



michigan community college association

LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Advisory Groups – Challenging the Status Quo to Reach 3.0

September 26, 2024

MCCA Student Success Summit

TOPIC AREA: EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

Who We Are

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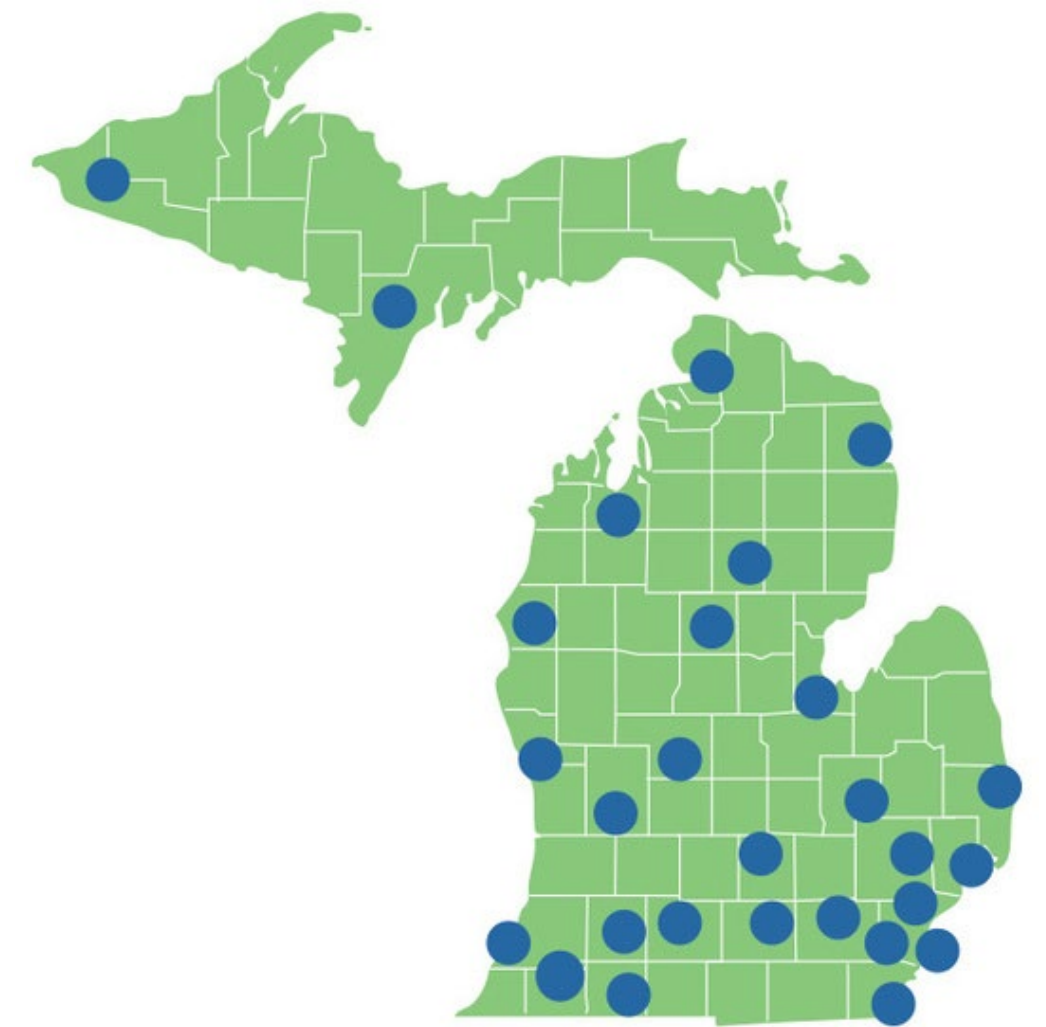
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COMMUNITY COLLEGE 3.0



Topics to Cover

1. Purpose of Advisory Groups
2. Current Thoughts from Michigan
3. The Problem Statement
4. What the National Research Says
5. Best Practices from Award-Winning Colleges
6. Recommended Actions



Purpose

“An Advisory Committee is a group of **persons outside the education profession**, comprised of representatives, recognized and **respected** in their own fields of work and **as employers of individuals** in occupations directly related to the specific CTE field of study, who **advise** CTE educators and administrators regarding CTE programs, based on the **employment needs** of the community, state, regional, national, and international marketplace.”

