
PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE HANDBOOK

A joint project between Minnesota State Colleges
and Universities Office of the Chancellor,
Academic and Student Affairs Division and
Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF)



Minnesota
STATE COLLEGES
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Background, Acknowledgements, and Purpose

BACKGROUND: MINNESOTA PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE PROJECT

Strong partnerships between postsecondary educational institutions and employers have long been recognized as a pillar in effective technical/occupational education programs. These partnerships ensure community ownership and build local support, commitment, and resources. In recognition of this fact, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Office of the Chancellor Division of Academic and Student Affairs and the Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF) collaborated on a joint project designed to reinvigorate program advisory committees in the state of Minnesota.

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 graduates are capable of performing in the occupations for which they have trained.

The purpose of the *Minnesota Program Advisory Committee Project* was to prepare faculty and administrators at two-year colleges in Minnesota to select, work with, and make optimum use of technical/occupational education program advisory committees.

The three main project tasks were:

1. Establishment of project working group
2. Data collection
3. Professional development workshops

The technical assistance of the nonprofit agency CORD was enlisted to execute the project tasks.

Task 1: Establishment of project working group—The “working group” consisted of administrators and faculty from Minnesota colleges who met with staff members from CORD on February 23, 2004. This group was composed of individuals from two-year colleges who were interested in ensuring that a new process for working with program advisory committees was established. The purpose of the working group was to:

- Review the project’s scope of work.
- Identify characteristics of successful committees already in place.

- Review the data collection instrument that was distributed to program leaders in the state.
- Review plans for professional development workshops.

The working group also had the opportunity to discuss how the project could be sustained long-term, and to consider communication strategies that could be used to engage faculty in the project.

Task 2: Data collection—Following the working group meeting, the data collection instrument was finalized and distributed electronically to college administrators and faculty directly responsible for coordinating advisory committee operations. The instrument requested information about current practices in advisory committee establishment, advisory committee roles, and connections to curriculum and instruction. It was accessible online from March 1 to March 19, 2004. Data collected through the survey instrument was important to the project team members as they prepared to address the needs of Minnesota colleges through the professional development workshops.

Task 3: Professional development workshops—CORD staff developed content for and delivered four one-day regional professional development workshops at four college campuses. The workshops focused on selecting committee members, facilitating effective meetings, and adopting a systematic process for working with committee members. The workshops were structured to address the needs of both faculty who were already facilitating advisory committees and faculty who had not previously facilitated advisory committees. Various models for establishing local or regional committees were provided and systems for ongoing electronic communication were established.

It was recommended that participants attend the workshops in teams of three or four from their respective colleges, but smaller or larger teams were acceptable. The project team recommended limiting the total number of participants at each workshop to 40.

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Most projects and products are the results of a cumulative effort of various groups of people. This handbook is no exception.

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PURPOSE OF THE HANDBOOK

Change is a constant, and constant change is a given.

The purpose of this handbook is to help committee chairs and members, administrators, and instructors improve the overall quality of technical/occupational education through the use of advisory committees. This handbook outlines the structure, function, and processes of effective advisory committees.

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Introduction: General Purpose and Structure of Advisory Committees

One of the most common characteristics associated with high-quality technical/occupational education programs is their close ties with business, industry, and labor. Technical/occupational education today must align with and fulfill employers' needs for competent, high-performing employees who enter the workforce with technology expertise and fundamental job-success skills. Because technical/occupational education programs must be integral parts of the communities they serve, it is necessary to have close cooperation between the college and local employers. Employers have a strong self-interest in helping postsecondary education improve and in helping students succeed. One of the most effective ways of providing a link between the community and the college is through advisory committees. Advisory committees are essential to the successful initiation of technical/occupational programs, and they play an important role in guiding, strengthening, and improving existing programs. Business, industry, and labor representatives have a wealth of expertise, personnel, and technologies to offer community and technical college systems.

What is an advisory committee? An advisory committee is a group of employers and employees who advise educators on the design, development, implementation, evaluation, maintenance, and revision of technical/occupational education programs. Each advisory committee is made up of individuals with experience and expertise in the occupational field that the program serves.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ADVISORY COMMITTEES

The program advisory committee is established to assist in program improvement. An effective committee is one that knows that something positive will occur as a result of its work. The committee must decide what it wants to accomplish and then develop a plan to accomplish it. Key to the success of any advisory committee is commitment—on the part of the committee members as well as participating educational administrators and faculty members. The college can set the tone for this cooperative venture.

ROLES OF ADVISORY COMMITTEES

The roles of the advisory committee are to advise, assist, support, and advocate the technical/occupational education program. Advisory committees also provide specifications for a program and help to ensure the quality of program graduates. An advisory committee's role is not to "rubber stamp" what already exists, but to offer suggestions for improvements that will help the program grow and expand.

Advisory committees can provide:

- Specifications
- Validation of content
- Assessment of program quality
- Unique education/training experiences
- Credibility
- Assistance in adapting skill standards for local needs

A successful advisory committee is one that plans and carries out a program of work that aligns the technical/occupational program with employers' needs. The program of work will most likely include these broad areas:

- Assessment and counsel—The advisory committee assesses each area of the program and offers suggestions on ways to improve that area. For example, the committee might suggest ways to modify the curriculum, review teaching materials for technical accuracy, provide information on equipment and vendors, and establish safety guidelines.
- Assistance—The advisory committee assists the program by helping instructors and administrators secure mentors and internships for students. The committee also assists with placement of graduates.
- Promotion and advocacy—The advisory committee promotes the technical/occupational education program in the community. Promotion and advocacy can take forms such as communicating with legislators, arranging publicity, presenting programs to civic groups, and authoring newspaper articles.

STRUCTURE

Each committee can develop its own organizational structure and operating procedures; this handbook provides guidelines for that process. Because each advisory committee is unique, there may be differences among advisory committees in Minnesota.

GOVERNANCE

Each advisory committee should develop and approve guidelines for operating procedures, or bylaws. Collectively, bylaws constitute a formal, written description of how the committee operates. At a minimum, they should include:

- Name of the committee

- Purpose
- Membership guidelines
- Officers and corresponding duties
- Meeting guidelines
- Subcommittee details or assignments
- Parliamentary authority or operating procedures
- Amendment procedures

SIZE OF COMMITTEE

The size and composition of an effective advisory committee should be appropriate to meet the educational, economic, social, and cultural obligations of the program and the college. The number of persons appointed to an advisory committee should be determined by the committee's functions, the size of the program, and the size of the community. The "one size fits all" approach doesn't work. At the same time, certain general parameters should be kept in mind. Committees with fewer than five members may have limited perspective, inadequate information on career fields, and too little diversity. Committees with more than 12–18 members can become unmanageable. In many cases, a membership of 6–12 is ideal.

Note: Some funding and/or credentialing agencies may have their own requirements as to the make-up of the advisory committee. Be sure to comply with those requirements to ensure that credentialing and funding are not jeopardized.

SELECTION OF MEMBERS

Advisory committees should consist primarily of employers. To be effective, committee members should have a clear sense of trends in the field. They should be able to identify skills that will ensure the employability of your program's graduates, and they should be able to identify jobs that don't yet exist but are likely to in the near future. This is necessary to keep your program on the cutting edge. When recruiting members, identify committed leaders and seek members who express sincere interest in the program, have the confidence of others in the community, and are dedicated to the occupation and the community.

