MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGE SOUTHEAST

A TECHNICAL & COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ADVISORY COMMITTEE HANDBOOK

Mission Statement
Minnesota State College Southeast prepares students for a lifetime of learning by providing education for employment, skill enhancement, retraining and transfer, to meet the needs of students and community.

Our Vision
To enrich lives and communities by being the best

Our Values
Integrity
Diversity
Excellence
Access
Learning
Stewardship

A big thank you to our advisory committees for your outstanding support of our programs at Minnesota State College Southeast. Advisory committees play a vital role to ensure that our curricula stays relevant and meets business and industry standards. Our success depends on your involvement. Your guidance and direction helps us to achieve our goal of providing an optimal learning experience that meets and exceeds the expectations of our students and regional employers.

The college is fortunate to have so many willing volunteers who are passionate about helping students! Your willingness to invest your time and financial resources, provide internship and clinical sites, and hire our graduates makes for successful programs. Again, thank you!

Sincerely,

Larry G. Lundblad

Interim President

Purpose of Advisory Committees

At Minnesota State College Southeast advisory committees help ensure that all aspects of our programs reflect the needs and current conditions of the workplace and that graduates are meeting the entry-level expectations of employers.   This is achieved through the continued evaluation of curriculum, learning materials, facilities, equipment, and the marketplace for students and graduates. MSC Southeast recognizes that advisory committees are indispensable for maintaining state-of-the-art, community-linked curricula in a time of rapid, continuous change and demands for accountability.

Membership and Structure

Each program area will establish an advisory committee with representation appropriate to an equal opportunity college. Membership will vary from 5 – 12 depending upon the nature of the program served.

Membership should include:

- All faculty representing their program
- A minimum of five representatives from business/industry/labor who employ program graduates
- A minimum of one recent graduate from the program
- A current student
- Secondary faculty
- College dean/coordinator

As needed:
- Appropriate governing official(s) (enforcement agencies)
- Professional organization representative(s)
- Secondary school counselor(s) and adminstrators

Ex-officio participants might include College Administration, Custom Training, Foundation, and/or college recruitment representatives.

Term of Membership

The college appreciates the contributions of all individuals who serve on our advisory committees. We recognize that their personal commitments and demanding work schedules may limit the time they are able to serve.

Most members serve for two to three years. Appointments are staggered so that new members are added while retaining some experienced members to help maintain continuity. In some programs, members may be asked to serve on the advisory committee for more than one term.

Expectations of Membership

Individual advisory committee members are expected to:
- become knowledgeable of the college and the specific program which the committee advises,
- promote the program and technical education in the community,
- attend regularly scheduled meetings; participate in committee decisions, and serve on subcommittees when requested,
- advise program instructors and staff of current trends and new developments in the industry or occupation,

- advise on criteria for program evaluation, planning, development and implementation,
- advise on appropriate instructional equipment and/or work-site learning experience, and
- advise on criteria for selection of instructors and students.

Other important roles include assisting students in learning of employment opportunities and responsibilities. Members may be guest speakers to help students understand employer needs and expectations, assist in conducting mock interviews, help locate prospective employers for upcoming graduates, or help students locate part-time jobs or internships. The committee may also recognize outstanding students through certificates, prizes, awards and scholarships.

Members may assist in identifying potential sources of students. They may promote the program in cooperation with college marketing personnel in news releases, media announcements, reports, special technology days, programs for civic groups, and open houses.

What Do Advisory Committees Do?

The advisory committee's function is to advise and assist in program planning, development, implementation and evaluation. Most advisory committees conduct activities in the following areas:

Job Market Information
- Identify new and emerging occupations
- Advise on labor market needs and trends

Curriculum and Instruction
- Identify and expand the use of new technologies
- Compare content with occupational competencies and tasks
- Analyze course content and sequence
- Review, recommend, and assist in obtaining instructional materials
- Recommend safety policies and procedures

Recruitment and Job Placement
- Assist in recruiting potential students
- Provide/obtain cooperative work experiences, internships/extern-ships, work/study, or work-based learning opportunities for students
- Assist students in developing resumes and interviewing skills
- Assist with career days/job fairs
- Hire graduates/program completers

Student Development
- Assist in developing and judging competitive skill events
- Sponsor student organization activities and assist in fundraising
- Conduct leadership development activities
- Establish scholarships and awards
- Provide tours and field trips, job shadowing, and speakers

Staff Development
- Provide instructors with retraining/back-to-industry and summer opportunities for technical upgrading
- Review professional development plans
- Support staff attendance at conferences

Community/Public Relations/Legislation
- Present programs to community groups, media, and legislators
- Establish programs to recognize outstanding students, teachers, and community leaders
- Promote special school events
- Assist in developing a marketing plan

Resources
- Assist in budget development and review
- Review present equipment and facilities and suggest schedule for replacement of equipment
- Conduct fundraising activities and make or obtain donations
- Leverage community resources and broker community partnerships

Program Review/Evaluation
- Participate in long-term planning
- Recommend new programs or elimination of obsolete programs
- Review and recommend program goals and objectives
- Participate in program evaluation and recommend evaluation criteria
- Assess the quality and quantity of graduates and job placement
- Compare student performance standards to business/industry standards
- Evaluate, recommend, and/or provide equipment and facilities

Responsibilities

A faculty member often serves as committee chair, but the committee may elect a member from the official membership to serve as chairperson. The chairperson presides at meetings, works closely with college officials, and ensures that minutes - with action items identified - are forwarded to Academics.

