SUBJECT AREA COMMITTEES (SACS)

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DEFINITION

A Subject Area Committee (SAC) [http://www.pcc.edu/resources/academic/degree-outcome/SACResources.html] is composed of all faculty throughout the PCC district who teach in a subject area or program. SACs address the instructional and curriculum concerns of its program(s) or discipline(s). SACs represent and articulate subject area and program issues which are defined by the PCC Mission Statement, the Core Outcomes, and the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. As the curricular and content experts for their subject areas, SACs will make recommendations and must be consulted regarding all relevant academic and curricular issues.

PURPOSE

SACs develop and implement curricula of all course offerings within individual programs or disciplines or in a group of related programs or disciplines.

SACs fulfill college and accreditation requirements for assessment of student learning outcomes with guidance from the Learning Assessment Council and the Dean of Academic Affairs. Assessment is used to guide SAC practices toward enhancement of student learning as well as to ensure that students who complete courses, programs, degrees, and certificates achieve the designated outcomes. This assessment is not for the purpose of evaluating individual faculty members.

The SAC is the proper forum for discussion of curricular issues. SACs make recommendations regarding academic/curricular issues such as:

- high school articulation
- community or baccalaureate college articulation
- grant application review, when requested
- substitutions for graduation requirements
- course and program analysis

SACs are not designed to negotiate or adjudicate issues of a contractual nature. Issues such as faculty compensation, faculty assessments, campus assignments, professional leaves (e.g. sabbaticals), and hours and days of assignment are resolved through mechanisms established by the collective bargaining agreement. SACs may make recommendations regarding contractual issues that have an impact on instruction and programs or disciplines.

MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

Each SAC will have as members all faculty (including part-time instructors and temporary full-time instructors) in its subject area or program. Part-time instructors are encouraged but not required to attend SAC meetings.

All instructors, including those who teach part-time, have the right to participate in all SAC deliberations including those concerning instructional materials selection, curriculum, faculty qualifications, and class size. Many SACs tend to make their decisions by consensus, while others use a voting process. For SACs using a voting process, part-time instructors with assignment rights who attend a SAC meeting will have the right to vote. SACs may extend decision-making rights to a greater number of their part-time faculty, including full decision-making rights to all SAC members who attend.

Proxy voting is not allowed in SAC decisions. SACs should determine their quorum requirements and voting-by-email policy for SAC actions. SACs should determine their own subcommittee rules and requirements.

SAC members shall select a chairperson(s) and inform the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs' (VPASA) office of their selection. Whenever possible, the chairperson's term of office will be one to three years, and multi-campus SACs should rotate their chairpersons among the campuses.

A division dean or other administrator will be assigned by the VPASA to serve as administrative liaison for each SAC.

MEETINGS, OPERATION, AND RECOMMENDATION REPORTING

At a minimum, each SAC will meet once during fall term, winter term, and spring term. All members must be notified at least seven days prior to the meeting date; an agenda will be distributed in advance of the meeting. Minutes will be taken and approved by the SAC members. Approved minutes will be distributed to all SAC members, the appropriate department chairs, division deans, deans of instruction (DOIs), campus presidents, and the VPASA.

The SAC Chair(s) or division dean (or other designated administrator) will submit SAC recommendations in memo format (minority reports may also be submitted) to the appropriate venue (for example, the VPASA, the Educational Advisory Council (EAC), an EAC standing committee, a DOI and/or other division dean). All further actions on the recommendations shall be reported back to the SAC.

The VPASA or designee will be responsible for responding to SAC recommendations in a timely manner. In the event the administration disagrees with a SAC recommendation, the parties will work collaboratively to try to reach a compromise regarding the recommendation. After this collaborative effort, if a compromise is not reached, the administration will, in writing, explain the rationale for their decision. The SAC shall be given the opportunity to supply additional information to the VPASA (or, as appropriate, to the EAC) and to appeal that decision to the VPASA.

SAC chairs and SAC members may attend the EAC and participate as guests regarding any issue on the EAC agenda. In addition, SAC chairs or others may request that items be put on the agenda for discussion.

Approved minutes and recommendations will be distributed to, and maintained in, all of the division offices supporting the program(s) or discipline(s) included in the SAC.

SAC RESPONSIBILITIES

CONTRACTUAL

The Faculty and Academic Professionals Contract (Article 26) [http://www.pcc.edu/hr/contracts/documents/faculty-ap-contract/article26.pdf] specifies the areas of expertise for which SACs are responsible: instructional material selection, curriculum, faculty qualifications, and class size.

NON-CONTRACTUAL

Curriculum Responsibility

SACs shall recommend all new courses, new programs, course and program revisions, course inactivations, grading options, course repeatability, and the manner in which the course is delivered (e.g., distance modality).

SACs are responsible for reviewing outcomes and assessment strategies for all courses and programs taught in their subject areas. Learning outcomes for degrees and certificates shall be consistent with the college-wide core outcomes.

Where no SAC exists for a course, program, or discipline, the VPASA will appoint a SAC to make academic recommendations.

