Program Advisory Committee Handbook for Faculty Technical Educational Programs

Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture Policy on Advisory Committees

The use of advisory committees enables our college to build technical education programs that are based on the real needs of the community and the state of Nebraska. In turn, the confidence of the public is secured when the experiences and counsel of the responsible layperson are solicited and acted upon by the College. This handbook is designed to be used as a guide to help offer enhancements and higher interactions with advisories.

(The materials included in this handbook came from the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and the Wisconsin Technical College System)

Background:
The purpose of the Nebraska College of Technical College Advisory Committee Handbook is to prepare faculty and administrators to select, work with, and make optimum use of technical education program advisory committees.

General Purpose of Advisory Committees:
One of the most effective ways of providing a link between the community and the college is through advisory committees.

Structure of Advisory Committees:

General Purpose

One of the most common characteristics associated with high-quality technical education programs is their close ties with business, industry, and labor.

Technical 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 education programs must be integral parts of the communities they serve, it is necessary to have close cooperation between the college and local, state and national employers.

Employers have a strong self-interest in helping postsecondary education improve in helping students succeed. One of the most effective ways of providing a link between the community, state and the college is through advisory committees. Advisory committees are essential to the successful initiation of technical 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 technical colleges.

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 education programs. Each advisory committee is made up of individuals with experience and expertise in the occupational field that the program serves.

Characteristics of an Advisory Committee

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.

Purpose of Advisory Committees
Advisory committees aid in the development of an educational program that will more adequately meet the needs of individuals of the community and the various business and industrial employers in the state of Nebraska.

Advisory committees may be involved in these activities:
- Identify or verify occupational competencies
- Approve program outcome and core abilities

- Assist in recruitment and placement of students
- Assist college with student assessment process
- Offer internship opportunities to program students
- Recommend equipment selection
- Offer support at public hearings and in legislation initiatives
- Create public awareness of NCTA programs and activities
- Develop scholarships and assist with institutional development activities
- Sponsor tours/field trips for students
- Identify industry trends for program purposes
- Share input on college wide facilities
- Assist with practice interviews
- Review résumés
- Participate in mock job interviews
- Provide job shadowing experience
- Donate equipment and/or supplies

A successful advisory committee is one that plans and carries out a program of work that aligns the technical 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, validate program outcomes 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 education program in the community and state. Promotion and advocacy can take forms such as communicating with legislators, arranging publicity and presenting programs to civic groups.

Advisory Committee Membership and Structure
<u>Governance</u>
Each advisory committee should develop and approve guidelines for operating procedures. Collectively, these procedures 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

Membership Selection
Selection of advisory committee members is proposed by the program supervisor based upon:
- Recommendations from existing advisory committee members.
- Recommendations from the NCTA faculty and administration.

Every effort should be made to have diverse representation throughout the state/region on each of the program advisory committees. Selection should consider a wide range of business and industry participants who represent:
- Employees who work at the level our graduates are trained.
- Managers who supervise those employees.
- Geographic locations throughout the state/region.
- NCTA employees who are ex officio members.

Structure
The average number of members comprising an occupational program advisory committee is 8-12 persons. It is important that the committee be dominated by the occupational representatives rather than the educators.

To help determine how many members would be appropriate for a committee consider:
- The number of target jobs served by the program.
- The size of the program.
- The size of the community.
- Organizations or businesses to be represented.

Officer Selection and Responsibility
1. Officers

a. The **chairperson** is responsible for organizing and conducting the meeting with advice and counsel from a college program representative and for establishing standing and special committees if needed. The chairperson is elected by the committee during the spring meeting and takes office on July 1; the committee may choose to re-elect the same chairperson for two or three consecutive years.

b. A **vice chairperson** is also elected to work with the chairperson and assume leadership when the chairperson is absent. She/he may also direct committee program planning and assist the chairperson as requested.

c. The **recorder** is responsible for recording the minutes of the meetings and is usually a college representative but may be chosen from the committee membership.

