

Professional-Technical Education

Clark College Advisory Committee **Handbook**

Advise for Action



Introduction

Professional-Technical education programs are an integral part of the community in which they exist and reflect the day-to-day occupational life of that community.

If this reflection is to be accurate, strong partnerships between these programs and the workplace are essential. One of the most effective means of developing these partnerships is the professional-technical education advisory committee.

Professional-Technical education, perhaps more than any other type of education program, requires close cooperation with the private sector. It prepares individuals to enter the labor force and provides the means for retraining and upgrading their skills. To maintain the relevancy of professional-technical education, programs must continually be evaluated and re-evaluated by people actively involved in the various occupational fields. Ongoing assessment by local employers and employees ensure that professional-technical education systems respond to the rapidly changing labor market.

The Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges has recognized the importance of citizens' participation in, and input to, the professional-technical education process by developing policies mandating the establishment and utilization of local professional-technical program advisory committees. The specific policies, rules and regulations adopted by the State Board are contained in the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges Policy and Procedure Manual Chapter 4: Instruction and Program Development, Section 4.21.00 – Advisory Committees for Professional Technical Programs. (See Appendix 1).

The purpose of this handbook is to help professional-technical education advisory committee chairpersons and community and technical college faculty, staff, and administrators improve the quality of professional-technical education in the state of Washington. It is intended to serve as a resource regarding the purpose, structure, creation, and operation of effective advisory committees. This handbook outlines suggested processes that advisory committees may follow to carry out their work and to focus their work on needs of the education programs and communities they serve.

Table of Contents

Introduction			
Table of Contents			
<hr/>			
Part 1	2	Part 3	11
Purpose of the Committee	2	Planning Meetings	11
Role of the Committee	2	Conducting Meetings	11
Role of the Chairperson	3	Minutes of Meetings	12
<hr/>			
Part 2	5	Illustration 4—	
Organizational Structure	5	Sample Agenda for Meeting to	
Size of the Committee	5	Organize Committee	14
Terms of Service	5	Illustration 5—	
Composition of Membership	5	Sample Agenda for Regular Meeting	14
Selection of Members	6	Illustration 6—	
Selection Process	6	Sample Notice of Meeting	15
Selection and Duties of Officers	6	Illustration 7—	
Orientation of New Members	7	Sample Minutes	15
Bylaws	7	<hr/>	
Illustration 1—		Appendix I	16
Sample Invitation Letter	8	State Board for Community & Technical	
Illustration 2—		Colleges Policy on Advisory Committees	16
Sample Appointment Letter	8		
Illustration 3—			
Sample Bylaws	9		

Part I



General

This section of this Handbook describes the purpose of the committee, role of the committee, and roles of the chairperson and educators.

Purpose of the Committee

The primary purpose for advisory committees is to serve as advisors to the college, providing advocacy, curriculum recommendations, and support for quality professional-technical education programs. Advisory committees have no administrative or legislative authority. Each community and technical college or college district is required to develop and publish advisory committee procedures which describe its unique implementation of the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges Policy and Procedure Manual Chapter 4: Instruction and Program Development, Section 4.21.00 – Advisory Committees for Professional Technical Programs. (See Appendix 1).

Role of the Committee

Professional-technical advisory committees have three major roles. They are to advise, assist, and provide support and advocacy for quality professional-technical education.

In an advising role, advisory committees assess specific areas of the professional-technical education program and formulate suggestions and recommendations designed to improve that specific area. Suggestions and recommendations should be presented formally to the college administration. Examples of recommendations could include modification of curriculum content, purchase of new

Purpose and Role of Advisory Committees

instructional materials or high-tech equipment, adoption of a new safety policy, and the like.

In an assisting role, advisory committees help instructors and administrators carry out specific activities. Examples include judging competitive skill events, setting up scholarships, and obtaining media coverage for special events.

In a support and advocacy role, advisory committees promote and advocate the quality of professional-technical programs throughout the community. Examples include talking to legislators, showing public support of professional-technical education, and writing articles for local newspapers.

Role of the Chairperson

The chairperson plays a critical role in maximizing the effectiveness of the committee. The chairperson sets the tone for the committee, works with the Department Head to develop the agenda and moves the committee through each agenda item. There are four major elements to becoming a successful chairperson:

- **Keep the committee's purpose in mind**

The advisory committee's overriding purpose is to help improve and modernize the professional-technical program it is serving.