- Kansas Board of Regents Advisory Committee
Handbook for Carl D. Perkins Grants



What do YOU think?

- What do your Advisory Groups do well?
- What challenges do your Advisory Groups face?



What Your Colleagues Are Saying

What does your group do well?

- **Current trends**
 - **Current techniques**
 - **Regulatory changes**
- **Referral program**

What are areas for improvement?

- **Attendance – helpful: virtual accommodation**
- **Variety of industry partners**

How Often Do You Meet? Is it Enough?

- Twice a year (Fall/Spring)
- Once a year
- Required once a year...but meet 4 times a year
- Enough time
- Plenty of time

Communicate In Between Meetings?

- Email
- Phone
- Drop-ins
- Newsletter



One Thing You Changed Due to Group Advice

- Added a 3hr communication/scenario-based lab to improve student-patient conversations
 - Curriculum changes
 - Exposure prior to the workforce
- Soft skills including composing emails & professional skills
 - Scenario-based training
 - Improved communication
 - Leadership
 - Diversity



Stuck in the Status Quo

How do community colleges improve the **effectiveness** of advisory groups to meet **post-college success outcomes** associated with Community College 3.0?



Data Analysis

- Very little research about advisory group effectiveness
- The qualitative data suggests advisory groups are effective but, should be developed more fully to impact student outcomes after graduation
- To transition our institutions to level up to Community College 3.0, advisory groups must be student-centered and outcome-focused
- It appears some employers struggle to see the relationship between their service on advisory groups and the return on investment



Why Advisory Group Success Matters

Employer Benefits

- Foster strategies to meet employer needs
- Able to customize training
- Proper workforce development
- Students/employees familiar with real-world equipment and practices
- Students and employers enjoy shortened onboarding and orientation times

College/Student Benefits

- Get direct feedback to employers
- Learn what future trends/skills needed
- Identify needed program revisions to ensure the curriculum is relevant
- Firsthand feedback from employers
- Knowing when to pivot
- Use employer partners to help recruit