SACs shall inactivate courses which are no longer being offered. If a SAC fails to inactivate a course that has not been offered for four consecutive years, the Curriculum Office will coordinate with the SAC regarding course inactivation.

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Course Content and Outcomes Guides

SACs shall develop and approve a Course Content and Outcomes Guide (CCOG) for each of their courses. SACs shall review and, if necessary, update each CCOG at least once every four years so it reflects current PCC and accreditation standards and practices. SACs shall submit new or updated CCOGs to the Curriculum Office. Refer to the Curriculum Office Home Page [http://www.pcc.edu/resources/academic/eac/curriculum/] for CCOG format guidelines and for course revision forms and procedures.

Program and Course Evaluation

SACs shall review requirements for courses, programs, and disciplines. Recommended changes shall be made in time to meet catalog deadlines. The catalog and brochures must be reviewed and updated as appropriate. To satisfy accreditation criteria and ensure currency, program or discipline reviews will be conducted at least every five years.

Course Challenges

SACs shall decide which courses can be challenged. SACs shall develop the challenge measurement and process as appropriate. Recommendations shall be submitted to the DOIs for approval.

Equipment Purchases

SACs shall review and make recommendations to the appropriate division deans for purchases of equipment that impact curricula on a district-wide basis.

Library Holdings

SACs shall review library holdings in appropriate subject areas and make recommendations for additional purchases or deletions. Recommendations should be submitted to the director of the library.

Textbooks/Instructional Materials

SACs shall determine when textbook and instructional material adoptions are group decisions or individual decisions. SACs must consider ways to minimize the cost to students for textbooks and instructional materials.

SAC CHAIR RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Work with SAC administrative liaison to set official meetings and agendas.
2. Conduct meetings.
3. Attend to the items in the SAC Responsibilities.
4. Work with the SAC administrative liaison to record and distribute minutes to SAC members, division deans, DOIs involved with the SAC, the VPASA, and other interested parties within two weeks of a SAC meeting.
5. Forward all curricular recommendations to the VPASA or person designated by the VPASA.
6. Work with the SAC administrative liaison to maintain an up-to-date historical file readily accessible to all SAC members and administrative liaisons.
7. Be readily accessible to all SAC members.

ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE SAC

ADMINISTRATIVE LIAISONS/DIVISION DEANS

Administrative liaisons represent the broad interests of the college. They engage in respectful dialog with SACs to clarify budgetary, contractual, and other implications of SAC curricular work, and they serve as a conduit between faculty, the DOIs, and the VPASA regarding issues critical to SAC recommendations. Administrative liaisons recommend SAC proposals--or, if necessary, add their justifications for not recommending them--after consulting with other division deans involved with the SAC.

Administrative liaisons work closely with faculty as they fulfill the SAC Responsibilities listed above. In particular, administrative liaisons will:

1. Collaborate with SAC chairs to identify issues SACs need to address, and bring forward agenda items for SAC meetings.
2. Help SACs develop degree and certificate programs, including conferring with other schools regarding course transfer and program articulation.
3. Work with SACs and DOIs to focus, assess, and strengthen programs through program review and academic planning.
4. Work with SAC chairs to ensure CCOGs are up-to-date.
5. Maintain the official SAC-approved listing of textbooks and other required student-purchased instructional materials.

Division deans are responsible for implementing SAC recommendations approved by the administration, including working with faculty and administrative colleagues to determine and secure necessary funding for approved proposals.

DEANS OF INSTRUCTION (DOIS)

1. Review and make recommendations for curricular revisions in accordance with Curriculum Office processes.
2. Consult with the campus presidents and the VPASA on SAC issues, including the assignment of SAC administrative liaisons.
3. Prepare administrative responses to SAC program reviews.

CAMPUS PRESIDENTS

1. Review and make recommendations for curricular revisions in accordance with Curriculum Office procedures.
2. Consult with the DOIs and VPASA on SAC issues, including the assignment of SAC administrative liaisons.

VICE-PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS (VPASA)

The VPASA serves as the College's Chief Academic Accreditation Officer and is responsible for working in the best interests of faculty, students, and the institution by ensuring compliance with accreditation standards, policies, and procedures; academic rigor and integrity of the College's curriculum; and the effectiveness of student development services that promote student retention and success. The VPASA will:

1. Review and approve/disapprove SAC recommendations as specified in previous sections of this standard.
2. Keep record of approved instructor qualifications and processes for faculty hiring.
3. Maintain the College's official file of all approved CCOGs.
4. Update the College Catalog as new and revised courses or programs are approved.
5. Keep the Course Master up-to-date as required by the course and program approval process.
6. Coordinate training and briefings for SAC chairs and administrative liaisons.
7. Communicate information regarding statewide initiatives, practices, and procedures impacting curriculum.

Policy/Standard Name: Subject Area Committees
Policy/Standard Identifier: S701
Authority:
Units responsible for review and update: Dean of Academic Affairs, Registrar, Curriculum Director
Approval: College President
Responsibility: Vice President for Academic Affairs
Date of Final Approval: May 2012
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