



ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

MID-SOUTH

**Committee Chair
Guidebook**

Committee Chair Guidebook

College committees are appointed by the Chancellor to make recommendations to the Chancellor and other administrative officers about policies and programs. Standing committees of the College will be chosen, as much as possible, with attention to diversity and to providing employees and students with opportunities to engage, over time, in a variety of governance initiatives. Student representatives will be approved by the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs. The chair of each committee will be appointed by the Chancellor unless otherwise noted. Standing committee meetings are open, and college personnel not appointed to a specific committee are encouraged to attend meetings and participate in discussions.

College committees will operate as bodies developing and recommending policy and reviewing operations. No policy formulated by a committee will be binding until reported to and accepted by the Chancellor, and if applicable, the Board of Trustees. Implementation of policies will be left to the appropriate administrative officers. The Chancellor and Vice Chancellors may request items to be placed on the agenda of any committee and may specify reasonable deadlines for action or report on these items. Committees will report their activities to the appropriate Vice Chancellor as requested.

Room and Furniture Requests

Please reserve meeting rooms as far in advance as possible using the Astra scheduling process found at <https://www.aaiscloud.com/ARStateUMidSouth/Default.aspx> A Facilities Use form is not required if no food, technical support, or special room set-ups are required.

Simple changes such as the rearrangement of classroom furniture that you or the committee members can handle are permissible. However, please remember to put the room back in its original state when your meeting is over.

Committee Chairperson's Responsibilities

One of the first tasks of a committee chair is to set up an email group in Microsoft Outlook using the membership list provided in the committee listing, which is updated each year. Creating an Outlook group makes it simple to email everyone on the committee and schedule meetings. All employees are strongly encouraged to update their calendars regularly to allow for easy scheduling of meetings. For help in setting up the email groups, please watch this tutorial:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XmEmY5CS3Jg>

All committees should elect a recorder who is responsible for publishing an agenda at least three days in advance of meetings and for recording and distributing minutes of each committee meeting. A standard form for minutes is provided in:
K:\Shared\Committee Info & Minutes.

Each committee should follow the standard rules of parliamentary procedures as outlined in Robert's Rules of Order when appropriate.

When recommendations from the committee need to be communicated to an administrator for further action, a recommendation form will be completed and forwarded to the appropriate person, unless other forms and procedures have been adopted, such as form for the Policy Review Committee (A sample is provided in this document). The editable versions of the form is provided in K:\Shared\Committee Info & Minutes. This person will then return the complete form to the chair of the committee who will report decisions or actions to the committee members and forward a completed form to the Chancellor.

Chairpersons are to ensure that a copy of each meeting's minutes is placed in the electronic folder: K:\Shared\Committee Info & Minutes. All employees have access to this folder so that information regarding committee activities is easily accessible to anyone who is interested in a committee's progress.

Some committees include one student member who must be approved by the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. Chairpersons are asked to contact their students personally, encourage their participation, and make every effort to schedule meetings at times that the student(s) can attend.

Chairs are also asked to encourage participation by all their committee members, to schedule meetings so the greatest number can participate, and so that all members get to attend the meetings. If the Chair has made every effort to schedule meetings at a convenient time and a member has not attended for three consecutive times without a reasonable explanation, the member should be asked to excuse himself/herself from the committee and the Director of Institutional Effectiveness informed so that others may be given an opportunity to serve. The effectiveness of our committees is directly related to the breadth of participation among faculty, staff, and students. Care is taken each year to have committees reflect the diversity of the College. This diversity has value only if everyone participates.

Being asked to serve as a committee chairperson is both an honor and a responsibility. Your willingness to serve is appreciated.

The Five W's Of Meetings

Why A Meeting?

Is a meeting necessary? Before scheduling a committee meeting, first determine if other means of communication can suffice. Make use of e-mail, interoffice mail, telephone, or fax machines when possible. If the objective cannot efficiently be met by these means, a meeting may be necessary.

What is a Meeting?

Meetings are useful for problem solving, decision making, and disseminating information.

