

Council Handbook

Approved by President's Cabinet July 2023

Introduction

The success of governance at Mt. Hood Community College (MHCC) relies on cooperation, collegiality, openness, and, most importantly, a belief in the mission of our college:

With a commitment to being inclusive, Mt. Hood Community College offers a full range of education and training in a supportive environment to advance personal and professional growth. We are a community hub for cultural, economic, recreational, and intellectual enrichment.

The college recognizes the importance of broad participation from employees and students in policy development, decision-making, and the creation and dissemination of ideas and strategies to move the college forward. To support this recognition, the college activates participatory governance to increase employee and student engagement in the governance of the institution, per Board Policy (BP) 2510: *Participation in Local Decision Making* and its accompanying Administrative Regulation (AR) 2510. Core elements of this type of governance model rely on the college community to be engaged, collaborative, and aligned with the college's mission, equity statement, values, and strategic goals.

Participatory Governance

The councils operate within the context of MHCC's approach to participatory governance:

1. **Broad-based input leads to better decisions.** Participatory governance stems from the knowledge that better decisions are reached when stakeholders are given the opportunity to provide input.
2. **Structure promotes effective input.** MHCC's participatory governance structure solicits stakeholder (employee and student) input using a commonly understood and widely accessible process where stakeholders' roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.
3. **Stakeholders provide input, executive leaders (or designees) retain final decision-making authority.** Participatory governance solicits and analyzes input from stakeholders on a continual basis. However, participatory governance does not free decision-makers from their responsibilities.
4. **Decision-makers communicate their decisions and rationale.** Councils and action teams incorporate stakeholder input into all deliberations. Decisions and their rationale will be communicated to the campus community.
5. **It takes time and effort.** MHCC's commitment to participatory governance engages stakeholders to actively and continually participate in the process and everyone commits to an accurate and timely two-way flow of information between those they represent and the groups on which they serve.

Governance Authority

Board of Education

Pursuant to Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) Chapter 341, the Mt. Hood Community College Board of Education is the governing body of the MHCC district, with the primary duty to adopt policies for the general governance of MHCC. Per BP 2200: *Board of Education Duties and Responsibilities*, the board, as duly elected representatives of the people, will have complete charge and control of all activities and programs of the district including its property, personnel, and finances.

President

The president, under the board's direction, has general supervision of the college and personnel. The president is the steward of the governance system and is responsible for managing the college per board's policy, and is accountable to the board for that management.

The president may delegate authority to other district personnel per BP 2430: *Delegation of Authority to the President*. Such delegations can be found under "MHCC Delegation of Authority" located on the president's office [intranet page](#).

Councils

Consistent with BP 2510 and AR 2510, councils serve as the primary mechanism for stakeholder engagement with governance, with membership comprised of classified staff, full- and part-time faculty and tutors, management and confidential staff, and students.

The following work is deemed to be outside the scope of the participatory governance councils.

- Collective bargaining
- College compliance with statutory requirements
- Directing the work of others
- Internal department or division operational planning and decision-making (however, departments and divisions are encouraged to use the council structure to solicit input and communicate operational plans and decisions)

Structure

MHCC has five councils (listed alphabetically):

1. Access, diversity, and inclusion
2. College infrastructure
3. Institutional effectiveness
4. Learner success
5. People strategies

Councils form action teams (ongoing) or task forces (short-term) to carry out their work plans.

Committees related to operational or department functions may exist and are not part of the council structure.

Role and Function of Councils

Role

Councils have three primary roles. These are to:

- Make recommendations to the president and president's cabinet (PC) about issues with broad and significant impact on college operations.
- Offer stakeholders an avenue to provide ongoing input.
- Respond to requests for feedback that the president or PC may request.

Outside of the governance role, councils may also take on activities that have campus-wide benefits and support the college's strategic plan.

The council structure and each council's charter will be reviewed on a staggered, five-year rolling basis, to determine if they should continue or be disbanded, and whether a new council should be established.