- **Take charge**

To be effective, advisory committee members must feel that their time and expertise are being utilized. Members need action in order to gain a sense of self-fulfillment. The chairperson,

together with educators, needs to create an environment that will result in an effective and successful committee.

- **Expect results**

To have something occur, the committee must be goal directed. The committee must decide what it is that they want to accomplish and then develop a plan to accomplish it. The chairperson guides members through a series of discussions results in recommendations for program outcomes.

- **Be organized**

Well-organized committee meetings add to the committee's effectiveness. The chairperson should plan an agenda at least two weeks prior to a committee meeting. The agenda should include minutes of the most recent committee meeting, standing committee and subcommittee reports, officer reports, and unfinished and new business. The chairperson should pace the meeting to complete all agenda items in an organized way and on time. The committee should know well in advance the date, start time, ending time, and location of all meetings. A good practice is to set a date and time for the next committee meeting prior to adjourning.



Organizational Structure

Development of an organizational structure and operating procedures for the advisory committee should involve committee members. The structure and procedures are usually developed as part of the committee's constitution and bylaws. This section outlines areas for committee members to consider as they develop and rules and procedures to govern the operation of their committee.

Included in this section are size of committee, term of service, composition of membership, selection process, selection and duties of officers, orientation of new members, sample charter or constitution, and sample bylaws.

This information is suggestive only and should not be viewed as the only process for establishing an advisory committee. The constitution and bylaws should be adapted to meet the needs of the specific advisory committee.

Size of the Committee

The size of the committee may vary by size of the community, scope of the professional-technical education offerings, diversity of businesses and industries in the community, and the purpose of the committee. Effective advisory committees should be large enough to reflect the diversity of the community, yet small enough to operate effectively. Committees with fewer than five members (five is the SBCTC minimum) can be less effective since they have limited perspective, inadequate information on a number of target jobs, and too few employers and employees represented. Committees with more than 18 members can become unmanageable. Eight to fifteen members are the usual size.

Terms of Service

Three-year terms of service most easily allow for continuity and change. One-third of the total membership can be appointed beginning each year after the first year of operation. To establish this rotation with a new committee, members can draw lots for one, two, or three-year terms, with one-third of the committee in each category. New members are appointed as terms expire.

It is recommended, if feasible, that members not be appointed to consecutive terms and that at least a one-year absence be considered before reappointment. By establishing a length of term, time demands for members will be clarified at the outset.

Composition of Membership

To provide effective communications between professional-technical education programs and the community, advisory committee membership must be representative of various interests in the college's service area. Members may be selected from the following:

- Representative businesses and industries, particularly those predominate in the area.
- Equal representation of labor and management.
- Both sexes, individuals with disabilities, educationally and economically disadvantaged individuals, racial and ethnic minorities who reside in the area served by the program.
- Employed graduates of the program.
- Economic Development Council and local Chamber of Commerce members.

Part II

- Workforce Investment Board members.
- Employment Security personnel.

In brief, the committee should strive for equal number of employees and employers, representing local business, labor and industry. If the occupation is apprenticeable, and a local JATC is active in the area, at least one labor and one management member of the JATC must be invited to participate.

Selection Process

Some personal qualities, which are desirable in members, include:

- Interest
- Availability
- Character
- Skill/Experience

A procedure sometimes used in the selection process is to contact specific businesses or organizations and have them select individuals from their business or organization to serve on the committee. The invitation to serve should be in writing (Illustration 1).

Following the nominee's acceptance of the invitation to serve, an appointment letter should be sent. This letter should state the term for which the appointment has been made (Illustration 2).

Selection and Duties of Officers

The success of the committee depends primarily on the leadership abilities of the officers.

Election of officers may be at the first or last meeting of the school year. Elections held during the

last meeting of the school year are preferable. In this way, officers are experienced members who can plan next year's agenda during the summer. Also, the first meeting of the new academic year can be reserved for orienting new members and for establishing a program of work.

