

## ***Cuyamaca College Participatory Governance Handbook***

### ***Cuyamaca College's Commitment to Participatory Governance***

Cuyamaca College is deeply committed to inclusive and collaborative decision-making that reflects the diverse voices of our campus community. Through clearly defined organizational and governance structures, the college fosters meaningful participation from all constituent groups—faculty, classified professionals, administrators, and students.

The *Participatory Governance Handbook* serves as a guide to the collegial decision-making and policy recommendation process at Cuyamaca College. It outlines the roles, responsibilities, and reporting pathways of the college's participatory governance councils, committees, and sub-groups. This resource is designed to support transparency, strengthen communication and understanding of participatory governance, and encourage active and effective engagement from all members of the college in advancing the College's mission and shaping the future success of the College.

Our governance structure reflects institutional decision-making processes that involves representatives of all constituent groups in developing and recommending policies and procedures (exclusive of collective bargaining matters) to the college president, district chancellor, and Board of Trustees. The constituency groups include students, faculty, classified professionals, and administrators. The college's decision-making processes are in alignment with the Grossmont Cuyamaca Community College District Board of Trustees' Board Policy (BP) 2510 and the state's Assembly Bill AB 1725.

### ***Related California Education Code***

[California Assembly Bill \(AB\) 1725 \(1988\)](#) as well as California Code of Regulations 51023 provide the framework for participatory governance in California Community Colleges, including the specific responsibilities of college faculty as represented by the Academic Senate. Cuyamaca College adheres to the principles of participatory governance as outlined in AB 1725, which is also the basis for GCCCD [Board Policy \(BP\) 2510](#) and [Administrative Procedure AP 2510](#). Education Code Section 70902(b)(7) mandates that the California Community Colleges Board of Governors adopt regulations that “. . . ensure faculty, staff, and students . . . the right to participate effectively in district and college governance.”

### ***Related Accreditation Standards***

The following Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) 2024 Standards also guide college decision-making processes and policy-making:

- Standard 4.2: Roles, responsibilities, and authority for decision-making are clearly defined and communicated throughout the institution. The institution's structure for decision-making provides opportunities for stakeholder participation and ensures the inclusion of relevant perspectives.
- Standard 4.3: The institution's decision-making structures are used consistently and effectively. Institutional decision-making practices support a climate of collaboration and innovation that advances the mission and prioritizes equitable student outcomes. The foundation for decision-making across the College is the College's vision, mission, and values.

### ***Cuyamaca College Vision***

Equity, Excellence, and Social Justice through Education

### ***Cuyamaca College Mission***

Cuyamaca College advances equity and social justice through student-centered and innovative approaches to education. We strive to create unique and meaningful learning experiences that build upon the strengths and socio-cultural experiences of our diverse student population and the communities we serve by providing programs that lead to certificates, degrees, transfer, career opportunities, and ultimately social and economic mobility.

### ***Cuyamaca College Values***

- **Student-centered**—Our students are our guides. We put students first and ensure the student experience is the foundation of our work by seeking student input and being responsive to student needs. We value and honor student involvement in institutional decision-making. We are committed to supporting student completion of educational goals and opportunities for lifelong learning while providing equitable and accessible distribution of resources.
- **Equity**—We work intentionally to honor and validate our students' and employees' lived experiences and cultural capital. Building upon the concepts of mutual trust, respect, and accountability, we work collaboratively to identify racial equity gaps in the context of intersectionality and implement approaches and practices that create and sustain a welcoming, supportive, and race-conscious culture and environment.
- **Student Success**—We meet students where they are and work collaboratively to transform students' lives through their experiences inside and outside of the classroom. Our purpose is to foster students' continuous growth and promote economic and social mobility. We take responsibility for creating and maintaining safe, supportive, and equitable spaces where students can thrive.
- **Innovation**—We aim to break away from traditional structures and approaches in order to open up more inclusive pathways to serving and supporting our students, employees, and community. We value and promote risk-taking, interdisciplinary collaboration, and creativity among students and employees in order to continuously learn, grow, and improve our practices.
- **Excellence**—We validate and support students' and employees' strengths, socio-cultural experiences, and perpetual thirst for learning and continuous growth. We value and honor the talents of each member of our community.
- **Social Justice**—We acknowledge social injustices that impact historically marginalized communities and work together to make systemic changes to actively dismantle the racism and inequalities ingrained in the fabric of traditional institutions in order to safeguard human rights, increase access, promote participation, and further equity.
- **Community**—We proudly stand as a member of a larger collective and recognize that together we thrive. Cuyamaca College values relationships with the many diverse local communities that we serve, including indigenous, border, and international communities. We acknowledge our role within larger historical and economic contexts, including recognizing the responsibilities we have as an educational institution occupying unceded Kumeyaay land.