In the development of a new advisory committee, college personnel should visit business sites to demonstrate their desire to build a true partnership that embraces the needs of employers. Look for members that are knowledgeable about the occupations

represented by the program or cluster. Members must have good communication skills; must be able to express their ideas clearly; and must be able to respect, tolerate, and work with ideas expressed by others.

Who should serve?

- Those who know what workers in the field will require in 3–5 years
- Those who value the institution and its students
- Those who want to help

Effective members are business representatives who stay informed about changes in their industries. Does that mean you should recruit chief executive officers (CEOs) or look to representatives of the rank and file? The answer depends partly on where your program stands. On the one hand, establishing a new program or rejuvenating a weak, yet valuable, one may require the combined efforts of individuals who command respect and have a certain amount of clout in the business community. On the other hand, a long-standing program may need periodic infusions of new technology or methods, for which the best sources of information are often the people who work with the technology hands-on. In still other cases, representatives from the second level of management are best positioned to look ahead and help design a program that will meet future needs.

Broad representation will include the viewpoints of segments of the community being served by the program. It is suggested that one or more college technical instructors, a secondary and/or university partner, and a representative of the administration should serve as nonvoting, consulting members.

The majority of committee members should be from business and industry. At the same time, the committee membership should be diverse enough to represent the concerns of a broad constituency encompassing:

- The general population (which is diverse with respect to gender, physical disability, age, race, and ethnicity)
- All occupational levels within the industry
- Program students and/or graduates (The committee should consider opening membership to one representative.)
- Organized labor
- Different company types, sizes, and structures
- Economic development councils or chambers of commerce

- Trade, professional, and civic organizations
- Community-based organizations, workforce development groups, and social service agencies
- Secondary and postsecondary educational institutions (represented on the committee by *ex-officio, nonvoting members*)

COMMITTEE OFFICERS

The advisory committee should elect officers from its membership. Suggested officers are a chair, a vice-chair (or co-chair), and a secretary. At the very least, a chair and secretary should be elected. **The chair should be from industry.** The committee chair may appoint subcommittees as necessary to facilitate committee business.

Chair

Leadership at the top is extremely important. The chair's leadership is one of the keys to the committee's success. So, it is imperative that the chair be a person whose opinions are respected. He/she sets the tone for the committee. The chair will create and maintain a cohesive, effective group and create an environment that is conducive to positive committee action. The two main roles of the chair are to set meeting agendas and conduct meetings.

The chair should possess skills and characteristics such as:

- Experience in the business cluster or occupation that the program represents.
- Ability to manage meetings, plan and adhere to schedules, involve members in ongoing activities, and reach closure and consensus on issues.
- Excellent oral and written communication as well as willingness to make appearances before the community to present, explain, and justify recommendations.
- Ability to delegate responsibility as well as willingness to accept responsibility for the committee's actions.
- Personality characteristics such as empathy, fairness, tolerance, sound judgment, and attentiveness.

The four main elements to becoming a successful chair are:

- *A clear sense of the committee's purpose*—The main purpose is to strengthen the educational program that the committee serves. That is the committee's reason for

existing. It has no legislative, administrative, or programmatic authority. The committee must work cooperatively with the college.

- *Ability and willingness to take charge*—The chair must create and maintain a cohesive, effective group.
- *Ability to get results*—The chair must guide the members through discussion, resulting in a program of work that will enable the committee to meet its established goals.
- *Good organization skills*—Good organization starts at the top. The chair should always bear in mind that committee members will only stay involved if he or she sets an example of good organization and uses their time efficiently.

It is important to encourage members to be proactive in giving information and advice to the program. The chair should make assignments to members on the basis of their expertise and enthusiasm in relevant areas.

The responsibilities of the chair include:

- Working with the college and the community to plan and carry out the committee's program of work.
- Developing items for the meeting agenda and assisting the secretary in handling details regarding meetings.
- Leading meetings.
- Keeping the group focused and on task.
- Delegating tasks and follow-up work.
- Appointing subcommittees.
- Submitting and following up on recommendations to the college.

Secretary

The advisory committee secretary oversees the administrative functions of the committee. The secretary should be a representative from business/industry. Staff support from the college should be assigned to assist the secretary. The secretary's responsibilities include:

- Ensuring that minutes are taken at meetings.
- Managing other administrative functions of the committee such as communication issues.
- Ensuring that the committee's work is recorded.

Staff Support

To achieve its purpose in a timely fashion, an advisory committee must have adequate administrative and clerical staffing. Many times this is provided by the college division or department in which the technical/occupational program resides. Staff members assigned to an advisory committee typically record meeting minutes and perform clerical duties as needed. They should possess skills and characteristics such as:

- An understanding of the technical program, occupation, and/or cluster.
- Good listening skills.
- Ability to organize detailed material.
- Good writing skills.
- Ability to work with college and employer representatives.

The responsibilities of the advisory committee support staff include:

- Taking minutes at meetings.
- Preparing minutes and having them reviewed by the chair.
- Distributing minutes.
- Mailing agendas, announcements, minutes, and other information to members.
- Making sure the membership roster is current, complete, and accurate.
- Making all facility reservations and all arrangements for refreshments.

Copies of all agendas and past meeting minutes should be on record with the secretary, with the department head, and/or on the advisory committee/college's website.

TERMS OF OFFICE

Each advisory committee should establish its own criteria and guidelines for member recruitment, selection, appointment, and replacement. Following are guidelines.

- The suggested maximum term for members is three years. It is recommended that members not be appointed to successive terms and that at least a one-year absence be considered before reappointment. A rotational, three-year term of service allows for both continuity and change. One third of the total membership would change each year. New members should be appointed as terms expire.
- The suggested term of office for the chair is one or two years. The term of office should commence on July 1 and terminate on June 30. The chair should be allowed to serve more than one term.

Committee membership should be reviewed and updated yearly to ensure broad-based representation of the industry and to ensure that the work of the committee continues.

ORIENTATION OF NEW MEMBERS

The committee's success will depend to a large extent on how well members understand their roles at the first meeting they attend. New and continuing advisory committee members should be regularly provided with information relative to the committee's purpose, function, structure, and goals as expressed in the committee's work plan.

New-member orientation could include a review of the member guide, the committee's bylaws, and summaries of past accomplishments. Orientation meetings often involve tours of employer facilities and presentations about the program. Discussion of current issues that affect the program should also be included.

Items in your orientation/member guide could include the following:

- Background on the college
 - Admission policies
 - Mission statement and value statements
 - Organizational chart
 - Programs offered
- Program or cluster overview
 - Curriculum (scope and sequence)
 - Facilities and equipment
- Roles and responsibilities (both individual and collective)
- Membership and governance issues
- Committee program of work and accomplishments

A master copy of the member/orientation guide should be kept on file and, if possible, should be posted on the web.

Typically, in addition to the member/orientation guide, new members receive various resource materials. These could include college catalogs, class schedules, program brochures, departmental literature, student retention and placement statistics, and local economic development news.