Function

Each council, action team, and task force will have a written charge, membership list, and contact information communicated on the council webpage located on the [council intranet page](#), located on the participatory governance webpage. Each year, by the end of week five, fall term, councils will develop and post to the council intranet page an annual work plan that aligns with the college's strategic plan.

Upon receipt and review of the council work plan, the president may request additional analysis, information, or recommendation(s) on specific issues or topics. Councils recognize their work may impact more than one strategic priority and will focus on items on which recommendations can be developed, resources may be allocated, timelines for completion are established, and success measures are set.

For council projects requiring implementation by other employees/departments/areas, prior to starting the work, the council will engage with the manager(s) whose department is responsible for the project's implementation to ensure feasibility for the project and alignment with department goals and plans. The manager(s) or their designee(s) must serve on the action team developing the project.

A council can seek the advice of management, students, or other staff on policy or operational issues. Consistent with BP 2510 and AR 2510, any major change in a written policy or administrative regulation will be shared with the appropriate council(s) before being sent to the PC for review and recommendation.

Work plans are designed to provide structure, scope, and accountability. They are not designed to limit the potential to address new issues that arise during the year. However, co-chairs should be mindful of not taking on too much or straying from the strategic direction of the college. Some issues may be best referred to the administrator responsible for that area.

All agendas and a summary of actions of each council meeting will be created and maintained on the [council intranet page](#). Agendas will be communicated prior to the meeting, and meeting minutes will be shared within 10 days of the meeting.

Action Teams and Task Forces

Councils create action teams and task forces to focus on a particular topic that needs the attention of a campus-wide recommending body, where such a body does not already exist.

Like councils, action teams/task forces will represent the various stakeholders of the college community. To avoid duplication of efforts and to ensure efforts are aligned with strategic priorities, councils will inform fellow councils when creating a new action team/task force.

When creating a new action team/task force, the council will provide notification to the other councils. Notification will include a general description of the need for the action team/task force and a specific description of the function(s) of the action team/task force.

- Action teams: established for ongoing topics, have a formal structure including a charge and many characteristics of a council
- Task forces: a subset of council membership established to address an issue that falls within the sphere of the council’s responsibility, identified for a specific task or issue for a specified duration, and disbanded once the task is completed

All action team/task force agendas and meeting minutes are communicated on the [council intranet page](#). Councils will review the work of the action team/task force and in consultation with the action team/task force, on a yearly basis, determine if each action team should continue or be disbanded.

Responsibilities

Councils will develop annual work plans, deliverables, and performance measures, and keep the campus apprised of their work. They will revisit their charge on an annual basis to determine if a revision is needed.

Co-Chairs

In addition to providing leadership for the council, co-chairs work with individual members on their participation and satisfaction and help to facilitate the management of action teams. While PC members may serve on councils as members or PC liaisons, they will not serve as council co-chairs.

Term limit: Two years as co-chair, one year as past chair

The major responsibilities of council co-chairs are to:

- Establish an annual calendar of meetings.
- Facilitate meetings.
- Solicit agenda input from council/action team members before each meeting.
- Set an agenda for each meeting.
- Provide an option for participants to attend via multiple modalities.
- Distribute the proposed agenda.
- Record attendance at meetings. Meeting minutes will reflect the total council membership and members who were present at the meeting.
- Manage and maintain the council intranet page to post agenda and final, approved minutes within 10 days of the meeting.
- Onboard new members to the council handbook and the council’s charge.
- Serve as advisor to the college president and PC to develop options and frame possible actions.
- Complete annual work plan and year-end report in collaboration with PC liaison.
- Recruit members.
- Meet with PC liaison at least quarterly outside of council meetings to ensure engagement and alignment.
- Attend quarterly meetings with the president, other council co-chairs, and PC.

PC Liaison

The PC liaison serves as the link between the council and PC and is accountable to the president.

Term limit: None

The major responsibilities of a PC liaison are:

- Bring council issues, updates, and concerns to PC, and the president if needed.
- Work with the council co-chairs to develop the annual work plan and year-end report. Meet with co-chairs outside of council meetings.
- Serve as the subject matter expert for areas under their direction.
- Ensure councils are functioning in a consistent, healthy manner.
- Provide leadership to engage necessary stakeholders to improve the process, if needed.
- Attend and participate in at least 75% of council meetings.

