

Charter and Bylaws

I. TITLE

The official title of the College's participatory governance council shall be the Skyline College Governance Council.

II. PHILOSOPHY OF PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE

The primary mission of Skyline College is to provide quality education to its students in partnership with its community. Participatory governance is a method of college management in which decision makers, whether with primary or delegated authority, are committed to involving affected constituencies in decisions as much as possible. Participatory governance is based upon individuals having a voice in decisions that affect them.

Participatory governance is carefully planned, instituted and evaluated. It is designed to lead to effective participation in decision making that unites constituencies, produces an improved college environment, and draws upon the strength of diversity. Participatory governance includes the structures and processes for decision making that engage students, staff, faculty and administrators in reaching and implementing decisions that further the primary mission of the college—to educate students. The groups formed to address college matters are properly charged and empowered, the members carefully selected, and processes clearly structured. The structures and processes for participatory governance vary according to task.

In order for participatory governance to work, there must exist a covenant of mutual trust, honesty, open agendas, equity, and respect for differing views. Essential to maintaining this covenant are open communications and feedback from all constituencies. All parties must commit to and take responsibility for fostering and maintaining an environment in which participatory governance can occur, as well as being well informed regarding issues.

Members of the constituent groups must commit to participating in the implementation of decisions made through participatory governance processes and to working within legal and pragmatic parameters of decision makers. The partners in participatory governance acknowledge that traditional and legally mandated roles continue within the context of participatory governance; e.g., the publicly elected members of the Board of Trustees have the ultimate legal and ethical responsibility for setting policy and making decisions regarding the operations of the District's colleges.

One of the ways participatory governance is implemented is through the Skyline College Governance Council. The purpose and operations of the Council are carefully defined in this charter and bylaws. Membership for the Council is broad-based and is representative of the College community. The Council actively participates in decision making regarding major college issues. The Council is the primary planning group for the College, thereby establishing the criteria and processes to be used by other units and committees in accomplishing specific tasks. Although the purpose of the Council is broad-based, it is not intended that the Council deal with all issues nor micro-manage individual units. The meetings of the Council are open and public.

III. PURPOSE

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The Skyline College Governance Council is the primary planning and policy formulation group for the College, thereby establishing the charges to other units and committees in accomplishing specific tasks including but not limited to, the following areas: budget, programs, student equity, accreditation and program review. The Council is responsible for reviewing the progress and accomplishments of the units and committees. The Council serves as the umbrella participatory governance committee for the College and is a major participant in decision making for the College.

IV. MEMBERSHIP

1. Members: The College Council will consist of the President of the College, the Vice Presidents, and the Presidents and Vice Presidents of the Academic Senate, Classified Council, and Associated Students. In cases of absence, the member's representative or designee will attend the meeting. (This should be the exception, rather than the rule.
2. Removal/Replacement of Members: Members may be removed only by the group that selected them. Any vacancies created by members resigning, changing office, or being removed shall be filled by the original designating group.
3. Expectations of College Council Members: Among the expectations for members of Skyline College Governance Council are the following:
 - a. Members possess an open-mind and are willing to develop a college-wide perspective and an understanding of constituencies other than their own.
 - b. Members are willing to commit to active and regular participation in College Council meetings and activities.
 - c. Members keep lines of communication open by informing those outside the College Council of issues and developments.
 - d. Members observe standards of ethical conduct.
4. Guests: Guests are encouraged to attend Council meetings and to participate in the discussion of agenda items. Guests are expected to follow the guidelines for meetings and will not be included in any polling for consensus.

V. MEETINGS

1. Quorum: A quorum for meetings will be 50% of the Council members plus one. A quorum requires at least one member from each designated unit.
2. Open Meetings: All meetings of the Skyline College Council will be open and public.
3. Meeting Times: Regular meeting times will be once a month. Special meetings may be called as needed.
4. Conduct of Meetings: Meetings of the Skyline College Council will be conducted in a flexible manner which promotes open discussions and full participation of all members and takes into account the nature of the agenda items. The President will serve as chair of the Skyline College Governance Council.

VI. AGENDAS

1. Agenda Building: Items may be placed on the agenda in the following ways:
 - a. Items for discussion will usually be determined at the close of the previous meeting of the Council.
 - b. A Council member may request that an item be placed on the agenda by submitting it to the President's Office at least 2 weeks prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting.
 - c. At the outset of a meeting, a Council member may request the inclusion of an item for discussion. The item

c. At the outset of a meeting, a Council member may request the inclusion of an item for discussion. The item will be placed last on the agenda unless otherwise agreed to by the members present. If there is not sufficient time to discuss the item, it will be carried over to the next agenda or a special meeting may be called.

d. Members of the Skyline College community may request that an item of College concern be placed on the agenda by contacting their representative at least seven working days prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting.

2. Agenda Order: The normal order of the agenda for Council meetings will be to prioritize the agenda for that meeting; b) to consider the various agenda items; c) to develop the next agenda.

3. Agenda Format: When items are submitted for the agenda, the member will include the purpose--reporting, problem solving, planning, reacting, decision making--and the approximate time needed. The member will also recommend the process to be used for that agenda item and if a facilitator is needed.

VII. DECISION MAKING/RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Decision Making: The Skyline College Governance Council will use consensus building as its principal method for decision making. However, in cases where consensus cannot be reached, a vote will be taken following parliamentary procedure.

2. Recommendations: If the College President or other primary decision maker rejects a recommendation of the College Council, the College President or other primary decision maker will provide a written explanation to the Council members of why the recommendation was not accepted. In addition, the College President or other primary decision maker will include a statement to the individual or group to which the decision is to be forwarded (usually the Chancellor or Board of Trustees) that their recommendation differs from the Skyline College Governance Council.

VIII. COMMUNICATIONS

1. Notification: A clearly labeled agenda will be distributed to Council members 2 weeks prior to each meeting. The agenda will show the time and location of the meeting with an invitation for all interested parties to attend. A clearly labeled meeting summary or minutes will be distributed to Council members. Council members are responsible for posting agendas and meeting summaries in prominent areas where their constituents have access to the agendas and summaries. In addition, a website will be constructed where meeting agendas and minutes will be posted.

2. Reporting to Constituents: Members will be responsible for keeping their respective groups informed regarding activities of the Skyline College Governance Council by reporting back to those bodies and eliciting input regarding items under consideration.

3. Annual Report: An annual report summarizing the work of the Skyline College Governance Council will be distributed to the College community.

IX. COMMITTEES

The Skyline College Governance Council may appoint one or more Council subcommittees, consisting of one or more Council members and any number of non-members, with such duties and responsibilities as the Council shall deem appropriate.

X. REGULAR REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE AND DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURES

The Skyline College Governance Council will undertake a review of the college's governance and decision-making structures at least once every six years, as part of the accreditation self-study process.

XI. AMENDMENTS

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This Charter and Bylaws may be amended by consensus or a vote in the absence of consensus of the members of the Skyline College Governance Council. A new Charter and Bylaws may be adopted by the unanimous consent of all the members of the Skyline College Governance Council in consultation with their respective constituents.

Source: How to Make Meetings Work, Doyle and Straus

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