Advisory Committee Program of Work

PLANNING A PROGRAM OF WORK

The primary purpose of advisory committees is to advise educators on the design, development, implementation, evaluation, maintenance, and revision of technical/occupational education programs. Each committee must decide what it wants to accomplish based on the needs of its program and the requirements of business in its community. The committee then develops a plan of work to accomplish its goals.

Following are the main steps in planning a program of work:

- Establish annual priorities
- Plan committee activities
- Develop planning tasks
- Assign responsibilities
- Establish timelines

Establish annual priorities—The priorities that a committee undertakes will be based on the current and projected needs of the community and what has been accomplished in the past. Priorities could include curriculum review and revision, staff development, career development and work-based learning activities, marketing and/or advocacy of the program, student activities (*recruitment, mentoring, placement*), or program-specific resource needs.

Plan committee activities—Once the priorities are set, the program of work can become more specific.

Develop planning tasks—These tasks are steps to accomplishing specific activities. The advisory committee should consider time, costs, human resources, and other support needed for each step.

Assign responsibilities—This can be the most important step for accountability and follow-up. Even when the entire committee will work on the project, one or more individuals should be responsible for getting each task started, keeping it going, and providing progress reports. Be sure each person responsible understands what is to be accomplished.

Establish timelines—In addition to clearly understanding what is to be accomplished, each person assigned to a specific planning task should know when the task is to be

completed. Timelines allow the person(s) assigned to a given task to plan for its completion.

PROGRAM OF WORK PRIORITIES

Priorities for the advisory committee's program of work usually fall into one of these categories:

- Curriculum
- Staff development
- Career development and work-based learning
- Marketing and advocacy
- Student recruitment, mentoring, and placement
- Program resources
- Evaluation (*of the program and the advisory committee itself*)

Curriculum

Review of curriculum— Advisory committees can identify programs and content that are out-of-date or do not meet industry standards. Members should advise on academic, technical, and employability standards that the program and its students should meet. Items to be reviewed include:

- Program objectives—Committee members should ask questions such as: Are the program objectives appropriate in light of current workplace trends? If achieved, will they produce graduates who will be able to enter employment at acceptable levels? Does the labor market's demand justify the number of graduates that the program is producing?
- Structure and length—After reviewing the structure and mechanics of the program, the committee should ask questions such as: Is the lab sufficient? Does the program provide adequate work-based learning activities such as internships and clinicals?
- Curriculum frameworks and course descriptions—Does the framework or course sequence satisfy the requirements of business and industry as stated in national standards and as determined through local employer needs assessment within Minnesota?

Modification of existing programs—Advisory committees help to develop educational objectives. Because they are directly involved with business and industry, committee members can provide a fresh perspective and new insights that program instructors often cannot. Fresh ideas help technical/occupational education administrators and instructors to align their programs with contemporary expectations. Committee recommendations should be stated in the form of motions that are then voted upon by the committee and recorded in the minutes.

Emerging fields—Advisory committees help to identify new or emerging technical/occupational education fields. Because change is a constant in the technological workplace, advisory committees are an indispensable source of up-to-date expertise on new and developing areas. They can identify areas in which new programs, or changes to existing programs, are necessary.

Program articulation with secondary programs—There is often overlap, or a lack of continuity, in the way programs at the secondary and community college levels affect students. Curriculum at the community college or technical college should not be developed in isolation from secondary schools. A career pathway system that recommends a 9–14 course sequence should be implemented. Likewise, options should be open for students who want to continue beyond the AAS degree.

Industry credentials—Advisory committees can help programs identify minimum industry standards and credentials for students exiting the program.

Safety—Advisory committees may be able to assist programs with safety concerns, safety training, or safety equipment.

Review, evaluate, and advise on course materials—Advisory committees can be helpful in determining whether texts should be updated or supplemented. It is usually not the advisory committee's task to select course materials, but committee members are often able to suggest helpful occupation-related guides and catalogs.

Staff Development

Provide in-service activities for instructors—Advisory committees can review instructor professional development plans and make recommendations for their improvement. They can provide instructors with retraining, back-to-industry, and summer opportunities designed to help instructors upgrade their technical skills, or they can provide in-service activities on current business/industry methods and processes.

Another area in which business partners can assist in staff development is math. Business and industry can help teachers infuse higher levels of mathematics into

technical/occupational courses and enable faculty to deepen students' understanding of algebra and geometry concepts as they are used to solve authentic workplace problems.

Open industry-based training to instructors—Advisory committee members may provide relevant employee training that could be made available to technical/occupational instructors.

Support instructors' memberships or participation in trade associations—By underwriting instructor memberships in industry and trade associations, advisory committees help educators gain access to up-to-date technology and the expertise of working professionals in the field.

Career Development and Work-Based Learning

Advisory committees can review career guidance activities and serve as a placement clearinghouse for the work-based learning component of your program.

Career awareness and career development activities—Advisory committee members are perfect partners for work-based learning experiences for students. Members can arrange for occupation-related field trips or other career awareness activities such as job shadowing.

Work-based learning activities—The most intense work-based learning activities are internships (or clinicals) and apprenticeship programs. In most cases, these programs are highly structured and involve bridging the curriculum and the workplace so that students can see a connection between their academic studies and their work-based learning. Internships have definite time spans—typically a semester or a year. There is no guaranteed employment at the end; however, many interns have found employment at their internship sites. Apprenticeships take many forms, but all involve both secondary and postsecondary components. Business partners work with educators to define the curriculum. Most youth apprenticeships involve some type of postsecondary tuition compensation, and many involve guaranteed employment upon successful completion.

Part-time jobs—In lieu of a formal work-based learning program, advisory committee members can often place students in part-time jobs related to the program. Technical/occupational education students welcome the opportunity to try out their new skills and make money while still in college.

Marketing and Advocacy

Interpret the program to the community—Acceptance and continued support of technical/occupational education often hinges on a community’s knowledge of career areas and related programs at the college. The advisory committee can heighten public awareness of local labor market needs and related technical/occupational programs at the college. For this reason, an advisory committee must initiate and maintain an effective public relations program. Advisory committees can also assist the college in developing or implementing the college’s marketing plan.

Serve as an advocate of technical/occupational education—Members can present technical/occupational programs to community groups, lending credibility and stature to the programs. Advisory committees can establish procedures for recognizing outstanding students, teachers, and community leaders.

Advisory committees should seek ways to increase coverage of technical/occupational programs in newspaper, radio, television, and other media. In addition, members can help in the promotion of special college events.

Seeking legislative support for technical/occupational programs—Advisory committee members can be the college’s most effective spokespersons among political groups. The views of prominent business leaders tend to carry considerable weight with policymakers at local, state, and federal levels. Advisory committees can explain to legislators about the need for technical/occupational programs, provide tours for legislators, and promote legislation that supports technical/occupational education.

Managing marketing and advocacy involves three main steps:

- Identify an “owner” for marketing activities—This may be a subcommittee or a person to work with the college public relations office.
- Develop a multimedia strategy.
 - Print
 - Digital (audio, video, and CD): student testimonials; employer testimonials
 - Radio and television
 - PowerPoint presentations
- Promote the program and the committee’s work.

Students: Recruitment, Mentoring, and Placement

An advisory committee can play an important role in identifying available jobs, in recruiting and mentoring students in technical/occupational programs, and in placing program completers.