Suggested officers are a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, and a secretary. Typical procedures, and duties for each position follow:

Chairperson

- The chairperson's leadership is the key to the committee's success. An employer or employee advisory committee member must chair the committee. Committee chairs are elected from the lay members—**faculty are not to serve in this capacity.**

Responsibilities of the chairperson include:

- Prepare meeting agendas and assist school representative in handling details regarding meetings.
- Preside at meetings.
- Arrange the committee's work activities and keep group efforts focused.
- Delegate tasks and follow-up work.
- Arrange to have background information and reports presented to the committee.
- Appoint standing committees and subcommittees.
- Represent the committee at official meetings and functions.
- Submit written recommendations of the committee to the college's administrator for professional-technical education.

- Follow up on committee recommendations and actions.

Vice Chairperson

- In the absence of the chairperson, the vice-chairperson should preside at committee meetings.

Secretary

- The secretary works with designated college representative to record meeting minutes and assists the chairperson with other committee responsibilities.

Responsibilities of the secretary include the following:

- Ensure that minutes of meetings are prepared and distributed.
- Ensure that agenda, announcements, minutes, and other information are distributed to members.

Orientation of New Members

New members should be oriented to their responsibilities and tasks. The committee's success depends on how well members understand their role.

Orientation should occur at or before the first meeting and continue, as needed, throughout the school year.

The new member orientation would include a review of the Member's Guide, the committee's constitution and bylaws, a list of current members, information about the education program along with its goals and objectives, and a tour of the program's facilities.

Bylaws

Effective advisory committees have bylaws that establish operating guidelines for the committee. As a minimum, these documents usually include:

- Name of the committee.
- Purpose.
- Relationship to the college administration and Board of Trustees.
- Membership.
- Organizational structure.
- Procedural rules.

Bylaws cover operation of the committee, selection of officers, appointment of subcommittees, responsibilities of members, and establishing of the program of work.

Because the rules of operation may need to change as the program of work or committee membership changes, bylaws should be reviewed and discussed at the beginning of each school year. Illustration 3 is a sample of committee bylaws and is not intended to be all-inclusive.

Illustration 1

Sample Invitation Letter

Date

Linda Edwards
123 E. McLoughlin Blvd.
Vancouver, WA 98663

Dear Ms. Edwards:

Your experience and demonstrated competency have led to your recommendation for membership on the (name of program) Advisory Committee. The Committee is composed of outstanding business, industry, labor, and civic representatives from our community. It works to forge closer cooperation between business and education by continually improving the professional-technical preparation for students at (name of college). Your insight into training needs and competencies would be of great value.

We realize your time is limited; we will make every effort to keep our meetings prompt, precise, and purposeful. There will be (number) meetings a year for each of the three years of your term.

We invite you to become a member of this important Committee. Your three-year term would begin July 15. Please consider this invitation and inform us of your decision by May 15. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Administrator
Professional-Technical Education

Illustration 2

Sample Appointment Letter

Date

Linda Edwards
123 E. McLoughlin Blvd.
Vancouver, WA 98663

Dear Ms. Edwards:

Congratulations on your three-year appointment to the (name of program) Advisory Committee. 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 place in which to live and work.

Your first meeting as a member is scheduled for August 1 at 7:00 p.m. in the (name and address of school). H.V. Green, the Committee Chairperson, will contact you soon to provide you with a tentative agenda and other materials.

We look forward to working with you. If you have any questions, please call me at (phone number).

Sincerely,

Administrator
Professional-Technical Education

Illustration 3

Sample Bylaws

BYLAWS
(Name of Committee)
(Name of Program & College)

ARTICLE I

Committee Operation

- Section 1** Meetings will be held at a time and date specified by the committee.
- Section 2** At least (number of) meetings will be held each school year. The exact number of meetings will be determined by the annual program of work.
- Section 3** The Executive Committee will develop the agenda for each meeting.
- Section 4** The program of work will be a consideration in setting the agenda for each meeting.
- Section 5** Discussion to obtain consensus will be the prevailing procedure used at meetings. Parliamentary procedure will be used when a decision is to be recorded and transmitted as a recommendation.
- Section 6** A quorum will consist of a simple majority of appointed members.
- Section 7** Meeting minutes will be recorded for each meeting and distributed to each member and appropriate college officials.

ARTICLE II

Subcommittees

- Section 1** Standing subcommittees should be established for such areas as deemed necessary by the chairperson.
- Section 2** Subcommittees may be of any size.
- Section 3** Subcommittees will elect their own chairpersons.

ARTICLE III

Officers

- Section 1** Officers will be elected by a simple majority. Officers will serve a one-year term and may be re-elected.
- Section 2** Officers will include a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, and a secretary.
- Section 3** Officers will be elected at the first meeting of each new academic year.