- **Mutual Respect**—We honor and value students’ and employees’ diverse talents and cultural capital by centering kindness, empathy, and compassion in every interaction. Recognizing that our words and actions impact our community, we seek continuous growth by holding each other accountable and practice equity-minded communication. We aim to create safe, supportive, and equitable spaces to ensure all voices and perspectives, especially those from historically marginalized or excluded groups, can participate in governance and authentically share their insights, experiences, and feedback without intimidation.

Cuyamaca College’s Strategic Plan: 2022-2028, sets forth five Key Planning Goals for the institution:

- **Increase Equitable Access**
- **Eliminate Equity Gaps in Course Success**
- **Increase Persistence and Eliminate Equity Gaps**
- **Increase Completion and Eliminate Equity Gaps**
- **Increase Hiring and Retention of Diverse Employees**

Members of the Cuyamaca College community are dedicated to advancing the college’s vision, mission, and strategic goals through a well-structured system of participatory governance. This system is rooted in transparency; open, honest, and collegial dialogue; inclusive partnerships; and purposeful collaboration—ensuring thoughtful planning and informed decision-making across the institution.

The structures detailed in this Handbook support our collective efforts to foster student success and propel the continued growth and innovation of Cuyamaca College.

### ***Introduction***

Cuyamaca College embraces participatory decision-making as a vital expression of our shared commitment to equity, inclusion, and student-centered leadership. All decisions must be guided by the fundamental understanding that the college's primary purpose is to educate its students. To this end, participatory governance work across the College is guided by community norms and carried out with guiding principles in mind.

### *Community Norms*

- **Partnership:** All governance groups have a vested interest in ensuring that Cuyamaca College fulfills the mission given to it by the legislature, State Board of Governors, and the Governing Board of the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District.
- **Respect for Members' Time:** We demonstrate care through the careful and thoughtful facilitation of meetings and aim for meaningful use of members' time, effort, and expertise. Participatory governance group meetings are scheduled and facilitated to ensure ample time for members to review agendas and attachments prior to the meeting so that robust, informed discussions can take place during meetings.
- **Collective Problem-Solving:** The most effective means of developing policy and procedures is to provide an opportunity for involvement by the constituency groups affected by the policy and procedures. Through active participation and collegial interaction by all members, mutual agreement is the goal.
- **Mindful of Processes:** Participatory governance groups are mindful of their charge and core functions as well as relationships with other governance and, if applicable, operational bodies. Discussions and recommendations in participatory governance groups center on the student experience and student voice.
- **Community Care:** Not only are we mindful of our processes, but our processes are mindful as well, meaning we care for and empower our community by prioritizing the needs of each individual member of our collective. We strive to foster a culture of trust and actively listen to and address concerns.
- **Closing the Loop:** Members have the responsibility of keeping their respective groups informed of the proceedings and recommendations of governance groups.
- **Inclusivity:** We strive to be inclusive, welcoming, nurturing, and validating to individuals of diverse cultures, identities, backgrounds, and perspectives.