-Valencia College Advisory Council Handbook



Best Practices

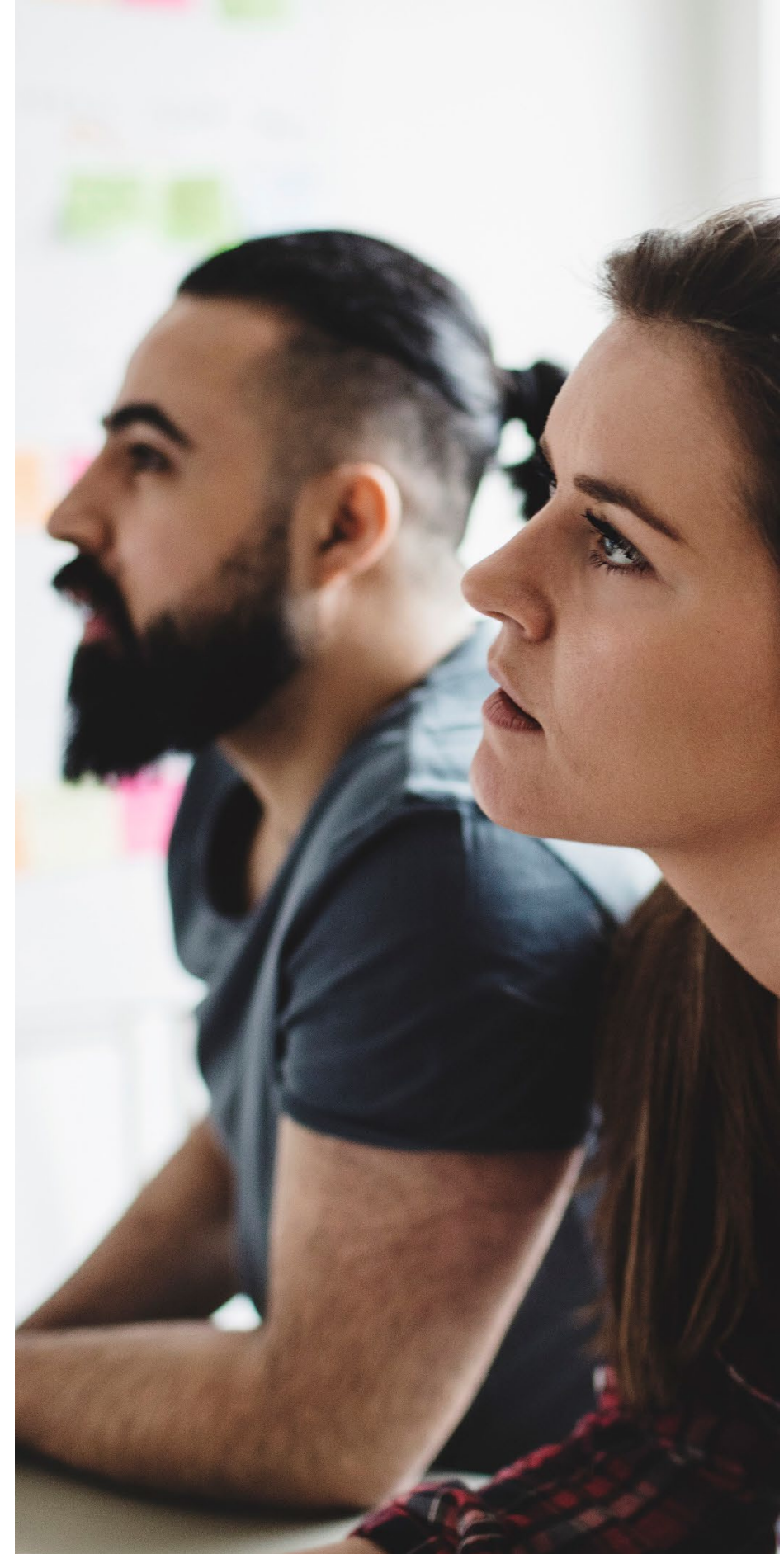
Advisory Groups Should Commit to...

- Providing Community Resources
- Annual/Long-range Planning
- Assisting with Curriculum Development
- Placing Students
- Sharing Workforce Trends
- Advising about Facilities and Equipment needs
- Launching new initiatives launch programs



Reestablish Who Should Serve

- Focus on Right Fit Partners who support your mission, vision, and strategic plan
- Senior leaders and decision makers as advocates. Additional employees as work group members, adjunct faculty and/or regular meeting attendees
- Limit terms to two years (with option for extension)
- Include cross-section of businesses served, recent grads, campus administrators and advisors, internship
- Ensure members are active in the industry



Advisory Groups Best Practices

- Base meeting **frequency** on **annual goals**
- Provide a **Handbook** with expectations
- Set guidelines for the employer-include realistic time and resources expectations including workplace visits
- Require members to present **industry updates**
- Assist with **recruiting** instructors & support staff
- Create easy **on-ramps** to partnerships and participation



How to Engage Students

- Faculty collect student questions during class discussions and ask members for real-world industry feedback to share with students
 - Members attend career and internship fairs
 - Members offer work-based learning opportunities
 - Volunteer as guest presenters in classes or as speakers at industry-specific conferences the college has hosted
- *Interview with Wala Wala Community College*
- *Valencia College Advisory Council Handbook*



