Chapter 2
The Roles and Characteristics of Advisory Committees

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ABSTRACT
The advisory committee represents the institution, as the voice of the department, utilizing effective practices and strategies in decision-making. Because workforce education is technical and complex in nature, experienced and knowledgeable industry-based individuals are needed to advise, guide, and make decisions to achieve optimum outcomes. Key individuals have the ability to influence a group to achieve a common goal. The members have established respect and trust among the stakeholders, and are better prepared to handle the leadership roles and achieve results for the committee. The committee focuses on equal representation and balance; decision-making process; and acting as the voice of the project. This chapter focuses on the role of advisory committees. The chapter will also concentrate on the characteristics that comprise an advisory committee, and address identifying the most effective members to include on a committee.

INTRODUCTION
Community-college workforce-education programs, in collaboration with local businesses and industries, offer specific training opportunities to guide students toward a career path leading to employment. Workforce and technical programs offer easy access to programs, quick return on educational

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investment, and means of encountering a variety of career and educational interests (Holzer, 2008). By definition, technical programs offer both academic and career-oriented courses, providing students with the opportunity to gain work experience through internships, job shadowing, on-the-job training, and industry-certification opportunities (Abbott, 2014). Workforce development is the coordination of public and private sector policies and programs that provide individuals with the opportunity to work for a sustainable income (Jacobs & Hawley, 2007). By enrolling in a local community college to gain new skills or retrain for emerging technologies, students may expedite achieving their full potential as an active member of society.

Advisory committees are a requirement for all educational workforce programs, as described in the Guidelines for Instruction Programs in Workforce Education (GIPWE, 2015). They are instrumental in providing funding, job placement, training, management, equipment, and support. Because the development and operation of workforce programs is complex in nature, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) requires each community-college workforce-education program to implement and document an industry-based advisory committee. Advisory-committee members are typically selected for a two-to-three-year term, and voluntarily serve as consultants (Lane Community College [LCC], 2013). In Texas community colleges, advisory-committee members typically serve two-year terms, and may be reappointed (GIPWE, 2015). A variety of considerations influence member selection, including relevant expertise, experience, willingness to serve, and recommendations from other advisory members (GIPWE, 2015). Additionally, advisory-committee members also function as links between colleges and businesses, helping to facilitate internships and other opportunities for students (Day, 2001).

Advisory committees serve as a bridge between community colleges and business/industry, helping to develop a rapport with professionals in industry to assist community colleges with future programs and support (Day, 2001; Kilcrease, 2011). Advisory committees represent the stakeholders at specific campuses, by providing recommendations to college administrators regarding the education and training needs of the community, best practices available to meet those needs, requirements of specific programs, adding or removing programs, and advice for addressing differences between advisory members (GIPWE, 2015). The committee informs college leadership, specifically relating to workforce-education, grants, and business/industry
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