Recruitment—Advisory committees help “sell” technical/occupational education to students and recruit students into the program.

Student outcomes—The advisory committee should review completion rates, placement rates, and (*where required*) state licensing examination outcomes for the program.

Placement—Advisory committees can advise on the current and projected demand for program graduates. They are also good candidates for hiring program graduates/completers and can notify instructors of job openings for which students are qualified.

Advisory committee members in the classroom—Members can serve as, or arrange for, guest speakers or substitute teachers in the classroom.

Mentoring—Members may serve as mentors for students and help students in making career choices. In addition, many advisory committees take on the task of assisting students in developing interviewing skills.

Resources (Equipment, Funding, and Personnel)

Advisory committees can advise the college on program resource needs, including equipment, laboratories, shops, staff qualifications, and specialized educational and training facilities. They can help leverage community resources and broker community partnerships. Many times advisory committee members donate materials, equipment, and services to technical/occupational programs.

Provide advice on new technology—To prepare students for a global workforce, technical/occupational education programs must use up-to-date equipment. Advisory committees should review existing equipment and consider how closely it matches equipment used in industry. Committees can determine what equipment is obsolete, what should be obtained, and whether the program provides sufficient student materials.

Facilities—An advisory committee can help to determine whether the physical layout of a shop or laboratory provides the best possible learning environment. At the community college level, the emphasis should be on hands-on instruction rather than simulated experiences. Development of manipulative skills requires a great deal of one-on-one time and much repetition. Experience in supervised laboratory settings is a must.

Libraries of visual aids, books, and magazines—Advisory committee members may have access to training videos and related items that can help to give students a clearer idea of what goes on in the workplace.

Evaluation—See *Sustainability section*

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Communication with Members

Communication with members will occur in both formal and informal settings. Advisory committees should strive to streamline formal face-to-face meetings as much as possible. Providing materials for review in advance, either by email or regular mail, can ensure that meeting time is reserved for interactive discussions and decision-making. Tours and lectures should not be scheduled during a regular meeting.

Before work can begin, committees must understand that education and the business world have different cultures, each with its own terminology, and that those differences can create barriers to communication. One of the tasks of an advisory committee is to create a common language that both educators and employers can use and understand. This is an ongoing process that takes place via meetings and other means of communication.

MEETINGS

Meeting discussions should focus on the agenda, and every attempt should be made to involve each member. Time should be allowed for open, free discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of the program. The committee chair should be able to draw on the expertise of individual committee members and not let any one member or school official dominate the discussion. Meeting atmosphere should be supportive rather than critical. Meetings should lay the groundwork for creating a productive atmosphere in which time is well spent.

The committee should establish meeting ground rules. These rules could include the following:

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

Frequency of Meetings

The frequency of the committee's meetings will be dictated by the work plan. Most committees meet at least twice a year, in the fall and spring. However, if a committee has an especially intense work plan, it may need to meet monthly. In any case, meetings should NEVER be called simply for the sake of holding a meeting. There

should always be a reason for a meeting. Meetings should be scheduled to facilitate timely development, implementation, and evaluation of the committee's work plan.

What time to meet—The best time of the day for advisory committee meetings depends on the calendars of those who must attend, especially business, industry, and labor representatives. Many will prefer either a breakfast meeting or a luncheon meeting. Because of work schedules and commuting time, some may prefer evenings. Regardless of what time a meeting is scheduled, most members will appreciate refreshments.

Where to meet—Meetings can be held at the college, a local restaurant, or the company facilities of an advisory committee member. The location should be whatever is most convenient for the majority of the committee's members.

How long to meet—A meeting does not need to be long to be effective. The constant should be quality of content, not time. Most meetings will last one to two hours.

Meeting Agenda

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 your attendance and allow meeting planners to know who intends to come.

Agenda items could include:

- Roll call
- Approval of previous minutes
- Introduction of guests
- Summarization of unfinished business
- Subcommittee reports
- New business and reports of special interest
- Miscellaneous discussion
- Review of next meeting date and location
- Adjournment

Agenda topics will be dictated by the program of work, but sample agenda topics could include:

- Academic preparation of students
- Labor market trends
- Impacts of federal and state legislation
- Emerging fields and potential new courses and programs
- Curriculum development
- Instructional development
- Facilities requirements
- Recruitment of students
- Marketing of programs and graduates
- Work performance of graduates
- Program review processes and outcomes
- Equipment
- Staff development for instructors

(As mandated by the Minnesota Open Meeting Law, all advisory committee meetings should be open to the public.)

Effective Meetings

Well-organized meetings add to the advisory committee's effectiveness. Busy committee members are more likely to remain involved when their time is used well. To accomplish this, schedule meetings well in advance and start and end them on time. Distribute the agenda to members prior to the meeting. A meeting should have a stated purpose and a published agenda designed to achieve that purpose. Pace the meeting to ensure that all agenda items are completed in an organized way and on time. If possible, the chair should set a date for the next meeting prior to adjourning.

Effective meetings include the following components:

- The meetings are held at times and locations that are accommodating to the majority of the members.
- The meetings should begin and end on time.
- The meetings should stay on task and on process.

- The meetings should allow for full and open discussion of issues, including controversial ones.

Managing group activity and interaction—An effective advisory committee allows sufficient time for attendees to learn and use group processes and skills for problem solving, decision-making, forecasting, and planning. The meeting leader should periodically summarize discussion and point out the connections and contradictions between points made. The leader should always ask clarifying questions. An effective advisory committee knows, understands, and uses appropriate relationship-building exercises.

Collective decision-making should follow parliamentary procedure. Beyond decisions, open and informal discussion must be encouraged. An advisory committee should strive for “consensus-based” decisions. The committee should explore and encourage all points of view in working toward consensus, i.e., a negotiated decision that everyone can “live with.”

Advantages of consensus

- Process encourages creative problem solving.
- Process builds trust and commitment.
- Process generates information and clarifies issues.
- Implementation is easy because all parties support the decision.
- Responsibility is decentralized.
- Results in a win-win situation

Disadvantages of consensus

- Process can be time-consuming.
- Process requires a skilled leader.
- Process can stalemate if conflicts are not resolved effectively.

Meeting Minutes: It's a Process

All advisory committees and subcommittee meetings must have written minutes. Minutes are the official record of the committee’s activities. They help members understand the group’s progress, concerns, decisions, and actions.

The advisory committee’s support staff records minutes. It is not necessary to record all discussions. Minutes generally include a listing of those who attended the meeting (*name, occupation, and organization*), a summary of each issue that was discussed, and any decisions, assignments, or recommendations that were made.

Written minutes should be submitted to the committee chair for review and signature. The minutes should be sent out in a timely fashion (1–2 weeks) after the meeting. In addition, previous minutes may be sent with the notice for the upcoming meeting.

A record of all past meeting minutes and a membership roster should be kept at the college or on the college's website. Good documentation of committee meetings can be used to support grant applications.

OTHER COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Advisory committees should create communication channels that help to maintain close employer-educator relationships that go beyond those established through formal meetings. Goals, needs, visions, objectives, and outcomes must be constantly communicated to the committee and to the community at-large. Following are suggestions for ways to communicate with committee members.

