

Career Education Program Advisory Committee Handbook



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Background and Purpose

Background College of the Canyons Career Education Program Advisory Committee:

Strong partnerships between community college educational institutions and employers are pillars in effective technical/occupational education programs. These partnerships ensure community ownership and build local support, commitment, and resources. In recognition of this fact, College of the Canyons Career Education Departments collaborate with industry professionals on many aspects of their programs. Advisory committees are groups of local employers and community representatives who advise educators on the design, development, operation, evaluation, and revision of technical/occupational education programs. The workplace knowledge and resources provided by committee members help to ensure that all aspects of technical/occupational education reflect the needs and current conditions of the workplace and that program completers are capable of successfully completing the next step whether it be employment or further education.

Purpose of the Advisory Committee:

California Education Code requires the support of CTE programs through advisory committees. Title 5, #55601 states:

The governing board of each community college district participating in a vocational education program shall appoint a vocational education advisory committee to develop recommendations on the program and to provide a liaison between the district and potential employers.

The Advisory Committee

Role of the CTE Advisory Committee

The primary role of the committee is solely advisory. The advice may be accepted or rejected by the program based on, but not limited to, a variety of factors such as available resources, laws, and regulations. It should be noted that the committee has no administrative or policy forming authority. Specific roles of the committee by area may include:

Industry

- Promote communication and partnerships between education and industry
- Assist in identifying new and emerging fields
- Validate local area job markets
- Recommend program modifications for existing programs that align with changes in industry or industry standards
- Assist the program in identifying specific skills and knowledge needed to be successful in the workplace
- Assist in determining skills needed for particular jobs at entry, technical, and professional levels

- Help connect program faculty with other industry professionals and prospective students
- Pay range for entry-level positions
- Identify job vacancies, hiring practices, and industry trends

Students

- Provide real world work experience opportunities for students
- Be a student mentor
- Help obtain sponsors or resources for awards, scholarships, equipment or supplies
- Serve as a guest speaker, provide demonstrations, or host field trips as needed
- Assist in marketing the program and recruiting students
- Recruit students for employment opportunities
- Participate in career and job fairs

Curriculum

- Assist in establishing curriculum and programs that are relevant to current industry standards and practices
- Assist in evaluating program effectiveness and reviewing student outcomes data
- Provide and/or identify training opportunities for educators
- Assist in keeping programs relevant by reviewing existing curriculum and programs

Facilities and Equipment

- Make equipment and facilities recommendations and connect programs with relevant vendors
- Help obtain sponsors or resources for equipment or supplies
- Donate equipment or supplies
- Assist in keeping programs relevant by reviewing existing facilities and equipment

FORMING AND MAINTAINING AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Membership

CTE Advisory Committee members should be cooperative, responsible, and productive people who are interested in the success of CTE. Prospective members should have current successful work experience in

the related occupation and be willing to contribute the necessary time to help strengthen the program. The ideal Advisory Committee candidate will serve to build and improve the technical program as well as promote the program within the community. At a minimum each member should be an active participant in the bi-annual meetings and should provide technical assistance and advice as needed.

The committee should be comprised of Advisory Members, Institutional Members, Participatory Members, and Student Members when possible. The majority of the committee membership should be Advisory members and the overall membership should be truly representative of the district.

Advisory Members

Advisory Members are individuals that have successful work experience in the related occupation. They should:

- Be successful individuals engaged in the specific program or discipline
- Be from the human resources department or other areas of the partner organization
- Have recent, successful, firsthand, and practical experience
- Recognize the time commitment required and express a willingness to serve on the committee

Institutional Members

Institutional Members are those individuals from College of the Canyons that participate on the committee representing administrative or management functions. They may include individuals from:

- Program Faculty
- Academic Affairs (including program or CTE Dean(s))
- Career Services
- Institutional Research
- Office of Instruction

Participatory Member

A Participatory Member is someone from another academic institution that may share articulation agreements or other academic pathways with the program. This may include:

- Faculty from other colleges, high schools, and/or ROPs

Student Member

A Student Member is defined as a current student in the program. Program alumni may also be invited to participate and may be able to provide a good perspective on how the program has impacted them since leaving the college.