ARTICLE IV

Member Responsibilities

- Section 1** Each member will attend meetings and participate in work activities.
- Section 2** Each member will study the issues or problems that come before the committee.

ARTICLE V

Program of Work

- Section 1** An annual program of work will be established by the committee during its first two meetings each year. Included in the program of work should be goals, objectives, tasks, time lines, member(s) responsibilities, and date completed.

Bylaws adopted: (date)



General

Officers direct, coordinate, and facilitate the work of the committee. Planning and conducting meetings deserve special attention so that time is well spent and effort is focused.

Planning Meetings

Successful committees meet regularly. Meeting dates are set by the group during development of the annual program of work. Notice of advisory committee meetings should be publicized and meetings should be open to the public. Consult with the appropriate college administrator regarding procedures that are followed in the system.

Each meeting is focused on particular content or issues, held in a comfortable location, and planned well in advance of the meeting date. The general planning process involves reviewing minutes of the last several meetings and the annual program of work in order to create the meeting agenda. A sample agenda for the organizational meeting of an advisory committee and a typical agenda for a regular meeting are outlined in Illustrations 4 and 5.

Social aspects of the meeting, such as light refreshments, contribute to group morale and commitment. Some meetings could be held away from the college campus to encourage an employment or community atmosphere. In preparation for the meeting:

- Establish and publicize time, date, and location of each meeting.
- Arrange for a meeting room and equipment.
- Notify committee members and appropriate college officials, in writing, of meeting date, agenda, and location.

- Arrange for refreshments, meals, special presentations and the like, if appropriate.
- Confirm all arrangements several days before the meeting.
- Call committee members and other attendees to remind them of the meeting.
- Prepare materials for issues to be addressed.

Emphasis on attendance and participation in committee work builds commitment and interest. A meeting notice and agenda should be sent in advance to members and appropriate college officials. Minutes from the previous meeting should be included. Background materials necessary for completing the work at the upcoming meeting should also be available. A sample notice of a meeting is given in Illustration 6.

Conducting Meetings

The following guidelines are useful for facilitating group activities and interactions at committee meetings:

State the purpose of the meeting and review the agenda. Some committees set goals or objectives for each meeting as a way of focusing on purposes.

- Encourage all members to speak and to respect the rights and opinions of each individual.
- Ask clarifying questions.
- Periodically, summarize discussion and point out the connections and contradictions between points.

- Use parliamentary procedure for decisions; otherwise, encourage open and informal discussion. The majority rules, but minority opinions must be addressed.
- Consider and resolve one issue at a time.
- Explore and encourage all points of view in working toward consensus.
- Show strong interest in attendance, ideas, and program of work.
- Distribute work assignments throughout the group.
- Make assignments and work tasks clear and specific; explain expectations, time lines, and products. Discuss background of issues so that everyone shares a common understanding of the terminology and the importance of the problems.
- Structure the meeting to avoid wasted time. This conveys a sense of organization, purpose, and productivity.
- Keep members informed of activities and progress.
- Recognize and reward members. Even a simple thank you is an effective reinforcement.
- Evaluate committee work regularly.

The atmosphere for interaction is critical. It is through discussion that members present views and develop findings, while moving toward consensus. The most productive atmosphere in a group meeting is a supportive atmosphere. The least productive atmosphere is a defensive one. Creating a productive atmosphere is time well spent.

The first or second meeting sets the tone for the year. The following ideas help establish a positive tone.

- Concentrate on establishing a friendly atmosphere, coupled with a seriousness of purpose and the background information necessary to begin the job.
- Emphasis that each member's knowledge and experience are unique and of great potential value to the program.
- Tour the facilities.
- Meet students enrolled in the professional-technical program.
- Invite board college administrators to a meeting.
- Provide opportunities for members to become acquainted with one another in social contexts, perhaps during meals or social gatherings.
- Discuss the expectations for committee work and for member behavior.
- Discuss future meetings; program needs, and past work.
- Call meeting to order and adjourn at the appointed time.

Minutes of Meetings

As the official record of committee activities, minutes keep individuals and groups informed about the committee's concerns, decisions, and activities. They remind members of the group's progress; they document the committee's productivity and its contribution to the professional-technical program.