Impact documents—These are one-page snapshots that keep the committee updated on current events. These informal documents capture significant outcomes in a compact format (typically one page) that can be readily shared through e-mail or posted on a website. Think of impact documents as an internal press release for your advisory committee members. Impact documents can update members on new activities, processes, and/or results.

Periodic highlights—These are one-page summaries of major activities and accomplishments during a specific time period. The time period could be a month or a semester. The person who writes the highlights should be careful in distinguishing between confirmed results and anticipated or projected results.

Annual report—An annual report should be a part of every advisory committee's communication plan. The report does not need to be lengthy. In fact, it can be an expanded version of the periodic highlights. The person(s) responsible for preparing the report should make every effort to streamline reporting to the committee, as time is always an issue. Information from the periodic highlights can be used as the basis for the annual report. The report should include significant program and committee accomplishments and general student outcome data (*how many students are in the programs, how many graduated, etc*). The annual reports will reflect input from—and will be of interest to—educators, business leaders, and the community.

Newsletters—Impact documents such as periodic highlights and annual reports can be distributed in the form of newsletters. Assembly and layout of the newsletters could be assigned as student projects.

Listservs/Email—The Internet provides a fast and efficient medium for communication between committee members and for committee management.

Website—If the program has a link on the college website, the committee should be able to make good use of it. Websites provide convenient environments for integrating reports, agendas, and meeting minutes. The website can serve as a communication hub for the entire program. Ideally, it would provide at least two links:

- Public access link—This link would lead the viewer to information that is of interest to the public, such as general information on the program and the activities of the committee.
- “Committee members only” link—This link would provide a connection point for committee and subcommittee members. This is the equivalent of the “back office” area reserved (by password protection) exclusively for authorized personnel.

Using effective communication strategies (in addition to meetings) is essential to the success of your committee. The ability of the committee to make decisions *during* meetings will depend to a large extent on how well the members communicate *between* meetings.

Sustainability and Special Considerations

Establishing an advisory committee is only the first step. To be effective, the committee must become and remain active. Setting and reaching goals and objectives enhance the effectiveness of an advisory committee.

The biggest sustainability factor for any committee is empowerment. The committee cannot bring about real change unless it is empowered to do so. You empower your committee by carrying out the following tasks:

- Selecting well-informed, highly motivated members
- Choosing effective governance structure and personnel
- Delegation of responsibilities as appropriate

WHAT MOTIVATES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS?

Faculty members and administrators can elevate the motivation of the committee members by:

- Showing awareness that the committee members are their students' future employers.
- Listening to committee members (especially regarding workforce needs).
- Responding to the committee members' suggestions.
- Respecting the committee members' time commitment.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND FEEDBACK

The end product of all advisory committee activities is a set of recommendations for continuous improvement of the program. Many advisory committees write a formal recommendation letter that is signed by the committee chair on behalf of the entire committee. Feedback on the recommendations is the most important motivational tool for advisory committees. Members want to do the "right thing" and are encouraged when they see tangible results from their recommendations.

MEMBER APPRECIATION

Rewards and recognition are especially important to advisory committees because members are not paid for their efforts. The best types of rewards or recognition are those that increase member satisfaction. A simple "thank you" can be a reward. *One of the best rewards is to ask for advice and respond to it.*

Rewards encourage attendance and involvement. Recognition activities also attract the attention and interest of other qualified people who may eventually serve on the committee. Recognition activities also bring public attention and goodwill to the college because they demonstrate that the college appreciates the efforts of the committee's members. Rewards should not be given indiscriminately but should reflect real contributions to the committee's success.

Following are ways to recognize your committee members:

- Write a letter of appreciation to a committee member's employer.
- Highlight the members' work at committee meetings.
- Invite members to visit programs to see how their recommendations are being implemented.
- Highlight member appointments and accomplishments in press releases.
- Invite members to attend special technical/occupational education events.
- Display members' names on a bulletin board or plaque at the college.
- Include members' names in program literature distributed to the public.
- Ask the college president to send each member a letter of appreciation.
- Give each member a framed certificate of appreciation.

It should be a goal of the college and the advisory committee itself to acknowledge the committee's successes loudly and clearly. Credit should be given to the advisory committee whenever possible. Connections should be made between program successes and recommendations of the committee members.

CONNECTIONS

Typically, technical/occupational education programs must be coordinated with other federal or state initiatives to avoid unnecessary duplication of programs and services. Advisory committees must be made aware of initiatives or legislation that will affect the program, and there may be a need to coordinate or make connections with other activities. Adopting a "systems" viewpoint will benefit the program and leverage resources.

Connection to collegewide advisory committee—An effective advisory committee functions as an essential component of the college's structure and plan for continuous improvement. The college may have a general advisory committee that helps with overall operations and policies. Technical/occupational program advisory committees

should adopt a college systems viewpoint, and every effort should be made to connect program advisory committees to collegewide advisory committees.

Connection to economic development—Advisory committees are aware of the impact of their work in their communities and what it means to the economic vitality and survival of those communities. Advisory committees should team up with local economic development councils and/or chambers of commerce to identify current and future solutions to workforce development issues and to find ways to target local, state, and federal resources. Local economic development entities frequently conduct labor-force surveys, which can be invaluable to advisory committees.

Connection to secondary system: Career pathways—There is often overlap, or a lack of continuity, in the way programs at the secondary and community college levels affect students. Postsecondary technical/occupational programs are impacted by the skill levels (technical and academic) of students emerging from secondary programs. Technical/occupational programs should not be administered without close cooperation between the two levels. An integrated system is needed to ensure successful student transitions from the secondary programs into the community college. A career pathways approach that recommends a 9–14 course sequence is an effective way to connect the two levels. The course sequence must satisfy curriculum requirements for graduation from high school *and* requirements established by the community college (without remediation).

University connections—Advisory committee members may find themselves wanting two levels of workers, one that requires an associate of applied science degree and another that goes beyond. It may be useful to connect with the university system so that programs can be articulated or a capstone program at the university level can be developed. The more options that can be developed for students, the stronger the workforce will be.

Workforce development clusters—Clusters are usually larger than just one industry. Clusters represent groups of employers who come together as a unified voice to stimulate awareness of and interest in related occupations. These organized groups of local businesses stimulate community awareness of and interest in career pathway opportunities available within a given locale. These groups facilitate partnerships with the K-16 education systems and assist in the immediate and ongoing development and revision of curriculum.

EVALUATION

Advisory committees should promote a culture of continuous improvement and focus on outcomes. Committee leadership must ensure that the members recognize that continuous improvement depends on regular evaluation. There are two broad areas of evaluation for an advisory committee:

- Technical/occupational program review
- Advisory committee performance

Technical/occupational program review—The ultimate measure of the effectiveness of technical/occupational programs is their ability to place highly qualified graduates into the workforce. Follow-up of students is a time-consuming task, but it is necessary to understand student outcomes. Members can provide insight into the strengths and weaknesses of program graduates.

Data that may be of interest to the advisory committee includes:

- Transitions from secondary technical/occupational programs to the community college
- Student academic performance (GPA, remediation rates, etc.)
- Retention rates
- Program completion rates
- Workforce placement rates

In addition, advisory committees can help set priorities for budgetary expenditures within a technical/occupational program. When resources are limited, members can help administrators make the best possible use of available resources.

