifications for entry into the program.

❑ Advise administration and board regarding program continuation, modification, or elimination as determined by review of outcomes.

Instructional Delivery Review

❑ Review state and national initiatives, directives, or legislation for and their impact on the program. Make recommendations on incorporation of the required changes.

❑ Assist in securing qualified substitute instructors, guest speakers, or workshop presenters for the program.

Student Employment Assistance

❑ Organize employer/student conferences.

❑ Notify instructor(s) of job openings for students.

❑ Facilitate students in obtaining work-based learning experiences, internships, clinical rotations, or cooperative work experiences.

❑ Assist students in developing job interview and resume development skills.

❑ Recommend employability skills curriculum content expected for success in the occupational area.

❑ Hire graduates/completers of the program.

Public Relations

- ❑ Recommend/facilitate/conduct an awards program for students that will encourage excellence and pride in achievement (i.e., special recognition, scholarships, etc.).

- ❑ Present programs to local civic and service groups.

- ❑ Recommend/develop a marketing plan for increasing community awareness and value of the program (i.e., facilitating/obtaining sponsored media advertisements, etc).

- ❑ Recommend/develop measures supported by business and industry to increase awareness of the program through local and state professional trade associations.

- ❑ Participate in and promote special college events related to the program.

- ❑ Talk to legislators regarding the needs of the program and college.

- ❑ Arrange for a tour of the program by legislators and other elected officials.

- ❑ Promote, support, or influence legislation that will impact the program.

Student Organizations

- ❑ Assist in developing competitive skill events.

- ❑ Serve as judges for competitive skill events.

- ❑ Sponsor or collect contributions of equipment and supplies for skill events.

- ❑ Arrange for display/demonstration space to promote student organizations as special events.

Performance Measures for Determining Advisory <u>Committee Effectiveness</u>

The following checklist provide a basis for helping determine the effectiveness of advisory committees in the performance of their responsibilities.

Performance Measures for Effective Advisory Committees:

#1 Understand the **Mission and Goals of the College and Program.**

✓ Know why the program exists.

✓ Understand the quality of student the program is capable of producing.

✓ Have developed a clear, concise committee purpose statement.

> *(Sample purpose statement: "To represent the interests of health occupations by reviewing and advising on curriculum, determining equipment and facilities needs, assisting with improving learning opportunities for students, and serving as an advocate for quality instruction.")*

#2 Know What Must be Done to Achieve Mission.

✓ Identify the "**critical success factors***"*

✓ Academic Competencies

✓ Employability Skills

✓ Technical Skills

✓ Search for improvement opportunities -- confront status quo.

#3 Scan Internal and External Environments.

Internal factors:

✓ Administrative and board commitment to <u>quality</u> programs.

✓ Programs/related programs offered by the institution.

✓ Adequacy of facilities and equipment.

✓ Instructor background and qualifications.

✓ Resources available (financial and support).

✓ Student access and recruitment.

External factors:

✓ Labor market needs, trends, and directions.

✓ Occupational licensing/certification requirements.

✓ Success of program graduates/completers.

✓ Community perceptions.

✓ Programs in other colleges.

#4 **E**nvision the **F**uture.

✓ Project requirements 3-5 years.

✓ Prioritize things that must be done to make program respond.

✓ List barriers (real and perceived).

✓ Enlist others: industry experts, academic instructors, and community.

#5 **D**evelop **P**lan of **A**ction to **A**ddress **I**dentified **G**aps.

✓ Set clear, measurable short/long-term goals.

✓ Specify logical implementation strategies and measurable objectives.

✓ Assign tasks.

✓ Establish timelines.

✓ Plan small wins.

✓ Develop specific recommendations for continuous improvement.

#6 **M**onitor **P**rogress **T**owards **R**ecommendations.

✓ Regularly meet with students, instructors, employers, and administrators/board to determine achievement.

✓ Get support -- Use influence of local business, labor, legislators, and community.

#7 **E**ncourage the **H**eart -- **S**tudents, **I**nstructors, and **A**dministrators.

✓ Celebrate accomplishments -- Value the victories.

✓ Champion the cause of professional-technical education.

Technical Assistance

Supervisory staff of the state agency responsible for oversight of professional-technical, vocational-technical, or occupational education programs are available to provide technical assistance upon request to local community and technical colleges desiring help in increasing the effectiveness of their advisory committees. State agencies, as part of the local program evaluation process, also conduct a review of program advisory committee administration and activities to ensure compliance with their established policies and procedures. Each community and technical college is encouraged to create a local policy and procedures handbook to meet the needs of their campus and programs.

In Washington state, technical assistance for technical and community college advisory committees is available from:

> State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
> Workforce Education
> 1300 Quince St.SE
> PO Box 42495
> Olympia, WA 98504-2495
>
> SBCTC Website: http://www.sbctc.edu/
>
>
> Tiffany Merkel
> (360) 704-4332
> tmerkel@sbctc.edu

About the Author

William C. (Bill) Olfert, is founder of Career & Technical Education (CTE) Services, a firm specializing in connecting education, technology, business and industry. With 30 years experience in professional-technical and vocational education, Mr. Olfert has served as a classroom instructor, school district vocational director, executive director of state councils on vocational education in two states, technical college administrator, and director of an area skills center. Each of these positions required extensive use of advisory committees. During his tenure as Executive Director of the Washington State Council on Vocational Education, Mr. Olfert compiled and published an extensive and widely disseminated package of technical assistance materials for advisory committees. Bill is a frequent presenter at workshops, seminars, and conference breakout sessions on how to work effectively with advisory groups.

Training workshops on enhancing advisory committee effectiveness are available for groups of staff and/or committee members. These are offered as two-hour, half-day, or full-day training sessions and are conducted by Bill Olfert, author of *Enhancing Advisory Committee Effectiveness.* For more information, please contact:

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