

## Guidelines for Standing Committee Tri-Chairs

### 1. How should we conduct the meetings?

Each committee is different and requires varying levels of formality to accomplish its mission. Meetings should be conducted in an appropriate way to ensure that everyone feels comfortable and has an opportunity to participate. In addition, appropriate methods should be used to ensure that the work of the committee is accomplished in an efficient and effective manner. Committees may want to discuss and agree on some ground rules. Here are some suggestions that you may want to adopt:

- Plan in advance how the agendas will be established and what roles each tri-chair may take (e.g., who will facilitate meetings, etc.)
- Prepare and send out (e.g., by email) an agenda prior to the meeting.
- Work to manage time so that meetings begin and end on time.
- Depending on the formality of the meeting, set ground rules concerning process. This could be as formal as following Robert's Rules of Order or as informal as a simple rule that all should be able to contribute to discussions but no one should dominate the meeting.
- Use humor frequently and tastefully.
- Arrange the (virtual) room in a format that is appropriate to the work of the committee.

### 2. What are the relationships between the faculty, administrative, and classified tri-chairs in terms of roles, direction, and decision-making?

The tri-chairs have equal status on the committee. There are no pre-defined roles for the tri-chairs. These need to be determined at the start of each academic year among the specific people holding the tri-chairs positions. Roles will change among the constituencies from year to year depending on the strengths and interests of the individuals involved. Standard practice is for the tri-chairs to meet together prior to the first committee meeting of the academic year. This initial tri-chair meeting would generally be sometime in August. At this meeting, the tri-chairs need to decide what roles each will play. The following roles and tasks may be needed in each standing committee: act as meeting facilitator, act as meeting recorder, send meeting notifications, send meeting minutes, set meeting agenda.

### 3. Who should take minutes?

The classified tri-chair is not automatically responsible for taking the minutes. There is no pre-assumption that any role will be filled by a specific constituency tri-chair. Use the initial tri-chair meeting, discussed in #2 above, to decide who will take on each role. Some tri-chairs choose to rotate functions at each meeting. Others have fixed roles. Choose the approach that works best for you.

[Whoever takes the minutes is also responsible for posting the minutes publicly to BoardDocs, accessible by clicking here.](#) [To watch a tutorial about how to post minutes to BoardDocs, click here.](#)

### 4. How do we set the agenda?

How agendas are set will vary for each committee and it might even vary within committees from year to year. Use the initial tri-chair meeting, discussed in #2 above, to decide how the meeting agendas will be set. Chairs can review the previous year's agendas for guidance.

## 5. Should we use Robert's Rules of Order?

For most committees, Robert's Rules of Order are probably too formal and not necessary for effective operation. Each committee can decide on its own procedures that are conducive to the work that needs to be done.

## 6. Who do we report to?

All standing committees, in a formal sense, "report" to Executive Council. The only exception is the Curriculum Committee that reports to both Executive Council and Academic Senate.

When a committee has a recommendation for action or policy change, it should submit its recommendation to Executive Council using a Campus Issues form. [These forms are available on the Executive Council tab you can access through the "Participatory Governance Committees" link, or by clicking here.](#)

Likewise, Executive Council may communicate issues to standing committees for them to discuss and recommend solutions. The process of submitting recommendations to Executive Council ensures review and input from all of the college constituencies.

Another perspective, however, is that standing committees, in the sense of being a part of the campus communication network, report to the college community as a whole. Part of the purpose and role of standing committees is to share information with the campus community on issues and decisions that are made. In support of this role, committee minutes are posted to BoardDocs so that they are available to anyone who is interested in the work of the committee.

It is important for committee members to understand, however, when it is appropriate to communicate to the college community and constituency groups and when it is detrimental to the work of the committee. Often, committees will be working on developing processes and/ or developing consensus on issues. Many things may be discussed which are later discarded by the committee, such as in brainstorming sessions. It may be harmful to the work of the committee to communicate sensitive issues too soon, before the committee has reached agreement on the issue. On the other hand, sometimes the committee may need input in order to inform its discussion. The committee may want to establish ground rules regarding communication so that everyone knows when and what to communicate.