Advisory committee performance—The effectiveness of the committee is determined mainly by determining whether the objectives set out in the program of work have been met. Members of an effective advisory committee should regularly evaluate their performances and use the information for continuous improvement. The goal of this evaluation (internal performance audit or review) is to help the committee evaluate its overall effectiveness. The evaluation can help the committee determine:

- Whether the program is accomplishing its goals.
- The extent to which the program of work has strengthened the program.
- What recommendations should be, or have been, acted upon, and what the implications of those recommendations are.

- The future direction and program of work for the committee.

Each year the advisory committee should review the past year of work, focusing on both accomplishments and challenges. That review will position the committee to chart its course for the upcoming year.

Questions to be addressed in an evaluation or internal performance audit—Assessment of the program of work should involve addressing the following questions:

- Were priorities and objectives clearly established?
- Did the activities of the committee help to meet the established priorities or objectives?
- Was the scope of the program of work realistic?
- Were planning tasks for each activity clearly defined?
- Were individual responsibilities clearly described?
- Were timelines for each planning task clearly established?
- What outcome has resulted from the program of work?

In addition to assessing the program of work, advisory committees should make sure the management of their committees is not a barrier to success. The 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.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND ISSUES

Rural Areas

Rural areas must deal with special considerations and challenges. Rural areas often lack large employers that can provide committee members. However, one should keep in mind that small businesses provide the majority of all jobs in the United States, and in many communities small businesses are the only employers. Employees in small businesses typically wear many hats and are spread very thin, leaving little time for committee involvement. At the same time, representation of small businesses on advisory committees can offer certain advantages, such as personalized attention and more varied experiences for students and/or instructors at the worksite. Committees can look for ways to expand and enhance the involvement of small businesses by having

them leverage their connections with subcontractors, suppliers, and other business contacts.

Statewide Committees

Your program may already be advised by a statewide committee, or the program may be unique in some way that calls for a statewide committee. One example in Minnesota is the Healthcare Education Industry Partnership.

Healthcare Education Industry Partnership—The Healthcare Education Industry Partnership is a program of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. Since it started in 1998, the partnership has worked to address critical healthcare workforce issues in Minnesota through the collaboration of higher education, the healthcare industry, professional and trade associations, and state agencies. Some of the partnership's strategic goals involve areas such as leadership, policy, workforce planning, capacity in nursing and allied health, flexibility and change in healthcare programs, immigrants, refugees and underrepresented populations, K-12 partnerships, and curriculum. For more information, contact www.heip.org or Kristin Juliar, Project Director; phone: 507-389-2707; fax: 507-389-6447; email: kristin.juliar@mnsu.edu; Minnesota State University, Mankato; 124 Myers Field House; Mankato, MN 56001.

Combined Advisory Committees

Many of the employers who serve on your committee may also be helping the secondary education system or university in a similar role. For some locales, a combined advisory committee that serves both secondary and postsecondary makes sense. In some cases a committee might serve more than one postsecondary institution. The question of whether a single advisory committee (*serving the needs of two or more college/universities or secondary schools*) is feasible for your program area should be answered by the local community. Many questions will come into play when deciding whether to combine advisory committees:

- Will there be scheduling issues for a combined committee?
- Can a single group meet and address all the issues?
- Is the program so unique that it does not have a counterpart at a different educational level?
- Is the area too large geographically?
- Is there competition among the programs?

- Would a combined committee provide a coordinated approach to meeting the needs of industry?
- Would it broaden the awareness of the program?

Even if a combined advisory committee were not feasible, informal information sharing between secondary and postsecondary levels is beneficial.

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Resources

SAMPLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE BYLAWS

(Source: National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation, <http://www.natef.org/>)

Article I—Name and Purpose

Section A.

The official name of this body shall be _____.
(Name)

Section B.

The above-named advisory committee shall exist only during such times as it may be authorized by the _____.
(authorizing School Board or Board of Trustees)

Section C.

The purposes and duties of the above-named advisory committee shall be to:

1. Identify vocational automotive education program needs for the school district (or area of service);
2. Help identify and assess labor market requirements;
3. Review and advise on the establishment and maintenance of realistic and practical vocational automotive education programs;
4. Participate in developing community understanding and support for vocational automotive education programs;
5. Assist in the development of long-range goals for vocational automotive education in the school district (or area of service);
6. Review special project requests;
7. Assist in the establishment of standards for vocational automotive education facilities;
8. Provide information on new technical developments that require changes in curriculum; and
9. Assist the school district (or institution) in reviewing legislation affecting vocational education.

Article II—Membership

Section A.

The advisory committee will consist of a minimum of _____ members and a maximum of _____ members, excluding ex-officio members.

Section B.

Appointments to the advisory committee shall be made by _____ in consultation with _____.

Section C.

The committee membership will be drawn as follows: [*Specify types and numbers of representatives to serve on the committee.*]

Section D.

Each appointment of an advisory committee member shall be for three years, except when the appointment is to fill an unexpired term.

Section E.

Two-thirds of the members will be retained each year, with none serving more than three successive years, and one year will expire before any outgoing member may be reappointed for a full term after serving the unexpired term of a member who has left the committee.

Section F.

One-third of the total membership shall be appointed each year.

Section G.

The term of a new committee member shall begin on July 1.

Section H.

An individual will automatically lose membership in the committee if s(he) fails to attend three successive meetings without presenting in advance to the chair of the committee a valid reason for his/her absence.

Article III—Officers and Their Duties

Section A.

The officers shall be: a chair, a vice-chair, and a secretary.

Section B.

All officers shall be elected annually by a majority vote of the committee members at the annual meeting; or the chair and vice-chair shall be elected annually by a majority vote

of the committee members at the annual meeting. The secretary shall be [*vocational education teacher, vocational education administrator or other vocational educator*].

Section C.

The chair shall be elected from among those members who have served on the advisory committee for at least one year. His/her duties shall be:

- a. To preside at the meetings of the advisory committee;
- b. To serve as chair of the executive committee; and
- c. To appoint special subcommittees, which may include persons other than advisory committee members.

Section D.

The vice-chair shall perform the duties of the chair in his/her absence.

Section E.

The secretary shall:

- a. Keep records of the attendance of members at meetings;
- b. Keep a record of discussion and recommendations;
- c. Maintain a permanent record file of advisory committee activities; and
- d. Distribute minutes of advisory committee meetings and copies of other committee documents to committee members, teachers, and concerned others.

Section F.

The executive committee shall consist of the chair, vice-chair, and secretary with the vocational educator in charge as an ex-officio member. It shall:

- a. Act on urgent advisory committee matters between meetings;
- b. Prepare an agenda for each meeting if requested to do so by the advisory committee; and
- c. Call special meetings of the advisory committee as they are needed.

Article IV—Meetings

Section A.

Regular meetings of the advisory committee will be held during the calendar year. Meetings shall be scheduled for the second Tuesday in February, April, June, and October.

Section B.

The June meeting of the advisory committee shall be designated as the annual meeting.

Section C.

Meeting dates may be changed by consensus.

Section D.

The chair may call special meetings of the advisory committee.

Section E.

Written notices of meetings shall be mailed by the secretary to all members at least two weeks before each meeting.

Section F.

Meetings shall not be more than _____ hours long, unless a majority of the members vote to continue a particular meeting.