Improving Employer ROI - Win, Win, Win

- Don't wait for the next meeting, let advisory group members know their impact when it happens
- Purchase specific equipment based on employer input
- Develop a certificate program in response to their needs
- Include a class in a degree program based on what they said
- Add content/training to a program based on advisory committee feedback, e.g., more pharmacology content



Strong ROI = Success

- Employment rates with Advisory Groups' companies employers increase
- Employers advocate for the institutions and recognize the value
- Employer engagement goes beyond attending the meeting – internships, guest lecturers, employment
- College can connect degree and certificate attainment to job placement
- Recent graduates report easy transitions to jobs



Challenging Perception

1. Advisory Board participation is not “community service” or PR work
It is part of a strategic and proactive recruiting and training resource in a market where hiring skilled labor can be difficult
2. Reframe, conversations around advisory groups with the challenges current needs, and the employer’s goals in mind.
3. Advisory groups are to be a benefit of the employer to address their needs; not simply to focus on partnership



Make the Most of the Partnerships

- Establish client relationships around systems and tie the success of the relationship to the program deliverables and employer participation...not individuals
- Consider technical & interpersonal learning/development
- Actively listen and translate employer needs into real initiatives and curriculum/ program design



Listening Tour Guide - SOURCE

TABLE 5: LISTENING TOUR GUIDE

	COMPANY EXECUTIVES	FRONTLINE/HIRING MANAGERS	HUMAN RESOURCES	RECENT PROGRAM ALUMNI
Key insights to seek in listening tour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization's goals, future plans, and strategic challenges • Broader industry marketplace trends • Willingness and capacity to invest deeply in a partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill gaps (both technical and professional skills) • Time it takes new hires to operate at 100% competency • Attributes of top-performing new employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open positions • Average time to fill open positions • Turnover rates • Hiring practices and requirements • Recruitment timelines and costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workplace culture • Barriers to upskilling • Gaps between classroom training and real-world application
What to consider as a problem-solving partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent do employer and college goals align? • Is the employer willing to make the investments needed to solve talent pipeline challenges? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can the college help to close skill gaps through better quality programming? • Can better training reduce time-to-competency for new hires? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can the college provide the quantity of talent needed for open positions? • What other educational providers are also responding? • Could the employer save money and time spent on recruitment by partnering with the college? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of feedback to employers might be helpful (e.g., onboarding practices, management of new workers)? • How can programs better align training to real-world requirements?

Source: The Workforce Playbook



Timeframe for Improvement

LONG TERM STRATEGY

- This will take continuous updating
- Advisory Groups review annually and get rid of the duds
- Make sure goals are in line for the institution and employers
- Keep what is best for the students at the forefront



Takeaways – Future Needs

- More research and data about how programs with Advisory Groups improve student outcomes
- Examine the relationship between Advisory Groups and Post-College Success
- Identify the best practices of high-functioning Advisory Groups



Advice & Action Items

Challenge the Status Quo

1. Freshen up your Advisory Group members – don't stick with the status quo; say goodbye if they are not helpful to student outcomes; cycle of membership
2. Hold employers accountable to engage with students
3. Improve employer Return on Investment (ROI) by reminding them of the benefits of their engagement
4. Find ways to connect and meet employers where they are



Appendices

1. Cultivating Successful Employer Partnerships, EAB, 2019
2. Interview with Former Dean & Executive Director Workforce Training & Tassell M-Tec Julie Parks, Grand Rapids Community College, 2/22/2024
3. [Kansas Board of Regents Advisory Committee Handbook for Carl D. Perkins Grant, 2020](#)
4. Presentation by Dr. Adriana Phelan, MCCA and University of Michigan Faculty, 11/13/2024
5. [Valencia College Advisory Council Handbook, 2024](#)
6. [The Workforce Playbook: A Community College Guide to Delivering Excellent Career and Technical Education](#), Aspen Institute, 2019, The Aspen Institute



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