Council co-chairs and PC liaisons are responsible for creating an open, welcoming environment for council members and all who wish to attend council meetings and deliberations.

Historian (optional)

The historian serves as the administrative support for the council and is chosen by the council co-chairs.

Term limit: None

The major responsibilities of the historian are to:

- Provide research, technical expertise, written reports, and meeting minutes (e.g. steps taken, recommendations made, major discussion points).
- Create and share meeting notices in advance of the meeting with appropriate materials.
- Post meeting agenda and minutes to the council intranet page.

Council Members

Council members carry out the work of the council.

Term limit: One-year minimum

Council members will:

- Serve as a source of reliable, consistent information to college groups with which they are affiliated or for whom they represent.
- Come prepared to meetings.
- Be respectful, listen well, and ask questions.
- Create a safe place for exploring lessons learned, process or program improvements, and/or continuous quality improvement. Do not be afraid to acknowledge mistakes or misjudgments.
- Communicate with the college-at-large regarding the work of the council. Use minutes and portal postings to help explain and educate others on the council's efforts.
- Consider all issues from a college-wide perspective.
- Allow one's role at the college to inform one's perspective.
- Be respectful of budget issues that may involve the loss of employment or academic programs.
- Ask for assistance from a co-chair when presenting to a stakeholder group, if needed.
- Use council membership as an opportunity for professional development and a chance to learn.
- Review this handbook annually.
- Go to the co-chair(s) if there are concerns about the process.
- Attend and participate in at least 75% of council meetings.

Council Operations Guide

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This section outlines more specific operational information, guidelines, and requirements regarding MHCC's councils and governance.

Continuous Improvement

At the end of each academic year, councils will review their annual work plan, interactions, and structure, and identify areas of success and improvement. Councils will share this information via

- An oral report made to campus at an all-campus meeting
- A written report submitted to PC by June 30 of each year

Decision-Making

- Councils should take a vote for decision-making.
- Majority rules, based on the members present at the time of the vote (quorum not required).
- Each decision should provide an opportunity to hear and note all opinions and feedback to promote continuous improvement, ensure relevant factors are considered, and promote transparent communication.

Council Notes and Information - Information Repository

All council information will be stored on the [council intranet page](#). Co-chairs manage and maintain the content, which should include:

- Council charge
- Council agendas and minutes
- Meeting documents
- Membership list
- Council's action teams

In addition, the site must be accessible to all MHCC employees and students.

Meetings

- Councils will meet at least once per month while terms are in session.
- Councils may choose to suspend council meetings during the summer months.
- Meetings are open to other MHCC employees who are not members or otherwise affiliated with the council. Non-member employees may attend for observation/learning provided the employee has their supervisor's approval.
- A quorum is not required for regular meetings and/or to conduct council business.
- Co-chair attendance is required to hold a council meeting. At least one co-chair must be present to facilitate the meeting.

Membership

Councils should have no more than 20 active members.

Each council will have two co-chairs. The faculty association will approve a faculty co-chair for each council. The president shall appoint the second co-chair. All councils will also have a PC liaison, appointed by the president.

Recommendations for council membership will be requested from the Full-time Faculty Association, Part-time Faculty and Tutor Association, Classified Employees Association, and the Associated Students of MHCC (ASMHCC).

Membership on councils will strive for diversity across groups representing various dimensions of diversity, including race, ethnicity, nationality, age, gender, ability, sexual orientation, employee group, worksite location, and functional area of the college to name a few.

- Councils should strive to have at least 8-12 regular attendees. The co-chairs and PC liaison share responsibility to contact any members not meeting the 75% attendance expectation to clarify their status.
- Four to five positions will be pre-defined for council administration (e.g., co-chairs, PC liaison).
- Councils will identify at least one student council member. Councils may also choose to engage in student forums or utilize other means for student participation/input.