ED 463 411   CE 082 946

AUTHOR   Kerka, Sandra
TITLE   Effective Advisory Committees. In Brief: Fast Facts for
                Policy and Practice.
INSTITUTION   National Dissemination Center for Career and Technical
                Education, Columbus, OH.
SPONS AGENCY   Office of Vocational and Adult Education (ED), Washington,
                DC.
REPORT NO   NDCCTE-17
PUB DATE   2002-00-00
NOTE   4p.
CONTRACT   V051A990004
AVAILABLE FROM For full text:
                http://www.nccte.org/publications/infosynthesis/in-brief/in-
                brief 17/inbrief17-advcomm.pdf.
PUB TYPE   Information Analyses (070)
EDRS PRICE   MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS   *Advisory Committees; Curriculum Development; Educational
                Assessment; *Educational Planning; Governing Boards; Group
                Dynamics; Planning; Policy Formation; Postsecondary
                Education; Program Effectiveness; Program Evaluation;
                Relationship; Responsibility; *Role; Secondary Education;
                Status; *Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS   Career and Technical Education

ABSTRACT
        In career and technical education (CTE), advisory committees
are groups of employers and community representatives who advise educators on
the design, development, operation, evaluation, and revision of CTE programs.
These committees may oversee an entire program or institution, provide input
to a specific department or technical area, or advise an entire school
district or state system. Advisory committees often have responsibilities in
the areas of curriculum and instruction, program review, recruitment and job
placement, student organizations, staff development, community and public
relations, resource development, and legislation. Effective advisory
committees provide ongoing evaluation, consultation, and research on programs
and curriculum. Indicators of effectiveness include appropriate structure,
group processes, and procedures. A committee composed of knowledgeable,
committed, and participating members who understand their role and use
effective group processes, connected to an institution that genuinely desires
their input, will enhance the effectiveness of the institution and serve the
best interests of the students. (Contains 13 references.) (KC)

Effective Advisory Committees
In Brief: Fast Facts for Policy and Practice
No. 17

Sandra Kerka

National Dissemination Center for Career and Technical Education
The Ohio State University
1900 Kenny Road
Columbus, OH 43210-1090

Effective Advisory Committees   no. 17

2002
by Sandra Kerka

In career and technical education (CTE), advisory committees are groups of employers and community representatives who advise educators on the design, development, operation, evaluation, and revision of CTE programs (Smith, Payne, and Thornton 2001). The workplace knowledge and resources provided by committee members help ensure that all aspects of occupational education reflect the needs and current conditions of the workplace and that program graduates are capable of performing in the occupations for which they have trained (Edison Community College n.d.). Whether or not a program must follow Perkins Act mandates for committees (Backes 2000), both secondary and postsecondary CTE programs should find them indispensable to maintaining state-of-the-art, community-linked curricula in a time of rapid, continuous change and demands for accountability.

Only effective, fully used committees will serve this function, however, not "paper tigers" established merely to meet mandates (Gonzenbach, Morgan, and Sheets 1997). This *In Brief* addresses the following questions: What do advisory committees do? What are the indicators of an effective committee? What are some examples of the uses of advisory committees?

What Do Advisory Committees Do?

A committee may oversee an entire program or institution, provide input to a specific department or technical area ("craft committee"), or advise an entire school district or state system (Backes 2000). Its duties may be statutory—many states have legislative requirements for the activities of local committees (Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System 1997; South Carolina Department of Education 2000)—or its functions may be determined by local needs. Most committees conduct activities in the following areas: curriculum and instruction, program review, recruitment and job placement, student organizations, staff development, community/public relations, resources, and legislation.

