Keeping Meetings on Track: Ensuring Effective Participation

Kale Braden, North Representative

Craig Rutan, South Representative

2014 ASCCC Curriculum Institute

Overview

- Building Relationships
- Planning Meetings and Creating Agendas
- Brown Act and Curriculum Committees

Ineffective Meetings

- As difficult as it is to believe, there are many meetings that do not accomplish their intended goals.

- Each one of these meetings began with good intentions, but something caused them to become ineffective.

- What are some things that make a meeting ineffective?

Relationships

- Whether you were appointed or elected, you are now the Curriculum Chair. To effectively manage the work of your committee, you must have strong working relationships with your fellow faculty and with administration.

- When everyone trusts that you are impartial and are striving to do the best for your college, it will be easier for you to achieve a consensus that everyone can agree with.

- These relationships can help you anticipate challenging conversations, address possible issues prior to a meetings, and to regain control of a meeting if things start to go badly.

Relationship With Your CIO

- Schedule regular meetings with your CIO.

- Discuss important issues outside of the Curriculum Committee meetings.

- It is completely unproductive for the CIO and the Curriculum Chair to be disagreeing with each other during a committee meeting.

- This does not mean that you will always agree with your CIO or that they just get their way. Curriculum is a primary advice issue and belongs to the faculty. You need to develop a good working relationship with your CIO so that they will understand where you are coming from, when there is room for compromise, and when they will need to defer to the faculty.

Relationship With Your Senate President

- Curriculum Committees operates under the umbrella of the Academic Senate.

- Curriculum Chair should regularly attend Academic Senate meetings.

- Academic Senate President needs to be briefed on curriculum issues.

Relationship With Your Faculty

- Faculty tend to only look at their CORs when they are in curriculum review, program review, or want to create a new class.

- Educate the faculty on effective curriculum practice.

- Make yourself available to faculty to answer questions.

- When regulatory changes happen (like repeatability), you need to sit down with affected faculty and explain what is going on and why.

Creating An Agenda

- Don't try to create the agenda by yourself. Work with your CIO, AO, and office staff to ensure you are as informed as possible.

- Provide some background for topics that will involve more discussion like policy changes.

- Establish time limits for each item. Curriculum meetings can be very long and you need to keep the discussions moving.

- Create a consent calendar to approve revised courses with no changes.

- Have updates on important items at the beginning of the meeting (AO, Accreditation, Planning) in case they might change the discussion for other agenda items.

Brown Act

The Curriculum Committee is subject to the requirements of the Brown Act.

- All meetings must be open to anyone that wishes to attend.
- The public must be allowed to make comments.
- All items being voted on must be included on an agenda that is posted at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.
- Only a single reading is reading is required but many colleges have two readings.
- Action can only be taken on items listed for action.
- Items listed for discussion or from public comments can only be acted on after a motion has passed to suspend the rules
- All votes must be recorded in the minutes

Managing the Meeting

- While you might not want to follow Robert's Rules for your Curriculum Committee, establishing some procedures can make your meetings easier to manage.
  - Time limits for each discussion item
  - Time limits for each speaker during a discussion
  - A speaker only gets to speak once until everyone interested in commenting has had a chance to speak
  - Presentation to the committee need to have a specified length of time. Without this, a "brief" presentation might take an hour of meeting time

Managing the Meeting

- As the Curriculum Chair, your role is to facilitate the meeting and to provide additional information that the committee members will not have.

- Whenever possible, make sure that you remain impartial.

- Do not allow your committee to go down a path that could be problematic (like being out of compliance) for your college.

When Meetings Go Wrong

- Things can go terribly wrong for both new and experienced leaders.

- Always try to remain calm. Everyone is looking for you to lead them and losing your temper will not help.

- Heated arguments and circular discussions happen to all of us.

Suggestions

- Properly preparing before the meeting can help you manage the tough situations

  - Meet with folks before the meetings. See where they are coming from so you know what to expect.

  - Include some details on your agenda. Some background information will make it clear why you are having these discussions now.

  - Have established rules that allow you to regain control if things start to go south.

  - Remain calm and do your best!

Questions??

- Thank you for joining us.
  - Kale Braden – BradenC@crc.losrios.edu
  - Craig Rutan – rutan_craig@sccollege.edu