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# Advisory Committee Handbook

For Advisory Committee Members



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Office of the Dean, School of Workforce Development

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# What is an Advisory Committee?

## Definition

An advisory committee is composed of business and industry representatives who possess the potential to hire students from the respective field of study. They are also chosen for their ability to advise the College on the content of that particular curriculum and future directions for the workforce.

## Purpose

Successful programs are the result of cooperative and collaborative efforts between Grand Rapids Community College and its business, industry, labor, and community partners.

The purpose of the advisory committee shall be to provide community-based information to the administration and staff of Grand Rapids Community College regarding the skills and competencies students need in a particular curriculum. By doing so the committee provides advice on new technology, emerging skill needs, and other curriculum developments.

In addition, the members of the advisory committee may engage in activities which promote the curriculum such as serving as mentors or hosting career fairs.

## Function

Advisory committees meet on a regular basis in cooperation with faculty and staff in order to provide advice on curriculum, provide community-based opportunities for students and offer future-oriented direction for education and training.

## GRCC Philosophy on Advisory Committees

GRCC believes that advisory committees can be a valuable part of the process of engagement with the community. They will be consulted regarding curriculum development and revision as well as offering robust student activities. The College will take all recommendations under advisement and make decisions according to the College's strategic plan, available budget, and other data.

# Why be an Advisory Committee member?

## What it's all about...

Occupational advisory committees are mandated in both federal and state law. They are invited to be a member of an advisory committee to lend their expertise and their experience to public education. They are invited because of their success in their own chosen occupation. They are valuable assets to Grand Rapids Community College in helping the staff to stay on the 'right track' regarding the proper preparation of students for the careers of their choice.

The students who are the ultimate beneficiaries of the advisory committees' contributions will eventually work in the occupation (or occupational cluster) represented by the committee members. They need to be able to compete in the job market, find and hold employment, progress on the job, and be productive members of society. In addition, some of them will want to transfer to a four-year college or university at some point in their careers. The college needs the advice and assistance of the advisory committee to ensure that a quality education is provided for students.

The effectiveness of the advisory committee depends in large part on its members. The recommendations and advice given as well as the efforts expended in helping students will assist the College in accomplishing its mission of a quality education.

## Why be involved...

Different individuals get involved with this kind of work for different reasons. The reasons most often given for this kind of community work include the following:

- Personal satisfaction of involvement with the educational process and providing needed expertise and knowledge.
- Establishing a source of quality employees.
- Business and industry pay taxes and ought to share in the stewardship of the public money.
- Receiving recognition from colleagues, friends and family.
- Recognition for the employer as well as for the individual advisory committee member.
- An opportunity to invest in the future of the community and the state.

## What will advisory committee members be asked to do?

They may be asked to help accomplish these types of objectives:

- Promote the program and occupational education in the community.
- Advise faculty and staff of evolving trends in the industry or occupation.
- Advise on criteria for program development, planning, implementation and evaluation.
- Advise on appropriate instructional equipment and/or on-the-job learning.
- Advise on criteria for selection of instructors and students.
- Advise on appropriate learning projects.

## How is the Advisory Committee formed?

### Recruitment of members

Advisory committee members shall be recruited from the greater Grand Rapids area labor market. Advisory committee members will be individuals selected on the basis of their:

- Knowledge of the community and the occupation.
- Experience in the occupation.
- Interest and willingness to get actively involved.
- Civic-mindedness and desire to be involved with student issues and advising.
- Enthusiasm and desire to make a difference.
- Ability to communicate and to be dependable.
- Interest in youth and adult education and training.
- Ability to represent the ethnic make-up of the community.
- Ability to hire students.

The department head/program director will make initial contact with potential advisory committee members by phone, by email, or by traditional mail. The potential member should be advised of the purpose, function, and role of the advisory committee and of the obligations and responsibilities of each member.

Potential advisory committee members may be referred by current members, by faculty of the department, or by other community contacts. In some cases, the department head/program director or academic dean might contact businesses seeking appropriate recommendations.

## Appointment of members/terms

Members of an advisory committee shall be appointed by the Dean of the School of Workforce Development, in writing, for a term of three years. Members may repeat for two terms.

## Composition of the committee

Each occupational area will have an advisory committee with representation commensurate to an equal opportunity college. The number of members will vary with the nature of the program being served. Normal size will be 10-15 members serving staggered terms.