NOTE: The chairperson and vice chairperson are chosen from the committee membership and may not be the college representatives.

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 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

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.

Conducting the Meeting

Committee discussions should focus on the agenda, and every attempt should be made to involve each member. It is important to encourage members to actively give information and advice to the program. It is helpful if each member of the committee is provided with a current roster of the committee membership.

Time should be allowed for open, free discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of the program. Discussions may include relevancy of the courses/programs, performance of graduates, changes in the workforce, emerging trends, review of the catalog, articulation efforts, brochures and recruiting materials, etc. A tour of the college and facilities before or after the meeting may be welcomed.

Usually advisory committees will agree by consensus rather than by vote. If the committee chooses to vote, ex officio members do not vote. Committee recommendations are advisory only, but all recommendations will receive serious attention by college faculty and staff. The committee needs to establish meeting ground rules to be used during all meetings.
Sample:

- Encourage everyone to participate equally.
- Share ideas freely.
- Hitchhike on each other's ideas.
- Provide constructive suggestions rather than negative criticisms.
- Stay on track—be concise.
- Start and end on time.

Planning the Meeting

NCTA recommends advisory committees meet a minimum of once per year.

Developing the Agenda
The following outline is suggested for developing an agenda. This will help to provide a uniform and comprehensive format for advisory committee meetings.

- Check in
- Reading and approval of minutes of preceding meeting
- Hardware/software needs
- Subcommittee reports
- Unfinished business from previous meeting
- New business
- Communications and miscellaneous matters
- Evaluation of the meeting
- Setting a date for the next meeting
- Adjournment

Assessment of Student Learning
Assessment is an ongoing process aimed at monitoring and improving student learning. In order to graduate from a program, throughout the educational experience, students participate in their learning through self-assessment activities such as surveys or inventories, reflection statements and/or essays. Faculty will gather evidence of student learning based on specific course assignments to monitor student progress and achievement.

Assessment of Student Learning is also needed to maintain NCTA's accreditation assuring the quality of education meets or exceeds acceptable standards set by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Schools.

SAMPLE APPOINTMENT LETTER (ON SCHOOL/INSTITUTION STATIONERY)

Current Date

Mr. Bill Smith
Lark's Cattle Company
3814 Place Drive
Your Town, Nebraska 60000

Dear Mr. Smith:

It is with great pleasure and appreciation that the (school/division) welcomes you as a member of the
_____ Program Advisory Committee. Your appointment is for a three-year term.

Your knowledge and expertise in _____ and your interest in education qualifies you as a
highly valuable member of the committee. We hope you will find this a rewarding experience.

Thank you for your interest in career and technical education and your willingness to serve.

Sincerely,

Chairperson

AGENDA

NAME OF GROUP:

LEADER: **FACILITATOR:**

MEMBERS:

DATE: **TIME:**   **ROOM:**

Expected outcomes/actions for this meeting:

Time:	Item:	Leader:	Purpose:
Time:	Item:	Leader:	Purpose:
Time:	Item:	Leader:	Purpose:
Time:	Item:	Leader:	Purpose:
Time:	Item:	Leader:	Purpose:

1. Check-In

2. Review Agenda

3. Evaluate Meeting - Team Discussion

4. Next Meeting - Team Discussion

Date:

Time:

Location:

MEETING ACTION PLANNING

DATE:

TEAM:

RECORDER:

MEMBERS PRESENT:

>   ***Members Absent**

GUESTS:

REVIEW AGENDA
ITEM/CONCERN:

ELEMENTS OF CONCERN:

TYPE OF ACTION:
ITEM/CONCERN:_____

**ELEMENTS OF
CONCERN:**_____
_____
_____
_____

TYPE OF ACTION:_____

**WHAT ACTION WILL BE
TAKEN:**_____
_____

**WHO IS
RESPONSIBLE:**_____
_____

BY WHEN:_____