Curriculum and Instruction

o Identify and expand the use of new technologies
o Compare content with occupational competencies and tasks
o Analyze course content and sequence
o Assist in developing and validating tests
o Advise on labor market needs and trends
o Review, recommend, and assist in obtaining instructional materials
o Recommend safety policies and procedures
(Colorado 1997; Miller 1999; Tri-City 2001)

Program Review

o Review and recommend program goals and objectives
o Participate in program evaluation and recommend evaluation criteria
o Compare student performance standards to business/industry standards
o Assess, recommend, and/or provide equipment and facilities
o Evaluate the quality and quantity of graduates and job placement
o Conduct community and occupational surveys
o Identify new and emerging occupations
o Recommend new programs or elimination of obsolete programs
o Participate in long-term planning
(Colorado 1997; Edison Community College n.d.; Gonzenbach et al. 1997; Smith et al. 2001; Tri-City 2001)

Recruitment and Job Placement

o Assist in reviewing teacher selection criteria
o Assist in recruiting new staff and potential students
o Notify instructors of job openings
o Provide or obtain cooperative work experiences, internships/externships, work/study, or work-based learning opportunities for students
o Assist students in developing resumes and interviewing skills
o Assist with career days/job fairs
o Hire graduates/program completers
(Colorado 1997; Edison n.d.; Tri-City 2001)

Student Organizations

o Assist in developing and judging competitive skill events
o Sponsor student organization activities and assist in fundraising
o Conduct leadership development activities
o Assist students with career development
o Evaluate student portfolios
(Colorado 1997; South Carolina 2000; Tri-City 2001)

Staff Development

o Provide inservice activities for instructors
o Provide instructors with retraining/back-to-industry and summer opportunities for technical upgrading
o Review professional development plans
o Support staff attendance at conferences
o Conduct workplace tours
(Miller 1997; Smith et al. 2001; Tri-City 2001)

Community/Public Relations

o Interpret the CTE program to employers, community, and the media
o Present programs to community groups
o Establish programs to recognize outstanding students, teachers, and community leaders
o Promote special school events
o Assist in developing a marketing plan
(Colorado 1997; Edison n.d.; Tri-City 2001)

Resources

o Assist in budget development and review
o Conduct fundraising activities and make or obtain donations
o Establish scholarships and awards
o Provide tours and field trips, job shadowing experiences, and speakers
o Leverage community resources and broker community partnerships
(Miller 1999; South Carolina 2000; Tri-City 2001)

Legislation

o Advocate for programs with legislators
o Arrange tours of programs for legislators
o Involve legislators in program events
o Update programs on legislative actions
(Colorado 1997; Tri-City 2001)

What Are the Indicators of an Effective Committee?

An effective advisory committee fulfills its primary **purpose** by providing ongoing evaluation, consultation, and research on programs and curriculum (Mercer and Dillon 1997). Indicators of effectiveness include the following. The committee—

- develops and carries out a yearly plan of action/program of work
- articulates long-term and short-term goals and objectives
- regularly reviews curricula to determine if they are meeting the needs of the students and the projected employment needs of business and industry
- promotes and publicizes the program
- reviews yearly outcome data from the program
- assesses the impact of recommendations yearly

(Colorado 1997; Mercer and Dillon 1997; Smith et al. 2001; Tri City 2001)

An effective committee has an appropriate **structure** (Mercer and Dillon 1997). Indicators of effectiveness include the following. The committee—

- Has appropriate composition and number of members. The committee membership is representative of genders and minorities and is composed of individuals who represent the community, special populations, business, industry, students, parents, community agencies, labor, and other individuals having skills in and knowledge of the occupation. Selection criteria include occupational expertise, industry perspective, peer recognition, interest in students, commitment, and diversity.
- Establishes processes for member recruitment, selection, appointment, and retirement
- Conducts member orientation, relationship building, development, and evaluation
- Formally recognizes member contributions

(Colorado 1997; Mercer and Dillon 1997; Smith et al. 2001)

An effective committee attends to **group process and procedures**. Indicators of effectiveness include the following. The committee—

- Operates under published, reviewed policies and procedures including an up-to-date constitution and bylaws
- Elects officers on a regular, systematic basis
- Meets often enough to establish working relationships and accomplish workplan

- Conducts well-attended meetings with a clear purpose and agenda
- Maintains a record of recommendations and/or actions that is distributed to the appropriate administrators and members
- Has active participation from school/college staff
- Uses effective group process—decision making and problem solving, group ownership, facilitation
- Has adequate administrative and clerical support