### *Guiding Principles for Participatory Governance Structures and Processes*

- **Transparency:** Easy to access information and committee documentation; clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and processes; effective and meaningful communication with the College community
- **Efficiency:** Make efficient use of members' time, expertise, skills, and effort; address the Council's/Committee's charge and function in the best possible manner
- **Representation:** Members are empowered to share perspectives and thoughts on issues and topics discussed by the Council/Committee; constituent group perspectives are valued
- **Accountability:** Make progress toward college strategic priorities and the Council's/Committee's goals/intended results
- **Evaluation and Improvement:** Council/Committees are focused on evidence-based improvement in processes, structures, and outcomes
- **Alignment:** Council/Committee placements within the governance structure are appropriate, given their charge/function
- **Clear Roles and Expectations:** Council/Committee members are aware of their roles and responsibilities to their constituent groups, the governance group, and for college governance group members overall; achieved through intentional onboarding for council and committee members through both the individual committees and councils and through each constituent group for their representatives

## *Decision-Making Procedures*

### **Participatory Governance Issues & Topics**

- **Governance:** A college governance issue is a policy, procedure, plan, or project that has an impact on the college as a whole. These include input on board policies and administrative procedures, college-wide plans (e.g., Strategic Plan, Comprehensive Plan, Equity Plan), and college program review processes as well as input on district-wide governance matters.
- **Operational:** Operational issues are those that involve the implementation of policies, procedures, and plans as approved through the governance process. Operational matters also include programmatic and department-specific responsibilities. Operational groups focus on policy implementation, translating board policies and college plans into actionable steps. Members of operational groups are typically identified by their specific expertise and/or assigned job duties within the college or district. In addition, operational groups may provide guidance or input to administrative leads for operational areas or make recommendations to governance groups when plans, procedures, or policies require adjustments related to the group's function.
- **Working Conditions:** Working conditions are those that affect employee groups related to bargained areas such as wages, benefits, workload, and other terms and conditions of employment. Working conditions issues are referred to the specific collective bargaining group or employee group and are addressed as outlined in the respective collective bargaining agreement(s).

### *Consensus*

Most committees and councils at the College follow a consensus decision-making model, meaning that diverse perspectives are shared and valued, and committee/council members work together to develop recommendations, plans, policies, and procedures that represent the broad input and general agreement of the committee or council. In order to honor the group's charge and role within the governance structure and ensure effective constituent engagement, consensus-building may require committees/councils to pause and gather additional input and/or information to move forward on a recommendation.

### *Quorum & Voting*

Unless otherwise stated in the committee or council charge, a quorum is defined as a simple majority (50% +1) of the total voting members.

It should be noted that during periods of interim administrative vacancies, the administrative membership on respective councils and committees will not be altered; instead, an individual will be appointed to represent the administrative vacancy.

## ***Roles of Constituent Groups in Participatory Governance***

To ensure that perspectives from the Cuyamaca campus community are included in participatory governance, the College Council serves as the lead consultation council and recommending body for the College. The College Council includes representatives from each constituent group (faculty, classified professionals, students, and administrators) and makes final recommendations to the College President. The College Council also includes representatives from the faculty collective bargaining group, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and the classified professionals collective bargaining group, California School Employees Association (CSEA). The College values diverse perspectives that each constituent group brings and encourages collegial discussion and participation in governance to inform college decision-making.

Representatives for each constituent group are noted in participatory governance council and committee compositions. Unless specified in the council/committee composition by position or title held, representatives are appointed to participatory governance councils/committees by their constituency group's leadership. Each college constituency group is described below, including specific roles and responsibilities designated for each group through California Education Code and district policies and procedures.

### ***Governing Board***

The **Governing Board**, with appropriate input from all constituencies through a participatory decision-making model, establishes District goals, adopts policies, authorizes the annual budget, awards bids and contracts, appoints and terminates personnel, and serves as an avenue of final appeal within the District for issues unresolved through normal processes of the college governance model.

