

OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR COMMITTEES AT LOS MEDANOS COLLEGE

At Los Medanos College, we commit to participatory governance and active representative leadership, much of which occurs in our committees and working groups. We emphasize being inclusive, listening actively, and making sure people feel seen, heard, and valued in processes designed to lead to effective decisions that center students. Ensuring different voices, backgrounds, and perspectives are reflected in how we plan, work together, and accomplish our goals.

To promote engagement, communication, and transparency, the following guidelines provide LMC committees with a foundational structure for overall operations. While committees should feel free to expand upon and create a community that is reflective of their work, these basic guidelines should be consistent across all committee operations, regardless of their reporting lines or Brown Act status.

Committees that are required to adhere to the Brown Act must follow additional guidelines to maintain compliance with public reporting legislation. This operational foundation provides transparency for participatory governance at the institution, promotes equitable access and engagement for members of the College community, and improves the effectiveness of LMC's committees and processes.¹

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR COMMITTEES

Every committee member and constituency group possess knowledge, expertise, and unique perspectives that are critical to institutional dialogue and decision-making. It is important to ensure that all voices are heard and considered, and to maintain an environment centered on communication, collaboration, transparency, and trust.

Committee members and meeting participants should demonstrate civility at all times during meetings, even (and especially) when issues of disagreement arise. All members of the College community – classified professionals, faculty, managers, and students – are deserving of, and must be treated with, respect. “The [shared governance] model... [benefits] from a focus on collective interests and from the coalescing of diverse perspectives contributed by all constituency groups” (SGC Position Paper, p.1).

Our work together is grounded in several commitments including the principles reflected in the “We Are Los Medanos College” campaign:

Respect,
Compassion,
Humility,
Inclusion,
Civility, and
Empathy.

¹ This revision is consolidated from 2024 Task Group Report, 2014 SGC Committee Operational Guidelines & 2017 SGC Committee Guidelines addendum.

Our College Values also inform our collaborative work in committees:

Excellence,
Respect,
Diversity
Integrity, and
Responsiveness.²

People serving on committees have been appointed to represent a specific constituency group, but they must also work toward what is in the best interest of the institution and its focus on educating, serving, and supporting students. Los Medanos College's "Shared Governance Model gives the College a structure for creating its vision with the guiding question: what does this issue, decision (etc.) mean for us as an institution?" (SGC Position Paper, p. 1).

The work of each committee – through its action and communication – should reflect LMC's commitment to equity and inclusion: increasing equitable outcomes and success for all students; providing equitable opportunities for all employees; and establishing institutional practices, policies, and processes that are equitable. "This model aspires to continually move us toward forward-looking decision-making, with an emphasis on equitable outcomes and processes." (SGC Position Paper, p.1).

COMMITTEE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

COMMITTEE CHAIR

The Committee Chair is responsible for ensuring that the committee functions effectively, fulfills its purpose, and contributes meaningfully to the college's mission and goals. Their key responsibilities include leadership, facilitations communication, organization, guidance, inclusion, equity, and fairness. Chairs will:

- Facilitate committee meetings, set/prepare agendas, and ensure that discussions remain focused and productive.
- Encourage participation from all members, manage any conflicts that may arise, and guide the committee toward consensus when making decisions.
- Ensure that all voices are heard during discussions and that all viewpoints are given due consideration.
- Serve as the primary liaison between the committee and other participatory governance bodies.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Committee members are selected or appointed to bring their expertise, perspectives, and collaborative spirit to the work of the committee. Their responsibilities typically include:

² Los Medanos College is in the midst of a revision of its values, and when completed, the new values will be inserted here.

- Actively participate in meetings, contribute expertise and insights relevant to the committee's objectives, and follow through on assigned tasks.
- Arrive prepared for each meeting, to be in the best position to provide input and actively engage in dialogue (e.g. review agenda and handouts in advance, seek and share input and feedback from constituency).
- Represent fairly the interests and perspectives of their department, constituency, or area of expertise.
- Work constructively with fellow committee members to reach consensus and make informed decisions.
- Support a collegial and inclusive environment where all voices are valued.
- Communicate relevant committee updates back to their colleagues or stakeholders.