Section G.

All meetings will be open to the public.

Article V—Annual Program

Section A.

The advisory committee will plan and operate under an annual program of work. Plans, topics, and goals will be included in the program.

Section B.

The program of work for each ensuing year will be discussed during the _____ meeting each year.

(Month)

Section C.

Proposals by the members will be considered by the executive committee, which will formulate a proposed annual program to be presented to the advisory committee during the _____ meeting for its action. (Month)

Article VI—Subcommittees

Section A.

As the need for standing and special subcommittees arises, such subcommittees may be appointed by the chair.

Section B.

Subcommittees shall report regularly to the advisory committee.

Section C.

A subcommittee will automatically be discharged upon accomplishing the task(s) for which it was established.

Article VII—Amendments

The constitution, articles, and bylaws may be amended or added to by a two-thirds majority vote of active members at any regular advisory committee meeting.

Article VIII—Rules of Order

The meetings and activities of this advisory committee shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order, except as otherwise provided by these bylaws.

SAMPLE TEMPLATE FOR DEVELOPING A PROGRAM OF WORK

(Source: National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation, <http://www.natef.org/>)

Committee _____

Year _____

Objectives	Activities	Target Date

SAMPLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING EVALUATION FORM

(Source: National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation, <http://www.natef.org/>)

Below is a guide for rating the effectiveness of the advisory committee meeting. Circle the number that best describes your feelings about each statement.

	Excellent (1) to Poor (5)				
1. I clearly understood the agenda and knew what we were trying to accomplish.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The agenda was well planned and organized and was received in advance of the meeting.	1	2	3	4	5
3. This was an important and productive meeting.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I feel the members of this committee understand their role and assignment.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Members had a chance to speak and made a contribution to items under consideration.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The meeting was well organized.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I felt that the advisory committee's opinions and feelings were understood and accepted by the college.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I feel satisfied with the activities and accomplishments of the advisory committee.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I feel my time and efforts are well spent in serving as a member of this advisory committee.	1	2	3	4	5

CHECKLIST FOR MANAGING A MEETING EFFECTIVELY

(Adapted from Massachusetts Career and Technical Education Curriculum Resource Center, 2003)

	Yes	No
Agenda prepared		
Agenda distributed to members before meeting		
Room set up comfortably before meeting begins		
Refreshments available		
Meeting begins on time		
Purpose of the meeting and outcomes are stated and agreed upon		
All members participate in discussion		
Group follows agreed-upon decision-making process		
Items on agenda are covered		
Action items and decisions made are reviewed at end of meeting		
Work commitments and timelines are reviewed		
Group gives input on next meeting's objectives		
Meeting ends on time		

SAMPLE MINUTES (EXAMPLE 1)

(Adapted from Nebraska Department of Education, Nebraska Career and Technical Education)

TECHNICAL/OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date _____

MINUTES

Members present—(List)

Members absent—(List)

Other present—(List)

Call to order—Committee Chair Beverly Smith called the meeting to order at 12 noon and expressed appreciation for attendance and participation. She stressed the importance of the committee’s continuing support and assistance. Dr. Jane Doe, College President, greeted the committee. Her greeting further assured the committee of its importance to the educational goals and program vitality.

Minutes—Minutes of the last meeting were approved as submitted.

Unfinished business—No unfinished business was brought before the committee.

New business—Ms. Smith asked the committee to make suggestions concerning “What are the new requirements of entry-level employees?” Ben Read indicated that a computer or data processing background would be helpful for employees. Eva Johnson further emphasized the need for computer training. She indicated that a job applicant with computer knowledge has an advantage. It was the consensus of the committee that expanded computer training should be added to the technical/occupational program as soon as possible. The chair was asked to appoint a subcommittee to investigate several kinds of computers and software for possible purchase. It was agreed that the subcommittee would report to the committee at the next meeting.

Adjournment—The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

_____, Secretary

SAMPLE MINUTES (EXAMPLE 2)

(Adapted from Massachusetts Career and Technical Education Curriculum Resource Center, 2003)

GENERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: _____

Attendees [*names and affiliations, i.e., with the school/college, program advisory committee, or other—attach list*]:

I. Program advisory committee presentations

HVAC

This program needs more space, more equipment, and an additional teacher. As industry uses more computers and solid-state equipment, we should keep up with those trends in our teaching. Taxpayers need to become educated as to the value and purpose of training in this occupational area.

GRAPHIC COMMUNICATIONS

This program focuses exclusively on offset lithography. The equipment, especially for prepress and press, should be updated. They have one station and need several more. The advisory committee should be enlarged to help explore trends in CTP and digital photography.

MACHINE SHOP

Few students are choosing this program. We need better information about it. Success stories are needed for good public relations.

AUTOMOTIVE

There has been great improvement in the use of repair guides, specifications, and visual and audio aids. The computer equipment needs immediate attention, i.e., we need extra equipment and updated training.

II. Summary of the general advisory committee chair

A. Present status of the school

Increased enrollment overall

Potential problems in machine shop program

Success in obtaining equipment and supplies; remaining needs

B. Observed trends

Negative perceptions among students and community of HVAC and machine shop programs

Continued increase of computers in nearly all occupational areas

Continuing demand for technical/occupational students

C. Recommendations

Purchase new equipment for the HVAC/R and automotive programs

Enlarge program advisory committee membership to reflect the need for computer expertise

Organize public relations efforts for technical/occupational education generally, and HVAC/R and machine shop programs specifically

SAMPLE ANNUAL REPORT

(Adapted from Lane Community College)

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2002–2003

1. Name of advisory committee:

Name of program:

Committee chair [*community member*]:

Committee coordinator [*LCC member*]:

2. Name of division:

Division chair:

3. Number of regular advisory committee meetings held:

Date of 1st meeting and number attending:

Date of 2nd meeting and number attending:

Date of 3rd meeting and number attending:

Number of special advisory committee meetings held:

Date and purpose:

Date and purpose:

4. Current program fact sheet from 2002–2003

Staffing—number of contracted faculty positions:

Staffing—number of part-time faculty positions:

Funding—general fund (program) budget: [\$\$\$]

Student fees: [\$\$\$]

Grant funds: [\$\$\$ *in grants*]

Has your program received Carl Perkins grants or any other grants in the last few years? If yes, describe the funds used and how they benefited the program.

Additional comments/explanations:

5. Program enrollment trends

	FY02-03	FY03-04	FY04-05	FY05-06
Program headcount				
Number of minority students				
Percent of minority students				
Number of females/number of males				
Percent of females/percent of males				
Number of graduates				
Placement rates for program graduates				
Number of students participating in cooperative education				
<u>Core students</u> : Students with a program major AND completed six or more required core credits in the program				
Number of core students making satisfactory progress				
Percent of core students making satisfactory progress				

Additional comments/explanations:

What is your program's student capacity and how is it determined?

Is your program currently at full student capacity? If so, how many students are on a waiting list?

Have you made program modifications to admit more students?

What adaptations have you made in your program to meet the needs of students with disabilities?

What adaptations have you made in your program to achieve gender balance?

6. Labor market information

What are the future employment opportunities for students in your program?

How does your committee determine your program's effectiveness in meeting business and industry needs?