In alignment with Education Codes 70902 and 71090 the Governing Board has ultimate responsibility for governance of decision making for the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District (GCCCCD). As noted in [Board Policy \(BP\) 2200](#), the Governing Board sets the policy direction for GCCCCD and delegates authority to the Chancellor to effectively lead the District. In carrying out its various functions, the Board ensures and supports active participation by stakeholders through the participatory governance processes. As elected representatives of the community, the Governing Board is the ultimate authority in the District, governed by state laws and regulations.

### ***College President***

As summarized in [Board Policy 7113](#), the **College President** is granted the executive authority and responsibility to lead, direct, and supervise the college, and administer programs and operations in compliance with legal requirements and policies. The president executes the duties and responsibilities outlined in the College President job description and that are within the purview of the operation of the College. This includes implementation and administration of District and college policies, procedures, and practices.

Through the participatory governance process, the College President receives recommendations and takes appropriate action. The College President organizes the college environment to ensure effective communication channels and organizational and governance structures for achieving participation from all constituencies in the decision-making processes appropriate to participatory governance. The College President encourages and monitors the participation of all constituencies in their appropriate college governance roles. The College President is responsible for presenting the college perspective/recommendations based on these processes. If the College President receives a recommendation but determines that another direction is necessary, the President will provide campus constituent groups with the rationale and reasons for their decision.

### ***Administrators (Managers and Supervisors)***

The Administrators' Association serves a dual role within GCCCD: it functions both as an employee union and as the representative body for supervisors and classified and educational managers as a constituency group. The Association represents classified and educational managers and supervisors, excluding confidential supervisors/administrators, vice presidents, and college presidents.

Additionally, the Administrators' Association represents classified and educational managers and supervisors in participatory governance matters, as delineated in Education Code 70901 (B) (1) (e), [AB 1725](#), and [BP 2510](#). The Administrators' Association E-Board is responsible for appointing members to councils, committees, and task forces when non-specific administrative positions are noted in the composition. These appointments are made from its constituency perspective. For governance committees at Cuyamaca College, only Cuyamaca College Administrators Association members may serve as representatives. If the Association President is not a Cuyamaca College employee, they will appoint a qualified Cuyamaca College Administrators' Association member to serve in any ex-officio capacity assigned by Association President.

Managers and supervisors play dual roles in the College's participatory governance structure. In their professional capacity, they implement operational matters aligned with their responsibilities and expertise within their designated roles. Simultaneously, they serve as a constituent group through the Administrators' Association, providing leadership, perspective and insight as part of the participatory governance process.

### ***Academic Senate***

The **Academic Senate** represents the faculty of Cuyamaca College. The Senate expresses the view of the faculty through a vote of the Senate. As noted in Education Code Section 70902 (B) (7), the governing board of a community college district shall ensure the right of the academic senate to assume primary responsibility for making recommendations in the areas of curriculum and academic standards. Furthermore, per Title 5 Section 43203, the governing board, or its designee, must consult collegially with the academic senate on academic and professional matters as defined in Section 53200.

In alignment with [AB 1725](#) and codified in California education code as noted above, the Senate adopts, approves, endorses and recommends action to the governing board on academic and professional matters. As provided in [BP 2510 Participation in Local Decision-Making](#), the Governing Board recognizes the authority of the Academic Senates with respect to academic and professional matters in accord with provisions of Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations noted above.