Some committees also align with district committees with similar charges (e.g., District Committee Committee). [Click here to see a list of all district committees.](#)

A committee periodically reports on its activities to Executive Council. The reports should include committee goals, objectives, or action items. Committees should report on the progress they make throughout the year, including the status of work related to their action items. Additionally, each committee should evaluate the effectiveness of the committee and their charge at the end of the year and include the summary of their evaluation to Executive Council. [Reporting forms can be found via the "Guide to Standing Committees" link or by clicking here.](#)

## **7. How are problems expected to be handled?**

In any collaborative environment, it is to be expected that everyone will not always agree. Committees will sometimes be required to address difficult issues that produce strong feelings among the members. The college has chosen to use collaborative forums for addressing many difficult issues. The college values this collaborative process and also shares the commitment to building a culture that is based on trust, open discussion, and mutual respect. In order to preserve these values, each individual must contribute by being sensitive to the feelings of others and respecting the right of others to disagree with personal views.

When we cannot reach a consensus agreement, then we need to agree on how to proceed. This may be something that you want to cover in your ground rules. Some things to consider are as follows:

- Agree on a method to reach a decision (e.g., majority vote, flip a coin)
- Everyone agrees to support the final decision
- Identify the criteria that will be used in making a decision
- Communicate the process used to arrive at the decision

## **8. In committees where there is an administrator who is responsible for the function served by the committee charge, what is the relationship between the committee and the functional office?**

Nearly all committees are supported by an administrative office (see list below). The relationship between the committee and the administrative function varies considerably across committees. In some cases, a representative from the administrative office serves as one of the tri-chairs to provide information and leadership for the committee. Standing committees are advisory to the administrative function. The committee may provide constituency input, review policy, prioritize, consult, or develop plans for the functional area. The representative from the functional area is responsible for obtaining effective and meaningful input into the operations of the area.

- Budget Committee advisory to Budget Administrative Services
- Campus Development Committee advisory to Campus Development Operations
- Campus Safety Committee advisory to Campus Safety Operations
- Honors and Awards Committee advisory to Honors and Awards College Advancement
- Education and Information Technology Committee advisory to Educational & Information Technology Information Technology Office
- Student Success and Equity Committee advisory to Matriculation Student Services
- Grants Committee advisory to Planning, Research, & Institutional Effectiveness Office
- Staff Development Committee advisory to Staff Development Staff Development Office
- Sustainability Committee advisory to Regenerate at SCC: The New Sustainability
- Staff Equity and Diversity Committee advisory to Staff Equity & Diversity Equity Office
- Student Equity Matriculation and Student Development Office

## **9. What is the tri-chair's role relative to student representatives?**

Student representatives benefit from close guidance and support in order to be embedded within the functions of the committee. Tri-chairs need to determine how best to contact the student (phone, email) to send meeting announcements and minutes. Tri-chairs can help the student(s) understand the charge of the committee and what the committee is working on. Many students do not have a historical or

organizational context to understand what the committee is talking about and also will need explanation of the acronyms and terms that we use (e.g., SLO and accreditation). All committee members can help identify students who might be interested in serving on the committee and refer these students to the Student Associated Council President for appointment to the committee.