COMMITTEE RECORDER

Each committee should designate a group recorder responsible for taking accurate and comprehensive meeting minutes. Minutes should include:

- the meeting date, time, and location;
- a list of members;
- a report of members and guests in attendance;
- a summary of discussions and decisions/votes; and
- any action items assigned.

The Committee Chair and Recorder are responsible for:

- Distributing the minutes to all committee members within a reasonable timeframe (within two weeks) following the meeting for review;
- Bringing the draft version of minutes to the following meeting for approval; and
- Posting approved minutes on the committee's webpage and archived for future reference.

MEETING PARTICIPATION, DECISION-MAKING & VOTING

Most committees at Los Medanos College use Robert's Rules of Order to organize and conduct a meeting. Other methods of structuring and facilitating committees exist, and committees may commit to other means, but they should be clearly understood by all members and serve to keep participation fair, the meeting organized and allow for all voices to be heard.

In the event of conflicts or disagreements among committee members, the Chair should facilitate open and respectful dialogue to resolve issues.

A clear voting process should be outlined in the committee bylaws. Committee decisions should follow these bylaws when voting on items.

For each action item/decision (or at the end of each meeting), the committee members should consider the following:

- Are there equity issues that arise from decisions we have made (e.g. equitable distribution of resources, access to services, potential barriers created, etc...)?
- What is the impact to our students?
- How will various members/groups of our College community be impacted?
- Has this meeting/process been equitable?
- Were all members/constituencies heard and given an opportunity to contribute?
- Were there any voices/perspectives missing that should be considered?
- Is there any additional information or support needed to facilitate our dialogue and/or decision-making?

TRAINING & SUPPORT

Committee members should receive orientation and training on their roles, responsibilities, and expectations. Current Chairs and continuing members should help to introduce new members and support their inclusion onto the committee,

At its first meeting of the academic year, each Committee Chair should review with the committee:

- LMC Mission Statement
- The Committee charge(s)/purpose (and update, as necessary)
- Reporting relationship within the College governance structure
- Appointed members and vacancies (if any)
- Roles and responsibilities (e.g. Chair, officers, members, support, etc...)
- Meeting logistics (e.g. day, time, location, frequency, agenda items, etc...)
- Protocols for action items (i.e. voting and quorum)
- Ongoing support should be provided to committee members, including access to resources and assistance with navigating committee processes.

COMMUNICATION

SHARING INFORMATION

At the end of each meeting, identify all “report-out” information for members to share with their respective constituency group and specify any follow-up/action required for next session (e.g. bringing back constituency feedback to the committee). To facilitate consistent information sharing, “talking point” bullets can be emailed to all members following the meeting.

Meeting guests and presenters should provide presentation materials and documents to the Chair for inclusion in the agenda. If that is not possible, presenters must email to participants any documents or slides they shared during or immediately after the meeting, so members can share them with their constituents or areas.

COMMITTEE WEBPAGE

The LMC website features a dedicated section for committee information, including a list of (and links to) all committees, their respective charges, meeting schedules, minutes, and membership rosters.

The committee Chair, or designated member, should be responsible for ensuring that committee information on the website is kept up-to-date and accurate.

Updates should be posted promptly (within two weeks) following any changes to committee membership, meeting schedules, or other relevant information.

Each committee's webpage should include:

- Meeting agendas and minutes;
- Time, date, and location of meetings;
- Current members and representation;
- Charge/purpose;
- Active/functioning links to key documents, information related to committee processes/products, and relevant resources; and
- Links to any sub-committees and group(s) with reporting relationship

EVALUATION & REPORTING

Committees should regularly (annually) evaluate their operations and effectiveness, soliciting feedback from members and stakeholders to identify areas for improvement.

Evaluation results should be used to inform improvements to committee operations and inform decisions about committee structure and composition.

Feedback received should be used to make adjustments/improvements to committee processes, communication strategies, and decision-making practices as needed.

Committees should provide a summary of the self-evaluation and an update regarding charges and goals outlined in the original committee application. This update should be completed/submitted to the Shared Governance Council by the first week of May.