As noted in [AP 2510](#), the academic and professional matters on which the Board will rely primarily on the Academic Senates are as follows:

- Curriculum, including establishing prerequisites and placing courses within disciplines
- Degree and certificate requirements
- Grading policies
- Standards or policies regarding student preparation and success
- Faculty roles and involvement in accreditation processes, including self-studies and annual reports
- Policies for faculty professional development activities

The academic and professional matters on which the Board will seek mutual agreement with the academic/faculty senates are as follows:

- Educational program development and educational program discontinuance
- District and college governance structures as related to faculty roles
- Processes for program review
- Processes for institutional planning and budget development
- Other academic and professional matters as mutually agreed by the Board of Trustees and the senate(s)

The Academic Senate regularly submits items for Board approval via the Chancellor. These include regular Curriculum Committee approvals, sabbatical leave recommendations, emeritus applications, and other academic and professional matters as listed above, upon which the Board either relies primarily upon or seeks mutual agreement with the Senates. The Academic Senate has direct lines of communication to the College President and President's Cabinet. Moreover, the Academic Senate represents all faculty and provides the means for faculty to collectively define, participate, engage, and shape decision-making as it relates to academic and professional matters as defined above.

In addition, as noted in Section 23203 (F), "the appointment of faculty members to serve on college or district committees, task forces, or other groups dealing with academic and

professional matters shall be made, after consultation with the President or their designee, by the academic senate.” Faculty appointments to standing committees and councils are for two-year terms of service unless otherwise noted in the committee/council charge and composition or as determined by the Academic Senate to ensure continuity if committee/council operations by staggering terms; additional terms are subject to senate approval. Unless explicitly authorized by vote of the Senate, faculty members serving on committees do not speak or decide for the Senate but are obligated to communicate regularly to the Senate on the committee’s/council’s activities. Appointees have the responsibility of keeping their respective groups informed of the proceedings. Appointees are expected to attend meetings and to contribute as a part of their professional responsibilities.

### ***Classified Senate***

The **Classified Senate** as defined in the Memorandum of Understanding with the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District, dated 5/16/02, represents non-management classified professionals in participatory governance discussions. As noted in Title 5, California Code of Regulations, Section 51203.5, “Staff shall be provided with opportunities to participate in the formulation and development of district and college policies and procedures...that the governing board reasonably determines, in consultation with staff, have or will have a significant effect on staff.” As such, the Classified Senate. As such, as outlined in Administrative Procedure 2510, the role of classified professionals in making decisions at the district level is to participate in the development of recommendations to the Chancellor on issues that have or will have a significant effect on staff.

The Classified Senate is organized to represent classified professionals in issues including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Promoting the participatory governance process, including the following:
  - a. the selection of administrative staff;
  - b. in-service education;
  - c. facilities and services;
  - d. relations and communication among interest groups in the College; and
  - e. finance and budget
2. Provide a centralized means of communication between classified professionals and the college community
3. Articulating the professionalism of the classified staff so that it is recognized and valued
4. Providing an opportunity to develop individual leadership among the classified professionals and increase the professional standards of its members
5. Promoting and supporting activities that develop or increase skills, productivity, and professionalism

### ***Students***

The **Associated Students Government of Cuyamaca College** (ASGCC) is the official voice of the Cuyamaca College student body and is responsible for selecting students to serve on participatory governance groups. Through representation on college participatory governance groups, the Associated Students articulate student perspectives regarding issues, policies, etc., to the campus and to the Dean of Student Engagement and Belonging.

Students play a vital role in participatory governance by offering unique perspectives that shape college decisions. Their contributions are essential to fostering an inclusive, student-centered environment that promotes equitable access, academic success, and ultimately social and economic mobility. In alignment with the California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Section 51023.7, their recommendations are given reasonable consideration in governance processes.

