Effective Practices for Council Chairs and Members

Council membership is governed by the charge of each council and the constituent groups on campus. Each council will include a representative of each constituent group in order to truly reflect participatory governance and inclusive decision-making.

We, at Modesto Junior College, value participation as a means to provide equal access to all staff, faculty, and administrators on matters that affect our institution. We believe that each participant brings different skills and gifts to the table, improving our discussion of issues which affect our students and our working environment.

Our college values all members within a committee. All members can expect;

- The right to be heard, fully without interruption or prejudice
- The right to conflict, bringing issues to the table which will better our college, our community, or our working conditions
- To cooperate with colleagues, despite political or pedagogical differences
- College governance councils exist to address issues that affect our college. Our goal is not to push forward a personal conviction, but to develop collegial relationships. We see conflict as opportunities to identify problems and seek solutions to benefit our community as a whole.

Our college governance councils should adapt to changing structures or needs within the college. New leadership in constituent groups should acknowledge the existing councils structure, proposing changes through the appropriate channels and be widely vetted to support full participation of constituent groups.

Council Members

1. Each member brings a unique perspective to the table, adding value to each council and college governance.

2. Each member should be prepared for meetings in advance;
   - Access to all materials
   - Research relevant contract, policies, governance structures which affect issues on the agenda
   - Research sister colleges, cohorts, and constituencies in order to add a broader perspective of the issue and identify possible alternatives

3. Each member values the time commitment of all members on a council. Members will use due diligence to bring key issues to the table in a timely manner where all members can be fully informed and each council can function in its most efficient and effective manner.

4. Each member acts in Good Faith---bringing areas of concern to the table, valuing conflict to problem-solve and work towards the common good.
5. Each member will locate a substitute if absent to not derail council work.

6. If strategic decisions are slated for the agenda, each member will give advance warning of absence in order to guarantee a quorum and not derail progress due to their absence.

7. If a constituent group member is absent without verification for two meetings, the constituent group will be notified and select an alternative member to represent the group.

8. Each member recognizes that attendance and participation fosters relationship-building.

9. Members represent constituent groups and should avoid personal comments that do not represent that membership.

10. Chair of the council has the responsibility to encourage courteous, constructive, and professional conduct.

11. Each member has open access to the chair of the council to voice concerns.

Chair: The chair of each council has the following responsibilities:

1. To move the agenda and ask for discussion to create efficient, informative meetings.

2. Maintain a focus on the college mission, college goals, and student learning in decision-making.

3. To facilitate meetings – locating areas of concern requiring resolution, seeking common ground rather than set a personal agenda.

4. To recognize that decisions and outcomes take time to develop. True collaboration always checks-in with each constituent group in order to see the possible consequences that decisions may have upon the campus community.

5. To utilize the skill set of members to benefit the whole committee and college. Members with knowledge of Education Code, Title V, constituent contracts, accreditation standards and Board policy and procedure are encouraged to add to the conversation.
VOICE AND ROLE OF THE INDIVIDUAL (How the Individual Can Get Involved)

Modesto Junior College invites your participation in its shared governance processes whether you are an employee or student.

Administrators, faculty, staff and students are encouraged to take an active role in their appropriate unit or constituency groups, college governance councils, and committees. Committees, such as initiative groups, and constituency committees, such as union representative councils, provide an excellent opportunity to make a contribution to the institution’s shared governance.

MJC’s college wide councils are comprised of members that are elected, appointed, or position based, but one does not need to be a member to participate. These college wide councils are open to everyone.

Any member of the community can attend a committee and can make his or her voice heard. An individual may contact the respective council chair. Many councils and committees allow debate following Robert’s Rules of Order. At these meetings one must wait for acknowledgment and permission from the chairperson to enter the discussion. Some councils, committees, and boards only allow discussion from voting members and invited guests during business. These meetings must provide an open comments item on the agenda, where anyone can speak. It is advisable in both cases to let the chairperson know who you are and that you would like to speak about, so that they can provide you with that opportunity. If you have an item you feel should be placed on an agenda it is appropriate to contact the chairperson(s) of that committee in advance. The chairperson will let you know whether your item will be on the agenda, or whether you will need to bring the item as an open comment.