A designated college representative will work closely with the committee chair in preparing for the meeting. This representative assists in:
- preparing meeting agendas in consultation with the chairperson,
- outlining the tasks to be accomplished by the committee,
- presenting items or problems needing action for discussion and recommendations,
- notifying membership of the time and location of meetings,
- arranging meeting rooms,
- reproducing and distributing the minutes, and
- preparing and distribute progress reports.

The designated college representative will send minutes, identified action items and recommendations to the Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs, advisory committee members, program faculty, program coordinator, and any ex-officio and invited participants.

Advisory committees meet a minimum of two times each year. The college recommends October and April meeting dates.

Indicators of an Effective Committee

Purpose: An effective advisory committee fulfills its primary purpose by providing ongoing evaluation, consultation, and research on programs and curriculum. The committee—
- develops and carries out a yearly plan of action/program of work,
- articulates long-term and short-term goals and objectives,
- regularly reviews curricula to determine if they are meeting the needs of the students and the projected employment needs of business and industry,
- promotes and publicizes the program,
- reviews yearly outcome data from the program, and
- assesses the impact of recommendations yearly.

Structure: An effective committee has an appropriate structure. The committee—
- has appropriate composition and number of members.
- establishes processes for member recruitment, selection, and retirement,
- conducts member orientation, relationship building, development, and evaluation, and
- formally recognizes member contributions.

Process and Procedures: An effective committee attends to group process and procedures. The committee—
- operates under published, reviewed policies and procedures,
- meets often enough to establish working relationships and accomplish work plan,
- conducts well-attended meetings with a clear purpose and agenda,
- maintains a record of recommendations and/or actions that is distributed to the appropriate administrators and members,
- has active participation from college staff,
- uses effective group process-decision making and problem solving, group ownership, facilitation, and
- has adequate administrative and clerical support.

Planning the Meeting

Organized meetings are one of the keys to a successful advisory committee. Establishing a meeting schedule at the beginning of the academic year will allow committee members to plan their calendars accordingly. A reminder (including a proposed agenda) should be sent two weeks prior to the meeting. A second reminder by telephone or email within one week of the meeting will increase attendance and allow meeting planners to know who intends to come.

Conducting the Meeting

- Allow for open discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the program.
- Encourage everyone to participate and share ideas freely
- Provide constructive suggestions rather than negative criticisms
- Start and end on time & stay on track
- Steer toward specific Action Items with clear roles and timelines

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Sample Core Agenda
(to be modified to meet program short- long-term needs)

- o **Welcome and Introductions**
- o **Reading and approval of minutes of preceding meeting**
- o **General Update**
  - ▪ *Enrollment Report*
  - ▪ *How the school year is going*

- o **Discussion – Industry trends; technology changes**
  - ▪ *What is changing that impacts what we teach and how we teach it?*
    - ▪ *New technologies? New skills required?*

- o **Discussion – Employer Expectations**
  - ▪ *Review program outcomes: do these still represent entry-level expectation of employers?*
  - ▪ *Is this program meeting employers' expectations?*
    - ▪ *What is the program doing well?*
    - ▪ *What needs improvement?*

- o **Discussion – Program Access**
  - ▪ *Are there parts of this program with potential to be delivered online?*
  - ▪ *Is there a field-related subject, currently not offered, that this program should consider developing/offering?*

- o **Discussion – Marketing/Recruiting**
  - ▪ *Where should the college focus marketing/recruiting efforts for this program?*

- o **Discussion – Program Support**
  - ▪ *What/Where is the potential for donations of supplies and equipment?*

- o **Discussion – How can we better use this committee and its members?**
- o **Recap Recommendations/Action Items**
- o **Evaluation of the meeting/Setting next meeting date**
- o **Adjournment**

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Meeting Effectiveness

Please use these questions to help evaluate your advisory committee meetings:

- Were priorities and objectives clearly established?
- Did the activities of the committee help to meet the established priorities or objectives?
- Were planning tasks for activities clearly defined?
- Were individual responsibilities clearly described?
- Were timelines for each planning task clearly established?
- What outcome(s) has (have) resulted?

In addition to assessing the program, advisory committees should make sure the management of their committees is not a barrier to success. Two key components of any successful advisory committee are effective people and processes.

Factors to assess include meeting frequency, meeting attendance, meeting time and location, each member's length of service, the diversity of the committee, committee guidelines or bylaws, meeting agendas, communication with members, public recognition of members, and recommendations made.