Technical Advisory Committee Guidebook

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About the Idaho Division of Career Technical Education

The Idaho Division of Career Technical Education (IDCTE) promotes and supports career technical education programs throughout the state. We prepare Idaho's youth and adults for high-skill, in-demand careers through collaborations with local school districts, institutions, educators, and industry partners.

Introduction

As Idaho's primary educational delivery system for workforce education, career technical education (CTE) is critical to the big picture of lifelong learning, ongoing training and education, economic vitality, and success in the workplace.

Because our mission is ultimately to prepare students for employment, strong partnerships between education and industry are required. Industry is also constantly incorporating the latest technology into its processes and envisioning the future of the marketplace, which translates to the ever-evolving skills necessary for their workforce.

Purpose of technical advisory committees (TACS)

Successful CTE programs maintain close ties with business, industry, and labor and must be integrated into their communities and state. Idaho's CTE programs are required to incorporate active input from an appropriately qualified business/industry TAC.

An effective TAC reveals local career opportunities, prepares students to enter the workforce, and/or helps upgrade the skills of workers who are already employed. The committee advises the program to ensure that its content and training remain current. Committee members also assist in and advocate for student, faculty, and program needs. Ultimately, committees strengthen the working relationships between the CTE programs and the communities they serve. Specifically, TACS should:

- Bring focus to important program outcomes.
- Bring training expertise to the table (they provide on-the-job training to their employees and share best practices).
- Secure resources for programs (e.g., equipment, staffing, expertise, speakers/judges for student events).
- Provide students and staff with new opportunities (e.g., internships, work experiences, and career exploration).
- Engage with their networks as appropriate.
- Advocate on behalf of programs.

Creating a TAC

TACs are generally established by a program representative, usually the department chairperson. An advisory committee can be established as a joint committee with nearby school districts. (TACs can be shared between secondary and postsecondary programs as long as adequate geographic representation exists from business and industry representatives. This is especially helpful in ensuring curriculum alignment and seamless transition for students from high school to technical college.)

For new career technical education programs or programs in need of a more formal committee structure, the program representative should take these steps to help ensure the success of the committee:

1. Determine the committee's structure:
   a. Interview the representatives from programs with well-established committees.
   b. Study the duties, function, and framework of existing committees.
   c. Observe committee meetings.
   d. Consider creating an ad hoc committee to plan and develop the new advisory committee.
2. Prepare a general structure and plan for the committee.
3. Obtain appropriate approvals[1]:
   a. Explain the intended function of the advisory committee to administration.
   b. Share examples of other committees, particularly for similar areas of study or those with similar workforce needs.
   c. List potential benefits to the administration, school, and teachers.

Individualized Occupational Training (IOT) programs are not required to have separate advisory committees if the program representative can gain industry input by attending the TAC meetings of other programs in the school.

General committee framework

An advisory committee is a group that is:
- Recognized for its expertise in a specific occupational area.
- Made up of business, industry, and labor representatives of the occupation(s) for which training is provided.
- Organized to advise institution personnel on matters concerning the career technical education program.

Committee size

The committee's size may vary by the size of the community, the scope of the CTE program, the diversity of businesses and industries in the community, and the committee's purpose. Size may also vary over time to align with specific committee activities. Committees should be large enough to reflect the community's diversity yet small enough to be managed effectively. Committees with fewer than five members tend to be less effective as they may have limited perspectives, inadequate information on many target jobs, and too few employers represented. Committees with more than 15

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[1] If a program representative cannot obtain approval for an advisory committee, IDCTE should be notified immediately, as committees are a required component of CTE programs.

members can become unmanageable. Five to nine members are generally an adequate size for most committees.

Length of service

To ensure continuity among committee members, each committee member should serve a standard term length, generally three years. These terms should be staggered, with one-third of the membership expiring each year. For a new committee, this may mean that initial appointments are assigned for one, two, or three years. As the initial appointments expire, subsequent members will serve the standard three-year term.

Generally, committee members should not be appointed to successive terms to ensure the committee allows for new perspectives. In addition, former members should have at least a one-year absence before being eligible for reappointment.