The chairperson should have a clear purpose in mind prior to scheduling a meeting. A meeting will run smoothly if it has a clear objective or set of objectives. Ideally, a written agenda that includes the objective(s) should be sent to members in advance so they know what to expect from the meeting, how long it will last, and what preparations to make. Three to seven days of lead time are ideal. As leader, it's your job to think about how the objectives can be accomplished. You may need to provide data, resources, or suggestions that the committee members can consider.

A second issue to consider is the structure of the meeting. What will be the format? Will there be open discussion, a presentation, or small-group work? Have you considered probable questions or concerns to be raised by the group? What items will be presented first? What is the most logical and effective sequence of topics or activities? Preplanning helps to solidify the meeting's purpose and prevents the discussion from drifting to irrelevant topics.

When to Schedule a Meeting?

The leaders must schedule meetings to ensure that the maximum number of members can attend. Ideally, committee meetings should be held at the same time each week or month.

Committee members should know the usual meeting time and place, and they should be informed of any changes. If meeting times are regular, sending out the agenda a few days in advance also serves as a reminder of the time and place.

Avoid calling a meeting at the last minute. Members must have time to prepare.

Where to Have a Meeting?

The meeting place should provide the privacy and space conducive to productive work. Try to meet in the same place every time rather than moving around. Scheduling is simple in this case, and members don't sacrifice productive time orienting themselves to a new location.

As chairperson, you can't take anything for granted. Make arrangements for equipment ahead of time and go to the meeting room early to set it up. Chairs may need to be moved; the temperature may need to be checked, and chalk or a flip chart may need to be provided. Be certain the environment for your committee's work is as comfortable and pleasant as it can be.

Who Should Attend the Meeting?

Decide who, besides regular committee members, will be invited to the meeting. There may be other individuals who are needed to explain programs or issues or who wish to attend to obtain information for themselves. If guests are included, try to inform the committee members prior to the meeting so they know whom to expect. Always take time for introductions to ensure that everyone present knows the other participants' names.

Conducting a Meeting

Beginning the Meeting

- Start on time. Always start on time, even if all the members have not arrived. This lets people know that you intend to adhere to the meeting times. If you begin the meeting late, members will come late to the next meeting and you'll have to begin even later. This situation perpetuates itself, and you'll end up with little or no time for your meetings.
- Select a recorder for each meeting, someone who will keep the minutes and help keep track of the time. You may have a different recorder for each meeting to share the responsibility.
- Review and confirm the objectives or purpose for the meeting. Even though the objectives for the meeting usually have been specified at the previous meeting and sent out in written form, it's wise to review them briefly at the beginning. A single sentence may do the job. This ensures that everyone understands the objectives and that members will be prepared to focus on them.
- Ask for changes or additions to the agenda in order to gain a consensus from the group. If there is other business, it should be briefly discussed so you can judge whether to include it in the present meeting or hold it for future meetings.
- Make time limits clear. Let members know how much time you expect to spend on each part of the meeting. By setting this expectation, members know how much time they have to give to each phase of the meeting, and they will tend not to exceed it. One hour should be allocated for most meetings—including those focusing on problem solving. Meetings lasting more than two hours diminish effectiveness and efficiency. If it is necessary for a meeting to last two hours, give breaks.
- Review action items from the previous meeting. In many cases, committee members will have taken responsibility for activities between meetings. At the beginning of each meeting, review whether these activities have been completed and what the results are.

Conducting the Meeting

- Make sure the group stays focused. Consistent with your emphasis on objectives, you need to see that the group stays focused on what it needs to be doing. At times, the group may get off on tangents which you, as a wise facilitator, realize are important in the development of the group. You may feel this is legitimate business for the group and choose to focus attention on that issue, possibly just by allowing members to continue to explore the topic until they feel some satisfaction.