(Backes 2000; Colorado 1997; Smith et al. 2001)

Examples

Developing and maintaining viable advisory committees are challenging tasks for CTE practitioners. Hudson County Schools of Technology in New Jersey infused new life into its committees by replacing 25 program-specific committees with 10 councils organized by career clusters (DeNoble 1998). "Council members no longer observe just one program; instead they're dealing with a big picture" (p. 9). Cross-cluster communication has enriched curriculum review, updating, and other advisory activities. The cluster approach may better reflect the contemporary structure of CTE programs and encourage teaming and integration.

Giving committee members a handbook or guide conveys a program's recognition of the importance of the committee, willingness to communicate, and respect for committee members' role. A number of examples of handbooks are available on the Web: Cantrell (2000), Colorado (1997), Moraine Park (2001), and South Carolina (2000) include samples of committee structures, membership, responsibilities, program of work, welcome letters, agendas, minutes, and other materials.

A committee composed of knowledgeable, committed, and participating members who understand their role and use effective group processes is part of the puzzle. One other very important piece is this: the institution genuinely desires their input. Administrators and instructors should consider how much support or advice they want and actually can or will use (Teitel 1994). Striking the right power balance with an advisory committee is a matter of communication, trust, and understanding of the big picture—serving the best interests of the students.

References

Backes, C. E. "Creating an Advisory Committee: Improving Vocational Programs with Community Support." *Tech Directions* 60, no. 1 (August 2000): 24-27.

Cantrell, E. F. *Vocational Education Business and Industry Advisory Committee Resource Guide* (Draft). Los Angeles Mission College, 2000. http://lamission.org/pab/resourceguide.htm

Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System. *A Guide to the Operation of Career & Technical Education Advisory Committees.* Denver: CCCOES, 1997.

DeNoble, K. A. "By Any Other Name." *Techniques: Making Education and Career Connections* 73, no. 1: (January 1998): 9.

Edison Community College. *Advisory Committee Handbook.* Ft. Myers, FL: ECC, n.d. http://www.edison.edu/aboutecc/policies/advisory_committee_handbook.pdf

Gonzenbach, N. M.; Morgan, B. A.; and Sheets, J. L. "The Forgotten Resource for Education—Advisory Councils." *ATEA Journal* 24, no. 4 (April-May 1997): 9-12.

Mercer, J. W., and Dillon, B. M. *Member Handbook and Leadership Guide for Minnesota Technical Program Advisory Committees.* St. Paul: Minnesota State Council on Vocational Technical Education, 1997. (ED 408 467)

Moraine Park Technical College. *Advisory Committee Handbook.* Fond du Lac, WI: Moraine Park Technical College, 2001. http://www.morainepark.edu/academics/advisory.shtml

Miller, L. *Policy Paper on the Role of the Family and Consumer Sciences State Advisory Committee under the New Workforce and Economic Development Legislation.* Sacramento: Statewide Advisory Committee on Family & Consumer Sciences, California Community Colleges, 1999. http://www.cccco.edu/cccco/voced/SAC.F_CS.pdf

Smith, C . L.; Payne, E. G.; and Thornton, G. M. *Standards and Guidelines for Work-Based Learning Programs in Georgia.* Atlanta: Georgia Department of Education, 2001. http://www.gavotech.org/workplace.htm

South Carolina Department of Education. *Handbook for Advisory Groups in Career and Technology Education.* Columbia: SC DE, 2000. (ED 441 971) http://www.myscschools.com/offices/cate/advisory_committee/

Teitel, L. *The Advisory Committee Advantage: Creating an Effective Strategy for Programmatic Improvement.* Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education, George Washington University, 1994. (ED 377 783)

Tri-City Area Educational Cooperative. *Advisory Committee Handbook.* Kennewick, WA: Tri-City AEC, 2001. http://www.careersnet.org/TAEC/documents/Advisory-Committee-Handbook.pdf

4