Governance

The program representative is responsible for developing draft policies (bylaws) regarding the TAC. Written policies should address the following items and should be established during the committee's first or second meeting:

- Approval of committee establishment.
- Committee membership.
- Appointment procedures.
- Length of appointments.
- Officers and their responsibilities.
- Available financial resources.
- The number of meetings annually.
- Standing subcommittees.
- Communication protocol with school administration.
- Data collection or annual reporting requirements.

These bylaws may be specific to a program or general for many programs within a school or postsecondary institution. Bylaws help establish expectations for industry representatives and provide a process by which concerns or issues can be addressed.

Meeting frequency

IDCTE expects that a committee meets at least twice each year. However, meeting frequency depends on the implementation of the program of work (Attachment A). Some committees may need to meet monthly; others may meet bi-monthly or quarterly during the academic year. All programs (cluster, pathway and career specialty) should demonstrate that the committee has taken an active role in its relevant career technical education program by implementing the program of work.

Meetings can employ the use of technology (e.g., conference calls) as appropriate. The program representative can also meet individually with committee members to collaborate on specific goals and action items stemming from the program of work. Industry involvement in the development and successful execution of the program of work is far more important than when or how meetings take place.

Specific roles and responsibilities

As committees are developed and conduct their ongoing business, members may be assigned specific roles and responsibilities aligned with individual roles on the committee and within the community.

Role of industry representatives

- Create and accomplish a program of work.
- Support career technical student organizations (CTSOs), if applicable.

Role of program representatives

- Work with the chair to schedule meetings and create agendas.
- Orient new committee members.
- Track progress for the program of work and assist industry representatives as needed.
- Communicate with the designated CTE program quality manager (PQM).

Role of institution administration

- Invite and appoint new members.
- Publish press release naming new members.
- List technical advisory committees in institution publications.

Selection of members and appointment process

Committee members should be appointed using the guidelines outlined below and a standard selection process. Division representatives, instructors or faculty of the programs, and other staff may serve *only* in an ex-officio capacity.

1. Develop a list of prospective members that include several key characteristics.
   a. Representatives of:
      i. Business/industry.
      ii. Local community (including Idaho Department of Labor representatives, if located in the community).
      iii. The general geographic area to be served.
      iv. Programs at other schools, if applicable.
   b. People who:
      i. Have recent experience related to the program area.
      ii. Are available to attend TAC meetings.
      iii. Have an interest in education and the program.
2. Once the list is compiled, interview prospective members. The interviews should:
   a. Explain the nature of the committee.
   b. Explain the prospective member's role on the committee.
   c. Describe the terms and length of service.
   d. Gauge the prospective member's level of interest in serving and determine to what extent his or her participation would benefit the program.
3. Send an invitation letter to the prospective new member, signed by the appropriate program or school leadership, and include the time, date, and location of the next committee meeting (see Attachment B for an example).
4. Once the administrator approves the appointment and the member has accepted it, send a formal letter of appointment (see Attachment C for an example).

Committee Meetings

Conducting the first meeting and/or the first meeting of the academic year

The initial committee meeting provides the foundation to engage the interest and support of committee members. The program representative facilitates the meeting until the committee selects a chairperson. It is essential that the program representative contacts members and organizes an agenda well before the meeting. In addition, the program representative may want to have discussions with new members to ensure that at least one individual is willing to serve as chairperson.

Organizing and conducting meetings

Following the initial meeting, committees may fluctuate in the number of times they meet throughout the academic year. The Annual Program of Work (see the template in Attachment A) helps determine the meetings' frequency. Contributions of advisory committee members depend greatly on how they are prepared for and oriented to their roles. For the committee to be effective, the program of work responsibilities should be divided among all members so that no one individual has total responsibility for the committee's success.

Chairperson

The chairperson collaborates with the program representative and facilitates member participation. The chairperson should be familiar with Roberts' Rules of Order and should have the ability to lead.

The chairperson's responsibilities include:
- Coordinating with committee secretary (program representative) to establish meeting dates and call the committee together when appropriate.
- Developing the meeting agenda with the secretary.
- Preparing background information and reports as necessary.
- Seeking consultants for advice on specific problems.
- Presiding at meetings and ensuring agenda and schedules are followed.
- Promoting the committee's role as an advisory, not policy-making, body.
- Helping members reach consensus on issues.
- Reviewing meeting minutes with the secretary for accuracy.
- Representing the committee at various official functions (e.g., CTSO banquets, board of trustees meetings).
- Assigning/organizing sub-committees, standing committees, and ad hoc committees.
- Maintaining communication with members, program representatives, and board members.
- Determining strategies for developing and completing the program of work.
- Recruiting members for the committee.
- Following up on committee decisions to ensure that they are acted upon.