Advisory committee membership should include:

- One full-time college representative from administration
- One full-time college representative from faculty
- One part-time faculty representative currently working in the field
- One or two student representatives
- One recent graduate representative
- Six or more representatives of the occupation currently employed in business, labor, or industry. Some of these representatives should be in the position of hiring graduates of the program.
- Representation from transfer schools

## How are Advisory Committees run?

### Setting the agenda

The agenda for each meeting is largely determined by the needs of the occupational program area. Depending on the curriculum revision cycle or the potential of an emerging curriculum there will be different needs for data from the advisory committee. In addition, the committee may decide to engage in activities which determine at least part of the agenda. An example of such an activity might be a career fair for which the committee solicits participants and arranges the schedule. Meetings preceding the career fair might be given over to these arrangements when possible.

The department head/program director should consult with the committee chair to compile the agenda, which ideally is provided to committee members in advance.

The agenda should be approved by administration, the department head or program director and the advisory committee chairperson.

## Conducting the meeting

Meetings of the advisory committee should be conducted by the elected chair of the committee or, in the absence of the chair, the vice-chair. Minutes should be taken by a member of the committee. The minutes may be prepared for distribution by college staff (typically the office personnel serving the program).

The chairperson of the advisory committee is elected from and by the membership typically at the spring meeting. Their term will be effective for the following academic year. The chairperson should not be a College employee.

An advisory committee should strive for free-flowing discussion and attempt to reach a consensus where decisions or recommendations need to be determined. Roberts Rules of Order may be used, if necessary.

The department head/program director should be ready to facilitate the discussion when necessary keeping in mind that the purpose is to obtain information from the community.

## Keeping and distributing minutes

Minutes should be taken at all meetings. It is not necessary to record all discussions, but suggestions, recommendations and decisions of the committee should be recorded.

Minutes should be distributed promptly by the responsible college staff to:

- the members of the committee
- the faculty of the program, including the program director or department head
- the appropriate Associate Dean
- the Dean of the School of Workforce Development

The minutes may also be posted on the department's/program's website.

## Responsibility of the college representative

The role of the college representative on the committee is to seek advice and to provide the following services:

- prepare an agenda in consultation with the committee chairperson
- outline the task to be accomplished by the committee
- present items or problems needing action for discussion and recommendations
- reproduce and distribute the minutes
- notify membership and appropriate staff of the time and location of the meetings
- arrange meeting facilities
- prepare progress reports

# Appendix A: GRCC Background

## **GRCC Mission, Vision, Ends & Values Statements**

### **GRCC Mission Statement**

The mission of Grand Rapids Community College is to provide the community with learning opportunities that enable people to achieve their goals.

### **GRCC Vision**

Grand Rapids Community College is a vibrant institution of higher education dedicated to enriching people's lives and contributing to the vitality of the community.

### **Ends**

We fulfill our mission by accomplishing the following ends:

**Community Outreach**--We serve the community as a quality educational resource providing leadership in response to the expressed needs of the community.

**Flexible Learning**--We meet the needs of the community by providing flexible learning opportunities in a timely manner.

**Community Partnerships**--We actively collaborate with the community through partnerships and services.

**Lifelong Learning**--We assist persons who want to continue, renew, or enrich their learning throughout their lives.

**Developmental Education**--We prepare developmental students for college and/or work. All students are encouraged, supported, and given opportunities and the means to reach their goals within their own learning styles.

**Transfer & Articulation**--We provide quality liberal arts and transfer programs that enable students to continue their education successfully at other institutions.

**Diversity**--We promote an understanding of diversity for all people in a quality, respectful, motivating environment.

**Workforce Development**--Students achieve the skills necessary for success in the workplace - today, tomorrow, and into the future.

### **Values**

As a college community working to support learners, we value:

- Responsiveness
  - Accountability
  - Innovation
  - Diversity
  - Excellence
  - Respectfulness
  - Service
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Grand Rapids Community College is an equal opportunity institution and does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, national origin, religion, height, weight, age, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, status as a disabled veteran or Vietnam Era veteran, and/or any other legally protected class not heretofore mentioned, in any of its educational programs and activities including admissions and employment.

The above measures, in conjunction with other related state laws and the College's policies and procedures, will assure all individuals opportunity for consideration or redress of complaints of illegal discrimination. Equal Employment Opportunity and Americans with Disabilities Act information may be obtained from the Director of Human Resources/Labor Relations & EEO, 404B CPP, 143 Bostwick Avenue, NE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503-3295. Telephone (616) 234-3972.

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