#### **10. What is the process for adding or removing committee members during the year?**

All committee membership is assigned by the constituency leaders. If a member discontinues participation from the committee, the tri-chair must note this and communicate this information to the constituency leads who will amend the committee membership list. If someone asks to join a committee, the tri-chair must refer them to their constituency leader but keeping in mind that committee membership is finalized early in the year. If a member on the committee is not participating, the tri-chair must follow up with them to see if there is a pathway to increase their participation. If the tri-chair does not receive a response or is at an impasse about how to increase participation, the tri-chair can make a collaborative decision with fellow tri-chairs to remove the member from the committee. To finalize this process, the tri-chair must inform the constituent leads of the change in membership, and they will update the committee roster or collect further information as needed. [A current listing of committee members can be found on the “Participatory Governance Committees” website in the navigation panel, or by clicking here.](#)

#### **11. What is the process for developing committee membership for the following year?**

The PRIE Office distributes a Committee Interest Survey during the spring semester. The responses to the survey are shared with the constituent leads to appoint people to committees. While the committee preferences people indicate support the formation of the committees, choosing a committee is not necessarily a guarantee of membership as other factors may be weighed in the appointment process. Additionally, a two-year cycle is used for appointments to support the stability of membership and work. If a member joined a committee at the start of a two-year cycle, they will automatically be appointed to the same committee(s) for a second year. If a member joined a committee in a year off the cycle, they will join the committee(s) for the remaining two-year cycle.

#### **12. How do we evaluate the effectiveness of the committee and improve processes?**

The PRIE Office is working to assist committees in conducting a self-evaluation of their effectiveness. Any committee may design its own evaluation process as needed. Annual evaluation of the committee by its members is recommended so that committees can continually improve their effectiveness. Executive Council will continue to conduct an evaluation of the entire participatory decision-making process every two years, or as needed. Shared governance standing committees should develop a short list of goals in the first or second meeting. At the end of the year the committee can retrospectively evaluate to determine the extent to which the goals were achieved.

#### **13. When does a standing committee use a Campus Issues Form?**

A campus issues form is used to make recommendations to Executive Council for any changes in the charge or function of the committee. When a standing committee takes the initiative to develop major new initiatives the campus issues form is used to obtain approval from Executive Council before dissemination or implementation. The proposal should target the broad concept, framework, or process

rather than the detail of the item under consideration. Executive Council will obtain any constituency input and discuss the implications of the proposal. Once accepted by Executive Council, the standing committee is empowered to develop the details, make presentations, obtain input, and perform any other activity required to implement the item without further consent. A campus issues form is also used for permanent changes in the meeting time of the committee.

#### **14. What is the communication between Executive Council and tri-chairs?**

Executive Council holds at least one meeting each semester for all tri-chairs. The purpose of these meetings is to provide information to the tri-chairs on how the participatory decision-making process works. Tri-chairs can discuss issues or problems with the committee structure and identify areas in the process which need improvement. It also provides an opportunity for communication and collaboration among committees where appropriate.

#### **15. Can we change the committee meeting time?**

There have been discussions of this issue at several tri-chair meetings and it has been the general consensus that committee meeting times generally should not be changed. In the rare case that there is a reasonable exception to this guideline, the committee tri-chairs may present their case to Executive Council using a campus issues form. Having a stable schedule of meeting times serves a number of functions. It...

- prevents conflicts with other committees and confusion over timing.
- provides consistency year-to-year.
- ensures that faculty, staff, and students can find accurate information in order to select committees they can attend.
- assures long-time members that they can continue to serve.

When selecting a committee to serve on, either as a member or a tri-chair, it is the responsibility of each person to verify that the meeting time fits within their schedule. Meetings times should not be rearranged to accommodate any individual's schedule.

#### **16. What is the role of the committees in college planning?**

Committees participate in planning by developing activities to further the implementation of the college mission, vision, values and goals. Committees may make policy recommendations directly to the College Strategic Planning Committee. All committees are expected to be familiar with college plans related to the work of the committee. Committees may also be associated directly to the development or use of campus plans:

- Some shared governance standing committees produce or contribute to formal college plans. For example, the Student Equity Plan is produced by the Student Equity and Success Committee.
- Information from unit plans from across the college is provided to the shared governance standing committees by the PRIE Office as requested. For example, unit plan objectives which have resource requests are provided to the Budget Committee.