

Councils/Committees/Task Forces Defined

We have instituted a number of councils that fulfill the intent of shared governance and include all campus constituent groups. We also have committees that have a specific purpose and were created to focus on programmatic areas which may or may not require membership from each constituency.

Councils: Councils are shared governance bodies that include representation from all college constituencies. They recommend and review district policy and procedures, review institutional performance, and make recommendations for institutional improvement. (See Table 2 for a list of councils)

Committees: Committees have relevant campus representation and a functional focus. These committees may make recommendations regarding institutional operational practices as it relates to their areas of expertise. Standing committees report to a particular shared governance council and work with other councils as needed on an issue that is pertinent to that area. (See Table 1 for a list of committees)

Taskforces: Any council/committee may establish a taskforce. A taskforce is a temporary group that addresses a specific task or project. Members are chosen based on their relationship to the processes under review, expertise about the issues, or ownership of potential solutions or outcomes.

Council/Committee Structure

The council/committee structure has been designed to integrate the daily operational work with the overarching college planning and ultimately the standards by which our college is evaluated (accrediting standards). The structure is designed to enhance the flow of information from the bottom up, from the top down, and among the various areas of the college laterally.

The structure identifies primary responsibility for our regional accrediting standards as well as promotes continuity by connecting the overarching shared governance body called the College Council, to the ground floor of the planning process (institutional effectiveness).

Council/Committee functions vary and are detailed in each committee's description form shown later in this manual.

Council/Committee Responsibilities

Each council/committee will establish annual goals related to institutional priorities or changing needs and conclude this cycle with a summary report of its accomplishments, challenges, and suggestions. This report should be delivered to the appropriate councils/committees. The report includes an evaluation of processes and recommendations for improvements. The reports will be published and distributed broadly to ensure access to information. (See appendix for templates and standards)

All council agendas will include committee reports. The College Council agenda will include various council reports.

Using Consensus to Reach Decisions

All councils/committees use consensus to reach decisions and make recommendations. This process can only occur when a quorum exists.

When Consensus is Reached

It's incumbent upon the council co-chairs to advise the note taker to include any reservations expressed by members when documenting consensus. Members may choose to stand aside and allow the consensus to move forward.

When Consensus is Not Reached

It's incumbent upon the council co-chairs to advise the note taker to include any dissenting opinions expressed by members when documenting the lack consensus. Co-chairs may have the option of researching the dissenting views, creating a taskforce, or pursuing strategies that may lead to reaching consensus, or deciding to table the issue.

Defining Consensus and Quorum

Consensus is middle ground in decision making, between total assent and total disagreement. Consensus depends on participants having shared values and goals, and on having broad agreement on specific issues and overall direction. Consensus implies that everyone accepts and supports the decision, and understands the reasons for making it. (www.businessdictionary.com)

In order for action to be taken, a quorum must exist which is defined as 50 percent of the council/committee plus one. Recall that ex-officio members have the right to participate and have a voice in all council/committee actions, however, consensus does not require ex-officio member's agreement.

Council/Committee Representation

Membership on councils and committees is determined through a variety of procedures depending on the council/committee and its relationship to other institutional bodies. How members are selected is described in the council/committee description. The key element of effective decision making is the degree of active representation demonstrated by each member. This includes communicating the council/committees' work back to the constituency which the member represents and in turn brings forward the ideas, recommendations, and concerns of the constituencies.

Members

Each constituent group appoints one member to the council. Thus, there are always 8 members in every council.

A council can appoint ex-officio member(s) to the council. Ex-officio council members are individuals who are members by virtue of their position or function that is germane to the charge of the council/ committee. Ex-officio members have the right to participate and have a voice in all council/committee actions. Council consensus does not require ex-officio member's agreement. Ex-officio members are expected to attend all meetings.

Committee Members

Committee membership does not require, but may have constituency representation. Membership is defined in each committee's description form shown later in this manual.

All council/committee members will:

- Attend meetings regularly;
- Act in a respectful and professional manner;
- Keep their constituent groups informed of council actions; and,
- Complete assignments associated with council work in a timely fashion.