

Dallas County Community College District

Organizational Communication and Collaboration in Decision-Making

Effective September 2009

HISTORY and RELATED POLICY

The "Council Structure" was adopted in the early 80s and documented a process for bringing formal groups together across the district to discuss common issues and concerns. The work of those councils continues, with many using the tools of continuous improvement as adopted in the 90s.

Per the Administrative Regulation BG, employee councils exist for consultation and reaction, as well as communication facilitation with constituents. Those employee councils (i.e. faculty, administrative and professional support staff) meet regularly, together and separately with the Chancellor and executive staff members.

Functional councils are also acknowledged in this regulation to confirm their importance in research, discussion, recommendations and communication – while placing decision-making responsibility for the District with the Chancellor and executive staff, including presidents, vice chancellors, and provost.

CONTRIBUTIONS toward COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

Some consistent themes to support student success have grown with Chancellor Lassiter's leadership in areas of communication and collaboration. The definitions adopted by the American Association of Community Colleges' further delineate those ideas:

Communication: *Uses clear listening, speaking, and writing skills to engage in honest, open dialogue at all levels of the college and its surrounding community, to promote the success of all students, and to sustain the community college mission:*

- *Create and maintain open communications regarding resources, priorities, and expectations.*
- *Convey ideas and information succinctly, frequently, and inclusively through media and verbal and nonverbal means to the board and other constituencies and stakeholders.*

Collaboration: *Develops and maintains responsive, cooperative, mutually beneficial, and ethical internal and external relationships that nurture diversity,*

promote the success of all students, and that sustain the community college mission:

- *Work effectively and diplomatically with unique constituent groups such as legislators, board members, business leaders, accreditation organizations, and others.*
- *Facilitate problem solving and decision-making."*

To meet these definitions, and to formalize the DCCCD commitment to transparency in organizational decision-making, the Chancellor's Staff has reviewed and adopted additional criteria in support of organizational communication and the infrastructure which supports it.

THE CHANCELLOR'S STAFF

This group is convened by the Chancellor, with membership including vice chancellors, presidents, provost, and varying levels of district level administrators with direct reporting relationships to the Vice Chancellors or Chancellor.

This group regularly receives reports and recommendations to facilitate decision-making from councils representing Vice Presidents (Instruction, Student Life, and Business), and Human/Organizational Behavior. Upon the request of one or more of those councils, other DCCCD functional councils, work groups, and/or taskforces may be asked to present related reports and recommendations directly to the Chancellor's Staff.

This group makes decisions on administrative regulation in support of Board policy. Meetings occur on a regular schedule with documented agendas and minutes.

VICE PRESIDENTS (Instruction, Student Life, and Business), MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS, and HUMAN and ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCILS

Each of these groups has a direct tie to the Chancellor's Staff through a Vice Chancellor. That Chancellor's Staff member will provide guidance to the assigned Council regarding requested discussion and other tasks – and will provide updates and/or schedule presentations for the Chancellor's Staff as required.

These councils represent on-going assignments, with membership based on position within the organization, and/or confirmation of the role by the assigned Chancellor's Staff member. The councils are responsible for identifying a leader, the schedule for leadership changes, and the production of meeting agendas and minutes. At a minimum, these agendas and minutes are to be provided to council members and the related Chancellor's Staff member.

These councils may interpret policy and procedure, and adopt operational actions in support of those policies. Members are responsible for sharing information with location personnel to confirm responsibilities and agreed-upon actions.

OTHER FUNCTIONAL COUNCILS

The Chancellor may appoint other councils to report directly to the Chancellor's Staff, but most functional councils will exist as a subsidiary to one of the primary groups noted above (i.e. Vice Presidents and/or Human and Organizational Behavior Councils). These primary groups are referred to as "sponsoring" in the following description. New functional councils are presented for confirmation by the "sponsoring" Chancellor's Staff member prior to initial organization, using the charter format as adopted by the Chancellor's Staff.

These councils represent on-going assignments, with membership based on function within the organization. These councils meet to address issues and assignments received from their "sponsoring" group, to review and recommend actions related to external mandates and internal responsibilities. The "sponsoring" group is responsible for reviewing and confirming the continuing need for the council in even years (i.e. 2010 will be the next confirmation period).

The councils are responsible for identifying a leader, the schedule for leadership changes, and the production of meeting agendas and minutes. At a minimum, these agendas and minutes are to be provided to council members and the related Chancellor's Staff member.

The councils may appoint committees or sub-committees for short-term, task-oriented work without additional approval.

Members are responsible for sharing information with location personnel to confirm responsibilities and agreed-upon actions.

WORK GROUPS

Individuals with a common and directed focus in an area of interest/importance to the District may be sponsored as a Work Group. Such groups are convened for information-sharing and updates, with no regularly assigned decision-making responsibility. However, such groups may act as a committee or subcommittee reporting directly to a Sponsoring or Functional Council on a short-term, action-based effort as assigned.

Work Groups are responsible for identifying a leader, the schedule for leadership changes, and the production of meeting summaries. At a minimum, these summaries are to be provided to members and the sponsoring individual/entity.

TASKFORCES

Project-based activities requiring district-wide representation and meeting a critical need, with a defined beginning and end of work, may best be satisfied with the appointment of a taskforce. Such groups may exist for up to two years, and must be charged by the Chancellor, a member of the Chancellor's Staff, or one of the "sponsoring" councils (i.e. Vice President/Instruction, Student Life, Business, Marketing and Communications, or Human and Organizational Development Council).

The "sponsoring" individual/group is responsible for the formal charge to the taskforce, including expected outcomes/timelines. A taskforce chair is designated by the charging party. Other members may be recommended by the Chancellor's Staff. Results will be presented to the sponsor, for formal consideration by the Chancellor, Chancellor's Staff or other sponsoring council.

The taskforce is responsible for organization of work, adoption of meeting schedules and production of agendas and minutes, as with other council entities.

PROCESS

Requests for Chancellor's Staff designation as a Council or other collaborative will be considered as received, and reviewed in even years beginning Spring 2010.

To begin the process, an interested employee or group should contact a potential Chancellor's Staff sponsor and discuss the request. Once a sponsor is identified, the charter draft should be prepared and forwarded to the Chief Learning & Training Officer for handling.

Once approved, the listing of councils and collaboratives will be updated, and a copy of the confirmed charter (including any editing requested by the Chancellor's Staff) will be returned to the designated leader of the group.