Keeping the minutes takes time, skill, and persistence. Minutes must be accurate, thorough, maintained promptly and continuously, uniform in style, and document proceedings of the committee.

Illustration 7 is an example of typical minutes for an advisory committee. Specific comments and ideas may be attributed to individual members. When done in a supportive way, crediting individuals with specific ideas in the minutes is an effective way of reinforcing active member participation.



Illustration 4

Sample Agenda for Meeting to Organize Committee

(Name of Program & College)
Ad Hoc Advisory Committee

Meeting Location:
(Name of College or Other Facility)
Building 9 Conference Room
September 19, 2000
7:00p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Agenda

Call to Order

Administrator/Professional-Technical
Education (Chair, Pro-tem)

Welcome

College President/VP of Academic Affairs

Introductions

Role of the Advisory Committee

Overview of the Need for a New Program

Review Available Information

Plan of Work to Obtain SBCTC Approval

- Review SBCTC Program Approval Request procedure
- Conduct program needs survey
- Expand advisory committee membership
- Appoint subcommittees to develop needs survey, program description, curriculum materials, faculty qualifications, and other required documentation.

Establish Time, Date, and Location for the Next Meeting

Adjourn

Illustration 5

Sample Agenda for Regular Meeting

(Name of Program & College)
Advisory Committee

Riverview Restaurant – 1111 South Main
November 14, 2000
6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Call to Order

Approval of Minutes

Unfinished Business

- Report of Response to Previous Committee Recommendations
- Report of Subcommittee on Competencies
- Update on Program of Work for this Year
- Other

New Business

- Establish Subcommittee on New Technology
- Assess Equipment and Facilities
- Elect Next Year's Officers
- Other
- Next meeting date, time, and location

Adjourn

Illustration 6

Sample Notice of Meeting

Date _____

Louise Pederson
389 Oaklawn Place
Vancouver, WA 98682

Dear Louise:

Our next meeting of the (program name) Advisory Committee will be (date) at (time) in the (place). Enclosed is a copy of the agenda for the meeting. The purpose of the meeting will be:

1. To begin study of the employment needs in the community; and
2. To plan student cooperative work experience summer jobs.

We look forward to seeing you. Please notify me by (date) if you cannot attend.

Sincerely,

(name), Chairperson
(program name) Advisory Committee

Illustration 7

Sample Minutes

(Name of College)

Program Name

Advisory Committee Minutes

Meeting/Date/Time/Place: _____

Attendees:

Topics Discussed:

-
-
-
-
-

Old Business:

-
-

New Business:

-
-

Motions:

-
-

Action Items Assigned:

-
-

Next Meeting (Date/Time/Place): _____

Prepared by: _____

Appendix 1

Chapter 4: Instruction and Program Development

4.21.00 - ADVISORY COMMITTEES FOR PROFESSIONAL-TECHNICAL PROGRAMS

The primary purpose for advisory committees is to serve as advisors to the college, providing advocacy, curriculum recommendations, and support for quality professional-technical education programs. Advisory committees have no administrative or legislative authority. Each community and technical college or college district is required to develop and publish advisory committee procedures which describe its unique implementation of the following elements, and further clarifies elements described in the suggested procedure section.

College advisory committee procedures will:

- Define the types of advisory committees that are permissible, that allow for regional cooperation, that meet a minimum of twice each calendar year, and provide for advisory meeting minutes that are maintained for a minimum of three years.
- Define required professional-technical advisory committee membership that will strive to ensure representation of gender and cultural diversity and include equal representation of business and labor, with the committee chair elected from the lay members.
- Define a formal professional-technical advisory committee member appointment process involving college administration, that sets term limits with allowed exceptions, and provides an advisory member inventory on form SBCTC PA-ADV.
- Describe required training for all advisory committee members prior to serving as voting members, including familiarization with Washington Ethics Law as it pertains to their involvement with the college.
- Provide a list of duties essential for proper functioning of the professional-technical advisory committees providing for timely feedback to committees on their recommendations.
- Describe realistic enterprise plans.

The SBCTC staff will provide technical assistance with development of procedures.

4.21.01 – SUGGESTED PROCEDURE COMPONENT LANGUAGE

General Advisory Committee

An advisory committee must be appointed by the college

administration for each professional-technical program or program cluster. The advisory committee can be formed for a single program, a group or cluster of like programs within a college, or a regional committee for a single program or cluster of like programs in a geographical region. If the program cluster or regional advisory committees are used, colleges should ensure that every professional-technical program area is adequately represented.

