

Section IV

Roles and Responsibilities

ABSTRACT: This section identifies guidelines for Merritt’s collegial governance committees. All governance committees (Participatory Committees) are expected to abide by these guidelines. Chairs and Co-Chairs of governance committees have specific responsibilities that ensure transparency in the collegial governance decision-making processes. Likewise, constituents that make up committee membership are responsible for the broad participation of the campus community and college-wide discussion on significant organizational and policy issues.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Roles and Responsibilities

Committee Chair and Co-Chair

When chairs of College Committees are chosen they become non-voting members of the committee. In the event of a tie the Chair may vote to break the tie if they wish. Other ways to make the decision include consensus or, if not a time-critical matter, continued discussion and consensus or voting later, or hold the topic over to a future meeting agenda.

Chairs are chosen to guide the agenda, discussion and votes. They are expected to be well-versed in parliamentary procedures to be able to effect efficient and collegial discussions.

The responsibilities of the Chair/Co-Chair are as follows:

- Be prepared to attend meetings (i.e. prepare schedule in advance to accommodate attendance).
- Understand the committee's charge, membership, connections, and /reporting relationships to other governance groups.
- Prepare the agenda, be prepared to discuss items and facilitate discussion in the meeting.
- Encourage participation of committee members and elicit feedback
- Utilize time management to keep discussion 'on track.'
- If the governance group does not have support/resource staff, the Chair is responsible for sending out and posting meeting materials and editing minutes.
- Track membership and inform President's Office of any changes and track member attendance.
- Inform and remind the committee of upcoming meetings and/or schedule of meetings.
- If new members join the committee mid-way through the semester, provide them with an "orientation" on the group's charge, membership, and schedule, as well as a brief overview of the issues addressed to date
- Keep informed of State, Local and District issues impacting the committee.
- Facilitate the review of committee charge.
- Report regularly to College Council.

Committee Member

The responsibilities of members are as follows:

- When signing up for committees note the terms and responsibilities, and arrange ones schedule to accommodate the needed work
- Attend all meetings of the governance group.
- Be prepared for meetings: review materials in advance; be ready to discuss and/or provide feedback; take notes to report back to the constituency group
- Follow through on seeking feedback from and/or communicating information to constituents
- Adhere to key dates and deadlines for meetings, submitting votes, and follow-up items
- Lend your voice/perspective to discussions and decisions – remember that you are there to represent your respective constituency group; participation in the dialogue and decision-making is your individual and collective opportunity to weigh in on institutional issues; when in doubt, ask questions.

Expectations and Engagement

- Maintain a professional and collegial environment; attack the issue – not the person
- Remember that, as members of the campus community, we’re all on the same team – and ‘We don’t tackle someone wearing the same jersey’
- “Step up, step down” – share the floor with the other committee members; feel comfortable to speak your mind and share your perspective, but avoid dominating the discussion; make sure there are opportunities for others to join in the dialogue
- Stay engaged in meeting discussions, through participation and active listening; avoid sidebars/private conversations, use of smartphones/tablets/laptops to check messages and surf the web, and other activities as this may be viewed as a distraction or disrespectful to your fellow committee members
- Promote a “culture of veto” – Decisions by consensus allows the work of the committee/College to move forward; won’t be stuck at a standstill because one person won’t agree
- All are equal members of the committee; open communication shall take place without fear of reprisal
- Although committee decisions/discussions may be communicated broadly or informally by the Chair and others, it is the primary responsibility of each member to keep their respective constituents informed of committee actions.

Terms of Service

Terms of service will be specified by committee by-laws.

Meeting Times and Locations

The Master Calendar of College meetings is managed through the President’s Office. If a governance group wishes to change the time, day, or location of its meetings, the request (including rationale) must be submitted in writing to the President’s Office. The request will be reviewed and evaluated, with regard to processes, room availability, and potential impact on other meetings and constituents.

Documents

Participatory Committees utilize standard templates for meeting agendas and minutes, which include the College Mission statement. For committees subject to the Brown Act, agendas must be sent at least 72 hours prior to the meeting (See Appendix D for templates).

Changes, Creation or Deactivation of College Committees

The process for creating or deactivating a committee that reports to College Council follows the Robert’s Rules of Order and the philosophy of Merritt College Governance. Should a new committee be deemed necessary, the matter should be placed on a College Council agenda. Reasons for the new committee will be presented and discussed. If prior research has taken place, or the new committee has been championed by a certain group or committee, it may be presented at this time. If no research has been done yet, an ad hoc committee may be created to research the pros and cons.

When fully researched by ad hoc and all constituency members, as with all collegial governance matters, the College Council will hear the recommendation and then if agreed upon, shall forward to the College President.

Decision-Making Procedures

Quorum

A quorum must be present at a meeting in order for governance group action items and decisions to be considered official. For the purposes of the College governance system, a quorum is determined to be a simple majority (i.e., 50% +1) of the committee's voting members. A non-appointed seat does not count when determining a quorum (i.e., if your governance entity cannot fill all the seats).

By Vote or By Consensus

Merritt College's collegial governance committees use Robert's Rules of Order, Revised for parliamentary rules.

For items requiring an official, recorded decision by the committee, action may be taken by achieving consensus or by taking a vote (verbally with a show of hands). To maintain consistency, each committee group should agree (ideally at its first meeting of the Fall) the decision-making method it will use throughout the year.

Helpful guidelines for achieving consensus:

- Clarify the problem/issue/question
- Outline the criteria/parameters (effect on students, equity impact, use of tangible and intangible resources, etc....)
- Explore alternate solutions
- Consensus does not mean unanimity (a few members opposed to the motion do not prohibit consensus, as long as the majority accepts the decision)
- For reference on Robert's Rules of Order, please see Q&A on:

<http://www.robertsrules.com/faq.html#1>

Selection of Committee Members/Chairs

To facilitate the work of the committee and to maximize the limited time available for committees to complete their work, and to the extent possible, members should be identified no later than August 31. Constituency leaders are expected to communicate this information to the President's Office. The President's Office will compile a comprehensive list for committee membership. Constituency leaders will communicate membership to each committee chair. Any delay in identifying members could impact the committee's ability to carry out its charge and prevents constituency groups from having full representation at meetings.

Committee Appointments

- Unless otherwise stated, committee appointments are made as follows:

Constituency Group:

Administration
Faculty
Classified
Students

Appointed By:

College President
Academic Senate;
Classified Senate
ASMC

Review of Committee Charge, Goals and Revision of By-Laws

All governance bodies should review their charge, goals and membership on an annual basis, using the description in this Governance Handbook, or a more recently voted charge and membership. This should occur at the first meeting each Fall.

Any revisions to the by-laws should be submitted to the College Council and will be reviewed and voted upon. Once approved, changes will be reflected in the Governance Handbook. Any revisions to the committee's goals should use the standard template. (See Appendix D for template).