Employee Resource Groups

PURPOSE: To provide forums for employees to gather and share ideas about matters that affect their professional development and work at the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC). Additionally, to provide safe, informal spaces for employees with a shared identity or common interest to gather and build community.

SBCTC recognizes that Employee Resource Groups (ERG) foster employee development and contribute to the SBCTC’s commitment to racial equity, while challenging systems of power, privilege and inequities. In service to SBCTC’s vision, Employee Resource Groups are an important part of creating a culture of belonging for employees. They strengthen networking and cohesiveness across the agency, promote career and professional development, provide another mechanism to exchange important feedback with management, and assist with efforts to attract and retain highly qualified candidates for employment at SBCTC.

Additional benefits include:

- Mentoring other Employee Resource Groups members
- Professional development and contributing to SBCTC career success.
- Providing informal training during Employee Resource Groups meetings and formal training through working with the Human Resources Office or Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.
- Employee Resource Groups are encouraged to communicate suggestions for improvements in SBCTC policy or practices to management by reaching out to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.
- Employee Resource Group members may also be asked by SBCTC management or Human Resources staff to help reach particular audiences or assist in expanding the applicant pool during employee recruitment activities.

Employee Resource Groups are welcomed, but not supervised, by the SBCTC. Their meetings and other efforts positively affect the work environment and contribute to SBCTC’s values and vision, including helping to recruit and retain a high quality, highly skilled workforce. They also provide employees with the skills, knowledge and tools they need to be successful, and promote equity, inclusiveness and cultural humility throughout the organization.

DEFINITIONS: The following definitions are specific to the terms of this policy and procedure and do not modify or revise similar terms as used on related procedures:

Cultural Humility: the ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented (or open to the other) in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the person. Cultural
PROCEDURE:

1. **Formation and Organization:** Employee Resource Groups are employee-formed and employee-led. Employee Resource Groups must:
   
   a. Be formed around a shared characteristic or common interest that can positively affect professional development or retention. The groups are intended to provide safe, informal spaces for individuals with a shared identity or common interest to gather and build community. Examples include, but are not limited to, national origin, race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, being a working parent, veteran status, or caring for aging family members while working.
   
   b. Be open to all SBCTC employees. As required by state and federal law and SBCTC policy, Employee Resource Groups may not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, religion, veteran's status, sex, national origin, sexual orientation or disability.
   
   c. Adhere to all SBCTC employment and general policies.
   
   d. Be composed of only SBCTC employees. Guest speakers may be invited to Employee Resource Group meetings.
   
   e. As required by the Ethics section of the SBCTC Employee Handbook, Employee Resource Groups may not use SBCTC resources to support or oppose any ballot proposition or candidate for public office. Additionally, Employee Resource Groups may not be formed to promote or benefit any private company or organization.
   
   f. Employees interested in forming an Employee Resource Group should complete an Employee Resource Group Application. The application is submitted to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee for review and recommendation, then routed to Human Resources for approval and to ensure full compliance with all SBCTC policies. If approved, the group will become an officially established Employee Resource Group bound by SBCTC policies and use of agency resources as described in this document.

2. **SBCTC Resources Available to Employee Resource Groups.** The SBCTC has determined that Employee Resource Group meetings, informal mentoring, and training activities enhance employee professional development, improve communication and contribute towards progress in meeting the SBCTC mission, vision, and values. In accordance with State Ethics rules, Employee Resource Groups are authorized to make use of the following state resources for the listed purposes (Because Employee Resource Groups and/or Employee Resource Group members may also be asked to participate in the development of SBCTC-sponsored training programs and in SBCTC outreach and recruitment, they will be able to make use of the same resources provided to any employee performing the assigned tasks.):
a. Physical Space.
   i. Shared space, including conference and break rooms may be used for group meeting on a space available basis.
   ii. Other SBCTC space (generally office or cubicle space) may be used for group when providing mentoring.

b. Employee Time.
   i. Meetings, informal mentoring and training may occur during regular working hours and employees may be granted up to 2 hours per month to participate in or prepare materials for Employee Resource Groups events or meetings. Time allotted for participation can be adjusted per supervisor’s approval on a case-by-case basis. Employee Resource Groups participants are responsible for monitoring their participation time.
   ii. While supervisor approval is not required to join an Employee Resource Group, employees should make their supervisors aware of their participation in an Employee Resource Group. An employee’s Employee Resource Group participation must not interfere with performance of the employee’s assigned work. If there is a performance issue, supervisors may limit use of work time on Employee Resource Group activities in order to improve performance.
   iii. Employees who are overtime-eligible are reminded that any time spent engaged in SBCTC-sponsored activities constitutes work time. Such work, like all assigned work performed by overtime eligible employees, is subject to the requirements of the SBCTC Overtime rules.

c. Computer, Copiers, Electronic Mail and Telephones.
   i. SBCTC computers and software may be used to prepare meeting agenda, training materials or hold remote meetings.
   ii. Copiers may be used to make hardcopies of meeting and training materials when needed.
   iii. Email and phones may be used to hold meetings by teleconference, convey information about upcoming meetings, communicate with one another between meetings, communicate with speakers or potential speakers, and provide advice and mentoring to others.

3. Responsibilities.
   a. SBCTC agrees to provide reasonable access to the resources as delineated in this policy.
   b. Employees wishing to form an Employee Resource Group must submit an application, articulating how the proposed group enhances professional
development and is consistent with policy guidelines on formation and organization, to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.

c. Employee Resource Group participants must comply with all SBCTC policies.

d. Participants must ensure that this participation does not interfere with their regular work assignments.

e. Overtime eligible employees must ensure that time spent participating in formal, SBCTC-sponsored activities is performed in accordance with the SBCTC Overtime rules.

f. Supervisors are responsible to ensure that a supervisee’s participation in Employee Resource Group meetings and activities does not interfere with the performance of that individual’s regularly assigned duties.

g. Employee Resource Groups agree to designate and inform the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee and Human Resources Office of at least one individual as lead for the group.

h. Employee Resource Group Leads agree to respond to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee’s annual check-in emails. The group agrees to provide information including: the number of individuals currently in the Employee Resource Group, updated contact information for the group, changes to the group’s name, description, or goals, the number of guest speakers the group hosted for the year, and any other information the group would like to provide to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.

i. Employee Resource Groups Leads are invited to attend Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee general meetings once per quarter. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee will choose one meeting per quarter for Employee Resource Group Leads to attend. At these meetings, Employee Resource Group Leads are expected to provide feedback from their Employee Resource Groups to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, which the Committee will bring to the Human Resources Office for consideration.

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