- May include current or former students

Finding New Members

Ask current committee members or appropriate professional organizations for suggestions. Additionally, other campus programs or departments may have resources that can assist you with finding new or additional committee members as needed. Here is a list of possible places to look for new members:

- Professional Organizations
- LinkedIn
- VIA
- Workforce Development Office/Econ Dev
- COC Business Liaison
- Foundation Office
- Santa Clarita Chamber
- SCCRC Region
- DSNs
- University Programs (if applicable)

Committee Size

There is no fixed number that will satisfy all situations. The group needs to be large enough to be representative of the district but not so large that it is unwieldy or difficult to call together. The total number may vary based on the program/discipline.

Role of the Committee Chairperson

The Committee Chairperson should be someone from industry. The Committee Chair, working with the educational Department Chair, can:

- preside at meetings
- call meetings
- appoint necessary sub-committees
- represent the advisory committee in other groups

The Committee Chair along with the Department Chair will create and maintain a cohesive, effective group and will create an environment that is conducive to positive committee action.

New Member Orientation

The Department Chair should provide a basic orientation for new members. Although new Advisory Members are discipline experts, they may be unfamiliar with academia and how the committee functions. It is suggested that members should serve on the committee for a minimum of two years but this may be determined by each Committee. Here are some things a new Advisory Member may need to understand or be provided:

- The structure of the college system
- The structure of the program – program(s) offered
- The roles and responsibilities of an Advisory Member
- The time commitment required to serve
- Current list of committee members
- Meeting schedule
- Previous minutes and agendas

Operation of Advisory Committees

Meeting Location and Schedule:

- Whenever possible the meeting should be held at the CTE program facilities
- Meeting space should be set up with comfortable seating and allow for face to face interaction and discussion
- Refreshments and/or meals should be provided
- The upcoming meeting schedule should be determined at the end of each meeting to ensure the most convenient meeting time for the members
- The scheduled meeting time should be strictly adhered to. Everyone's time is valuable and should be respected.
- The agenda for each meeting should be clear and specific. Advisory members will likely drop out if they perceive their time is being wasted through an unproductive or poorly run meeting.
- Previous meeting minutes and any reading material requiring action should be sent with the agenda well in advance of the meeting date
- If necessary ensure that the room can easily accommodate video or web conference for any members unable to attend in person.

- Ample meeting notice should be provided and may vary depending on the committee, but a minimum of 2 weeks is recommended.

Meeting Frequency

- Each CTE Advisory Committee should meet at least once per year. If it meets twice per year, one meeting should be held in the fall and one in the spring.
- Generally meetings should last one to one-and-a-half hours as determined by the committee
- When only one meeting is to be held during the year, additional ways of facilitating communication and soliciting feedback with the CTE Advisory Committee should be employed. One suggestion is to draft a short survey with relevant questions and distribute it via email. Be sure to send a follow up that includes the survey results.

Suggestions For Communicating Between Meetings

It is important to stay connected with the members of the committee. Your department may want to consider developing a newsletter, impact document, general summary, or a listing of program highlights that could be shared with the committee between meetings. This communication is intended to be informal, compact and likely shared via email.

Consider using other forms of technology for communication as well including:

- Blogs
- Collaborating and File Sharing
- Groups and listservs/email
- Online polls, surveys, and registrations
- Podcasting
- Social Networks (Facebook page, LinkedIn Group, etc ...)
- Video Sharing/Video Blogging
- Web Conferencing/Video Conferencing
- Website

Organizational Functions and Duties

Academic Affairs Support

Academic Affairs will provide logistical and administrative support to the Department Chair in coordinating and hosting the Committee meeting. The timelines are suggestions only and are subject to change based on the committee, the program, and when during the semester the meeting has been scheduled. Support will include:

4-6 weeks Prior . . .

- Send a list of members to the program Department Chair for review and input
- Send a “Save the Date” notice
- Create/Draft the meeting invitation with input from the program Department Chair
- Request agenda items from the program Department Chair
- Secure the meeting room
- Order appropriate refreshments for the meeting

2-3 Weeks Prior . . .

