



3.30.0.1 Program Advisory Committees

I. Purpose:

MnSCU policy 3.30 states “Program advisory committees are designed to provide guidance and advice on program design, operation, accountability and closure.” The Academic Affairs administration feels that no institution can function effectively without the support and input of the community, and advisory committees provide a direct communication link to the community and industries served by technical education. All programs that have an A.A.S. and/or a diploma/certificate as awards shall have an advisory committee. Programs that award an A.S. degree or a certificate in an academic area will receive similar input from the institutions that approve articulation agreements.

The advisory committees have a vital role in the technical/occupational programs at Century College. The need to use the advisory committees as a valuable resource is recognized by the students, faculty, and administration of the College. The College depends upon the expertise of the advisory committees to enhance the programs’ curriculum, advise the College on trends in the marketplace, and participate in determining facility needs for individual programs.

The value of an excellent advisory committee in the role of student recruitment cannot be underestimated. The make-up and activity of the membership of an advisory committee lends credibility to the program, the college and its stated outcomes.

II. Membership

The membership of the advisory committee shall consist of between ten and twelve members from the community. Membership shall consist of one student currently in the program, a graduate of the program currently employed in the field, and the remainder from the industry the program serves (some of the members may be graduates of the program) or from an educational institution apart from Century College. Members shall be selected with the intent of providing diversity in the committee make-up. The membership should not be heavily weighted with graduates from the program at Century College. In addition to these ten to twelve members, the program instructors and the Academic Dean responsible for the program will be members. Although not members of the committees, the President of the College and the Vice President of Academic Affairs should be sent a courtesy invitation to each of the meetings. The proposed membership of the initial committee and subsequence changes in membership should be submitted to the Academic Dean responsible for the program, for review and suggestions. Academic Affairs will maintain a current list of the membership of all advisory committees.

The terms of the members of the committee should be staggered so that there is not a completely new membership at any given time. When designing a new program, one-third of the members should be appointed for a one-year term, another third for two years and the remaining third for three years.

Subsequently, each member should be appointed for a three-year term and not serve more than two terms. When a member's term expires, the Chair of the committee will have the option of reappointing the member for a second term. This will ensure a fresh perspective and broaden the base from which the program receives input.

All members of an advisory committee will be provided with a copy of "Century Community and Technical College Leadership Guide for the Effective Use of Advisory Committees." This guide serves as a practical approach to organizing and operating an advisory committee.

III. Structure of Advisory Committees

Each advisory committee should have a chairperson elected by the members of the committee for a one-year term. The chair may be reelected annually. A vice chair should also be elected to fill the position of the chair when needed. A member of the committee should take notes and send them to the Academic Dean responsible for the program who will publish and distribute them.

A program instructor shall be designated as the program representative and shall act as a consultant to the advisory committee, establish the agenda in consultation with the chair of the committee and the Dean, and serve as liaison with the committee, other program staff, and administration. The program representative is also responsible for identifying program goals to the committee and ensuring that the issues in the program are addressed.

IV. Meetings

While the need for the number of meetings each year of the Advisory Committee may vary, there should be a minimum of three meetings per academic year. The first should be early in the Fall Semester to set up a plan for the upcoming year and set up the organizational structure of the committee. The second meeting should be early in the Spring Semester to discuss any changes or problems during the year and the third should be a shorter meeting before the Advisory Committee Appreciation Dinner in the spring so that a review of progress toward the goals set in the fall can take place.

A minimum of three meetings is required even if appearances would suggest that there are no changes in the industry or that input by the Committee is not needed. The legislature has made it very clear that the advice of community members is critical for the development of curriculum and for continued adequate funding. An active and representative advisory committee is a key component in meeting this mandate.

Because of the increased need to document the participation and recommendations by the advisory committees, it is important that there be a complete file of the agendas and minutes of the meetings in the Academic Dean's office. Clerical support for the meetings will come from the Dean's office.

The agenda should be prepared in consultation with both the program instructor and the Advisory Committee Chair. A copy is to be sent to the appropriate dean's assistant one month before the meeting. This will ensure that there is sufficient time for typing and mailing. The agenda will be sent out to the members, the Academic Dean responsible for the program, the Vice President of Academic Affairs, and the President of Century College three weeks before the meeting. Advisory committee lists must be kept up to date.

The minutes from each meeting should be sent to the Dean and dean's assistant within one week of the meeting for typing. A copy of the minutes will be sent out to each of the members of the Advisory Committee within two weeks of their being received by the Dean's office.

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