



Advisory Committee Handbook

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What is an Advisory Committee?

The primary purpose of the program advisory committee is to assist educators and administrators in establishing, operating and evaluating programs and providing feedback.

An advisory committee is established for a specific occupational program and is a representative group of practitioners in the community whose experience and abilities represent a cross section of a particular occupational area. Student representatives will be included on the committee to provide input. In addition, these students will represent any of the following populations: economically disadvantaged, disabled, individuals in correctional institutions, individuals in programs designed to eliminate sex bias or individuals with limited English proficiency. Advisory committees will make every effort to represent all genders and the racial and ethnic minorities of the communities in which they serve.

Why are Advisory Committees Important?

One of our goals at LCC is to continuously improve our students' learning experience. We can achieve this goal by ensuring that our programs remain current and relevant, and by teaching a curriculum that prepares students to meet industry needs. There may be national standards to follow and licensure requirements, however, there is no substitute for connecting with our local business and industry leaders to learn first-hand what skills and knowledge their employees need to have. A committee with representatives from key employers within our region allows us to stay abreast of emerging trends and equips us with the information needed to justify changes to program curriculum and/or resource allocation to ensure program viability and continued student success. Further, industry leaders are more likely to support program development through donations of funds, materials, or equipment if they feel connected to the college and the program.

An advisory committee provides a window for your program into the community. It also allows the community to take ownership in our programs. While you may only have a handful of active industry partners on your committee, their knowledge and expertise will assist with understanding the needs of the industries we serve. Making these connections with our industry partners opens the door for deep relationships that may open the door for student work-based learning opportunities, such as guest speaking, job shadowing, site visits, internships, and apprenticeships.

Advisory committees support instructor development by providing opportunities to regularly update their industry knowledge and skills. In some instances, advisory partners may be willing to support instructor professional development by allowing site visits, sharing trade journals and conference information, and participation in staff training opportunities. Advisory committee members may also be willing to assist in identifying and recruiting talented new instructors to teach in the program.

Advisory Committee Member Benefits

The benefits a person will derive from participating as a program advisory committee member will depend upon his or her active participation. Some of the benefits are:

- Personal satisfaction of knowing you have contributed both to the educational program and the growth of the economic community
- Satisfaction of knowing you have helped students
- Satisfaction of knowing you can contribute in strengthening the program and to prepare students to serve the workforce needs of the community
- Assist in providing advice in the use of educational resources

Advisory committee members benefit from serving on a committee by contributing to the development of future professionals within their industry, learning about trends from colleagues in the industry, providing work-based learning opportunities that allows direct connection with students, and encouraging good stewardship of tax-payer funds.

Advisory Committee Functions and Requirements

The purpose of an advisory committee is to assist the program in the decision making process. The primary role of an advisory committee is to provide insight into the realities of the program's targeted industry. This is less about communicating the skills needed and more about understanding the economic landscape for the industry. Functions of the advisory committee may include:

- Reviewing the goals and objectives of the program and serving as a communication link between the program and the community
- Informing program leadership about changes and trends in the economy, industry, and local workforce, including safety standards
- Reviewing program performance and outcome data and recommending revisions to program curriculum
- Reviewing curriculum content to ensure alignment with workplace standards and employer needs
- Assisting in promoting the program and identifying work-based learning opportunities and job opportunities for students/graduates
- Reviewing and recommending facility and/or equipment improvements as well as assisting in identifying potential sources for donations of funds, supplies, and/or equipment needed to enhance program quality

In some instances, advisory committee membership makeup, roles, and functions are dictated by federal and state regulations and/or accrediting bodies. There is no single list of responsibilities nor is there a single best way to structure the committee. However, there are some standards that all advisory committees will be expected to comply with. All occupational programs are required to have an advisory committee and all advisory committees are required to meet at least once annually.

Membership

Ideally, advisory committee members from business and industry will have:

- Knowledge of the skills and professional characteristics required for successful employment in the occupation
- Current and relevant occupational experience and expertise in the industry
- An understanding of economic, regulatory, and educational climates that may impact the industry
- Sincere interest in influencing occupational education and training to ensure a skilled workforce
- Authority to offer work-based learning opportunities and to hire graduates.

Advisory committee membership should also include all faculty who are teaching in the program and student representation (current students, alumni, and special populations as defined by Perkins legislation). The LCC Special Populations Coordinator can assist with identifying special population students.

Other members who should be considered include K-12 representatives, transfer partners, donors, and community organization representatives.

Membership should be staggered (recommend three-year terms) to allow for new members while retaining some experienced representatives to maintain continuity.

Member Role

As a member of an advisory committee, you are part of a group of experts in a specific field. You will advise in the development and operation of a particular program at Lansing Community College, bringing current industry trends, labor market, and occupational safety issues to the attention of the committee. You will also advise in the areas of curriculum content within established college guidelines. Responsibilities include:

- Attend meetings regularly
- Define program outcomes necessary for career/educational preparation
- Assist the program leadership with technical information which they find necessary for the program
- Respect other committee members and help to reach consensus on issues
- Maintain objectivity and concentrate on the program's needs
- Make recommendations for new advisory committee members

Lansing Community College Expectations

The following guidelines outline expectations for committee makeup, roles of the committee chairperson and (where applicable) the co-chairperson, and required documentation.