7. Curriculum

List any curricular changes/improvements during last year and describe briefly.

How was the advisory committee involved?

What curriculum barriers inhibit students from achieving their goals?
(Example: scheduling requirements)

8. Program planning and design

What are the goals of your advisory committee for next year?

What progress did you make toward your goals from last year?

Describe how faculty and advisory committee members worked together to accomplish/identify the items listed above.

Do you and your advisory committee have additional comments regarding equipment, facilities, staffing, funding, etc.?

9. Please list additional comments as appropriate.

10. Signatures of the committee chair, committee coordinator, and the division chair

Other issues that may need to be reviewed:

- What is the student and employer demand for the skills learned through your program, and what happens to students who participate in the program?
- What is your strategy for keeping your program “state of the art,” and what staff development do you and your staff need to meet future program skill needs?
- How would you rate the exit math, writing, speaking skills, and/or other competencies for technical programs of students who complete your program?
- Is there an articulation or secondary program?

Other topics that the committee may wish to explore during an annual review:

- Program marketing activities and public relations
- Needs for equipment, supplies, and staff
- Cooperative relationships between the college and industry
- Ways to support professional technical education, which may be called for by local and state college officials, boards, and legislative groups
- Program advisory committee goals, accomplishments, and barriers to success
- Industry and employment trends in the field

SAMPLE LETTER CONFIRMING MEMBERSHIP (EXAMPLE 1)

(Adapted from Massachusetts Career and Technical Education Curriculum Resource Center, 2003)

Dear _____:

I am pleased to inform you that [*technical/community college*] has accepted your membership in the [*advisory committee name*] for the next school year.

Enclosed for your information are materials that explain the goals and objectives of our college, the program, and your role as an advisory committee member. I will be contacting you soon, when our first advisory committee meeting is scheduled.

Your experience and expertise will help us provide the high-quality, up-to-date training that is necessary for a student's successful transition to work. I appreciate your interest in our program and college, and I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Division Chair or Department Head

SAMPLE LETTER CONFIRMING MEMBERSHIP (EXAMPLE 2)

(Adapted from Nebraska Department of Education, Nebraska Career and Technical Education)

Date

Ms. Jane Jones
213 Cedar Avenue
Somewhere, NE 68000

Dear Ms. Jones:

Congratulations on your appointment to the advisory committee for [*program*] at [*college*]. Thank you for your willingness to serve. Your contribution will keep the program effective and up to date as well as help to make our community a better a place in which to live and work.

Your first meeting as a committee member is scheduled for [*date*] at [*time*] in the [*room, address*]. You will be contacted soon with a tentative agenda and other committee member materials.

We look forward to working with you. If you have any questions, please call.

Sincerely,

Administrative Official

SAMPLE LETTER OF RECOGNITION/RECRUITMENT

(Adapted from Massachusetts Career and Technical Education Curriculum Resource Center, 2003)

Dear _____:

On behalf of [*program and school/college*], I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to you for your faithful participation in our advisory committee activities during the past year. Your contributions were invaluable, and resulted in numerous program and curriculum improvements. [*List several examples.*]

The technical/occupational students and faculty who benefited directly from these improvements also wish to express their thanks to you, and encourage your continued support and service.

At this time, I am in the process of organizing the committee for the coming year. I encourage you to remain by nominating an advisory committee member to take your place and to continue to share with us your thoughts and expertise.

Sincerely,

Division Chair or Department Head

SAMPLE LETTER TO INACTIVE MEMBER

(Adapted from Massachusetts Career and Technical Education Curriculum Resource Center, 2003)

Dear _____:

On behalf of [*program and school/college*], I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to you for serving as a member of our advisory committee.

The [*program*] has benefited greatly from the work of the committee. I realize, however, that our advisors are very busy, with many competing demands on their time, and I am grateful for your interest and involvement over the past _____ year(s).

Please let us know if you are interested in continuing your work as an active member of the [*program name*] advisory committee.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Division Chair or Department Head

ARTICLE: “ADVISORY COMMITTEES DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE”

by Brian Manley (2001)

(Source: National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation, <http://www.natef.org/>)

As a certified technician and vocational automotive instructor, I’m here to tell you that the single most important component of *any* automotive training program is a diverse, professional, forward-thinking advisory committee.

Seven years ago, when I accepted my job as the vocational auto instructor for five high schools in suburban Denver, Colorado, I inherited a hobby-shop program where students worked on their own vehicles, or didn’t work at all. Books were out-dated, the tool room was decimated, and greasy engines and transmissions gathered in the corners. I had my work cut out for me!

Just as I’d been a professional, ASE certified technician for 15 years, I had a goal for this training program—to create a *professional*, ASE certified program, serving the needs of surrounding repair facilities. I wanted to build a strong program, where students could earn a quality education and begin a successful career.

I soon learned that my greatest allies during this transformation process were the members of my advisory committee. In addition to our vocational director, I had enlisted some of the best technicians, shop owners, dealership management and technician trainers in our city to meet with me and guide the course of our destiny. Here’s the “path to success” that my committee created and helped me carry-out during the past seven years:

- Initial evaluation of hand tools, shop equipment, classroom, training mock-ups, textbooks, and student safety items. A list was made and each committee member gave input and recommendations for program improvement.
- Purchase of state-of-the-art textbooks, tools and equipment. Using my school budget as a starting point, members suggested how best to divide the funds up for each year as I built my curriculum and replaced worn/missing/out-dated tools and equipment.
- Clean-up of the entire shop/classroom area to create a more professional appearance. We’ve thrown away the junk and re-built our classroom. Next on the agenda—new wall and floor paint!
- Evaluation of our program for ASE certification through NATEF. We became certified, and guess what? I have that recognizable blue seal hanging in our

training facility, which strikes up conversations with parents and community leaders about the difference between certified and non-certified training programs.

- Assisting with donations of late-model vehicles for training. We used to have 10-year-old-cars; now I have a half-dozen late model, OBD II vehicles for training.
- Assisting with judging for our local SkillsUSA-VICA Leadership and Skills contests. Our committee members have judged Job Interview, Auto Tech Hands-On, Related Technical Math, etc.
- Evaluation of our program for Automotive Youth and Educational Systems (AYES) participation. The AYES program creates supervised internships for our students along with Snap-On tool discounts and training for potential mentors.
- Inviting guest speakers (like yourselves) for class, to talk about job potential, attitude, salaries and benefits of becoming a master technician.
- Arranging job shadowing in shops for students, so potential technicians can get a taste of what the “real world” is like.
- Arranging “career days” and back-to-school-night events so our community can see our program and talk to the experts about a career as an auto technician.

Our committee meets once per month, on average, which creates a “closed loop feedback” system between members, my administrators, my students, and myself. Can a committee member give me constructive feedback? Yes. Could one of my students talk to my committee and relate his/her comments or concerns? Yes. Does my committee make recommendations directly to my boss (the guy with the check book)? Absolutely—which makes my boss confident in his decisions when making large purchases, because the needs of my program are coming from our industry professionals, not me.

So, can your advisory committee make a difference to your automotive program? Definitely. Select your advisory committee carefully. Diversity, professionalism, and a willingness to be involved are important characteristics for advisory committee members. A strong and active advisory committee is critical to the success of your program.