Vice-chairperson

The vice-chairperson is familiar with the chairperson's duties and responsibilities and will assume these responsibilities in the chairperson's absence.

Secretary (program representative)

The committee's success depends a great deal on the program representative who serves as the committee secretary. The secretary must devote enough time and attention to keep the committee actively involved in the CTE program. The secretary plays a dual role, switching from leader to helper, depending on the committee's needs.

The secretary's responsibilities include:
- Coordinating meeting arrangements.
- Developing meeting agendas with the chairperson and distributing them to the committee members in advance of the meeting.
- Acting as recorder for the committee (e.g., coordinate all mailings, take minutes, compile committee recommendations for leadership).
- Reviewing goals and objectives with the committee.
- Providing members with resource materials and program information.
- Initiating and facilitating discussion during each meeting.
- Providing feedback to members on the results of their recommendations.
- Compiling and maintaining contact information and background data from committee members, including email addresses.

Ongoing committee activities

All members of the committee have the following responsibilities:
- Attending meetings regularly.
- Assisting with the development and execution of the program of work.
- Respecting the opinions of other committee members.
- Helping reach consensus on issues.
- Maintaining objectivity and focus on the needs of the program.
- Making recommendations.
- Accepting assignments for subcommittee work.

Given their different functions within the education system, industry, and the community, committee members will have a wide variety of roles and responsibilities. The following list, while not exhaustive, should help determine how committee members can contribute:

Offer guidance on:
- Labor market information.
- On-the-job training techniques.
- Equipment and technology.
- Skill gaps.
- Certifications.
- Facility design.
- Marketing/communications
- Needs analysis.
- Curriculum review.

Provide work experience/career exposure through:
- Career exploration.
- Internships/job opportunities.
- In-service opportunities for faculty.

Support CTSOs by volunteering as:
- Speakers.
- Judges.
- Mentors for leadership development.

Provide financial support and advocacy for:
- Scholarships and fundraising.
- College bonds and other legislative efforts.
- Donating or purchasing equipment and supplies.

Developing the annual program of work

During the first committee meeting each academic year, create the program of work (see Attachment A for a template). Investing time developing a quality program of work will guide the committee for the remainder of the year. Aligning the program of work with the reasons for having a TAC can provide the following benefits to the program:
- Bring focus to important program outcomes.
- Provide training and best practice expertise.
- Secure resources for the program (e.g., equipment, staffing, expertise, speakers/judges for CTSOs).
- Identify new opportunities for students and faculty (e.g., internships, work experiences, exposure to career options).
- Connect the program with the larger community through colleagues and networking.
- Advocate on behalf of the program.

Simply put, the action items can be developed under the following objectives:
- Outcomes.
- Resources (curriculum, equipment, expertise).
- Exposure to work/careers.
- Advocacy.

All goals and activities should be formatted as SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely. A few examples are:

- Provide XX quality work experiences to students by March 20XX.
- Secure resources to purchase (or secure a donation) a XXX by December 20XX.
- Recruit XX freshmen to the 20XX "Fundamentals of XXX Course."

Once the program of work is finalized, incorporate a progress review into future meeting agendas. The need for subcommittees and assignments for committee members should become clear.

Reporting requirements

In Idaho, TACs must meet at least twice per academic year and demonstrate that the committee has taken an active role in the program.

IDCTE requires that the Annual Program of Work (Attachment A) be emailed to tac@cte.idaho.gov by June 15 each year. The program representative should complete the "Status" column before forwarding the report to the dean of the technical college. The dean will complie the reports (using

Attachment D) and submitthem to IDCTE. Committees should ensure their recordkeeping supports this requirement.

Additional resources

The Association for Career & Technical Education (ACTE) has developed a handbook, "Building Advisory Boards that Matter," that provides additional recommendations. It can be purchased at www.acteonline.org/shop.