Regional advisory committees are helpful for the purpose of providing a coordinated educational effort among colleges and school districts.

The clustering of advisory committees is recommended to enable balanced representation while minimizing the burden of excessive meetings.

A minimum of two advisory committee meetings must be held during each calendar year.

A quorum should be established for each committee.

Minutes for these meetings must be on file for the previous three years.

Committee Membership

Advisory committees must be composed of equal numbers of employees and employers representing local business, labor and industry.

When the occupation being taught is apprenticeable and a local Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee (JATC) is active in the geographical area, at least one labor and one management member of the JATC must be invited to be a part of the respective advisory committee. The college is responsible to contact the chairperson or secretary of the JATC and request representation for the specific advisory committee.

Advisory Member Appointment Process

Advisory committee members must be formally appointed by the college, in writing, for a specific term limit (i.e., one, two, or three years). The college may re-appoint members for additional terms when appropriate.

The recommended minimum committee size is five.

The appointment process should strive to ensure representation of gender and cultural diversity.

Colleges must maintain an inventory including all information requested on form SBCTC PA-ADV of the membership of each advisory committee. This inventory should be updated annually.

Members not attending at least 50 percent of the scheduled meetings should be replaced in order to maintain a viable committee.

state board for community and technical colleges policy and procedures manual

Advisory Committee Training

Advisory committee members need to be instructed as to their roles, responsibilities, and duties prior to serving as voting members. That instruction should also include all pertinent sections of the new Washington Ethics Law, Revised Code of Washington, Chapter 42.52, as it pertains to their involvement with the college. The committee should be clear on how the committee will carry out its functions over the course of the year, and a plan of work identified.

Suggested Advisory Committee Duties

Curriculum:

Review labor market information to ensure the occupational program area is in demand and that vacancies exist for future employment.

Advise the college as to the industry standard or certification required by the occupational area, and/or assist in the development of skill standards where appropriate.

Review the content of the professional-technical program and respective courses. Advise the college of changing market conditions, technologies, and employment needs.

Advise as to the kinds and balance of theory, technical skill development, production work, and/or realistic enterprise tasks to be accomplished by the students, in order to ensure the most effective and efficient use of instruction time.

Review instructional materials and recommend those that are most appropriate to the instructional program; i.e., instructional materials, computer software, technical materials, and trade publications.

Assist the college in conducting special events that benefit both the student and the college; i.e. manufacturing, product seminars, and college open house.

Facilities and Equipment Budget:

Advise the college as to the adequacy of the physical facilities and conditions of equipment, and prepare recommendations for effecting needed change.

Assist the college in obtaining instructional equipment.

Review annual budgetary requests for equipment and supplies, make recommendations, and assist in the development of bid or purchase specifications when appropriate.

Advise in development of plans for new construction or remodeling of existing facilities.

Instructional Quality:

Advise the college in the development of qualifications

for the hiring of instructors and serve on interview panels when appropriate.

Advise in the development of evaluation instruments and procedures that may assist in determining the effectiveness of the instructional program, conduct outcome assessments, and recommend appropriate changes.

Recommend procedures for developing, implementing, and evaluating work-based learning experience programs.

Recommend instructional practices that will promote the development of a safe instructional environment, and that will instill safe work attitudes and habits in students.

Recommend strategies that ensure that instructors maintain instructional, industry, and state-of-the-art proficiency.

Recommend standards and minimum academic qualifications for student enrollment into programs.

Advise administration regarding program continuation and/or modification as determined by a review of outcomes.

Instructional Delivery:

Review national and state directives and initiatives and their impact on local programs, and make recommendations on how to incorporate the required changes.

Help college secure qualified substitute instructors.

Student Employment:

Recommend ways to assist students in the landing of internships and/or eventual employment.

Assist in the development of portable, transferable competencies, skills, and abilities expected of successful employees.

Realistic Enterprise

If a job account or realistic enterprise is to be conducted by or in a professional-technical program, a procedural plan must be on file and should be jointly approved by the college and the advisory committee. The plan should describe, as a minimum, hours of operation, the goods and services that will be produced or sold, what the charges, fees, and taxes will be for each, who is eligible for services, and on what time basis.

Approved 1/24/2000



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