In instances where advisory committee membership makeup, roles, and functions are dictated by federal and state regulations and/or accrediting bodies, committees are expected to comply with those requirements. All others will be expected to comply with the expectations outlined in this handbook. In all cases, committee member lists, meeting agendas, and meeting minutes must be provided to Academic Affairs.

Chairperson Role

The chairperson shall be an LCC employee and serve as a liaison between the advisory committee and the program/department personnel. He/she attends all scheduled meetings and works with the co-chairperson in setting meeting dates. In addition, he or she will:

- Ensure uniformity and consistency in the committee review process by assisting committee members in evaluation skills
- Understand any regulatory and/or accreditation requirements governing the advisory committee makeup, roles, and operation
- Work with the committee to identify new committee members and ensure regular rotation of committee membership
- Develop and maintain channels of communication between the community, business industry, and Lansing Community College
- Assist with the advisory committee year-end review and the continuous improvement process
- Provide clerical support to the committee
- Assist in organizing the year's schedule
- Preside over meetings
- Determine strategies for completing
- Work closely with new committee members

Co-Chairperson Role

The co-chairperson shall be an external community member elected annually by majority vote of the committee members at the first meeting of the school year. The co-chairperson should be familiar with all duties and responsibilities of the chairperson and assume the duties of the chairperson in their absence.

Meeting Agenda

Advisory committee meeting agendas are prepared by the Chairperson. The agenda, list of committee members including their organization, title, and contact information, along with documentation of the programs goals and learning outcomes, Perkins Core Performance Indicator data (if applicable), program performance data, and other relevant information, will be distributed to committee members via email for review in advance of the meeting.

Meeting agendas and committee member lists must also be sent to the divisional academic dean, associate dean, and the Academic Affairs office.

Meeting Expectations

All advisory committees are required to meet at least once annually. Committee meetings are generally hosted on the LCC campus and last one – two hours. The meeting is facilitated by the committee Chairperson. The purpose of the meeting is to collect input from the advisory committee members, therefore it is encouraged to create an atmosphere that fosters open dialogue. A quorum is required for all decisions or recommendations.

Minutes

All advisory committee meetings must be documented by official minutes. Minutes must document all suggestions, recommendations, and decisions of the committee. Name of members in attendance as well as those absent should also be noted. Minutes should be distributed via email to all committee members (including those who were absent), all faculty teaching in the program, the academic dean, the associate dean, and the Academic Affairs office.

Advisory committee meeting minutes and advisory committee membership lists will be shared with the State of Michigan (upon request) in compliance with Carl D. Perkins legislative requirements. Committee meeting minutes will also be uploaded to LCC SharePoint.

Appendix A: Sample Meeting Agenda

Note that this template is provided as an example and is not required for use.

- I. Introductions
 - a. All committee members share name and affiliation.
- II. Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes (when applicable)
- III. Program Updates from Current Year
 - a. Topic examples may include new or updated textbooks, changes to program or course curriculum, work-based learning opportunities, guest speakers, field trips, student projects, new or updated transfer opportunities, trends in student behavior, challenges, etc.
- IV. Industry Trends & Changes
 - a. This is an opportunity to review EMSI data with the committee.
- V. Review of Program Courses and Curriculum
 - a. How well is the LCC program aligning with workforce expectations, industry standards, labor demands, etc?
 - b. Is the program equipped to handle projected changes coming in the next 5 to 10 years?
 - c. What skills do students need to have upon graduation and do LCC graduates have those skills?
- VI. Perkins Core Performance Indicators (CPI), if applicable
 - a. Are there any disparities in the CPI data?
 - b. Are program CPI levels meeting State expected levels?
 - i. What may be some contributing factors
 - ii. What action plans could be implemented to address any identified factors?
 - iii. What resources may be needed?
- VII. Update of Student and Program Assessment (such as Program Review & PROE)

Appendix B: Tips for Meeting Minutes

- I. Use a template. Some groups use the agenda as a template while others use a unique template for minutes. The important thing is to have a template established prior to the meeting to simplify the minute taking process.
- II. Document who was present and who was absent. We recommend that you circulate a sign-in sheet.
- III. Document actions and their owners. Clearly articulate any decisions made and document motions to approve and vote outcomes (when applicable). For future plans, document who will be responsible and a timeline for deliverables.
- IV. It is not necessary to document discussion.
- V. Include images. For example, if handouts were provided or information was written on a white board, attach those items to the minutes. Take pictures of information that was written on a board or flip chart.
- VI. Write the minutes while the discussion is still fresh in your mind. Send them out in a timely manner. We recommend within a week of the meeting. This allows those who were in attendance to recommend edits and those who were unable to attend to learn about what they missed.
- VII. Submit your minutes to Academic Affairs, along with your advisory committee membership list and meeting agenda.