- If issues arise that are not relevant to the job at hand, it is your duty as facilitator to bring the group back on track. Often a gentle reminder of the time limits and objectives for the day are sufficient. If the new topic is one about which the group feels strongly, list it as an objective for a future meeting. In this way, you give it credence and importance, but keep it from interfering with the committee's current focus. Regardless of the issue, your job is to keep things focused on the most important topic. This helps sustain the group's energy and motivation. Your committee needs to feel that things are happening and that the process is working, even if no specific action is taken on a particular day.
- Maintain a suitable pace for the meeting. Ask questions or solicit discussion to slow it down; set time limits to speed it up.
- Expect and encourage participation. As the chairperson, you should avoid dominating the discussion and do a lot of listening. Members should be seen as equals. Give attention to quiet personalities. You do not want to create a feeling of isolation. Learn to control "difficult personalities" and potential conflict.
- Validate each member by making eye contact periodically with everyone attending the meeting. Make it a point to recognize everyone at the meeting by asking for their individual view — particularly those who have not participated in discussions.
- As facilitator, your response should be open, encouraging, and appreciative. Constructive criticism should be discussed within the group; however, the facilitator should not take sides until all evidence is presented. In some instances, you may have to make the final decision, but consensus-building is important.

Ending the Meeting

- Establish action teams and responsibilities. Whenever a committee meeting ends with a decision, review what has been decided and confirm it in writing. Everyone should know what is to be done, who will do it, and when it will be accomplished. The distribution of tasks should be fair. If people don't volunteer, ask if they would be willing to handle a particular task.
- Allow members to volunteer for specific assignments. Those who can do the tasks best should do them, but everyone should be involved at one point or another in the labor that committee work requires.
- Sum up the session and set the date, place, and objectives for the next meeting. You need to be sure that committee members know where and when the next meeting will be and that they agree on what will be accomplished there. These decisions are usually simple and straightforward and grow directly out of the activity in your meeting. However, it's still a good idea for the facilitator to sum things up briefly by reviewing what's been accomplished and what will be done at the next session.

- Evaluate the meeting. Ask for feedback from the team: “To what extent did we meet our objectives?” This needn’t be a lengthy discussion, but some time can be provided for committee members to express themselves about how the group functioned, what went right, and what went wrong. In general, members need to feel a sense of satisfaction and closure, that they got what they wanted out of the meeting or, if not, that they had a chance to express their discontent.
- End the meeting crisply, positively, and on time. You may recall meetings that simply faded away because the facilitator didn’t seem to know how to end them or meetings in which a good spirit was established but that ended with the feeling that the meeting had served no purpose. It’s important to end the meeting on an optimistic note, without endless discussion. Never ask a question at the end of a meeting. Just state what will be done next time, thank people for their work, and announce that the meeting is over.
- Clean up and restore the room to its customary configuration. This is a courtesy to others, which you hope they will also show to you.

Following the Meeting

- Prepare the minutes or ask the recorder to do so and to forward you a copy as soon as possible. With the help of the individual who was assigned to take notes, prepare a comprehensive but concise summary of the meeting. Do this as soon after the meeting as possible, but not later than a week after the meeting, before you lose the flavor of what really happened. Distribute the minutes to the committee members in time to get feedback before the next meeting.
- Follow up on action items and plan carefully for the next meeting. One of your most important tasks is to be sure that members who have been assigned responsibilities carry them out. Offer whatever help they need, since the advancement of the group depends on their work. Follow up with a telephone call or note of encouragement to be sure that tasks and assignments reach completion. You’ll also want to plan the details of the next meeting based upon action taken in the interim.

ASU Mid-South Committee Recommendation Form

Directions: When recommendations from the committee need to be communicated to the administration for consideration or action, the Committee Chairperson should complete this form and forward to the Director of Institutional Effectiveness for forwarding to the appropriate person. Upon return of the form to the Committee Chairperson, he/she will report decisions or actions to committee members.

Committee: _____

Date: _____

Recommendation: _____

Rationale: _____

Committee Chairperson's Signature: _____

Forwarded to: _____

_____ Approved _____ Not Approved

Comments/Explanation: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

To be completed by Committee Chairperson

Date Returned to Committee Chair: _____

Date Committee informed of response: _____

A completed copy of the recommendation form should be filed with the meeting minutes.

ASU Mid-South Meeting Minutes

Committee		Date	
Facilitator		Time	
Location		Scribe	
Members Present			
Members Absent			
Guests			

Key Points Discussed and Action Items				
No.	Topic	Action Item(s)	Outcome/Follow-up and Owner	Misc
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				

Rollover Issues (issues to be rolled over from this meeting to the next):

Parking Lot Issues (issues to keep on the radar for future discussion):