As noted in [AP 2510](#), students have the right and responsibility to participate in decisions that significantly affect their educational experience, including:

- Grading policies
- Codes of student conduct
- Academic disciplinary policies
- Curriculum development
- Courses or programs to initiate or discontinued
- Processes for institutional planning and budget development
- Standards and policies regarding student preparation and success
- Student services planning and development
- Student fees within the authority of the District to adopt
- Any other District and college policy, procedure, or related matter that the GCCCD Governing Board determines will have a significant effect on students

### ***Confidential Administrators***

Confidential Administrators at the college level include the Vice Presidents. Confidential Administrators play a central role in the executive leadership of the College. They contribute to administrative decisions to carry out the college mission and create an institutional culture that reflects college values of Equity, Social Justice, Innovation, Student Centeredness, Student Success, Excellence, Community, and Mutual Respect. Confidential Administrators are responsible for an array of governance and operational duties including planning, organizing, and directing College programs; planning for and managing resources; hiring, supervising, and providing work direction to employees; and problem-solving and decision-making to advance the College's strategic goals and objectives. Confidential Administrators are involved in college-wide decisions and formulate recommendations to the President on matters assigned related to their area of expertise and responsibility.

### ***Labor Groups***

For matters related to compensation and working conditions, employees are represented by the following organizations:

- Faculty—American Federation of Teachers Guild, Local 1931
- Classified Staff—California School Employees Association, Chapter 707
- Administrators—Administrators Association
- Confidential Administrators—meet and confer unit
- Confidential Supervisors/Assistants—meet and confer unit

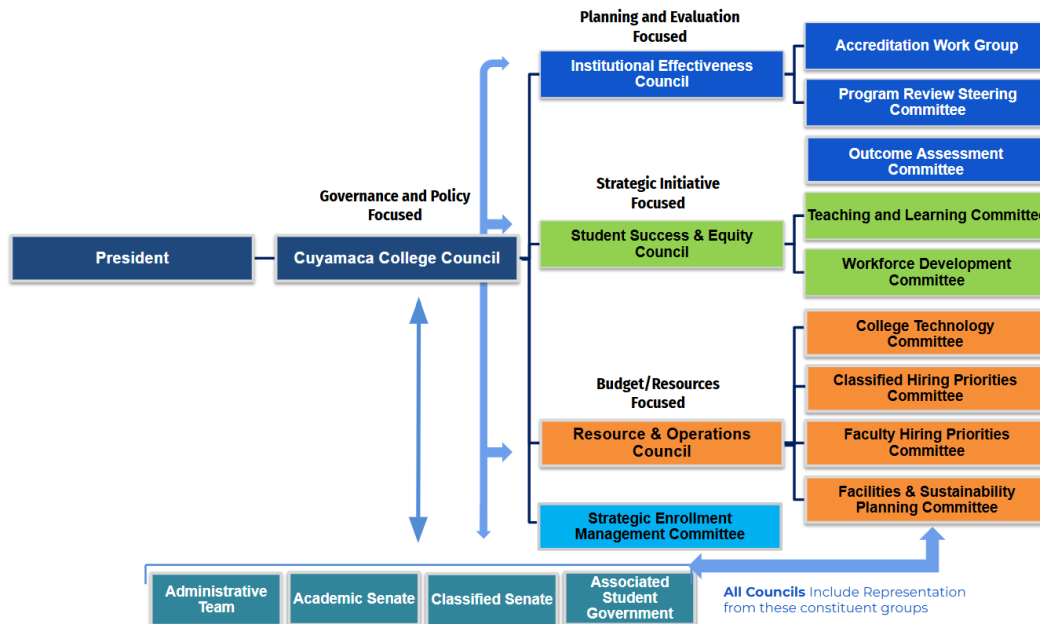
Labor groups have representatives on the College Council and on other, non-participatory governance committees as appropriate to their employee group and the committee's scope of work.

### ***Responsibilities of All Parties***

Whether or not governed by the Brown Act, college participatory governance committee deliberations and votes are public. In addition to representation afforded to individuals through constituencies, individuals and groups may also be heard in any committee by requesting permission to speak. Written minutes of proceedings will be posted for all college participatory governance councils and committees.

### ***Governance Structure***

**Cuyamaca College Participatory Governance Structure**



*As of Fall 2025*

## Annual Planning Process



### Annual Planning Process