- Send meeting invitations and maintain RSVPs
 - At a minimum, invitations should include:
 - Agenda
 - Parking Permit
 - College Map
 - Day, time and specific location of the meeting
 - Previous meeting minutes and any other documents the committee members need to review prior to the meeting

1-2 Weeks Prior . . .

- Make reminder calls/emails
- Send the agenda if it wasn't included with the original invitation
- Confirm refreshments

Day of Meeting . . .

- Set up the meeting room
 - Arrange tables and seating
 - Connect and test video conferencing equipment if needed
- Bring Sign in Sheet and Copies of the Agenda
- Coordinate and set up refreshments
- After the meeting, clean up the meeting room
- After the meeting, prepare meeting minutes and submit to the program Department Chair for review

2-3 Weeks After . . .

- Finalize meeting minutes with the program Department Chair
- Send thank you letter and finalized minutes to attendees
- Possibly send a follow-up letter to non-attendees to check their interest in continuing to serve on the committee

Ongoing . . .

- Maintain the member list throughout the year to include any changes indicated by the program Department Chair
- Optional - Work with the program Department Chair to formally recognize the service of the committee members. Suggested forms of recognition are:
 - Certificate of Appreciation
 - Display Names on a Plaque and/or on the program website
 - Letter of Appreciation to the Employer
 - Invitation to Education Events
 - Highlight Accomplishments in Press Releases
 - Invite Members to visit programs to see implementation
 - Include names in program literature

Program Faculty Support

Typically, the program Department Chair will be responsible for the following:

- Verify and review committee membership
- Review the meeting invitation
- Prepare the agenda by consulting with the department and the advisory members and/or chair
- In addition to the agenda, provide academic affairs support any materials that may need to be sent out along with the invitation or provided at the meeting
- Review and edit meeting minutes
- Provide ongoing updates to the membership list

Advisory Meeting Agenda Recommendations

Meeting discussions should remain focused on the agenda and should be made to involve each member. Time should be allowed for open and free discussion. It is important that the advisory committee actively provide programs with information and advice that leads to instructional improvement.

General Recommendations

- Encourage everyone to participate equally
- Share ideas freely
- Provide constructive suggestions rather than negative criticisms
- Stay on track and on time
- Be concise

Suggested Agenda Items

Specific agenda items will vary based on the program but sample topics may include:

- Welcome & Introductions
- Review and Approval of minutes from the previous meeting
- Curriculum Review/Development (Both credit and noncredit)
 - Including recommendations for new or revised content
 - Articulation/Pathways
- Facilities and Equipment
- Course and/or Program Level SLO Outcomes
- Program/Department Data
 - Program Review Data (# of students, completers, etc.)
 - Perkins
 - Labor Market Data
 - Industry Certifications
- Program/Department Updates
 - Staffing
 - Grants
 - OER
- Scholarships
- Work based learning opportunities (internships, job shadow, etc.)
- Industry Updates
 - Emerging Fields
 - Labor Market Trends
 - Changes in the workforce
 - Changes or new skills required
 - Employment Opportunities
- Program Marketing and Events
 - Outreach Events
 - Job Fairs
 - Student Recruiting
- Professional Development for Faculty (including conferences, workshops, etc)
- General Feedback or Recommendations
- Determine next meeting date/time

Not Sure How to Get the Conversation Started?

The following is a list of questions that may be helpful in starting a conversation with Advisory Members.

Employment

- Are you able to provide internships (paid or unpaid) or other work based learning opportunities?
- Do you have open positions? How many have you filled during the past 12 months?
- What employment trends do you see throughout the industry?
- What are the specific job skills this discipline should focus on?
- Do our program completers meet current industry standards?
- What changes/trends are occurring in the industry that will affect employer needs?

Curriculum/Facilities/Equipment

- Do our courses reflect adequate training, current practices, and job duties in your company?
- What entry level skills are not supported by the instructional equipment available in the laboratory classrooms?
- What equipment should students be able to use?
- What curriculum modifications do you suggest to meet any skills gaps?
- In your opinion, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the COC program?